DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

"Native American Gothic"

The Native American as Gothic Element in America's twentieth-century Literature and Film

Verfasser

Florian P. Sidlo

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magister der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2010

„In Jede hohe Freude mischt sich eine
Empfindung von Dankbarkeit"
(Maria von Ebner-Eschenbach)

Mein Dank gilt Besonders

Drⁱⁿ Carmen Birkle
meiner Familie
Meinen Freunden
und Katharina

Table of Contents

Where I grew up, there lived a man in the neighborhood that everybody only referred to as 'Winnetou' or – after the 1990s movie adaptation of the Cooper classic – sometimes also as 'Last of the Mohicans'. To my knowledge this man was an Austrian, maybe called Novak or Huber, but he had decided at some point of his life to dress like an Indian. He had long straight hair, always wore leather pants and jackets, moccasins, and some headband with colorful patterns on it. He had an 'Indian bicycle' with which he even made the local news, and sometimes kids could admire his vehicle at a local fair or at a 'kindergarten barbeque'. Of course we little ones were more fascinated by the small portable TV set attached to the bike than the feathers and ornaments, but that fact did not in the least diminish his authenticity as an Indian amongst us kids. It goes without saying that adults considered him crazy, which he probably was, but for us he was just 'Winnetou.' I had almost forgotten about this man, until I started to write this paper. The more I have read about the depiction of Native Americans in literature and film, the more parallels I could draw to the last Indian from Donaufeld (a neighborhood of Floridsdorf, the 21st district of Vienna). He incorporates all those clichés built over the time that are basis of the misrepresentation of Native Americans, and hence of my analysis of the Native American as Gothic element in twentieth-century American literature and film.

When we encounter a Native character in literature or film, s/he is never just an ordinary person, because there is always a certain mystery which haunts her or him. What sounds like an illegitimate generalization itself turns out to be rather evident when one looks at the representation of Native people over the last five hundred years. Most stereotypes we can find in recent depictions of indigenous people can be traced back to the earliest written accounts about Native people. This legacy of misrepresentation varies from the picture of the 'wild man' to the 'noble savage', but there is rarely a genuinely equilibrated or authentic representation of the Native American. Adding the threat of genocide, Native Americans soon degenerated to the 'Vanishing Indians', a people doomed to die out. Any depiction of a Native character tells this particular story, given everything

Native an 'aura of death'. This effect is almost exclusively (ab)used to create a Gothic feeling amongst the mainly white audience. I claim that the misrepresentation of five hundred years and the constant threat of extinction made a literary element out of the indigenous people of America, comparable to Frankenstein's monster or vampires. Moreover, I claim that it is impossible to produce an authentic picture of Native Americans, no matter if endeavored by a Native or a White person, without drawing back on the Gothic effect of the Native American.

In the first chapter I will delineate the most important historical developments that influenced the image of the Native American in contemporary literature and film. However, since my aim is to find the origin of the clichés of indigenous people we still encounter, I concentrate on the aspect of misnomers and myths about Indians rather than battles and treaties. Major historical changes will be dealt with, of course, but my focus will lie on the mainly inaccurate naming and the literary depiction of Native Americans.

In the second section the development of the literary genre called Gothic is on the agenda. Again, I will primarily focus on those aspects necessary to explain the development of the genre with respect to the Native American. Many aspects, i.e. the concept of 'the Other' or 'the monster', which were cultivated and developed in Gothic literature, can be found in the depiction of the Native American. Therefore, I will to show what concepts these themes are built on, and in how far the image of the Native has developed according to them. I will further argue in this section why I consider it plausible to ask for a *Native American Gothic*, since the Native American served as an opponent to white America from the first day of colonization, and was depicted in such a way the early democracy as well as its first literary genres, the captivity narrative, and more importantly, the American Gothic.

The third part is dedicated to the analysis of *Monkey Beach* (2000), a book by Canadian First Nation Eden Robinson. I want to demonstrate that even a book by a Haisla writer thematizing the genocide of Native Americans depicts indigenous life in a Gothic way, since, as I argue, the aura of death and the history

of extinction has not only influenced the stories by whites about Natives. It goes without saying that five hundred years of fabrication have shaped the indigenous people themselves and how they react and process the culture clash with white Anglo-Saxon America. However, I will try to show that the unquestionably Gothic effect accomplished amongst the mainly white readership builds on the same grounds as the attempt by a white filmmaker to create a Native movie character without falling back to the old clichés of the Western.

In the final part of my paper I therefore analyze Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man* (1995) and in how far his deconstructed Western makes use of the same Native American Gothic effects and elements found in *Monkey Beach*. I will try to show that the image of the Native American created over hundreds of years somehow constitutes a common ground for criticism, which allows Native authors as well as whites to comment on the injustice and the misrepresentation Native Americans still have to face today.

1. FROM INDIAN TO NATIVE AMERICAN

What do I mean when I speak of Native Americans? Before I start giving an exact definition of the term Native American, where it derived from, and which ideology this includes, I want to try to define my understanding in one sentence.

Using the term Native American I refer to all the indigenous people of the North American Continent, including Canadian First Nations, and those referred to with the probably more common but politically not correct term Indian.

After I decided to write my paper on this topic and to use the term Native American Gothic, I was glad to find that anthropology does not know any national borders for Native Americans. This discipline uses the term Natives for all indigenous people of the (North) American continent. Since this is a paper on Native Americans as Gothic element in American literature and culture, I had to exclude those not represented in English; therefore, neither the background nor any other part of my paper will more than touch on subjects concerning Native people from Meso- or South America.

In order to define the term *Native American* it is an inevitable necessity to look at the historical background, since the development of the term and all the related concepts describing those people include a historical component not easily omissible. This includes the development of all the words used to describe these people of the New World from Columbus until now, what they mean, where they come from, and what attitudes are implied when used. In order to define this term, however, I also have to summarize the misconceptions, misnomers, and swear words used to describe the Native population. As we can see in the following quotation, the terminology and its historically influenced changes do carry so much meaning that a clear-cut definition seems to be impossible.

> In its most ethnocentric usage, American meant the ideal American citizen of the United States. Whether this meaning derived from ideals of racism or merely ethnocentrism, it always measured other persons by the yardstick of middle class American values of religion, politics, family life, education, and appearance. Thus *Indian* referred to those people deficient at best and

> antagonistic at worst to what Americans were supposed to be, ideally. [...] To change the terminology to Indians or Native American mitigates without resolving the problem of reference.   (Berkhofer, "Cultural Pluralism", 38)

Whatever term we find for those people I want to write about in my paper, it will always leave a bad taste in the mouth of politically correct writers, because not using the various tribal or national names (and even those words are strictly speaking not correct) builds on the wording of the oppressors. The negative representation of a certain group in a language is necessarily linked to negative attitudes and prejudices against others. Here we already find the first major reason of what I consider a fundamental part of the Gothic effects which I claim Native Americans have in American literature and film.

The problem with the attempt of giving a historical outline of *Native American* terms is, however, that the issue of historical representation itself is also frequently questioned in the case of Native people in the U.S.A. and Canada. It is a rather common concept that history was mainly written by powerful (white) males, or about the deeds of successful kings and emperors, mostly leaving out the point of view of the regular people, daily trivia or the perspective of the losers' side of a conflict. Nevertheless, the rising interest in the history of everyday life over the last decades, the growing field of gender studies or the historical focus on the stories of the defeated have paved the way for those aspects of history so long omitted. One of the more sensitive topics that has emerged throughout this process is the history of Native American people. Calvin Martin asks in the introduction to his book *American Indian, Problem of History*: "What [is] our metaphysics of writing Indian-white history, and how accurately [does it] convey the metaphysics of those individuals and groups of individuals we seek to describe?" (C. Martin, 6). The author and his colleagues argue that it is hardly possible to describe a people who historically were mainly described by Whites, and who themselves had a totally different attitude towards historical delineation, not to mention differing concepts of time or other notions so important for Western society. This question of validity will be particularly interesting for my further interpretation of *Dead Man* (see chapter 3), a movie written and shot by Jim Jarmusch, a white American. I argue that regardless of any real Native American history, the misconceptions about Native Americans are neither the property of white nor Native culture, but that they form a certain common ground,

though not a beautiful one I have to admit, on which both sides have the right, if not the obligation to reflect.

But coming back to Native Americans; the discrepancy between the European chronological delineation of events and the oral tradition of a people not having the same sense of time nor having (until recently) a written language already illustrates the difficulty of writing about the historical background for topics concerning Native issues. Yet, before we even start the attempt to delineate the "undelineatable", there are still questions which I consider crucial and therefore have to be brought up in advance for the better understanding of the following chapter as well as the general setting of attitude towards the topic of the paper.

"Who is a Native American?" This question is asked by Karen L. Kilcup in her introduction to *Native American Women's Writing, 1800-1924, an Anthology*, where she tries to find a definition of Native American Literature, which, by definition should be rooted in an understanding of self, in this case, a Native American identity. Un/fortunately, without really providing any answers making a discussion obsolete, Kilcup's introduction exemplifies the problematic of all topics dealing with Native American issues, and this is the lack, or maybe impossibility of a self-definition of *Native Americans* in a Western sense. Giving various examples, Kilcup tries to show how fuzzy the boundaries of race can be. On the one hand there is half-blood Zitkala-Sa, a woman of the Progressive Era with American boarding school education who fought for Indian rights and education, but due to her rather Western life style was questioned about her "real" Indianness by her own people (personalized in her fiction by her reproachful mother). On the other hand, we find Mary Jemison[1], a captive white woman and classic example of someone going Native, who was fully integrated into the Seneca people. In between these two extremes we have the question of 'mixed blood'.

> Who is Indian? If someone is only "part" Indian, can we still call him or her a Native American writer? It is an interesting question to be asked within a

---

[1] Mary Jemison (1743-1833) is a classic example of a woman going Native. After she was captured by Shawnees as a teenager, she assimilated, married a Native and eventually was adopted by Senecas. She lived the rest of her life as Native woman, (c.f. *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison*)

> culture where anyone who has the smallest trace of African ancestry is often simply called "black". While it is no longer acceptable to talk of "Quadroons" when speaking about black writers, the term "mixed-blood," "full-blood" and half breed" are common currency in public thinking about American Indians. (Bruchac, 323)

Another important question, which has to be dealt with before defining the historical usage of the term *Native American,* is the general concept behind naming a "race". "These people, like societies elsewhere, usually referred to their own group as 'the people' or 'true people'" (Berkhofer, "Cultural Pluralism", 38). Only after the arrival of the European conquerors and their subsequent colonization there was even a need for a classification, and hence a "pan-Indian (that is, cross-tribal)" (Kilcup, 1) term or concept.

> Only the contact between the European people and Native American people caused both "sides" to recognize that the original people of the Western Hemisphere should bear the misnomer, Indian [...]. If the Indians had no collective reference for each other, then what is the collectivity that historians gather under the rubric of American Indian history?
> (Berkhofer, "Cultural Pluralism", 38)

Well, I am aware that the representation of Native Americans has been biased for various reasons over the last five centuries; nevertheless I have to rely on the Western delineation of events, first of all, because the Native perspective is missing in many cases. Secondly and generally speaking, the focus of the paper is on the representation of Natives in American literature, therefore biased or not, I have to use it as resource for, as I argue, the prevailing negative depiction of Natives in U.S. and Canadian fiction on which it is actually built. Supporters of the Native cause, however, often object to this sort of argumentation. Robert F. Berkhofer Jr., for example, is bewailing in his book *The White Man's Indian* that "[e]ven White writers on the history of White images of the Indian tend to treat all Native American cultures as a single Indian one for the purposes of analyzing the validity of white stereotypes" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 26). This leads us back to the question whether Native people have a single identity or not. 'History', or better say the past has somehow paid its tribute to this discrepancy. By making certain groups of people "the Other" of the dominating class, unity amongst the oppressed is a rather natural effect which we can also find in the Native community

nowadays. "Whether as conception or as stereotype, however, the idea of the Indian has created a reality in its own image as a result of the power of the Whites and the response of Native Americans" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 3). It is exactly this concept that creates the basis of my topic, namely the independent existence of a concept parallel to the group it describes, but even influencing it in a way that the perceptions imposed on actually become reality, in a way. I believe this concept, the problematics of representation and the lack of answers nicely characterizes the basis of the mystic figure 'Native American', and hence the basis for my analysis of the Native American as Gothic figure in American literature and film.

1.1 The wHIteSTORY of Indians

Before Columbus "discovered" the American continent people of Europe already had their ideas of how exotic people on far-away islands had to behave and dress. Maritime tales and stories of adventurers and sailors like Marco Polo already provided certain pictures of what to expect people of a new world to look like. Therefore, the actual encounters with 'naked savages' were in a way certainly anticipated. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's later introduced model of the 'noble savage' began to be fashioned already at that time. "This image emphasized as much the initial innocence and generosity of the Native peoples of the New World as their nakedness, characteristics that were constantly noted by Columbus and the explorers who followed him" (Washburn and Trigger, 63). In addition to that, many other misconceptions were communicated to the mother continent, which were eagerly added to the prejudices about the native population of the New World. Some of the most popular preconceptions were reported by the man after whom the continent was named, Amerigo Vespucci. In his *Mundus Novus* from 1504-05, which contained more "anthropological" details than Columbus' letters, and was even more popular in Europe, he described the Indians as

> a race I say gentle and amenable. All both (sic!) sexes go about naked
> covering no parts of their bodies; [...]. They have, too, hair plentiful and
> black. In their gait and when they are playing their games they are agile and

dignified. [...] For some I have seen having in a single face seven borings any one of which was capable of holding a plum. [T]heir women, being very lustful, cause the private parts of their husbands to swell up to such a huge size that they appear deformed and disgusting. [...] They marry as many wives as they please; and son cohabits with mother, brother with sister [...] and any man with the first woman he meets. [...] They live one hundred and fifty years, and rarely fall ill, and if they do fall victim to any disease, they cure themselves with certain roots and herbs.
(qtd. in Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 8-9)

Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci also reported of cannibalism on the Caribbean islands. This quickly changed the picture of the savage from innocent but maybe hostile to depraved (cf. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 7). The New world was perceived as Garden of Eden, in which those creatures lived, no matter whether noble savages or devils, but without any armory worth mentioning, which rather soon led to slave raids including cruelties of all kinds, leaving many Caribbean islands quickly depopulated. Of course the increasingly worsening picture of the brutish devils without any knowledge of God did not help the Native population either. Nevertheless, there were constant supporters of the Native population, which led to a discussion on a religious and philosophical level not to be reconciled over centuries (cf. Washburn and Trigger, 64).

The discovery of the New World and the subsequent colonization in the fifteenth and sixteeth centuries were dominated by Spain, both Columbus's and Vespucci's travels were predominantly financed by the Spanish court. Therefore, and not surprisingly, the stories as well as the terminology were highly influenced by Spain. The English term *Indian*, as well as the French *indien* or the German *Indianer* were adopted from the Spanish *indios*, which Columbus used for this people he considered to be Asian. "*India* stood as synonym for all of Asia east of the river Indus at the time and *Indies* was the broadest designation available for all the area he claimed under royal patent" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 5). This also made the discussion whether or not Indians had the same humanity a mostly Spanish one. "Perhaps the most basic division was that highlighted in the debate at Valladolid in 1550-51 between the colonist-turned-friar Bartolomé de la Casas and the stay-at-home scholar Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda" (Washburn and Trigger, 65). People argued about the justification of enslavement of the Native population based on Aristotle's assumption that not all men could be equal; therefore, some had to be destined to become slaves, which de la Casas opposed vigorously (65).

However, the Indians' godlessness was not questioned by either one of them, which is to be seen in Friar de la Casas's assumption that " [s]urly these people would be the most blessed in the world if only they worshipped the true God" (qtd. in Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 11). This was maybe the first step of the white man's attempt to find the salvation of those poor heathens in Christianity, followed by many others. Nonetheless, atrocities against Native populations became the rule, which de la Casas indicted repeatedly. As an advocate for the Indians he could not stop the slaughtering of people, numbers range from 100,000 to 10,000,000, but he was accused of blackening the name of Spain, because he was "unwilling to find excuses for Spanish behavior. His linking of his role as defender of the Indians and historian was made clear in his will, in which he asserted that he wrote his histories so that if God ever destroyed the Spanish nation for its crimes against the Indians, people would know why" (qtd. in Washburn and Trigger, 68). However, no matter how much was said in favor of the Indians, there were not many questioning whether Indians were as good as Europeans or not. "Using the twin criteria of Christianity and 'civilization', Spaniards found the Indian wanting in a long list of attributes: letters, laws, government, clothing, arts, trade, agriculture, marriage, morals, metal goods, and above all religion" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 10).

What is especially fascinating about this period of "Native American History", the phase of encounter with the European intruders, is the fact that most misconceptions which built the basis of prejudices and stereotypes over the last five hundred years were already laid in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Maybe this is already the first sign, or maybe the first step of a race becoming a stereotypical figure in society and therefore in literature. When predisposition is inherited at such an early point in time, what else is there to be expected?

Although Englishmen were fishing the waters of Newfoundland so that it soon became one of the greatest European enterprises, the English did not make many attempts to colonize the New World in the sixteenth century. Also the French empire started their colonization projects only in the seventeenth century, after the first attempt to build a colony failed miserably for most involved, and European politics kept attention on the old continent as well (cf. Jennings, 167-68). In their actual encounters with Indians, French and English entities varied

considerably in their success of keeping the relations peaceful. While Frenchmen in la Floride were depending on Indian food and military assistance against the Spanish, and therefore cooperated well with the Native population, the first English attempts to start a colony were overshadowed by cruelty between Englishmen and Indians (Washburn and Trigger, 69). After expeditions by Sir Walter Raleigh to Virginia, a piece of land on the coast which he named after the Virgin Queen Elizabeth in the mid-1550s,

> [his] Roanoke colony was managed badly from its beginning [...] by commander Ralph Lane [...]. His treacherous ambushes and general brutality left a legacy of ill will among the Indians that guaranteed the disappearance of the Roanoke colony as soon as it was left to its own resources. [...] In a word, European approaches to the Americas (excepting Spain's establishments) were episodic rather than a product of rational policy. (Jennings, 168-69)

As we have already heard before, the French and English discourse about the Native population was mostly influenced by the dominant Spanish discourse, which delivered the terminology as well. Due to the shared European context it can be assumed that even if not influenced by Spanish accounts, neither the English nor the French would have had significantly different impressions of the encounters with the Indians, since all three societies share the concepts of Christianity and civilization, with which they judged the population of the New World. Furthermore, adventurers of both countries seem to have encountered mostly wilder Indians, which influenced their perception of the people, and hence the terminology (cf. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 13).

> Sixteenth-century Frenchman, Italians, and Englishman generally employed a variant of the Latin *silvaticus*, meaning a forest inhabitant or man of the woods, for the Indian as the earlier spelling of sauvage, salvaticho, and savage show so well in the respective languages. English usage switched from savage to Indian as the general term for Native Americans in the seventeenth century, but the French continued to use sauvage as the preferred word into the nineteenth century.
> (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 13)

The image of the savage that was established in many European societies may root in the medieval concept of "der wilde Mann", a German expression which eventually is based on the ancient concept of wild people living in the woods, who

are especially hairy, sexually depraved, cannibals, simply half human half animal living in the woods (cf. Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 13). This concept allows comparisons to literary or mythical figures of Indian origin like the Sasquatch (a mythical creature I will discuss in detail later on), but also to more recent and western mythical figures like Big Foot, Yeti or Hillbillies; the latter are still classic figures in contemporary horror movies.

Another set of names for the inhabitants of the New World was added by the writings of Pilgrims and Puritans. In *A Key into the Language of America; Or, An [sic.] Help to the Language of the Natives in That Part of America Called New-England,* Roger Williams published a nomenclature in 1643, summarizing various terms used for the Native inhabitants.

> First, those of the *English* giving: as *Natives, Salvages, Indians, Wild-men,* (so the *Dutch* called them *Wilden) Abergeny men, Pagans, Barbarians, Heathen.* Secondly, their *Names,* which they give themselves. I cannot observe that they ever had (before the coming of the *English, French* or *Dutch* amongst them) any *Names* to difference *themselves* from strangers, for they knew none. ... They have often asked mee [sic.], why we call them *Indians [,] Natives, &c* And understanding the reason, they call them-selves *Indians,* in opposition to *English*, &c.   (qtd. in Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 15)

Besides those already mentioned, the words "infidel" and "heathen" also found their way into the discourse, due to the rising numbers of religious communities seeking freedom in the New World. Both *infidel* and *heathen* have their roots in the ancient Judeo-Christian idea of themselves and the "Others". (This idea of "otherness" will be very important in the following chapters, since it is a basic feature of Gothic and American Gothic literature.) Needless to say, the ancient concept of the *Barbarian* was also projected onto the Native Americans. "By the sixteenth century, *barbarian* and *heathen* had come to be used almost interchangeably in English usage, for civility and Christianity were presumed necessarily and therefore inextricably associated" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian,* 16). Another aspect of Native/White difference was mainly introduced by the English, and that was the issue of land.

> While all European nations engaged in trade with the Native peoples [...] the English were more concerned with establishing [...] settlements. [...] As a result, the English interpretation of the North American Native was sharply

> conditioned by the fact that land- its ownership and use- formed a principal concern of both parties in their dealings with the other.
> (Washburn and Trigger, 74)

This is also to be seen in the English use of the word *nation*, only referring to a people, and not as it was (and is nowadays) to a kingdom, empire or, more contemporary, country, which of course would include a certain entitlement to land. It was not before the nineteenth century that this rather archaic concept was substituted by the word *tribe* (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 16).

Besides the general notion of superiority of white society over the Native population and the disdain for the lack of Christianity, there is another aspect worth mentioning, and this is the attractiveness of the Native lifestyle to the English population. As it is for many other historical puzzles, if one wants to find out what was popular at a time, it is best to look at what was forbidden by the ruling class. "[G]overnors of the Jamestown colonies [for example] prescribed the death penalty for running off to live with the Indians, clearly an indication that the attractions of Indian life were great" (Washburn and Trigger, 74). This appreciation of the other lifestyle is also to be found in the famous mid-eighteenth century concept of the "noble savage" by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. It is unquestioned that quite many Europeans tried to find their luck in the Native lifestyle, which is documented in Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* from 1782, saying that "thousands of Europeans are Indians, and we have no examples of even one of these Aborigines having from choice become European!" (Crévecoeur, 215) This of course does not really reflect the actual fluctuation of people changing sides, so to speak. In fact the opposite must have been true, but the mere fact that there were a considerable amount of people turning down European values of civilization and Christianity must have been a shock for the upholder of morals and values of the European/American society. This was particularly true for the Puritan religious leaders for whom captivity narratives like the one by Mary Jemison undermined the Puritan culture of piousness and obedience considerably. The threat seemed to have been so great that even the president of Yale University, Ezra Stiles, wrote in 1783 "that Indians were probably literally the descendants of Canaanites" (Washburn and Trigger, 77), which was used as a religious justification for enslaving the Native population.

With the War of Independence, and most Indian groups involved on the English side, the attitude towards them changed after the foundation of the United States of America even to the worse. "They were increasingly referred to as tawny pagans, swarthy Philistines, copper-colored vermin, and by the end of the eighteenth century, redskins" (Washburn and Trigger, 80). The substantial emphasis on skin color came with the slave trade, and the attempt to justify enslavement of Africans by dehumanizing people with darker skin color. This already had a history in European culture, but was reinforced in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in America. What also changed the perception of the Indian around the time of the American Revolution was the substantially decreasing number of Natives due to warfare but also diseases, which gave rise to the idea of the 'vanishing race'.

With the Enlightenment losing attraction in European societies and nationalism growing after Napoleon's domination over Europe, the ideas of immutable racial differences grew in Europe as well as in America. Euro-Americans vindicated their superiority over Indians, who where considered as civilizable as animals, first using polygenism, then Darwinism. Moreover, most of the Americans even "anticipated that the total extinction of the American Indian would soon occur and sentimentally interpreted their replacement by European settlers as a tragic but minor episode in a drama of worldwide technological, moral, and intellectual progress" (Washburn and Trigger, 81).

After half a century of existence, a certain U.S. self-consciousness started to develop, which American historians tried arduously to support by historical facts. Although later rejected by numerous American historians, many of these accounts were "excessive [in] protecting the reputation of American heroes" (Washburn and Trigger, 84), an approach, which we can still find in American society as crucial characteristics of self-definition and culture (cf. U.S. national anthem: ... land of the Brave and Free ...). Naturally, the Indian, if mentioned at all, served the authors only as counterpart of the white man, as the savage villain. Subsequently, historical encounters between Indians and the white settlers were portrayed in a very euphemistic way. If most casualties were on the Indian side, it was a great victory against savages; they reported about atrocity against innocent settlers, if the skirmish or battle was won by Indians. One prominent example is offered by

historian William De Forest "[who] was appalled by 'the indiscriminate butchery' of the Pequots - men, women, and children- by colonial forces in 1637, wondering how American historians would have characterized an equivalent extermination of the inhabitants of New London by English soldiers during the American Revolution" (Washburn and Trigger, 89).

After the region between the Appalachian chain and the Mississippi was acquired through the treaty of Paris in 1783, and the great expansion of U.S. territory through the Louisiana purchase in 1803, the idea of removing Indians westwards became more and more popular amongst the white population. Even those who previously propagated the assimilation of Indians through education and missionization considered the removal as last remedy for the Indian race. This move, however, was not only criticized by the few supporters of the Indian cause left. The historian Jared Sparks for example predicted the situation of the Indian to be quite the same on the other side of the Appalachian chain 50 years later, and that extinction was inevitable (Washburn and Trigger, 83). Unfortunately, the rather self-fulfilling prophecy made by Sparks was closer to reality than most would have imagined. The new Indian territories in the West were soon threatened by the constant progress of the railway system. In the year 1869 already five lines existed that connected the East with the West coast. This expansion did not only bring a constant rail route from coast to coast, but progress manifested itself in a massive moving in of settlers, mining camps and townships. "The railroad industry helped at least 12 territories to become states between 1867 and 1912" (Fixico, xiii). This was the starting point for the extinction of the buffalo. The extermination of those animals can be seen as symptom and as symbol of nature's collateral damage for the sake of progress. Even more so, the buffalo was to a great deal a crucial part of the livelihood of many of the Native population of the region. The systematic elimination of these animals did not only resemble the fate of the Native people, by taking away a greater source of their daily bread, so to speak, this process even accelerated the vanishing of the Native population.

"In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the attention that historians paid to Native peoples both in the United States and Canada declined still further" (Washburn and Trigger, 97). A scientific branch which increasingly

engaged in Native American studies was anthropology, though. This rather new discipline, which had its first approach on a rather amateur level in the late eighteenth century, was considered to be concerned with the Native Americans, since the 'lack of history' made them uninteresting for historians. Due to this neglect by classic historians, this relatively new science was able to work rather unhindered, making the finding of new information on Native Americans comparatively easy. "As a branch of historical studies, the discipline of ethnography [...] can already take pride in its accomplishments. Less and less will the historian of Indian-white relations consider Native American actions only in terms of Euroamerican categories of understanding" (Krupat, 9). This development was especially enriched by the work of Franz Boas.[2]

However, these (future) findings of this new science did not manage to stop the disappearing of Native American people in America's everyday live of the late nineteenth century. The change of the economic situation and the political developments of the time did not make it easier for the Natives to survive in the Progressive Era. For the Native communities one of the most important pieces of legislation at that time was the General Allotment Act, or Dawes Act of 1887. "The act stated that the president could allot reservation land to Indians, without their consent, and that those Indians who follow the provisions of the act would be granted U.S. citizenship citizens [...]" (Fixico, xiv). Although amended twice, this act only pushed the further land gain of white Americans. This had many reasons, amongst them illiteracy amongst the Indians, who simply did not understand the contracts, or the poor condition of the land that was sold to them, which could not provide a decent living for their owners. Furthermore, the decay of the land was even expedited by land division due to inheritances. The following drops in land value subsequently drove many Indians into selling their property for a much lower price to "Americans". "From 1887 to 1934 Indian land as a whole diminished from 139 million acres to 48 million acres. Of the 91 million acres lost, two-thirds disappeared during the first 10 years of the allotment program, even though only 5 million acres were actually allotted in this period" (Fixico, xv).

The situation of the Native population in the beginning of the twentieth century was basically an aftermath of the allotment policy. Although a

---

[2] Franz Boas (1858-1942) was a German American anthropologist and pioneer and is called the father of American or Modern Anthropology.

considerable percentage stayed on their reservations and allotments, there was a constant movement of Indians to the cities. This was further stimulated by U.S. entry into World War I, where approximately 10,000 Indians fought as American citizens. The granting of U.S. Citizenship to the Native Americans followed shortly after. In World War II already 25,000 Native Americans served as soldiers abroad. Moreover, also the war industry which would pull the country out of the Depression drew another 40,000 to 50,000 Natives into urban areas; governmental action followed. The attempt by the state to integrate Indians into municipal life by starting housing and working projects unfortunately failed to achieve full integration, leading to the development of 'Indian ghettoes' in the cities. Adding the factors of under-education, alcoholism and a poor job situation, the Native communities struggled particularly in the urban regions.

Apart from the problems of delineating Native American history or of defining a collective Native American identity, this chapter showed how persistently certain stereotypes are transported from one generation to the next, leaving the boundaries between deformation and reality often more blurry than we would wish for.

I argue that Native American Gothic is neither particularly Native nor White. It is based on the mutual history of war, murder and near extinction, on the lack of representation, on history's failure to tell the true story, on repression of one's own people's atrocities. When writing about Native topics, it is hardly possible not to get Gothic. Some critics claim that nowadays everything is Gothic, and I agree to a great extent. In all topics and stories based on human actions and emotion there will be something repressed, something that haunts someone. Over the greater part of what we call history, the majority or ruling class tended to project this certain aura on 'the others', firstly by excluding them, secondly by not knowing about them, which is worth analyzing further. If one adds near extinction to this mythic atmosphere, we have the perfect Gothic element. For American culture, this is clearly the Native American.

The concept of the Native American has many different aspects. There is the notion of Otherness, forced upon them through five centuries of oppression. We find a certain lack of voice that characterized most periods of Indian-white

relations, leaving those who resisted the oppression no way but to speak and write in English. Moreover, there is the concept of the Vanishing Indian, a certain halo of death that accompanies every Native American, which also shaped American history. This happened on two levels, one is the mere fact that Native Americans were threatened to be extinct, lost most of their lands and struggled vigorously to become respected members of American society, and the second aspect is the denial that is still visible in the American perception of the mutual history, repressing everything that does not fit the American hero prototype. "The traditional historian colonizes the Indian's mind, like a virus commanding the cell's genetic machinery. The typical procedure is to make Amerindians into what might be termed a 'people of history' (C. Martin, 6). This contrasts wonderfully with the notion of nineteenth-century historians who neglected Native American history for its supposed lack of facts worth mentioning. Furthermore, there is also a particularly uncanny interest of nowadays America in Native culture, or at least what whites consider it to be. Dream catchers are made in kindergarten, and 'Indian bracelets' and patterns decorate men and women all over America. What was adjusted to the market survived in the US, and the noble qualities of the poor Indians only now are mourned. All in all, this doomed race incorporates many Gothic elements, but before I start with the development of American Gothic, its themes and characteristics, and in how far the Native American plays a role (for literature in general, and for my paper in particular), I first want to put my focus on the literary representation of Native Americans in general. The following chapter should not only build the bridge between a) the history of Natives' and whites' (often problematic) cohabitation and the misnomers of the agitators and b) the historical development of the literary genre of American Gothic; it should predominantly serve the purpose of showing that the current situation of stereotypical depictions of Natives has a history in American literature.

1.2 THE NATIVE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE; FROM THE ANTAGONIST IN CAPTIVITY NARRATIVES TO BECOMING A GOTHIC ELEMENT

As one of the first truly American forms of literature in the broader sense, the captivity narrative by definition had a strong influence on the subsequent characterization of Native people in American literature. The most prominent example of the genre is the captivity narrative by Mrs. Mary Rowlandson that was published in 1682. In her story, *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson, a Minister's wife in New-England,* the author describes the Native Americans as atheistic, wild and diabolic creatures, being "the worst of heathen". "What made these lessons particularly vivid was the bringing of the larger forces of the Lord and Satan, Puritan and Savage into the microcosm of personal experience" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 84). Furthermore, this form of representation perfectly exemplifies the rather omnipresent influence of the Puritan worldview on the American subjects of the late seventeenth century. Several other captivity stories showed the pious reader that living without *His* guidance ended up in becoming savage brutes lingering in the woods and giving their soul to Satan. As already mentioned above, the Puritans understood to create the antithesis of their belief around those people most dangerous to their worldview as well as everyday life, the Indian. All sins and depraved desires were projected onto the Native American. This already indicates how deeply rooted the "Otherness" of Native Americans is in the history of the United States and shows the complexity of the stereotypical depiction of Natives we now have to look back on when interpreting Native American characters in American (Gothic) literature.

In the next step of representing the Native threat, the agency changed from the more religiously influenced "God saved me" to a more self-conscious and secular understanding of saving yourself instead of relying on divine gratitude. This is a development surly influenced by the project of American independence and the Enlightenment, but hardly changed the situation or depiction of the Natives to the better. When we look at the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States of America, neither the "all

men are created equal" nor the "we the people" included the Native American. As mentioned before, the war of Independence and the emancipation of the United States of America generally worsened the situation of the Natives. This generally negative attitude towards Indians was further enhanced by a growing self-consciousness of American writers and the blooming commercialization of captivity and horror stories. Another important American writer contributing to this literary sub-genre was Samuel Drake. In his book *Indian Captivities; Or Life in the Wigwam*, published in 1839, "[t]he blood-and-gore sensationalism of the commercially inspired and highly successful captivity narrative of the nineteenth century led directly to the dime novels and the later cowboy and Indian movies of popular culture" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 85). The theme of the wilderness, the dangerous inhabitants of the woods and the horrors of Indian warfare became more and more a key theme in American literature and culture. Furthermore, "the mysterious Indian mounds gained much attention at this time as the American equivalent of European ruins and castles" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 87). With the rising popularity of Gothic novels in the United States, and "in an attempt to establish their own literature, American writers sought truly American subjects such as American Indian and the American wilderness" (Ruppert, 387). One of the first who explicitly named the Native American as characteristic of American literature was Charles Brockden Brown. In his introduction to his novel *Edgar Huntly,* published in 1799, Brown argues that those classic features of the Gothic genre - which I will further explore in the following chapters - do not exist in the natural environment of Americans and that Indian hostility and the threats of wilderness are far more suitable as setting for American Gothic fiction (cf. Goddu, 4). An additional aspect drawing attention to the Indian was the growing romanticism. When European Americans considered it safe - meaning from a standpoint in history when extinction seemed inevitable - they started pitying the dying race. This increasing romantic sentimentalism produced many famous works, beginning with Philip Freneau's poems in the 1780s.

> Freneau's Indians were noblemen of nature, but they were aware of themselves as members of a dying race. His poems were typical of a literary sentiment that was more concerned with the Indian of the past or of a present competition that was soon to pass.   (Ruppert, 286)

Other prominent examples would be James Nelson Barker's play *The Indian Princess; Or, La Belle Sauvage*, a story about Pocahontas's noble love.

This rise of sentiment also paved the way for criticism of Puritan attitudes and historiography, which resulted in Washington Irving's essay challenging the Puritan view on King Philip, published in 1819 in his *Sketchbook*. In 1824 Lydia Maria Child wrote the novel *Hobomok*, in which King Philip's portrayal is changed from the former Puritan perception to a rather noble savage. The most important example of the time, though, is unquestionably James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* in 1826, and the subsequent *Leatherstocking Tales.*[3] In order to pity the Indian properly, the general picture of the brutish heathen had to be changed to the noble savage we already know from Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In contrast to the original eighteenth-century concept of the Swiss writer and philosopher, the American "nobilization" of the savage had its peak in the nineteenth century. As Europe saw this climax already in the eighteenth century, the growing distance between the white American majority (on the East coast) to the frontier and therefore to the red man made it quite easy for them to change the general perception of Indians from demonization to pitiful nostalgia. "The high point of the tendency to romanticize the safely dead Indian was Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's long poem *The Song of Hiawatha*, published in 1855" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 90). The author mixed up an Iroquois hero with an Ojibwa deity, who was placed in the picturesque forests of an America before Columbus, stressing the Garden of Eden myth that can be found from the first contact in the New World onwards. This general change in perception also influenced the visual arts. The most prominent representative was George Catlin, who "rushed [through the still unsettled West] in [his] battle with time" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 94) to capture the Indian, who transformed to an anachronism with the speed of steam locomotives. After becoming famous, Catlin toured through the U.S. and Europe with his artwork in the 1830s and 1840s.

Another phenomenon quickly becoming an anachronism of the time were Cooper's simplified noble savages and his "Indianized" whites. This theme was

---

[3] *The Leatherstocking Tales* is a series of five novels published between 1823 and 1841. They all share the same protagonist, Natty Bumppo. The second part is the most famous of the books, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), which was also made into a movie in 1992.

taken on by Robert Montgomery Bird's *Nick of the Woods, or the Jibbenainosay*, published in 1837. The main character, a peaceful Quaker mutated to a slaughterer of Indians, after some of them killed his family. No matter how popular at the time, this sort of frontier amalgams of whites and Indians were also doomed to vanish. The tenacious pushing of the frontier and the general wisdom of White America considering the Indian extinction only a matter of time made amalgams of two cultures, no matter how simplified or diverse, expandable. This was also reflected in stories like Mrs. Ann Sophia Winterbotham Stephens' *Malaeska; The Indian Wife of the White Hunter*, in which the issue of miscegenation between Whites and Indians is thematized. This story was published in the mid-1860s and was a good example of the rise of the dime novel and its morality. The decline in cost for the raw material paper and the advancements in printing and distribution possibilities laid the foundation for the rise of these cheep reads. "Popular culture and literature seemed full of fantastic re-creations of historical encounters, [w]hile the Indian slipped from consideration in a serious literature" (Ruppert, 389) that became more and more popular in the United States; namely Realism. This new movement in literature did not necessarily entail a realistic representation of Native Americans. "Writers associated with American literary realism seldom chose the Indian as a subject for serious consideration. When they did, it was usually to ridicule Romantic stereotypes" (Ruppert, 389). Famous authors like Mark Twain, for example, built their picturesque descriptions of the Indian in the West on the prejudices so deeply rooted in American culture.

By the mid-1880s, the cowboy was introduced as the new hero of various frontier adventures, leaving only two roles for the red man; a.) the bloodthirsty villain who attacks trains and settlers and joyfully rapes women and children, and b.) the noble savage (again!), usually playing the sidekick of the white hero, who did absorb some features of the Indian lifestyle, but most importantly showed the red man how things are really done. This is best illustrated in Karl May's books, which perfectly reflect the curiosities this tradition of fake Indian characters had to offer over the centuries. Never having been to the U.S. until late in his life, the German Karl May created a series around Old Shatterhand and Winnetou, which socialized many generations of Europeans with the picture of the noble savage and his even nobler white counterpart. Naturally, these stories never reflected the Indian lifestyle as possible alternative; so generations of children in Germany and

Austria, even those who did not read Karl May anymore, never wanted to be the Indian but always the cowboy.

With the constant and rapid improvements of technological inventions, photography became more and more common in the later nineteenth century, visually documenting the Indian transition from inhabitants of the wilderness to dwellers of reservations. This rising tendencies of visualization also made the dime novel come alive in 1884, when the first Wild West show was performed. This concept was a great success in America as well as in Europe. Besides the usual problem of how Natives were portrayed there, the saddest aspect was that many Native Americans played the red man in these shows. "[O]ne year Sitting Bull even toured with the show" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 101).

This condensation of White-Indian affairs into the Wild West frontier format did not only stay part of the entertainment industry. Even academic America considered theories based on this concept of the frontier as valid metaphor for American history and the development of U.S. American society. In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner delivered a speech to the American Historical Association where he presented his frontier thesis. According to his argumentation, which found great acceptance amongst academics, the American character and history were fundamentally formed by the frontier experience. But besides the general influence of the frontier, which in general is unquestioned, the Indian was depicted as mere obstacle in white America's westward race for progress. Turner presented his argumentation so well that most of his theories found their way into many textbooks, creating a further step toward anchoring Native stereotypes in America's historical consciousness. It took almost half a century until nameable historians like Henry Nash Smith (*Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* [1950]) questioned Turner's frontier theory by arguing that this sort of depiction showed more about the prejudices and ideology of white America than it actually did about the frontier experience per se.

As already touched upon before, one remedy of the Native American struggle for acceptance was the adoption of the English language. The first written publications by Indians were mostly produced by early converts to the Christian belief. Those were mostly written in Latin and Greek though, since the content was almost exclusively religious. "Probably the first published work by an Indian

author is Samson Occom's *A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian*, in 1772" (Ruoff, 145). It goes without saying that there was peaceful co-existence and trade, which necessarily led to the mutual learning of the other language. Nevertheless, in the course of history the majority of Indians who learned English in the following two centuries did not really do it voluntarily. Much of this development was forced upon the Indian community by luring, or forcing their children into residential schools. There, they learned to be white, how to speak English properly, and of course how to be a good Christian. This, naturally, excluded any Native behavior, which included speaking in their native tongue, and clothing according to their customs.

Naturally, this left many Native Americans caught between two options, because for many the best way to help their people seemed to be the entering of the Western world and fighting injustice with (English) words in newspapers, decrees and political debates. This, however was not always perceived as helpful for the future of the Native people amongst themselves, because those who did were often accused of having lost the identity they had been fighting for in the first place. Especially in the Progressive Era there were many Native writers who first gained Western education, then academic acceptance amongst whites, but simultaneously lost something of it (acceptance) amongst their own people.

One of the most prominent examples of the time was Zitkala Sa, an author I already mentioned before. She was not only very successful in agitating for the Indian cause, but also in portraying her personal struggle with identity and belonging, which she processed in her short stories. Her works describe the transition from a small Indian girl to a well educated, but somehow de-indianized warrior for the Native people. Besides her autobiographical prose, Zitkala Sa became a respected member of the Native Society, being Secretary-Treasurer of the Society of American Indians, editing its journal, the *American Indian Journal,* and, after quitting her affiliation with the latter, founding and chairing the National Council of American Indians. Not only a role model of her time, Zitkala Sa's writings perfectly represent the Native American literature of the nineteenth century. Most of the publications were protest literature, autobiographical literature and articles broaching the issues of Indian removal, Native rights and the general struggle of the Native community in the eventful American history. The struggle on the reservations and the problems entailed through the boarding

school policy were also the core topics early twentieth-century Native Literature circled around. Having Native Americans in the Army in World War I, and getting full citizenship in 1924, the Indian community moved a bit closer to the white majority. This seemed to have influenced Native literature as well; here, too, the genre of the novel became more popular amongst Native authors. "With the publication of Oliver La Farge's *Laughing Boy* in 1929, the genre of the Indian novel reached full maturity" (Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 107). This triggered a series of publications by white-educated Native people, with D'Arcy McNickle (*The Surrounded* [1936]) as the most prominent example.

2. Gothic
American Gothic
Native American Gothic

In anticipation of my concept of the Native American Gothic, it appears inevitable to first have a look at the root discipline, the Gothic itself. Naturally, American Gothic and hence the Native American Gothic differ from the original literary genre in certain aspects, but the general ideas, the basic drive behind the genre and the emotions - or maybe the attempt to close exactly those away - that are created in the readership are based on quite the same grounds. Before I therefore start commenting on the Native American as Gothic element in American Gothic fiction, I want to start with the Gothic, to which people this term referred, and in how far this could be of interest for my understanding of the Native American Gothic.

2.1 The Goths

Usually the Gothic refers to the uncivilized medieval. The most common usage is unquestionably a certain architectural style, which was considered to be depraved in comparison to the following style of the Renaissance and its regained interest in ancient aesthetic and architectural standards. Gothic architecture did play a certain role for the literary genre of the Gothic, in which Gothic castles as homes of the aristocracy were a pivotal element for the emerging genre.

However, what struck me most when reading about the genre was the fate of the people who are nowadays also known as Goths. Anthropologically speaking, the term Goth is - as the term Indian - a collective term for a certain group of Germanic tribes. They were infamous in history because of the creation of considerable troubles for the Roman Empire, which climaxed in 410 BC, when they even took Rome. They established kingdoms in today's France and Italy, and always served the Roman Empire as 'the Other'; they were the barbarians for the Romans. This was basically what the Goths stood for - historically- being uncivilized and destroying the Empire of civilized Rome. During the eighteenth

century, however, the term, and especially the reputation of the people carrying that name, changed considerably. When England had to define itself properly in eventful times, it was important to set itself apart from its political enemies. France being the biggest opponent of the English over a great deal of history (e.g. the battle of Hastings), it was important for England to create a certain myth around those people who ousted the French from the power on the Island. Those were Germanic tribes, who we now call Goths. In order to dominate the dreaded French, it was necessary to create some form of heroic background for this people. Therefore, the former primitive agitators became strong and heroic ancestors of the English, who reassured a civilized system of justice and law after the cruel rule of French nobility in England. Authors suddenly quoted various ancient writers like Tacitus, who emphasized the Goths' virtuousness, and their maybe simple, but true understanding of justice and liberty.

This leaves us two diametrically opposed definitions of the Goths; on the one side the barbaric, who serves as 'the Other' for the civilized peoples, on the other side the strong and heroic ancestor for those who want to point out their long tradition of civilized society in contrast to other nations. In their book, *The Gothic,* David Punter and Glennis Byron summarized the perception of this people as followed: "What remains constant throughout the developing political use of the term is that the Gothic always remains the symbolic site of a culture's discursive struggle to define and claim possession of the civilized, and to abject, or throw off, what is seen as other to that civilized self" (Punter and Byron, 5). If we now substitute the word *Gothic* with the term *Native American*, does it not perfectly summarize the relations of the Native people to the whites on the (North) American continent?

The similarities in the perception of others, especially the posthumous idealization that is used to glorify one's own past is surprisingly close. Compared to what can be seen in the U.S.A. today, where having Native ancestors is nowadays considered chic in a way (Johnny Depp, the white main character in *Dead Man* also has Native ancestors!) we can make the assumption that the Indian is the American Goth, an idea that is by all means at least worth thinking about. Even more so, the Native American serves as fundamental element of the American Gothic, as I will show, whereas the Goth is often used as example, but apart from sharing the name s/he does not really play a role in the Gothic literary tradition.

Therefore, defining a Native American Gothic seems to be a rather legitimate undertaking from this point of view. However, before finally arguing about the necessity of such a concept, I may quickly summarize the development of the Gothic genre, which, nevertheless, is the basic concept for Native American Gothic.

2.2 GOTHIC

"What I mean- or anyone else means- by 'the Gothic' is not so easily stated except that it has to do with fear."

(Moers, 90)

Despite a certain seniority the genre of the Gothic might have by now, and regardless of literally thousands of so-called Gothic novels, to actually define "the Gothic" is a difficult undertaking, indeed. As it is with most attempts to define a specific genre, most participants can only bring themselves to agree on dissent. Therefore, the quantity of definitions that follow a certain Derridian[4] understanding of genre is relatively high amongst literature on the Gothic and its related sub-genres.

> The law of genre depends upon the principle of impurity. Categorical generic distinctions aim to ensure the purity of certain individual works or the statue of related genres. Associated with the hackneyed, the feminine, and the popular, the Gothic lacks respectability and hence must be quarantined from other literary forms. (Goddu, 5)

What is still agreed upon is that these sub-genres following this (un)defined genre of the Gothic have obvious connections and similarities, but that their differences are by no means less characteristic for them. A claim that nicely summarizes this idea is made by Punter and Byron in their introduction to *the Gothic.* They argue that there are not too many real Gothic texts, but that "the Gothic [has] more to do with particular moments, tropes, repeated motifs that can be found scattered, or disseminated, through the modern western literary tradition" (Punter and Byron,

---

[4] Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) was a French philosopher; "The Laws of Genre" is an article published by him in 1980, in which he discusses the necessity of categorization in literature.

XVIII). It seems that the Gothic is- on a meta level- as hard to grasp as its characteristic ghosts, the impalpable horrors and the fuzzy boundaries of sanity and frenzy we so often encounter. Yet, beyond all questions of definitions, the historical and social developments that seem to have led to the rise of the Gothic novel allows to make some general statements on characteristic Gothic elements, where they come from and what they stand for.

The Gothic as a literary genre is in a way the shadow of the Enlightenment. "After the Renaissance, the classic tradition was associated with civilised, humane and polite civil culture, its moral and aesthetic values privileged as the basis of virtuous behaviour, harmonious social relations and mature artistic practices (Botting, 3). This new way of thinking and defining moral values, the secularism and rationality that was supposed to bring light into the dusty pre-industrial world in general, and to England in particular, was predominantly founded on the contrast to a falsified version of the medieval past, the so-called *Dark Ages*. Not that there was no superstition or religious pressure in these medieval times that made improvement dispensable, but in order to further distinguish the late eighteeth century from the past, it was 'slightly readjusted' to create an even better appearance for the new ideas and attitudes of the Enlightenment.

> The history in which the Gothic circulates is a fabrication of the eighteenth century as it articulates the long message from the feudal orders of chivalry and religiously sanctioned sovereignty to the increasingly secularised and commercial political economy of liberalism. 'Gothic' functions as the mirror of eighteenth-century mores and values: a reconstruction of the past as the inverted, mirror image of the present, its darkness allows the reason and virtue of the present a brighter reflection. (Botting, 5)

We have already encountered the custom of posthumous glorification in the example of the Goths in England, and we (will) also find it in U.S. American historiography. (This, as I believe, gives everything building on this falsified history automatically a Gothic touch, again a concept that will be important for my further investigations.) However, this new enemy – one's own past so to speak - was found in almost anything, from the inferior architecture of the time, to the uncivilized and cruel social conditions; and there was one word which summarized all the past deviances, *Gothic*. Needless to say, the creation of such an enormous 'collective

taboo' triggered immediate fascination with this supposedly evil past, which grew at least as quickly as rationality, new morals and the social standards could set foot in society. Suddenly the stories of knights tyrannizing their peasants and servants became popular, and the attempt to close away one's own superstition was best done by reading and telling stories about ghosts, hauntings, tales full of bad omens and violence.

The first novel which was called Gothic was *The Castle of Otronto* (1764) by Horace Walpole. He managed to distill the anxiety and fears of England's society of the late eighteenth century into a story that "came to define a new genre" (Botting, 4). As we can see from the title, the concept of the castle was one of the most pivotal features of the genre. But the castle is not just an old, huge building sheltering the evil aristocrat in its Gothic (in the architectural sense) walls. The castle incorporated many other elements considered Gothic, such as ghosts, hauntings and animisms.

Often set in a remote, gloomy landscape, the castle, with its thick walls, dark hallways, trapdoors, and cellars made it easy to hide away the evil deeds of their inhabitants. The interplay of mirrors and darkness in the hallways created just the right optical setting for appearances of ghosts, steep staircases and creaking wooden floors established the right acoustics for hearing a poor soul being tortured. Yet, this poor soul might have been one's own, and with the conscience only unsuccessfully locked away, this settings so often crushed the spirits of its inhabitants. Holding up the pretended morals and values (that the Enlightenment established) became impossible, and the bad conscience of the protagonists (and the readers) were pulled down to the lower ground floor (of their soul), driving them into madness. Naturally, the genre was soon target of various parodies, but nothing delineates the characteristics of a genre better than a mocked version of it. One of the oldest examples that displayed the importance of the castle was *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793) by Eliza Parson. Besides the castle as obvious object of mockery, also the cliché of the German is played with. Later Edgar Allan Poe, one of the major contributors to the developments of the Gothic in general, and the American Gothic in particular, wrote in the preface to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1839): "My terror is not of Germany, but of the soul" (Poe, 2), showing that the German had a certain Gothic aura amidst the English-speaking world.

However, the most prominent example of mock Gothic was *Northanger Abbey* (1818) written by Jane Austen. By making her protagonist a lover of the Gothic, Austen manages to ridicule much of Gothic literature published until then by quoting them.

A genre that is characterized by the barbarism of the past as the basis of its appeal could be suspected of not developing, since the past is over and the 'necessary changes' were made to serve as counterpart to enlightened times. What made the genre so suitable for parody was not only the style that reflected aristocratic decadence, but of course a certain distance to the readers' everyday experiences. Yet, it was soon realized that Gothic stories were more effective when placed in a setting that was familiar to the reader. The Gothic subsequently did develop with the circumstances and changing fears of the people, so that the stories commuted into the domestic sphere in the Victorian era and beyond. This transformed the castle into a mansion or big old house. Unquestionably one of the most famous Gothic houses is the Bates mansion from the Hitchcock classic *Psycho* (1960). As one of the best-known and most gifted filmmakers of all time, Hitchcock was a master of creating Gothic moments, using the whole spectrum of Gothic artillery to create haunting stories and movies that influenced western film society, and also contributed to making the genre and its classic features more known as well as appreciated.

This metamorphosis of the castle into a house also pulled the female perspective more and more into the focus of Gothic stories, since women, as 'the angels of the house', were mostly *bound* to the household. This confinement of the female half of society kept a certain potential of violence and terror hidden away in the walls of the home.

> Behind the states of fear and horror, and driving through the tissue of reasonable and rational explanations, loom the outlines of real horrors. In early Gothic this was sometimes the reality of the oppression of women, or children, in a patriarchy that denied them rights.
> (Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic,* 8)

Furthermore, the Gothic was one of the first genres where the numbers of women writers was considerably high. One the first really well-known Gothic authors was Ann Radcliffe, who was "the most popular and best paid English novelist of the eighteenth century" (Moers, 91). Her most famous work is *Mysteries of Udolpho*

(1794), "a novel in which the central figure is a young woman who is simultaneously persecuted victim and courageous heroine" (Moers, 91). This introduced the theme of the woman in distress into the Gothic genre.

Another major contribution that can be credited to Ann Radcliffe is the triggering of the discussion about the distinctive features of *horror* and *terror* in Gothic literature.

> Ann Radcliffe stressed the importance of *terror* as opposed to *horror,* a distinction that is often blurred in other Gothic works such as M.G. Lewis's *The Monk,* but which nevertheless does offer some useful ways to talk about the emotional affect that is privileged here. In Gothic terror of what might happen, or might be happening, is largely foregrounded over the visceral horror of the event. (Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic,* 8)

The easiest way of describing the opposition is the difference between so-called 'Horror-movies' vs. 'the Thriller'. Whereas the first one builds its fascination mostly on graphical violence, the second confines itself to the things that are not shown, creating fear and anxiety via the imagination of the spectator and thus creates terror. This is the reason why German speakers often call this film genre "Psychothriller", because it is an attack on the psyche, hidden behind the obvious.

A second woman worth mentioning is Mary Shelley. With her creation of the monster in *Frankenstein* (1818) the author managed to express the emerging fear of the increasing regimentation and mechanization that inevitably came with the technical progress that spearheaded the industrialization of the centuries to come. "Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* in 1818, made the Gothic novel over into what today we call science fiction. *Frankenstein* brought a new sophistication to literary terror" (Moers, 91), the monster. Coming from the Latin word *demonstrare* (meaning showing), the monster was used as a warning against misbehavior or vice (c.f. Punter and Byron, 263). This postulation of a norm by showing its deviance found its way into the Gothic set of tools. It also perfectly fitted the clear distinction between good and evil, self and other that was established in the Enlightenment and hence in the Gothic tradition. According to ideas Kristeva developed in her influential book *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980), the most disturbing form of monsters are consequently the hybrids, because they disrupt the binary system of good and evil. (c.f. Punter and Byron, 264). This aspect

I will further elaborate on in the chapter on *Monkey Beach*, where (the concept of) 'the monster' has a rather specific meaning and importance for the story.

Recapitulating the short introduction to Gothic literature and its most characteristic features, it is obvious that soon after the corner posts of the genre were established, the themes and tropes of the genre advanced from the exaggerated past of chivalry into the domestic realm of the readership. This necessarily changed the focus of the genre. The appeal of the genre quickly changed from a rather physical violence to a subtler, psychological terror that bewitched the readers. A sub-genre of the Gothic which, by definition, had to step away from those stories of aristocratic tyrants tormenting their environment out of their castles, and therefore significantly helped the genre to evolve, was the American Gothic.

2.3 AMERICAN GOTHIC

From Brockden Brown to William Faulkner or Eudora Welty, Paul Bowles or John Hawks, it is, bewilderingly and embarrassingly, a Gothic fiction, non-realistic and negative, sadist and melodramatic- a literature of darkness and the grotesque in a land of light and affirmation.   (Fiedler, 29)

Hand in hand with the advance of the Enlightenment and its refreshing tendency of demonizing the evil past, we find a new *nation* in the New World, yearning to build its own identity after the historical struggle to fling off restraints from England. Mixed with the heritage of Puritan values and a certain lack of history, Americans found their form of purification through demonizing *the Other* not only by translating it into a new geographical scenery, but by bringing them into their present. When the mythologization of the past - as seen in the example of the Goths - was not possible due to the lack of one, this inevitably ended in self-mythologization. This is a phenomenon many nowadays consider to be one the most *American* characteristics, a lack of self-reflection and a massive tendency to over-celebrate one's own nation. For example, when the winner of the NFL (the *National Football League*) is crowned at the Superbowl, the club is called the *World*

Champion in American football. Not that there actually were teams from other places in the world that were better, but for Americans it is out of question that there even could be. But what does this self-mythologization have to do with American Gothic? And how can a country that barely had a history at the time have its literary version of a genre that deliberately played with it? This is a question also Cathy Davidson formulated in her work *Revolution and the Word. The Rise of the Novel in America* (2004) as following: "Does America have enough of history to sustain the Gothic's generic challenge to history, its rewriting and un-writing of history" (Davidson, 231)?

When we see the genre of the Gothic as *the dark side* of the Enlightenment rather than the stories of evil chivalry in Gothic castles tyrannizing their surroundings, the different outcome on the American continent is not that surprising anymore. Naturally, the two genres were compared, and since the European Gothic was established first, American follow-ups were measured within the same patterns of analysis. The European and American forms of the Gothic developed depending on their own specific backgrounds. The American lack of history which is said to hinder a proper Gothic genre does not really count as argument anymore, when understanding the Gothic as counter-movement to or at least side effect of the Enlightenment. Then it is no surprise that the Americans did not (really) thematize castles and chivalry, but the horrors of their surroundings. Similar to the Enlightenment in Europe, Americans also projected their vice onto others, but for lack of past villains they chose contemporary ones, and instead of mythologizing the past, they started to mythologize their own people. This self-mythologization, therefore, comprises the fundament of the American Gothic. Even more so, besides captivity narratives there was not too much literature coming from the American continent at this point, which causes many critics to claim that a great deal of American literature was actually Gothic. "From the earliest period of American Gothicism - some critics have seen almost the whole American writing as a Gothic literature - differences in American circumstances led American Gothicists in other directions" (Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic,* 4). But how does this go together? "America's self-mythologization as a nation of hope and harmony directly contradicts the gothic's most basic impulses" (Goddu, 4). As it was with the Enlightenment and the *Dark Ages* in the context of Europe, the more light the

darker the shadow. This is just translated into the American context where we find the binary opposition of the self-mythologization and the American Gothic. What society does not want to incorporate, hence suppresses, will eventually emerge and be dealt with in literature.

The dichotomy of time that divides the here and now from history, which was so essential for the European Gothic novels, was also adapted to American circumstances.

> The burden of a scarifying past is more typical of [European Gothic]. The Gothic cannot function without a proximity of Otherness imagined as its imminent return; consequently, allegory's rhetoric of temporality - its gesturing toward what cannot be explicitly recovered - aspires to a narrative of the return of the Other's plentitude on a frontier which "geography" supplements the impossibilities of language, of both national and personal historiography. (Martin and Savoy, 6)

Paradoxically, the initial lack of history to be repressed and the subsequent self-mythologization did not keep American historiography of the following centuries from repressing the already mythologized past. This may be the reason why most American literature is considered to be Gothic, because this new nation is built on this characteristic feature of subjugating those parts flourishing on the new continent they initially wanted to stay out. Answering Cathy Davidson's question: Yes, the United States' self-perception is built on the un-writing or not-writing of history (see chapter 1).

Summing up, Europeans repressed the problems current in the eighteenth century by mythologizing the past; Americans repressed those problems by mythologizing the here and now. And Gothic's "obsess[ion] with transgressing boundaries" (Goddu, 4) found its way into the American wilderness. The frontier eventually became one of the most important concepts for the American Gothic as well as for the American society in general. The *frontier thesis* by Frederick Jackson Turner was for a long time state of the art, and James Fenimore Cooper's famous and popular *Leatherstocking Tales* also dealt with the two things Americans really feared, the wilderness and its inhabitants, the Indians.

As we have already heard, America had to offer a slightly different version of projecting vice. Naturally the old continent, and England in particular, served to a certain extent as evil past, but due to its geographical distance the old enemy was not enough. Instead of the characterizing Gothic features such as castles and chivalry, the genre experienced an adaptation to the new environment. Classic hallmarks of the Gothic were translated into the new world. "Some authors, such as Isaac Mitchell in *The Asylum; or Alonzo and Melissa* (1811), imported castles to America, but most American authors transformed and hence dislocated British models of the Gothic" (Goddu, 4). They tried to find certain topics that were purely American, topics the average United States citizen could relate to. Furthermore, "unlike the British Gothic, which developed during a definable time period […] the American Gothic […] is less easily specified in terms of particular time period of groups of authors" (Goddu, 3). However, one author who can easily be identified as an American Gothic writer, basically because he spearheaded its tradition, was Charles Brockden Brown. His novel *Wieland* (1798) is considered to be the first American Gothic novel. In his second novel, *Edgar Huntly*, which he published only one year later, Brown even defined the American Gothic by delineating what in his opinion should replace the castles and chivalry of British Gothic literature in order to create a truly American experience.

> America has opened new views to the naturalist and politician, but has seldom furnished themes to the moral painter. That new springs of action and new motives to curiosity should operate,- that the field of investigation, opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe,- may be readily conceived. […] It is the purpose of this work to profit by some of these sources; to exhibit a series of adventures, growing out of the condition of our country […]. Puerile superstition exploded manners, Gothic castles and chimeras, are the materials usually employed for this end. The incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the Western wilderness are far more suitable; and for a native of America to overlook these would admit of no apology. (Brown, 29)

Besides the importance of this statement for my thesis on which I will further comment in the next chapter, it is worth mentioning that the author claims that the "perils of the Western wilderness are far more suitable [...] for a native of America [...]", without even thinking of Native Americans. Comparing this to the notion of contemporary anthropologists who even claim that the term American is strictly

speaking only referring to Natives (in the sense of Indian), this quotation is even more interesting.

Brown's preface lists some obvious differences in the realization of the genre in the geographical and cultural context of the American continent. As explicitly said, America has no castles or aristocrats to offer, but there is the constant threat of the wilderness, and the hostile Native Americans hiding in it, in short, the frontier. "Four indigenous features were to prove decisive in producing a powerful and long-lasting American variant of Gothic: frontier, the Puritan legacy, race and political utopianism" (Lloyd-Smith, "Nineteenth-century American Gothic", 109). I personally would add a fifth feature, namely a certain reversed understanding of Otherness.

Apart from the apparent difference between the British noblemen and their American equivalent, the Indians, these two contrasting concepts of enemies do have plenty in common, though. The castle as well as the wilderness stand for their inhabitants, and for the evil they help to disguise and veil in their remote shadows and darkness. Both groups claim to own a land that a majority would like to own themselves, and both enemies are willing to vigorously fight for their claimed property. Besides differences in their attire that usually set them apart from the others, the enemy behaves differently, following other customs, eats other things. In short, the enemy is '*The Other*'. Besides the relabeling of the concept of *the Other*, the Gothic genre experienced a considerable twist in its basic appeal, and this was substantially influenced by the work of American authors. If we look back at the concept of *the Other* that changed from *chivalry to barbarity*, we find a certain paradigm shift along the lines of the victim-offender binary. Whereas the European Gothic foe was a tyrannous landlord and aristocrat, standing for those in power, the American enemy was not exactly an equal opponent. Being the minority in their native country only shortly after the continent was 'discovered', the Native community never really was in the position nor willing to oppress the white population. Here we already find a specification that will play an essential role in (American) Gothic fiction, i.e., the blurred boundaries of active and passive, of aggressor and victim. This can be best exemplified by quoting one of the best-known American authors, Edgar Allan Poe: "The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge".

This opening sentence of "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846) distills the perfidious disparity of agitator and victim on the American continent into one sentence. Poe included three puns in this sentence so that the surface structure of the sentence allows two opposing interpretations:

> "The injuries of Fortunato," for instance, deploys the genitive in a way which suggests not only the injuries *by* Fortunato, but also the injuries *of* [or] *to* [him]. "I had borne" suggests "I had birthed, I had produced," as the obvious alternative phrasing, " I had endured," does not. And then there is the "as I best could" rather than "as best I could, as long as I could." [...] We see how conveniently an aggressive will to power can mask itself as victimization. (Veeder, 28-29)

Poe is well known for inventing the detective story, but like many other American authors, his work contributed immensely to the development of the American Gothic. Works like "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) or "The Tell Tale Heart" (1843) incorporated (classic) Gothic features, but Poe managed to translate the horrors of the genre into the more familiar settings of the house or family mansion, or simply the reader's own imagination. This shifted the focus from the ghosts and monster stories to the more subtle terrors of family life. "Gothic writing had displayed a marked tendency to represent the family as a source of danger" (Briggs, 127). Old secret corridors and hidden staircases leading into a long forgotten torture cellar are transformed into family secrets; staircases do not (necessarily) lead into a cellar, but into the abyss of the human soul. "While the English Gothic had dealt with physical terror and social horror, the American Gothic would concentrate on mental terror and moral horror" (Frederick Frank, qtd. in Goddu, 8). This moral horror that obviously influenced American family life and society, is deeply rooted in the Puritan legacy. Again, Poe's work can be seen as showcase for thematizing the religious pressure society.

> Poe might be seen as possessing a Puritan imagination, but largely without compensatory notions of grace. Melville wrote of Hawthorne's "Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin, from whose visitations, in some shape or other, no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free." Equally we might say, from which no deeply *American* mind of the period could be free. Another part was surely that great imaginative input for the American, the perspectives images from hell-fired Puritanism. Poe's tales of tormented sinners propose a kind of dark necessity, for which their explanations provide only rationalized justifications. (Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic*, 70)

The religious imprint of American society is hard to deny. Many of the first settlers were (often radical) religious groups who fled prosecution in Europe. Puritan morals and values influenced the young U.S. society, and even nowadays we find an unusually strong impact on political and even scientific topics; e.g., the debate about 'Creationism versus Evolution'.[5] The juxtaposition of enlightened ideas and puritan morals was a battle that was mostly fought on a subconscious level. "The American Gothic, it has been argued, takes a turn inward, away from society and toward the psyche and the hidden blackness of the American soul" (Goddu, 9).

When we examine the development of the Gothic genre, and more specifically the characteristic features, elements and tropes, it is obvious that this literary genre shifted from the castle to domestic terror. "The house, not the castle, becomes the site of trauma; its terror deriving from the familiar inmates instead of some external threat" (Lloyd-Smith, *American Gothic*, 75). This specific unease and unfamiliarity that only the familiar can produce, was defined by Sigmund Freud as 'Das Unheimliche'. From the early beginnings of psychoanalysis, literature played a significant role, because "for the psychoanalytic critic, the elements, structures and themes that constitute the 'make-believe' world of the literary text speak to the desires and fears of both authors and readers" (Massé, 229). In his essay *Das Unheimliche* (1919), or *the Uncanny,* Freud defines humanity's most constant horrors - death, ghosts, the repressed other - the theme of the double as a basic feature of terror and the effect that those have on the human soul. The following excerpt from his work is particularly interesting for a (n American) Gothic interpretation, because it pinpoints the effect of shifting the focus of stories from a certain remoteness of time, space or reality into the sphere of the readership.

> In fairly tales [...] the world of reality is left behind from the very start, and the animistic system of beliefs is frankly adopted. Wish-fulfillments, secret powers, omnipresence of thoughts, animation of inanimate objects, all the[se] elements [...] can exert no uncanny influence here; for, as we have learnt, that feeling cannot arise unless there is a conflict of judgment as to whether things which have been 'surmounted' and are regarded as incredible may not, after all, be possible. [...] The situation is altered as soon as the writer pretends to move in the world of common reality. In this case

---

[5] There is a frequently reappearing discussion about whether school should teach evolution in a Darwinian sense, or if a religious based theory called Creationism should be taught in schools.

> he accepts as well all conditions operating to produce uncanny feelings in real life; and everything that would have an uncanny effect in reality has it in his stories.   (Freud, 237)

More than a century after Brown had published his first American Gothic novels, Freud delivered a psychological explanation for why American Gothic had to move away from chivalry and castles to the frontier and hence the Native American. The 'common reality' of early American life, or more specifically its fears were based on the Native American as the most serious threat to the United States of America. Indians were not only heathens; they even refused to being saved. They did not share the same values and morals, and more importantly were said to be unable to keep up with the progress white Americans were making. This made them, above all, also an enemy of the political utopianism of the United States. However, even though the Native American was driven to the other side of the Appalachians, and soon close to extinction, they were still in the woods, and more importantly in the heads of American people. They haunted the wilderness and the minds of ordinary Americans, which kept the Indian in a distinctive, almost peculiar position in American society.

In the following chapters I will describe and analyze this special uncanniness that Native Americans produce in white society, first by delineating my understanding of a Native American Gothic, then by analyzing two texts which deliberately work with those clichés of the Native American, and which nevertheless have a Gothic effect on the readership of the twentieth- and by now twenty-first-centuries.

It is beyond question that the announcement of democracy in the former British colonies was a revolutionary upheaval in the world. The Independence of the United States of America was either symptom of or catalyzer for a new world order, but it definitely marks the beginning of a new era; *novus ordo seclorum.*[6] Yet, it is equally indisputable that the Declaration of Independence did leave out significant parts of society when speaking of *all men created equal* and *inalienable rights and liberty*. Three major groups can be identified that were definable not included: women, slaves and Indians. In the course of the following centuries, those three groups struggled to gain recognition, maybe with different goals, probably even with fairly contradictory objectives or even without sympathy for each other, but they had one thing in common, they were being oppressed by the same agent. While the groups fought for their rights of representation, the topic found its way in that one literary genre that is known for giving a voice to those that society usually silences, namely the (American) Gothic.

> American Gothic literature criticizes America's national myth of new-world innocence by voicing the cultural contradictions that undermine the nation's claim to purity and equality. Showing how these contradictions contest and constitute national identity even as they are denied, the Gothic tells of the historical horrors that make national identity possible yet must be repressed in order to sustain it. (Goddu, 10)

Subsequently, certain sub-genres of the Gothic developed that focused particularly on these specific topics. Most of it, that is to say, was mainly done posthumously, but in order to fling off the hauntings of the past it was necessary to thematize exactly those. In the twentieth century, various sub-genres emerged that indirectly created a pretty good negative pattern of American society and its self-perception. We now have a female Gothic, dealing with the immense struggle to surmount the patriarchal patterns that were (and still are) so fundamental in almost all societies around the world. There is an African American Gothic, processing another shameful episode of American history repressed far too long. Likewise, many new

---

[6] ‚Novus ordo seclorum' is Latin and can be translated as "new world order" or "new era". It is to be found on the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States, and since 1935 it features on the One-Dollar bill.

threats that emerged throughout history, as, for example, the city as institution of uncanniness, have precipitated their own Gothic interpretation. The Native American- although one of the three large groups that had been left out silently when the Declaration of Independence was announced - did not get its own Gothic sub-genre. But didn't the first two genuinely American literary genres, the captivity narrative and the American Gothic novel, share ONE prototypical enemy, the Indian? Weren't the perils of the wilderness and the threat of Indians the fundamental features of America and subsequently an American literature, therefore also of the American Gothic? "Four indigenous features were to prove decisive in producing a powerful and long-lasting American variant of Gothic: frontier, the Puritan legacy, race and political utopianism" (Lloyd-Smith, "Nineteenth-century American Gothic", 109). Those four features have again ONE particular enemy as common denominator: the Native American.

When Brown wrote about the adaptation of the Gothic to the American context, he concluded that "the incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the Western wilderness are far more suitable" than castles or stories about chivalry were (Brown, 29). Consequently, when the first acclaimed American Gothic author defines the American Gothic in the introduction to one of the first American Gothic novels as quoted, I argue that it makes the Native American by definition the oldest American Gothic element.

However, although the castle found its way into American Gothic by transforming into the house, the Native American never managed to transform into American society. When America posed for a group photograph, their self-perception and their simple 'black and white' thinking did not leave enough space for the Native American to be in the picture, but why didn't at least its negative pattern, the Gothic do? Needless to say, there are some authors who have dealt with the topic of the Native in American literature, but way too often this sensitive topic degenerates to one of many elements of an analysis of a text, for example as source of magic realism, instead of gaining the specific focus I consider appropriate. Furthermore, like the differences we encounter between a classic male and female Gothic, the Native American as Gothic element developed its own Gothic mode.

In my depiction of the Native issue one specific sub-genre of the Gothic was a bit disregarded so far, and that is the Canadian Gothic. Canadian fiction, like Canada as a nation, tends not to get the attention it may deserve on the American continent due to the overwhelming presence of its southern neighbor in politics and the media. Recurring like a mantra, Hollywood epitomizes best the notorious overlooking of Canada and its entities. Who knows that Pamela Anderson, Kiefer Sutherland, Jim Carrey or James Cameron are in fact all Canadian?[7] Not that it actually matters, but it reflects the omnipresence of the U.S. when speaking of America as a continent.

However, the border between these two sovereign countries is of little concern for this endeavor, since history and anthropology found no significant differences in Native peoples, whether they were called First Nations or American Indians. Yet, the Canadian Gothic does something important that makes it worth mentioning, and that is, at least to a certain extent, the incorporation of the Native issue. In contrast to the U.S. American (Frontier) Gothic, where the Indian himself poses the greatest threat, the Canadian counterpart uses Native mythological figures and stories in order to depict the horrors of the wilderness. The probably most famous and successful Canadian writer is Margaret Atwood. With her work she contributes to the genre of the Canadian Gothic not only by writing novels mostly situated in this particular realm. She also provides articles and books on the Canadian Gothic in general. In her influential 1977 essay on "Canadian Monsters: Some Aspects of Supernatural Fiction" and in the publication of some of her lectures *Strange Things: The Malevolent North in Canadian Literature* (1995) which was published as a book in 1995, Atwood explores the gothic effect of the North, and its mythical appearance that it substantially owes to the Native myths and monster tales. This aspect will be of greater importance in the next chapter, in my examination of the Gothicism of British Columbia's wilderness and its most faithful inhabitants, the First Nation People and their mythical figures.

---

[7] James Cameron's last movie, the multiple Academy Award winning *Avatar* (2009), also (ab)uses the clichés of Native Americans. Not only the aesthetic depiction of the *wild* people living in the woods (of some other planet) but also the story line as such is not more than a rough sketch of the fate of Native Americans on the American continent. Moreover, instead of using the chance to change the prevailing stereotypical representation, Cameron shows a white (Earth) man going Native, showing them in a Natty Bumppo or Old Shatterhand style how it is really done.

Nevertheless, it seems evident that there is this certain discrepancy in the relation of constant negative portrayal that we find foremost with the Native American in American (Gothic) literature and hence a certain lack of focus in the respective literary analysis. There are, as I believe, various reasons why the Native American point of view is paid less attention than, for example, the African American or female struggle for equality. There were many similar obstacles in overcoming prejudices, for instance the deeply rooted racism and patriarchy inherent in language. Maybe the long(er) lasting tradition of fabrication of the Native just makes it take longer to actually get rid of them again. But there are also some noteworthy differences that suggest, as I reckon, why the Indian did not get the same attention in the literary way of processing such issues as women and African Americans did, and that is the threat to American self-perception and self-mythologization which the Native did demonstrate.

Before I start to argue about what I consider essential for my subsequent claim for a Native American Gothic, I want to state that I do not consider the fate of African Americans or emancipation of women more or less tragic, sad or worth interpreting. Yet, at the starting point of the history of the United States, the three groups shared an analogous fate, namely oppression and misrepresentation, but the struggle to gain recognition did not only end differently, the process also received different attention. Therefore, with the 'historical facts' in mind I want to first explore the possible reasons for the exceptional reflection the Native American experienced in the past. And secondly, I will look at how an interpretation of a book and a movie by a Native American and a white American, respectively, can have a common ground of interpretation, namely a Native American Gothic analysis.

Space is and has always been an essential feature on the American continent; whether concerning land ownership or the place of certain groups in society. Native Americans, women and African Americans equally fought for their right of place and space in a nation so vast that greed seems even more ridiculous. However, there is a certain difference between women and African Americans on the one hand and the Native American position on the other. Until the 1950s, African Americans and women de facto never had their space in American society.

They had their confined place, in the house or at work, but they never had the right or at least the realistic possibility of owning American soil or having a voice or place in society. Native Americans had had their space before the American continent was colonized. Naturally, when refused a 'right' already possessed, Native Americans fought strenuously to keep their land. Furthermore, they demonstrated a massive threat to the concept of the 'New World', simply because they offered an alternative lifestyle many white settlers were considering worth an attempt (see Crèvecoeur). African Americans as well as women struggled to gain their right to ownership; they wanted to be part of society and being treated equally, but *within the system* of the United States of America. Native Americans did not. This substantial difference was already recognized by Tocqueville when arguing about the similarities of African and Native Americans in the United States.

> The Negro would like to merge with the Europeans, and he cannot do it. The Indian might up to a certain point succeed in doing so, but he disdains to try. The servility of the one delivers him into slavery and the pride of the other to death. (Tocqueville, 150)

From today's point of view I would not agree with Tocqueville's stand on the *servility of blacks* in the U.S., but the underlying argument behind this quote is similar to what I try to suggest. Furthermore, this quote from the 1830s gives a hauntingly close estimation of what the Native American was moving to, i.e., almost extinction.

Here we find the essential difference in relation to the system of those in power; whether one wants to be part of it because left out, or whether to refuse to bend to the rules of the system at all. This of course gave Native Americans a *special* standing in American history, because they were, as a matter of fact, always "the Other". Native Americans, apart from the completely divergent way of life, concepts of time and space or simple differences in appearance, neither fitted the patterns of European thinking nor Catholic or puritan moral and social standards. This legacy of Otherness is the antithesis to American self-mythologization. African Americans and women were not part of American society, but the Native American was the antagonist.

The pride of Native Americans, as Tocqueville stated, did not only maneuver them closer to extinction. As the ultimate *Other* of American society, the culture of

prejudices and stereotypes they were facing over hundreds of years pushed the white American picture of the Indian closer and closer to the most basic concept of Otherness that humans are said to disrelish, namely death. Freud considered death and everything connected to it as the most persisting fear of humanity; "Many people experience the feeling [of the uncanny] in the highest degree in relation to death and dead bodies, to the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts" (Freud, 242). After five centuries of fabrication the Native American established, or rather was imposed on an *aura of death*. This can be seen in the tradition of American historiography as well as in the literary depiction of Indians in dime novels and in the pivotal role of Natives in the American Gothic tradition. The Native community was either ignored or associated with death. This curse, so to speak, was branded into the concept of a Native American that white Americans as well as Europeans had and still have. When talking, reading, writing or filming Native Americans, it is not possible not to see the dark veil of death that *history* has projected on them for such a long time. Like the deeply rooted Anti-Semitism in Europe and elsewhere, even genocide could not exterminate the prejudices and stereotypes established over centuries. The contrary is more likely; it rather accentuates the old clichés of the "Vanishing Race". When something vanishes, it is not really gone, but technically not really here anymore either. This is also true for the Native American. S/he walks the earth as *dead man*, like on a journey through. This aspect is particularly interesting for the analysis of *Dead Man*, where this notion of a people representing death is portrayed in a very poetic and graphic way.

Another aspect that uses the disruption of the binary of life and death is the notion of the monster, as encountered in the previous section. Following Kristeva's argumentation, the challenging of a binary, in our case, the Indian as being between life and death, creates a very strong uncanny feeling within the spectators. This, however, does not diminish the sensation of watching. A more recent example would be the series of videos and websites showing lethal accidents which has been popular with teenagers for the last two centuries. The magic of the transgression of a boundary that underlies the general attraction of the Gothic is combined with the most basic fear of death. Nothing is uncannier than death, because humanity is far away from understanding death. The monster and the boundaries between life and death will be dealt with in *Monkey Beach*, where

those basic Gothic concepts are wonderfully mixed with a form of magic realism and Native American tradition and beliefs.

When contemporary literature or film incorporates Native characters, it is without a doubt impossible not to feel confronted with this particular *legacy of death* which I have delineated over the last chapters. Even when not familiar with the concept of the Native American as Gothic element, it is inevitable not to build on it. This naturally raises the question of representation, and who actually is allowed to comment on Native characters.

> It is white words, white language, that have been our most potent weapon against Indians. Are we, the descendants of their destroyers, now to presume to tell their stories in the language that destroyed them? Is it time, yet, to acknowledge the responsibility to make their stories part of their common heritage? (Gallagher, 274)

Processing clichés and old stereotypes is usually left to descendants of this particular group, because self-irony is possible whereas a joke at the expense of others isn't. However, when we encounter a Native American, we don't see just a person with a particular racial background. We see the figure that historiography, hysteria and fear have developed over more than five hundred years in travelogues, literature, Wild West shows and films. Everything Native we encounter nowadays, whether in literature or in real life, is biased by this history of fabrication. It is not possible to overlook this legacy of death, no matter how little this image of the Indian actually has in common with Native American people. This image has been handed on from generation to generation, forming a scheme of common knowledge of Western society. And like most 'common knowledge', as long as reality does not repeatedly prove one wrong, it sticks. But when we recognize that the literary depiction of the Native American is just an image, there is no reason why non-Native people cannot challenge this Gothic image that is not necessarily closer to reality than Gothic's ghosts, or monsters like Frankenstein. As it is with all the other monsters in literature, when we encounter a Native we see the antagonist of the majority, the non-white, non-Christian subhuman devil that is not fit enough to compete with the progress that WE are making. More importantly, we see what we are afraid of, namely the inability to live up to our

own morals and values. Even more so, we see the greatest of mankind's deviances and ultimate limit to the never-ending progress we claim to make, and that is death. Facing Native Americans is facing death. First, Europeans faced the "devils" in the wilderness; then Americans were confronted with the perils of the frontier, followed by the encounter with a dying race. And now, there is the guilt of genocide that haunts American society. No matter whether white or Native American, the genocide is haunting both groups. It somehow constitutes, as already said, a certain common ground on which everybody is able to reflect.

As we will see in the two examples I have chosen, the challenging of the image of Native Americans somehow can work on two different levels; the correct representation of authentic Native life and their struggle of identity, and the ridiculing of the former stereotypes. Both, however, will have to draw on the same clichés and stereotypical depiction, as well as on the 'facts of history'. Hence, in my analysis of *Monkey Beach* and *Dead Man* I want to show how Native Americans, their mythology, and their history are used to create a Gothic feeling. Even more so, I claim that it is inevitable to create a Gothic feeling amongst the mainly white audience. When showing Native people, either the genocide or the guilt of genocide will haunt everything in connection with them. That is what I consider Native American Gothic.

3. MONKEY BEACH

In Eden Robinson's first novel, *Monkey Beach* (2000)*,* the readers accompany Lisamarie, a young Haisla girl from Kitamaat BC, in her struggle to grow up in the 1970s in a small town, finding her own identity. The frame of the story is the unfortunate disappearance of her younger brother Jimmy, which sets the rather dark atmosphere of the novel. Lisamarie's growing up is equally influenced by her family's dark secrets and her striving to surmount the hardships of a young girl, torn between two realities, her Western Canadian life and her spiritual heritage. If it was not for her Native American identity, this story could have been a classic 'coming of age' novel. Yet, all the suppressed memories of her family that she seems to accept only reluctantly, point to the same problem, the cultural conflict between Native Americans (or First Nations) and white Anglo-Saxon Canada.

Eden Robinson is a Haisla First Nation writer from British Columbia. Born in 1968, she grew up in Kitimaat, BC, as the second of three children of a Haisla man and a Heiltsuk woman. Her younger sister Carla is an anchorwoman at CBC. Eden Robinson studied creative writing at the University of Victoria and received an M.A. at the University of British Columbia. Her first book *Traplines* was published in 1996 and consists of four long short stories. It won the UK's Winifred Holtby Prize. In 2000 she published *Monkey Beach*. This very dark novel with its intriguingly complex structure and an undoubtedly autobiographical touch was well received in the English-speaking world. *Monkey Beach* became a bestseller and also gained its author the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize, making her one of the first Canadian female Native writers enjoying international fame.

Right from the start we don't know where we are, but this, we know pretty exactly. Robinson maneuvers us through the Pacific Northwest coast of the American continent in a '*Google Earth* kind of style'. With detailed directions that rival the sensation of scrolling or zooming in on a map too fast, Robinson leaves us with a precise approximation of remoteness.

> Find a map of British Columbia. Point to the middle of the coast. Beneath Alaska, find Queen Charlotte Islands. Drag your finger across the map, across the Hecate Strait to the coast and you should be able to see a large island hugging the coast. [...] Princess Royal Island is the western edge of traditional Haisla territory. [...] But once you pass the head of the Douglas Channel you are in Haisla territory. (4)

"This commentary on maps demonstrates how, as Guillermo Verdecchia puts it, 'maps have been of no use because I always forget that they are metaphors and not the territory'" (Verdecchia qtd. in Appleford, 98). The additional information that the author provides, therefore just seems at first sight rather unnecessary, and just supports the feeling of being lost in the wilderness of Canada. But the specifically Native context gives this sort of information an unequivocal twist.

> Early in the nineteenth century, Hudson's Bay traders used the Tsimshian guides to show them around, which is when the names began to get confusing. "Kitamaat"" is a Tsimshian word that means people of the falling snow, and that was their name for the main Haisla village. So when the Hudson's Bay traders asked their guide, "Hey, what's that village called?" and the Tsimshian guides said, "Oh, that's Kitamaat." The name got stuck on the official records and the village has been called Kitamaat ever since, even though it really should be Haisla. [...] To add to the confusion, when Alcan Aluminum moved into the area in the 1950s, it built a "city of the future" for its workers and named it Kitimat too, but spelled it differently. (4-5)

Since we know about the misnomers the Native population on the American continent has been exposed to in the course of history, we already are able to identify the first piece of evidence, therefore, where this story might be heading to. It is obvious that the contact with the white settlers is the basis of all the misnomers of the village. Encounters between Whites and Natives, however peaceful they may have started, often turned out to become rather violent,

eventually. Depending on the source as well as the single incident, of course, the roles of the aggressor and the victim of such confrontations may vary, but the constant of those clashes is considered common knowledge; whites plus reds equals violence. This inevitably reminds the reader of the genocide of Native Americans. The frame of the story further supports this suspicion. It is the disappearance of the main character's little brother; a 'vanishing Indian'. Therefore, on the thematic level, there is no doubt where this story is heading to, namely the haunting of post-colonialism in British Columbia. On the genre level, there is also not much choice left; the wilderness of British Columbia, a death premonition, and an Indian setting, sounds like a Native (American) Gothic novel to me.

Whereas the frame story about the disappearance of her brother actually constitutes the thematical frame - the Native's history of genocide - with Lisamarie, Robinson takes us on a journey into the childhood of a Haisla girl and her personal struggles growing up in Kitamaat in the 1970s. In most Gothic novels the locations serve a specific purpose, and often give away information about the horror to encounter, or are even the basis of it. Hence, before I will focus on the context level, let me shortly concentrate on the general setting we encounter in this novel.

In her article on *Monkey Beach*, "Native Canadian Gothic Refigured" (2001), Andrews argues:

> Set in the remote village of Kitamaat, Lisamarie's story begins with yet another Gothic convention, a portrait of a seemingly closed world far from urban centres or the basic geographical knowledge of most readers. To demonstrate the isolation of Kitamaat and to orient the readers, in the opening pages of the text Lisamarie provides a substantial description of the village that highlights its inaccessibility [and] also conveys the centrality of the waterways. (Andrews, 10)

I agree with Andrews that the first pages of the novel, including the description of the setting, leave the reader rather lost in a non-familiar region of the world. However,

> Andrews sees this passage as a detailed and "substantial description" of Kitamaat, which stands in stark contrast to the mystery of Jimmy's disappearance (10-11). I would argue that the contrast is false: like Jimmy's

fate, the map is fraught with ambiguity; it reflects Lisamarie's desire to "map" her world and thereby stave off the recognition that such an act, as an assertion of mastery, is always misleading. (Appleford, 98)

I tend to support Appleford's reading here. First of all, because the scene does not give any *real* information on Kitamaat, therefore does not actually contradict the (usually disorientating character of the) disappearance of Jimmy. The scenes rather complement each other in order to create just the right (Native American Gothic) setting for the story. Secondly, as in many other Gothic stories, we encounter the biased perspective of a first-person narrator. Consequently, when we as readers are a bit confused about the world we were just put in, so is the protagonist maybe herself.

Furthermore, the two scenes also share an important aspect which Andrews does recognize as important, that is the "centrality of waterways" (Andrews, 11). Even without any profound knowledge of Native American mythology or the sustenance of Pacific Northwest coast Indians, it is obvious that water plays a significant role in *Monkey Beach*. In general terms, humanity considers water as the ultimate symbol of life. Therefore, when moving in a literary genre where death is the prevailing and pivotal concept, the mentioning of water can neither be neglected as mere characteristic of the surrounding area, nor considered to be just Robinson's successful attempt to take the reader out of their personal realities. My suspicion concerning the importance of water is further re-enforced by the Haisla proverb Robinson quotes at the beginning of the story: "*It is possible to retaliate against an enemy, but impossible to retaliate against storms*" (n.p.) Generally speaking, this fulfills yet another Gothic convention, namely the threat of nature that is a recurring topic in Canadian or Frontier literature. However, when we look at specific examples from the story, we will realize that Robinson does not just mitigate nature to a mere element of Gothic threat. She "negotiates a space in which her characters can examine the possibilities inherent in connecting to the natural world, monsters and all" (Andrews, 9), and, moreover, "reworks the typical settler's realization that the land is 'wild' and 'empty' because of prevailing Eurocentric ideals of what it ought to be" (Davidson qtd. in Andrews, 9).

With the introductory 'storm' quote in mind, the frame story of Jimmy's disappearance only becomes really interesting when solved at the end of the story. At that point we will have learned about various water-related deaths in the family. Besides the episode of Ma-ma-oo's sister Mimayus, who died in her attempt to visit her boyfriend in Bella Bella despite a dreadful storm (161-62), the most important water related deaths are those of Ba-ba-oo and Jimmy. On a surface level these two stories might not have much in common, but a close examination of the two fates reveals an interesting juxtaposition.

Ba-ba-oo was said to be out at sea at any occasion, of course in a Haisla canoe. As for many tribes of the Pacific Northwest coast, the sea was a central part of their lives; sustenance and culture-wise. Therefore, his demise in the bathroom could be interpreted as ironic twist of fate, due to his moral deviances. Ba-ba-oo was broken by the malevolent influences of white European culture. He, as a member of the First Nations with so much experience with the element of water dies in the confined (western) space of a bathtub. His grandson Jimmy, however, leading a completely assimilated life as "normal Canadian teenager", seems to have inherited his grandfather's love for water, which manifests itself in Jimmy's swimming carrier. Yet, detached from his ancestral tribal culture, Jimmy is (only) trained in a swimming pool. When it comes to the showdown with Uncle Josh out at sea, Jimmy has to swim back to shore. But his swimming pool training cannot help him surmount the 'distress at sea' his heritage has caused. Although Jimmy grew up in a totally westernized way - the sort of life that had destroyed his grandfather - he cannot get rid of the curse that seems to lie on the Native population. He dies like his grandfather, an uncanny death in an unfamiliar yet familiar situation. Jimmy could fight the enemy, but he couldn't fight nature.

Furthermore, in the author's negotiation of space and wilderness we also encounter a certain shift away from the woods as classical source of threat to more (white) urban regions. Both Lisamarie's stay in Vancouver and the incident in Terrace suggest that the danger of places originates in the western city rather than in the surrounding wilderness. Even in those settings where a classic Gothic house is a pivotal element, the novel transcends the usual tropes of the genre. Ma-ma-oo's house is haunted, but it is haunted by Ba-ba-oo, standing for the depraving effect of western life style on the Haisla people. Also the house on the hill does not

take its intimidating atmosphere from the wilderness surrounding, but rather from the rape after the party (258). Both scenes are a harbinger of post-colonial stress in the Haisla community, the return of the repressed.

Yet, there is one place in the story that symbolizes the paradigm shift that is detectable in the novel, and that is Monkey Beach. From a traditional Gothic point of view

> Monkey Beach itself is a distinctly Gothic setting, remote from the rest of the world and populated by mysterious creatures whose existence in her mind reflects her psychological confusion about who she is and what powers she possesses. (Andrews, 18)

From a Native (American) Gothic angle, however, this setting comprises the importance of the wilderness as source of Nativeness. On the one hand, it is simply the home for Native (American) people; on the other hand, Monkey Beach symbolizes a piece of land where Eurocentricism has not yet intervened; where Lisamarie can be what she is, a Haisla woman. What Andrews describes as psychological confusion could also be understood as the overwhelming exposure to her untouched Nativeness, which becomes more and more unfamiliar for Native people in the twentieth century. Moreover, Lisamarie's death premonition shows her brother on Monkey Beach (7), where the mystery is eventually solved, too. The communication between her and her (dead) family members further suggests that this place is where true Nativeness can take place. Hence, this is the place where Lisamarie finally has to return to, following the traditional development of a Gothic female finding her place. Yet, Lisamarie's final destination is not a better standing in society, but, as the title of the last chapter indicates, it is *The Land of the Dead*.

3.2 Children and Fools Tell the Truth?

At various occasions I have already thematized the predicament of authenticity. After literally hundreds of years of misrepresentation, it is almost natural that Native writers consider (only) themselves as apt source of information on Native issues, or even criticism.

> All too frequently, Aboriginal artists are viewed (by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals alike) as impersonal explicators of truth about their culture. Eager to see the negative images of the past replaced by ones more representative of Aboriginal life and history. (Appleford, 85)

On the other hand, we should remember one of the first questions I posed in the introductory part; who is a Native, anyway? Is the so-called *half-breed* still able to answer questions on 'Nativeness', or even a white person gone Native, like Grey Owl[8]? If not, is a *full-blood* Indian therefore automatically to be considered competent to answer questions of authenticity? That sort of inquiries tend to circulate around the difficulties of self-identification and definition according to western, white-European standards, and in how far this is even possible, expedient or desirable. One way of doing so would be the artistically reprocession and creation of genuinely Native literature by competent informants. Claude Lévi-Strauss differentiates between two kinds of informant: " the engineer [who] works by means of concepts and the bricoleur [who works] by means of signs" (Levi-Strauss, 19-20).

> The Aboriginal artist is often perceived as an "engineer" who proceeds with conceptual foreknowledge of the project of cultural expression, and whose artistry lies in the daft deployment of specially designed tools, in this case the certain signs of culture. Both dominant and resistant tropes of aboriginality operate within the engineer model, which serves the editorial function of eliminating elements not consonant with or not "authentic enough" for a tacitly or explicitly conceived project of Aboriginal culture expression. (Appleford, 1)

Appleford instantly challenges this concept by quoting Derrida, who considered the notion of the engineer as sheer impossibility, because nobody can possibly

---

[8] Grey Owl was a British citizen who emigrated to Canada to live as a Native. As Gray Owl he toured through the world, pretending to be a Native himself.

analyze a concept or group of people s/he is moving in or part of, without being biased.

Eden Robinson seems to have dealt with this question in a very subtle way. Her main character is a child and later a teenager. As in most societies in the world, the voice of a child is never taken as seriously as the one of a grown up, which we can see in common expressions like *don't act like a child* or *stop being childish*. This perfectly fits the Gothic tradition of having biased characters as informants, since the uncertainty of trustworthiness immediately creates a Gothic feeling. This has, in my point of view, two very important reasons or effects. First of all, it automatically takes her out of any discussions on being an *engineer or bricoleur*; it is obvious that she could only be the latter. Secondly, this could be understood as indirect criticism of the infantalization of "Others" that has been a habit in white American society, which is well exemplified by the (in)famous poem The "White Man's Burden" (1899) by Rudyard Kipling.

However, two crucial aspects or levels of the story seem to underline and support my reading of the text. There is the more spiritual aspect, the theme of the b'gwus and the more general element of tricksterism in Native story-telling. And there is the cultural issue we find in the conflicting relation of Eurocenticism and the Native heritage.

> Six crows sit in our greengage tree. Half-awake, I hear them speak to me in Haisla. *La'es*, they say, *La'es, la'es*. […] *La'es-* Go down to the bottom of the ocean. The word means something else, but I can't remember what.   (1)

On the first page, in less than a dozen lines, Robinson manages to transport two absolutely pivotal messages about the story and the themes driving it; it is about Haisla people, and most probably a member of the group without profound knowledge of the respective mother tongue. Lisamarie calls into question her own reliability as a "Native informant. […] Her journey throughout the novel involves not only the search for truth, but also the investigation of her Haisla heritage" (Appleford, 8). Even later in the book we find a repercussion of Lisamarie's torn attitude towards Native spiritualism, when she states that she "felt deeply comforted knowing that the magical things were still living in the world" (315-16). In Appleford's point of view, this "statement […] articulates a particular kind of

self-reflective ideological irony, since as an 'authentic' Haisla woman with spiritual power, she is the neo-colonialism's magical thing" (14). Since Lisamarie is everything else but proficient with the spirituality of their people, I would rather understand the 'magical things' as not disrespectful, but definitely not quite appropriate for a *truly authentic* Haisla woman to say about spiritual beings her people believe in. However, Appleford's comment certainly pinpoints Eden Robinson's general approach of dealing with the issue.

The general struggle of the Haisla people is also to be seen in various characters throughout the story, as well as in their relationships with each other. Like in many other American Gothic stories, the main source of terror and the subsequent coping with the *return of the repressed* is to be found in Lisamarie's relatives and their struggle to come to grips with the repressed issues (of colonialization). As I argued before, the source of the terror that we can detect within the family is substantially influenced, even driven by the characters' racial background. In *Monkey Beach*, like - as I claim - in any other text where Native characters are depicted, "evil is primarily associated with Eurocentric interventions in the Haisla [or any other Native] community rather than [with] individual Native characters" (Andrews, 12). But let me come back to the aspect of the struggle of Western popular culture versus Haisla heritage. Various family members represent different stages of cultural blending.

The female and more spiritual perspective is represented by her paternal grandmother on the one and her mother on the other side. Ma-ma-oo is the *most Native* character in the whole story. Although she is more like a passive Native character when it comes to culturally fighting for her 'Indianness', she introduces and teaches Lisa to understand, respect and use her innate spiritualism. However, Robinson does not seem be satisfied with merely *black and white* characters. Even Ma-ma-oo has a *white side*, she is a passionate follower of a popular TV soap opera, where she even starts yelling at the TV from time to time. Lisamarie tells her that it is *just* a show, somehow reversing their usual role of the one explaining the other how to interpret *the other* world. Her parents reject Ma-ma-oo's attempt to educate her granddaughter spiritually.

> Lisamarie's father dismisses Ma-ma-oo's tendency to think that all things, from the sasquatches rumoured to have been sighted on nearby Monkey Beach to the soap opera characters whom Ma-ma-oo watches on television, "are real."
>
> (Andrews, 14)

This is equally true for Lisamarie's mother, who totally neglects her own spiritual abilities and also discourages Lisamarie in doing so. Quite early, her mother ridicules Lisamarie when she asks her parents whether they have also heard the crows talking to her.

> "Did you hear the crows earlier?" I say. When he doesn't answer, I find myself babbling. "They were talking to me. They said *la'es.* It's probably-"
> "Clearly a sign, Lisa," my mother has come up behind me and grips my shoulders, "that you need Prozac."[9]
>
> (3)

The second major pair is Uncle Mick and his brother Albert, Lisamarie's father. Mick is a fighter of the A.I.M.,[10] "who has fought the Eurocentric world to retain tribal rights and freedoms" (Andrews, 13), in which he even lost his wife Cookie in a supposed FBI assassination. In relation to Lisamarie's father, Uncle Mick is *the Native*, his brother Albert rather the *well integrated* Canadian citizen.

> If Uncle Mick and Dad hadn't been brothers, I wonder if they would have ever spoken to each other. Dad had been to school to become an accountant, but he quit the firm he was with after they passed him up for promotion four times. [...] Uncle Mick, on the other hand, hated straight work. After he drifted out of A.I.M., he fished on Josh's seiner, did some logging, beach-combing, trapping, fire fighting, tree planting-whatever paid his rent. He rarely used his apartment because he liked camping better. Dad didn't like to be anywhere you couldn't get cable.
>
> (59-60)

Whereas Albert's depiction doesn't really reveal anything about his Native heritage, Uncle Mick's behavior totally follows the patterns of a positive almost cliché Native character; fighter for A.I.M., no friend of steady work, if working, mostly out in nature. Even his lodging situation is more Native than his brother's. He likes to camp a lot, Lisamarie's dad fancies cable TV. Yet, not even Uncle Mick is depicted as totally Native. He is such a huge Elvis Presley fan that when the latter died, Mick even pilgrimaged down to Graceland in order to mourn the loss.

---

[9] Prozac is a popular tranquilizer.
[10] A.I.M. stands for American Indian Movement. The group fights for the rights of indigenous people in America. They were particularly active in the 1970s.

Interestingly enough, Lisamarie is also named after Elvis's daughter. This would not be too surprising, since Uncle Mick was obviously not the only Elvis fan in the world. But we learn that Uncle Mick and Lisamarie's mother seem to have a history, again one nobody really talks about. "He came up behind her, encircled her waist with his arms and gave her a gentle kiss on the neck. She pulled his arms off, slowly, then pushed him away, eyes downcast" (122).

But the topic of a brother having an affair with his sister-in-law has more significance in a Haisla context, as well as for the novel. As we learn only later in the text by Ma-ma-oo, the story of the 'wild man in the woods', the b'gwus, has some interesting similarities to the suspected affair between Uncle Mick and Lisamarie's mother, or rather vice versa.

> There was a beautiful woman who was having an affair with her husband's brother. She and her husband were paddling back to the village after trading their oolichan grease for seaweed. Just off Monkey Beach, they stopped and he pissed over the side of the canoe. She lifted the paddle and clubbed him. While he was in the water, she used the paddle to hold his head under until he was still. Thinking he was dead, she paddled back to the village and told everyone he drowned. But the next day, when the wife and the husband's brother went back to hide the body, they found large footprints in the sand. Worried he might be alive, they followed the trail into the woods. They discovered the man - transformed into a b'gwus - who then killed his adulterous wife and brother.   (211)

In retrospect, however, there were also some other signs where this relationship between Mick and his sister in law might end.

> Robinson places the passage describing the porpoises directly after Lisamarie's observation of her mother and Uncle Mick's transgressive intimacy in the cabin. The conjunction of "the violation of marriage taboos" and Lisamarie's mother's terror at mistaking porpoises for humans illustrates the consistent collision, throughout the novel, of contemporary Haisla characters with traditional Haisla beliefs. In this context, Uncle Mick's grisly death - he is eaten by seals – can be seen as cosmic punishment for the "crime" of loving his sister-in-law.   (Appleford, 10)

This corresponds with Halpin's explanation Appleford quotes in his text, namely the fear of transgression of the boundaries between humans and animals (Appleford, 10). "Persons who have already diminished their humanity or not yet achieved it - children, the drowning, men and woman [sic] who break sexual

taboos – are subject to the dangerous contagion of their resemblance to animals" (Halpin, 221-22). This general fear of breaking taboos, which is obviously the basis of stories like the one of the b'gwus, are handled via a specific Native theme that also found its way into Canadian Gothic, the trickster.

As Margaret Atwood declares in her article "Canadian Monsters: Aspects of Supernatural Fiction" (1977), Gothic literature in Canada is characterized by the fear and mysticism of the North, and the ghosts and monsters of the wilderness, which are primarily based on Native (American) mythology.

> Native monsters, already outside the realm of Eurocentric society, offer a source of mystery and magic that allows Canadian writers to incorporate the ghosts of the New World (Native Tribal cultures) in a contained fashion without necessarily acknowledging the ongoing survival of these people. (Andrews, 8)

This has two interesting aspects; first of all the perfidious interest of white North America in the monsters of a people (they drove) close to extermination (culturally or physically?), and secondly the inept attempt of self-deception by choosing ghosts of others in order not to be scared too much, because safely out of their reality, anyway. This emphasizes my notion of the Native American as Gothic element, since basically anything considered Indian seems to create a spooky and Gothic atmosphere for the white readership.

However, Robinson's incorporation of the b'gwus or Sasquatch as 'the Other' of her text can be interpreted in various ways. Following the 'tradition' of Canadian Gothic literature, Eden Robinson uses Native mythology in order to present the Gothicism of the wilderness. By presenting 'the other' based on the general fear of wilderness that most Euro-Americans feel, she cleverly takes out the Native as possible target of 'Othering'. Moreover, this basically represents a reversal of the usual depiction of white-Native relations.[11] In *Monkey Beach*, the most persisting terror is not created by the Native characters, but via the legacy of Eurocenticism, genocide, and Christianization. Moreover, Robinson's choice also contributes to the ambiguity of the character of Lisamarie.

---

[11] C.f. Andrews, 20.

In the scene where her little brother Jimmy tries to become rich and famous by taking a picture of the Sasquatch, there are already indications that Lisamarie's connection to the 'wild man of the wood' is unusually strong. When Jimmy ran off into the woods and started yelling, "I found him" (15), Lisamarie followed into the woods in order to find Jimmy.

> I could hear myself breathing I could feel someone watching me. The sweat on my body was stinging cuts and scratches I hadn't been aware of before, was drying fast, making my skin cold. I turned very slowly. No one was behind me. I turned back and saw him. Just for a moment, just a glimpse of a tall man, covered in brown fur. He gave me a wide and friendly smile, but he had too many teeth and they were all pointed. He backed into the shadows, then stepped behind the cedar tree and vanished. I couldn't move. Then I heard myself screaming and stood there, not moving. Jimmy came running with his camera ready. He broke through the bushes and started snapping pictures wildly, first of me screaming and then of the woods around us. (16)

Several passages in this scene have a particular ambiguity suggesting that Lisamarie might be the b'gwus herself. The only one who even thinks to have seen the Sasquatch was Lisa. She could feel that she was watched, and although she said that nobody was behind her, she still could suddenly see the monster in front of her, smiling. And when her brother emerged, he just took photos of her, while she *was hearing herself* screaming.

> This detail is perhaps incidental, underlining either Jimmy's foolishness or (from a traditional Haisla perspective) his unworthiness for a b'gwus encounter because he desires it too much. Yet, what if Jimmy did capture b'gwus on film? What if Lisamarie is the b'gwus he has been so desperate to find? (Appleford, 91)

If we keep up the categorization of the family members in binary pairs of different levels of adapting to Western culture versus preserving or at least dealing with the Haisla heritage, then here Jimmy would be Lisamarie's counterpart. Jimmy is the product of his parents' active denial of their Native ancestry. Hence, his interest is exclusively driven by a commercialized (Western) version of the b'gwus. Therefore, when Appleford says Jimmy might have found what he was looking for so desperately - his sister and not a Sasquatch - it could indicate his desire to find his own Nativeness, which is yet only possible for him in a Western context. This

tension will eventually break the character of Jimmy, which I have also touched upon above, and will also further explain in a following part on colonization and sexual abuse.

In his article "Vizenor's Indian Gothic" (1992), Alan R. Velie investigates the Gothic effect of Native characters in American literature. One of his major themes is the trickster. His analysis gives us some further hints at how *Monkey Beach* and particularly the character of Lisamarie could be understood. "The most important figure in the mythology of virtually all North American tribes was - and still is - the Trickster" (Velie, 78). Comparable to the theme of the Gothic monster, the trickster constitutes a quintessential element of social life, by constantly questioning the basic restraints of community life. Lisamarie, supposedly torn between herself and the b'gwus identity, can be seen as trickster figure. In Native story-telling, the trickster embodies the

> surrogate whom the tribal members can identify with and so feel freed from the trammels of tribal restrictions. Any society that has oppressive rules of moral and ceremonial behavior needs mythic and ritual sources of rebellion which allow tribal members to flout the rules through surrogates.
> (Velie, 81)

As Velie claims, also western literary tradition incorporates a similar archetype comparable to the trickster, which he calls "brother to Odysseus, Til Eulenspiegel, Huck Finn, and Randle Patrick McMurphy, to name just a view. Often the trickster figure is split into two opposite but complementary figures" (Velie, 79). The last sentence, apart from the importance for the trickster argument, would perfectly summarize the notion of being a Native American in the twentieth century; the aboriginal and the Canadian identity constituting the two opposites, nevertheless still complementing each other into one First Nation (entity). This supports the notion of the hybrid creature which the Native American represents in the Western world.

However, another fact supports the notion of the b'gwus being "Lisamarie's cultural and narrative 'Doppelgänger' (Appleford, 13), and that is the nickname she gets from her Uncle Mick, namely *monster*. After she has bitten Frank in a fight, Lisamarie and Frank end up in hospital, both accompanied by parents.

> While Mom was in the bathroom and Mick was flirting with the nurse, Frank and his mother came back out. She came right up to me and said, "I think you have something to say to my son." I knew I was supposed to say sorry. But if Frank wasn't going to say, neither was I. "You taste like poo." "You are a monster," she said to me. "You are an evil little monster." "Takes one to know one!" Mick shouted, looking up from his potential date. [...] Mick came up and knelt beside me. "You okay?" "I'm not a monster," [...n]obody likes me," I said. "Kiddo," Mick said, kissing my forehead, "you are my favourite monster in the whole wide world."   (67)

Although she denies being one, Mick announces that she is his favorite monster. Moreover, the line "Takes one [a monster] to know one!" sounds like a normal response in a situation like this, but compared with the b'gwus encounter scene, it sort of suggests that, although she doesn't know, Lisamarie is a monster, and therefore able to see them, too.

From a Native American Gothic point of view, the admittedly small incident could be interpreted as a miniature version of the white-Native culture clash of past times. The majority, and stronger group of whites, attacks the Native; when s/he fights back, she ends up being called a monster. The previously presented argument that Robinson uses the b'gwus figure as the 'Other', and therefore criticizes the common Othering of Native people, can be seen in the following quote:

> There are rumours that [the b'gwus] killed themselves off, fighting over some unfathomable cause. Other reports say that they starved to death near the turn of the century, after a decade of horrific winters. A variation of this rumour says that they were infected with TB and smallpox, but managed to survive by leaving the victims to die in the woods. They are no longer sighted, no longer make dashes into the villages to carry off women and children, because they avoid disease-ridden humans.   (318)

All these *speculations* on the near extinction of the b'gwus are suspiciously close to the fate of the Native population, combined with the usual assertions that were used to dehumanize Natives over the last centuries, as the *killing themselves over a fathomable cause*, or the *leaving behind of victims[12]* suggests.

---

[12] This completely contradicts the "sanctity of the warrior's code - the one that says we will leave no one behind". Taken from the introduction of Amy Waters Yarsinske's book called *No One Left Behind*, this so-called code is almost a commonly known phrase American society. However, the code stands for the sanctity of life, and the subsequent respect for soldiers who lost their lives in the line of duty. Hence, leaving someone behind is considered to be inhuman and barbaric.

With the stylistic weapon of the b'gwus, and the trickster, Robinson creates a very special situation. On the one hand, the trickster figure, as we know from the Gothic genre in general, allows us to comment on deviances of society. On the other hand, Lisamarie's neglect or at least struggle to accept her position in society as well as the text, supports the point that she is not really a reliable narrator. Even more so, Appleford claims that

> [t]he b'gwus subtext in *Monkey Beach* highlights the desire for and fear of judgment and retribution. Lisamarie's connection to the b'gwus indicates her role as (failed) judge (a connection necessarily predicted upon her "purity as a witness"), but it also suggests that Lisamarie's struggle to maintain her sanity is ultimately doomed, because of her inability to resist the "contagion" the b'gwus represents. (Appleford, 11)

What further adds to that uncertainty of Lisamarie's reliability is her personal gender struggle that is also taken to a Native ghost level. In various scenes the protagonist describes herself as not really girlish. We can see this in the scene where she gets into a fight with Frank that subsequently earns her the nickname monster. Over most of the story she therefore is compared to the b'gwus figure. Yet, toward the end of the novel, Lisamarie's development is also reflected in her (re)discovered femininity. Obviously having come to terms with her monster status, she describes in a school paper the mythical figure of the T'sonoqua (cf. Andrews, 18).

> T'sonoqua is not as famous as B'gwus. [...] But discredited scientists and amateur sleuths aren't hunting her. There are no conferences debating her existence. She doesn't have her own beer commercials. She has a few amusing notes in some anthropology books. [...] She is, by and large, a dim memory. (337)

We cannot only interpret this in gender terms, but also as general statement on the status of tribes in the western world. There are a handful of famous Indian tribes, like the Mohawks and Navajos, some of them gracing commercials of all kind. But in their shadows, the not so popular nations are only carving out a miserable existence as a dim memory in some anthropological accounts.

However, in the last scene, when Lisamarie seems to have reconciled herself to her twofold existence, she can hear the b'gwus howl: "not quite human, not

quite wolf, but some-thing in between" (374). Taking up the point on 'Othering' through the figure of the b'gwus, this scene seems to reflect Lisamarie's compliance with her position in the world, and the status of the Haisla people; not quite white, not quite Native, but something in between.

3.3 "KILL THE INDIAN AND SAVE THE MAN"[13]

Without doubt, colonization and its aftermath in the Haisla community of Kitimaat is the pivotal theme of the text. As we can see in the first part of my paper, the various levels of acceptance or even total immersion into a *going white* kind of way suggests that the cultural differences and the problems of the clash of cultures had a massive influence on the Native population. The further we progress in the novel, the clearer the picture gets of the *return of the repressed*, which slowly crawls out of the pages. The wounds that were not inflicted by sword or bullet, and therefore created the psychological trauma of post-colonialism, were the attempt to Europeanize and Christianize the Native population, an attempt which found its manifestation in the residential school.

Even nowadays, many people experience their school time rather as a terrifying than an enriching episode of their lives. In the article "The Price of Deviance: Schoolhouse Gothic in Prep School Literature" (2007), Thomas A. Atwood and Wade M. Lee analyze the Gothicism of schools in general. Although not specifically focused on Indian boarding schools or Residential schools, the rather across-the-board approach by the authors helps to compare the general Gothic experience of educational institutions as such and the presumably specific Native American Gothic effects of Indian boarding and Residential schools. The authors explain the common sensation of the school pedagogy in the following way: "rather than nurturing independent thought and encouraging personal growth, schools enforced conformity and quash individuals expression" (Atwood and Wade, 102). On the personal level, so to speak, school was not that much fun for whites either. For the Indian boarding and Residential schools this, paradoxically, also had a

---

[13] "Carlisle Indian School founder Richard Pratt could infamously assert that the function of his school was to 'kill the Indian and save the man' (Stromberg, 99).

certain 'positive' side effect. As I have suggested earlier, the collective term Indian is based on the idea of conformity or identification of all Native people of the continent. That was just simply not the case. The school experience and the constant threat to one's own identity, however, created an atmosphere of unity amongst the incarcerated. This, as I believe, very human reaction to a common enemy, somehow established a (pseudo, because enforced, but still) self-developed pan-Indian identity. In *Learning to Write "Indian"* (2005), Katanski argues in the introduction that

> [l]earning to write "Indian" also refers to the boarding schools as generators of pan-tribal identity, where students from different tribes met one another, recognized shared values and experiences of injustice crossing the boundaries of tribal nations, and developed a sense of themselves as "Indian" that did not cancel out their tribal affiliation [...].   (Katanski, 7)

Furthermore, the acquisition of the English language also enabled Natives to actually address their complaints to the English-speaking public, as we can see in the example of Zitkala-Sa. Yet, what we know from her literary coming to terms with the boarding school past, this was not quite the intention of the inventors. The Carlisle Indian school, founded in 1879 by General Richard Henry Pratt, "was the prototype for federal off-reservation Indian boarding schools designed to destroy tribal nations and strip Native children of their culture, language, and religions" (Katanski, 2). Whatever cruelties the school had to offer for their students, in the case of the Indian, they were not inflicted in a 'well-meant' kind of way necessary to become a grown-up, but specifically in order to destroy the aboriginal roots as soon as possible. The loss of individuality that was a general problem in schools, according to Truffin, created "three types of disintegration [...]: the first possibility is paranoia, or loss of sanity; secondly, violence, involving loss of control or loss of life; and finally monstrosity, wherein the protagonist loses his humanity" (Truffin, 7-8). For the Native however, the loss of identity was not just reduced to the individual, but also took place on a cultural level, which we can see in the quote I used as chapter title, "kill the Indian and save the man." The awareness of death is even to be found in the realm of the colonizer's pedagogy. The 'killing' was not reduced to the figurative level of 'just' destroying the cultural anchors of Native children.

> Many students lost their lives as the result of intense physical abuse and neglect, infectious diseases that attacked them in their dormitories, or severe emotional battery and trauma. Even more students experienced a psychic death at the school, driven from their families and toward the harmful cycles of alcoholism and violence. (Katansky, 13-14)

Admittedly, many of the previous quotes allude more to the Progressive Era than to the 1970s in which our story is set. However, when examining the text with the specific focus on the psychological repercussions of the residential school experiences of various characters, the definitions given appear by no means inappropriate. This is also backed by another definition quoted in Atwood and Wade suggesting that "Schoolhouse Gothic" is characterized by "the tyrannies (or curses) of the past manifest as self-perpetuation hierarchies and power inequalities present in educational institutions" (Atwood and Wade, 103). Furthermore, the mental and emotional reverberation inflicted by the attempt to repress Nativeness in Residential schools returns to the communities, and preserves the legacy of death that colonization imposed on the Native population.

In *Monkey Beach* the residential school topic is mostly dealt with through the fate of Lisamarie's family on her father's side. Like in a scavenger hunt, the reader has to collect bits and pieces of stories of the past in order to understand the behavior of Lisamarie's family, which is "torn by the mysterious decision of her grandmother Ma-ma-oo to send her children Trudy and Mick away to residential school rather than deal directly with her abusive husband Ba-ba-oo" (Appleford, 7). However, in my reading of the text, the mystery does not really lie in the decision of Ma-ma-oo to send their children away to protect them, not knowing what tragedies would follow. The mystery rather lies in the fate of Ba-ba-oo himself, which casts a cloud over the family's story. In how far did his behavior influence his offspring and how could we interpret this episode as characteristic of the story as well the fate of the Haisla people on the whole? We do learn that Lisamarie's grandfather drowned drunk in the bathtub, but that his wife, Ma-ma-oo was suspected to have 'helped' a bit. This was neither the only alleged crime not punished, nor the only killing out of retribution for past crimes committed. On Lisamarie's (unconscious) coming of age investigation of herself as a Haisla, she inevitably stumbles over her family secrets, which she would not have solved (for

the reader) without her cousin Tab's crucial assistance. "Lisamarie is a highly problematic detective and an imperfect moral arbiter" (Appleford, 7). Luckily, already at the beginning of the story, Tab confronts Lisamarie with her rather naïve view of things, giving the reader the first clues to the origin of the repressed past.

> "Why doesn't your mum talk to Ma-ma-oo?" I asked Tab when we were reading comics in the bedroom. Tab sighed. "Don't you pay attention?" "I pay attention" I said, getting indignant. "No you don't. Ba-ba-oo was an asshole. He beat Gran. Instead of sending him away, she sent Mick and mum to residential school." "And?" "God, you can be so dense," she said. (59)

After being introduced to the topic, we get more and more information about the sometimes rather irritating or too impulsive behavior of Lisamarie's uncle and aunt. When involved in a discussion on Christianity with his sister in law's family, Uncle Mick loses his temper, giving the reader some insight into the root of the problem.

> "They were after numbers! That's all they wanted! How many converts they could say they had. How many heathens they-" […] "What's wrong?" "He's gone crazy," Uncle Geordie said. "Crazy, I'm crazy? You look at your precious church. You look at what they did. You never went to residential school. You can't tell me what I fucking went through and what I didn't." […] "You really don't get it. You're buying into a religion that thought the best way to make us white was to fucking torture children-"   (109-10)

Uncle Mick tried to fight the apparent abuse of his childhood with Native activism and alcohol, his sister Trudy simply stuck to the latter. This can be seen as flight from the evil past of the residential school, as well as the passing on of the legacy of corruption of the Native population through alcohol and violence, personified in their father, Ba-ba-oo. Trudy's alcohol addiction and the obvious influence on her raising Tab constitutes the bridge between the two generations, giving Tab the insight into the emotional damage of her mother's generation. What her cousin learned the hard way, Lisamarie learned from her. "You are lucky that your dad was too young to go to rez school" (254). After Lisamarie got into trouble with a bunch of white boys, from which she emerged by pure luck, even Aunt Trudy provides the reader with some further insight into the residential school

experience. "There were tons of priests in the residential schools, tons of fucking matrons and helpers that 'helped' themselves to little kids just like you" (255). Fitting Robinson's general tone of sarcasm and irony, Aunt Trudy's attempt to drown her misery in alcohol seems to end where it started, in Alberni. "There's a treatment centre where the residential school used to be," topping the black humor of the scene with the following joke: "How many priests does it take to change a lightbulb?" [...] Three. One to screw it, one to beat it for being screwed and one to tell the lawyers that no screwing took place" (310).

Furthermore, what was not more than adumbrated in the largest part of the story becomes more and more obvious toward the end, the unpunished sexual abuse of Native children in residential schools. It starts with the rape of Lisamarie by her 'friend' Cheese. This scene, again, can be interpreted as prototypical of the post-colonial cruelty against the Native population, the white boy who is considered to be a friend, rapes the Native girl, lies about it afterwards, and gets off unpunished. Yet, there is one rather unremarkable character who, the closer it gets to the end, the more is pulled into focus, Uncle Josh. In most of the story he is just Uncle Mick and Aunt Trudy's drinking buddy, acting slightly weird in front of Lisamarie, but nothing that couldn't have reasons in his own drinking problem. But when Lisamarie tries to prove to her brother's girlfriend, Josh's niece Karaoke, that he has not left her, but that he has actually bought an engagement ring for her, she finds a photograph and a birth announcement that highly suggest Josh raping her.

> Josh's head was pasted over a priest's head and Karaoke's was pasted over a little boy's. I turned it over: *Dear Josh*, it read. *I remember every day we spent together. How are you? I miss you terribly. Please write. Your friend in Christ, Archibald*. [...] On the front [of the birth announcement] a stork carried a baby across a blue sky with fluffy white clouds. *It's a boy!* Was on the bottom of the card. Inside, in neat, careful handwriting it said, "*Dear Joshua. It was yours so I killed it.*" (365)

Although Karaoke pretends it was meant as a joke when asked by Lisamarie, she concludes that her brother must have interpreted it for what it apparently was. "The revelation of Karaoke's sexual abuse precipitates the avenging murder of Josh by Lisamarie's brother Jimmy" (Appleford, 7).

> The card and photograph are all about relationships of domination as shaped by race, education, the faith invested in the Church, and the process of colonization. But Karaoke's card to Uncle Josh marks a break in the cycle, expressing a pointed refusal to continue to submit to such abuse, which began with one white male Christian's sexual abuse of a Haisla child. [...] The powerlessness of the colonized male is countered by his abusing the colonized female. (Andrews, 12-13)

Andrews's analysis seems to pinpoint the effect that the scene has in the context of the book, but it appears she neglects the collateral damages. In the different generations of Haisla people we encounter in the course of the story, this legacy of abuse has found its manifestation in alcoholism, violence and sexual abuse and triggered various forms of mutilations. Like in genetics, the dark will return, and if a generation is left out, it will return in the next. Or as if the post-colonial trauma and the legacy of death were an innate birth deficiency of Native Americans, they will eventually be haunted by genocide and colonizing attempts in all their flourishings. Warriors like Uncle Mick die in the line of duty, drunkards like Aunt Trudy, in a puddle of vomit, but this phenomenon is really epitomized by the fate of Jimmy. He doesn't show any interest in spirituality or Haisla tradition whatsoever, leading a 'white and assimilated' life after his parents' example. Karaoke's card may have broken the cycle of silence, but the return of the repressed does not spare him, breaking apart Jimmy's world and pulling him quickly back into the vicious cycle of violence. This is Native American Gothic.

3.4 WHAT WOULD SIGMUND DO?

As discussed before, the literary genre and psychoanalysis have mutually influenced each other in their developments. What Poe and many other writers offered over centuries of story telling, psychoanalysis used as fundamental corpus for its investigations of the human soul, and particularly its darker corners. Based on this data in general, and E.T A. Hoffmann's story "Der Sandmann" (1817) in particular, Freud coined a concept which is impossible to imagine missing in today's literary analysis, 'Das Unheimliche', or 'the Uncanny'. However, in the course of history psychoanalysis was also (ab)used to certify people's insanity, based on others' opinions deviant from the norm rather than on *real* psychological deviances. Insanity per se is Gothic, but what is more Gothic than being called insane, without having a mental illness? In Ken Kesey's novel *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962) - the basis for the widely known, and Academy Award winning film adaptation (1975) staring the young Jack Nicholson - we encounter this theme of being held in a mental ward merely based on the lack of social skills according to the norms of the majority. Yet, there is one thing that is even more Gothic than this, and that is becoming insane due to being unjustifiably considered going mad. This is epitomized by Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist classic "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), in which the protagonist slowly loses her mind during a 'rest cure' after she gave birth.

With our Native American Gothic context in mind, there is to say that Western psychoanalysis is of course strongly built on Enlightenment ideas of rationality, with what Derrida calls "sharp distinction between the real and the unreal, the actual and the inactual, the living and the non-living, being and non-being [...], the opposition between what is present and what is not" (Derrida, "Specters of Marx", 11). Therefore, whatever form of indigenous spiritualism there was, psychology's attitude was undermining the integrity of these beliefs, indirectly pushing all Native beliefs in the same corner with delusions and other mental illnesses.

It is a fact that in Western culture, we have anxiety over the *meaning* or interpretation of such 'intrusions' if only because five hundred years of

materialism has been aimed, as Terry Castle notes, at 'eradicat[ing]
superstituion and plac[ing] all seemingly supernatural phenomenon on a
solid psychological footing' (163). In fact, the history of psychology – from
Mesmer to Freud – tells us of concentrated efforts to keep the study of the
mind an occult-free zone and to repudiate all things 'mythical'.
(Castricano, 803)

Therefore, any form of occultism is refused as psychological response to
overwhelming situations. With respect to the Native community, indigenous
beliefs in ghosts and spiritualism were categorically belittled as the primitive
people's way of dealing with insanity amongst their group members (cf. Waldram,
109).

When a human psyche encounters a situation that it is not capable of
processing, because it is beyond all schemes and patterns of logic it knows, the
sub-conscious creates phenomena outside the reality of the conscious,
constructing a 'logical' solution to the incredible pain or the anguishing disruption
of (moral) values. When Lisamarie is forced to face her brother's probable demise,
the repressed memories of her grandmother dying in a house fire, her friend's
suicide and, above all, her uncle's death with all its repulsive details (his corpse
was mutilated by seals) all surface again. This probably makes Lisamarie's mind fly
into the realm of ghosts, where, as we have learned from Ma-ma-oo, everything
works the other way round (140). So in the land of ghosts, all these deaths may
have made sense, in contrast to the *real* world, where they certainly do not for
Lisamarie. This is basically what her therapist insinuates during their session. "Do
you think […] that maybe these ghosts you dream about aren't really ghosts, but
are your attempt to deal with death?" (273). "One can almost see Freud, who was
profoundly ambivalent about all things 'occult', nodding tacitly in agreement that
it's all 'in Lisa's mind'" (Castricano, 808).

Lisamarie's way of *dealing with death* is characterized by the figure of
Mister Booboo. Her constant nightmare visitor supplies her with a premonition of
death. Naturally, the young Lisamarie neglects the warnings as mere nightmares,
but with her grandmother's guidance and the recurring of Mister Booboo before
tragic twists of fate, Lisamarie reluctantly learns to trust her forebodings. On a
Native American Gothic level, this awareness of death can be understood as the
constant threat of extinction that Native Americans have gotten used to over the

last five hundred years. Consequently, the psychologist's treatment

> could be read as an act of colonization [...]. Part of Lisamarie's challenge in *Monkey Beach* is to negotiate the relationship between Haisla culture and the pervasive presence of popular culture and to find a balance between the two. (Andrews, 13)

The propagating of striking a balance between the two worlds, the Native and the white world, can also be found in the passages called *Contacting the Dead*. Dispersed across the novel, these passages provide us with something like 'spiritualism for dummies', but beneath the obvious instructions for talking to dead people, she seems to explain how to survive as a Native person in the world of whites. "To contact the spiritual world, you must control the way you enter this state of being that is somewhere between waking and sleeping" (139) and "Seeing ghosts is a trick of concentration. You must be able to concentrate on nothing and everything at the same time. You must be both asleep and awake" (212). However, Robinson also warns us about the dangers of transgressing the cultural boundaries. When Lisamarie almost drowns in the last scene, her grandmother appears to her, telling her: "You have a dangerous gift [...]. It's like oxa-suli. Unless you know how to use it, it will kill you" (371). This scene suggests that exclusively following the spiritual (=Native) world, can be lethal. In my point of view it indicates the author's pedagogical message that living a purely Native life will kill one, as it has done with many ancestors before.

At the end of the therapy session, Lisamarie follows the orders of 'the thing' which was feeding on the shrink's body, before it started to whisper 'the correct' answers in Lisamarie's ear. She 'confesses' to have made up all the stories about ghosts just in order to get attention. The shrink is appeased, finishing the therapy session with: "I think this was a very good session. I'm sure that with a little work, you'll be back to *normal* in no time" (274, my emphasis). When we see Mister Booboo as reminder of the *legacy of death* in the ghost world (in the real world this is Lisamarie's brother Jimmy), the shrink's suggestion to neglect him equals the general tradition of repressing the genocidal guilt we have encountered so often with the white colonizers. Following that habit and the logic of Western society and psychology, Ms. Jenkins accepts anything that follows her own understanding

of reality. When Lisamarie states that she is only an attention seeker, this is enough for her to be satisfied, because her argumentation follows the same (Western, therefore colonizer) logic. As we have seen at many other points in this paper, the (white) majority tolerates the seemingly remorseful and morally deviant, but rejects those questioning the values behind the morals. Keeping up appearances must be based on a partial acknowledgment of the codex; questioning the codex subsequently equals a challenging of the whole society following it, and this is usually considered as a threat, and will therefore be prosecuted and if possible punished.

> In this context and beyond literary criticism, we also get a sense of what's been the case for First Nations historically, given the fact that […] Western psychology [like Christian ideology] has been instrumental in the colonial process of nation building by demonizing and outlawing First Nations spiritual practices. (Castricano, 806)

Finally, the capitalistic aspect of colonization in general, and psychology in particular, is personified by Lisamarie's mother. As previously discussed, her mother's first line in the text is: "Clearly a sign, Lisa […] that you need Prozac" (3), after Lisamarie has just tried to communicate her spiritual abilities to her parents. Furthermore, her mother does not try to talk her out of her belief through logical arguments. No, she suggests doing what millions of North American women do in order to deal with the painful reality of their lives, taking anti-depressant drugs. This can be seen as a manifold attack; first against Western psychology's recent attempt to simply numb off problems instead of facing them. Secondly and consequently, it characterizes Lisamarie's mother's total surrender to Western culture, and (with the help of Prozac) her not necessarily unsuccessful neglect of the history of her people.

4. *DEAD MAN*

"It's preferable not to travel with a dead man." [14]

William Blake, a young, clumsy accountant from Cleveland, Ohio, is heading West for a new job in Dickinson's Metal Works in the town of Machine. After a series of unfortunate events, he finds himself shot at and subsequently hunted through the wilderness of the Pacific Northwest. He meets a strange Native American named Nobody, who helps 'the stupid fuckin' white man' with his supposed flight, but actually prepares Blake for his last journey. Yet, what on the surface level looks like a comic slow-motion version of a classic Western, turns out to be a subtle critique of Native American genocide; making it uncannily unclear who actually is referred to in the epigraph.

Jim Jarmusch, the writer and director of *Dead Man* (1995) is a famous independent filmmaker from the United States. Born in 1953 in Ohio, Jarmusch soon developed an interest for movies. After studying English and American Literature in New York, Jarmusch lived in Paris, where he discovered European and Japanese cinematography. Back in New York, Jarmusch continued his studies at the Graduate Film School in New York City. During his studies in New York, he met many artists who influenced his development. He soon managed to build up a reputation in the American independent scene. He became famous with his movies from the late 1980s and early 1990s, featuring stars like Roberto Benigni, Tom Waits and Johnny Depp. Since then, Jarmusch and his distinctive style have become an integral part of American cinematography.

---

[14] This quote by Henry Michaux is the opening epigraph of the movie.

4.1 THE RED MAN IN WESTERNS AND *DEAD MAN*

"Representations of American Indians and cultures have long occupied positions in mainstream American literary and filmic identities" (Cummings, 57). If there is one genre in American popular culture that has excessively exploited the stereotypical imaging of Native Americans, it is the Western. Following the simple good and bad dichotomy of dime novels and Wild West shows where those stereotypes are a fundamental element and basis of their appeal, the Western has massively contributed to further propagating the negative picture of Native people around the whole world. It is basically the first genre in the history of motion pictures, which Vachel Lindsay already stated in 1915 in "the first book of American film theory *avant la lettre, The Art of Moving Pictures*: 'the photoplay began' with 'the whirlwind of cowboys and Indians'" (Lindsay qtd. in Nieland, 176). However, the mystified version of indigenous people in America is not only symptomatical of America's self-mystification, it is rather one of its core problems. As previously discussed, much of American historiography is based on the mythologization of its people and history, and more importantly the demonization and fabrication of 'the Others'.

> Jim Kitses's claim that "first of all, the Western *is* American history (Kitses 1969, 57) and J. Hoberman's observation that it was "typically the vehicle America used to explain itself to itself" (Hoberman, 85) could hardly be made about any other genre of film.   (Gurr, "Natives Cites back", 1)

Questioning and challenging the picture of the Native American equally calls into question the established values of American society. Such an undertaking is in danger of tarnishing America's self-perception, but changing old habits requires deep cuts. Hence, in order to change the picture of the Native that popular culture has transported and incorporated, it is necessary to work with equally powerful messages, which is only possible within the medium that has fostered the old clichés for such a long time.

> American popular culture has historically been an arena where hegemonic structures and ideas could be challenged and where the status quo could be questioned, often through humor and satire. [...] However, the power of any one image of popular culture is weakened in part because of the sheer magnitude of competing popular elements. Images are further diluted

> because they are often casually consumed as entertainment and because the contents of popular culture are so broad, varied, and transitional.
> (Mihelich, 129)

A successful challenge of immanent racism and its filmic depiction in America necessarily has to work via the deconstruction of the most prototypical American movie genre transporting these messages, and that is the Western.

> If [...] one wants a drastic, a fundamental, a sweeping critique of the very concept of 'America', the Western is the natural genre in which to formulate such a critique. But since the Western as a genre encodes precisely that ideology, the Western itself must be inverted, deconstructed, turned against itself in order to deploy it for such a critique.   (Gurr, "Native Cites back", 1)

With *Dead Man*, Jim Jarmusch managed to write and produce a motion picture that does exactly this; the movie deconstructs and turns the Western against itself and its inherent misrepresentation of indigenous life. In the interview with Jonathan Rosenbaum, the famous former *Chicago Reader* film critic, Jim Jarmusch explains his intentions behind shooting this poetic critique of America and the Western as its filmic manifestation.

> In Hollywood Westerns, even in the 30s and 40s, history was mythologized to accommodate some kind of moral code. And what really affects me deeply is when you see it taken to the extent where Native Americans become mythical people. [...] The people in power will do whatever they can to maintain that, and TV and movies are a perfect way to keep people stupid and brainwashed.   (Rosenbaum, 47)

It is unquestioned that *Dead Man* did not turn out to be an average Hollywood movie, which might have been the key to success. Among many, Native activists and film critics likes Ward Churchill[15] deplore the usual depiction of Native Americans as well as its simple inversions produced in Hollywood, e.g. in *Dances with Wolves* (1990). "The cinematic depiction of indigenous peoples in America is objectively racist on all levels" (Churchill, 167); Jarmusch's movie is an exception. His Native character Nobody neither follows the picture of the 'brutish heathen' nor its equally unrealistic inversion, the cliché of the 'noble savage'. "There are a

---

[15] Ward Churchill is a Native American writer and activist. In publications like *Fantasies of the Master Race: The Cinematic Colonization of American Indians* (1992) he criticizes the immanent racism of Hollywood's depictions of Native characters.

few undeniable facts about *Dead Man*, one of the most important of which is that Jarmusch's film shows a significant effort to depict a Native existence stripped of the stereotypes of the last hundred years of filmmaking" (Kilpatrick, 176). Due to its unquestionable status, the movie triggered an avalanche of attempts to categorize this movie; it was called "a mediation on death and transfiguration […] a tone poem, an acid Western, an anti-Western, a revisionist Western" (Nieland, 172-73) "or deconstructive Western, which has long dissolved the mythology of the frontier" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 2). Whatever title this motion picture is given, only when looking at the particular setting, the stance, the point of view shots or its specific arrangements, it is possible to grasp Jarmusch's subversive and challenging depiction of indigenous life. Before I go into the details of figures and characters, what they represent and in how far their portrayal challenges the usual depiction of Native Americans, I want to focus on the specific atmosphere as well as filmic possibilities Jarmusch makes use of in order to present the Native genocide.

When most other anti-Westerns "[seem] to self-consciously avoid the use of Hollywood stereotypes of American Indians, *Dead Man* exploits and inverts" them (Cummings, 67). We encounter the figure of a young man heading West for a prosperous future; we have bounty hunters, U.S. marshals, trains and horses; "Finally, the visual icons of the Western are all there: the "Wanted" posters, the swinging salon doors, the ubiquitous guns. But *Dead Man* also represents what is not usually seen: a pissing horse, the protagonist […] urinating against a tree, a gunman being fellated in the street" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 3). Just by adding this layer of realism to a genre so well known by such a great audience, Jarmusch not only manages to caricature and demystify the Western, he thoroughly creates the right 'anything goes'-atmosphere needed in order to add yet another layer missing in this genre for almost hundred years; that is a Native character that does not follow the usual stereotypical patterns the western audience has become so accustomed to. In Jarmusch's filmic arsenal, every element a filmmakers can resort to in order to convey a message is used to thematize the genocide of Native Americans in the USA. Partly by dissolving old clichés, partly by adding a certain layer of realism, Jarmusch manages to criticize the tradition of maltreatment of indigenous cultures. "More precisely, it is largely an interplay of words and image,

but all five filmic codes – images, spoken language, written text, music as well as non-verbal, non musical sounds – are at work in the representation of the genocide of Native Americans" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 9). In the next section I want to delineate how exactly this omnipresence is achieved, and how the interplay of visual and spoken stimuli work.

4.2 A Black and White Western?
Doubles and Juxtapositions in *Dead Man*

Among many, the double and the juxtaposition are the most apparent and idiosyncratic modes at work in *Dead Man*. Equal to the initial scene of *Monkey Beach*, during the first few minutes of Jarmusch's film the cautious viewer can already identify various indications about the structure as well as the content of the story. The doubles are utilized to frame and predict the events, the juxtapositions serve the purpose of challenging the audience's expectations, giving us hints about the genre the movie is working in, as well as the intended message of the film. Therefore, I will focus on these two major aspects, and particularly on what we can already find in the first scenes of *Dead Man*.

The first and most obvious of Jarmusch's stylistic choices has been to shoot the movie in black and white. Apart from its specific beauty this certainly has not only been a question of style. Using the modes of classic Gothic literature, Jarmusch tries to send his audience back in time, expanding his spectrum for critique. Shooting the movie in black and white alleviates this endeavor, especially with a Western audience that is prone to optical stimuli. By setting the narrated time of the story prior to the Western or its predecessor, the Wild West Show, Jarmusch seems to attempt to "set the historical, cultural and indeed generic records straight" (Nieland, 172), by showing his version of a Western, and the messages it could transport.

> The period setting functions in at least one vital way: it allows to restage "history" of a quintessential nineteenth-century "space," the western frontier. In fact, the film becomes vehicle for a double restaging. Jarmusch

> drastically and forcefully confronts two modes of historical representation: he interrogates presumed American history of the nineteenth century and the ensuing film history of the twentieth. (Cummings, 67)

Furthermore, I would suggest that this stylistic decision is also a subtle critique of the 'black and white' dichotomy we usually encounter in Western characters. Jarmusch follows the traditions and modes of the Western, yet only to an extent necessary or useful for his unmerciful inversion of it, creating more than just a negative pattern of the Western. *Dead Man* offers a Western liberated from old stereotypes, showing characters that reflect more than just a 'black and white' version of white and Native people.

Another crucial effect is how particularly slow the movie is cut. Although reduced speed is a characteristic of most Jarmusch films, in this particular case the slow cutting does more than just giving it the usual Jarmusch stance. This slow motion picture subliminally works against the obvious content level of the story.

> The rhythm of the film – meant to approximate that of classical Japanese films- was designed so that "scenes would resolve in and out of themselves without being determined by the next incoming image." This formal interruption of progressive movement […] is especially striking in a film that depends on the progress of Blake and Nobody's westward journey. (Nieland, 180)

These rivaling velocities - the viewer's expectation of a getaway-story versus Jarmusch's consciously decelerated movie - constitute an understated critique of the generally accepted modes of Westerns and movie chases. On a historical level, this anti-progressive statement contrasts with the common attitude of the Westward expansion and the rise of industrialization and capitalism that has had its climax around the turn into the 20th century. In this time period, known as the Progressive Era, Native Americans particularly struggled to keep pace with white America (see chapter 1). Comparable to *Modern Times* (1935), one of the most famous Charlie Chaplin movies, Jim Jarmusch has also developed his commentary on Industrialization and its effects on mankind around the machine as ultimate symbol of de-humanization.

In the first ten minutes - even before introduced to the title of the motion picture - the viewer is exposed to numerous references and peculiarities that

suggest the direction of the movie, thematically, stylistically, as well as on a content level. "In a long series of quick blackout scenes, Jarmusch cross-cuts insistently between the ominous chugging of the locomotive's wheels (conventionally, Hollywood shorthand for historical progress and Western expansion) and the interior of Blake's cabin" (Nieland, 171). The almost hectic movement of the train wheels is contrasted by the obvious lengthiness of the train ride this young man faces. The various shots of the cabin, with their "sinister shift in passengers over various time breaks marked by fade-outs and fade-ins from the city slickness to barbarism" (Rosenbaum, 8), and the lack of music or any other spoken interaction reinforces the impression of boredom, and increases the contrast to the rapidly moving wheels of the train. As indicated by the previous Nieland quote, as well as by a point I have made earlier in this paper, the train not only stands for Westward expansion and the pushing of the frontier, it is, above all, a symbol of or at least a catalyzer for the eradication of Native tribes, their livelihood and their habitat. This is, for example, juxtaposed by Blake's looking out of the window, briefly watching some burned-down tepees along the train tracks.

Besides the equally relieving as well as irritating break of silence the entering of the train's fireman constitutes, the first part of speech that occurs in the movie introduces the viewer to some major aspects of the story. "A strange, poetic monologue on the train by the man who stokes the fire (Crispin Glover) simultaneously prefigures the film's final sequence" (Rosenbaum, 83).

> Fireman: Look out the window. … Doesn't this remind you of when you are in the boat and then later that night you're lying, looking up at the ceiling, and the water in your head was not dissimilar from the landscape, and you think to yourself, "Why is it that the landscape is moving, but the boat is still?

This initial speech about the boat rhymes with the last scene, Blake's voyage in the sea canoe, constituting a frame for the story via the doubling motif. Equally, the initial train scene is doubled in a prior canoe journey, "both periodically punctuated by losses of consciousness and fade outs" (Rosenbaum, 76). During their short conversation, the stoker then "starts firing personal questions and comments at Blake about his destination and background that includes the

suggestion that he's heading both for hell and his own grave" (Rosenbaum, 8).

> Fireman: Well, that doesn't explain why you've come all the way out here,
>   all the way out to hell.
> Blake: I have a job, out in the town of Machine.
> Fireman: Machine? That's the end of the line!
> Blake: Is it?
> Fireman: Yes!
> Blake: Well, I received a letter from people at Dickinson's metal work
>   assuring me a job.
> Fireman: Said so?
> Blake: Yes, I'm an accountant.
> Fireman: I wouldn't know, because I don't read. But I tell you one thing for
>   sure. I wouldn't trust no words written down on no piece of paper,
>   especially from no Dickinson out in the town of Machine. You are
>   just as likely to find your own grave!

This dialogue does not only suggest the evilness of Blake's intended future working place and employer, but equally works as a death premonition. The trappers, who suddenly start shooting out of the window, which could indicate Blake's gun-related death, emphasize this impression. After Blake has disembarked from the train, it soon turns out that the town of Machine fulfills the expectations one has developed after the fireman's prediction. "Rather than an heroic depiction of America's industrial progress, Jarmusch offers a menacing representation of industrial modernity in Machine" (Nieland, 177). Blake enters the nightmare version of a Western town, with urinating horses, coffins, oodles of antlers, and a prostitute fellating a gunman right next to the main street. The dark impressions of death, vice and brutality that "resonates with images of Blake's 'London'" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 6) - this intertextuality will play a significant role in *Dead Man* as well as in my analysis - reinforce the suspicion that the quirky fireman's foreboding will eventually come true. Furthermore, the entering of Machine will find its echo at the end of the story, when Nobody drags Blake through a Makah village in order to get a suitable sea canoe for his dying companion.

In line with these expectations is the visit to the supposed new employer, Mr. Dickinson. Despite "a letter that confirms [his] position", the only job he is offered by the owner is "pushing up daisies".[16] Mister Dickinson reiterates the

---

[16] 'Pushing up the daisies' is a euphemistic colloquialism for demise.

fireman's death premonition, underscored by a number of emblems of death; an enormous stuffed bear, large deer heads, a picture of Mr. Dickinson with a gun, and Mr. Dickinson in persona, with a gun in his hand. Also this scenario will find its doubling when the metal work owner hires three bounty hunters to kill William Blake, who has shot the owner's son.

Summing up this section, I want to append one more juxtaposition that somehow works as meta-doubling in *Dead Man* and that is the contrast of wilderness and the town. The "nightmarishly squalid settlement of festering pollution and nastiness" (Rosenbaum, 27) is opposed by the beautiful shots of the wilderness of the American West. Apart from the evident differences, in both places death is lingering behind every corner or the next tree, respectively. Whereas the violence in the town of Machine appears to be omnipresent, the wilderness is characterized by its supposed emptiness. We even see most wilderness shots twice, first Blake and Nobody, then the bounty hunters following them. This increases the effect of surprise when actually confronted with indigenous hostility. When Cole Wilson rides through the forest, he is suddenly hit by an arrow coming out of nowhere. Also Blake's encounter with Native Americans is equally mythical, although not at all violent, suggesting the special position of Blake. Sitting in the middle of nowhere, Blake suddenly sees a group of Native Americans in the bushes, all camouflaged and hardly cognizable. He tries to grab his gun, but when he turns around again, the Natives have disappeared. Both scenes illustrate the rivaling of emptiness and threat within the wilderness, but more importantly denote the ambivalent situation of Native Americans. "Native American is forever appearing *as* disappearing, into a land determined both spatially, as wilderness or frontier, and temporarily, as the theater of history and 'manifest destiny.'" (Elmer, 19).

4.3 "The Eagle Never Lost so much Time as when He Submitted to Learn From the Crow"?[17]

Under normal circumstances, there would be no doubt about the real protagonist of this story. The audience accompanies a young man looking for a better future in the far West. Coming from Cleveland, Ohio, the accountant William Blake is portrayed as a shy and clumsy young man fleeing his unfortunate past (his parents have died, and his fiancée has left him recently) towards a new job in Dickinson's metal work in the town of Machine. All this suggests a classic Western character development, a young man has to live up to the hardships of the rough West, and in the end he kills the bad guy and gets the girl. But this would not be a good revisionist or anti-Western if those traditions were not inversed or challenged, and the story would not allow at least a discussion about the real protagonist of the story.

The audience does not learn much about the background of our supposed main character. If it were not for the presumptuous questions by the train's fireman, the audience would have been left in the dark about William Blake's past. His passiveness is also shown in his encounter with Thel. When a drunkard pushes the flower girl into the main road, he only watches her lying in the street instead of helping her. Blake only rushes to help after she complains about his behavior. It is also Thel who suggests that he should walk her home. William Blake is "like a blank piece of paper that everyone wants to write all over" (Rosenbaum, 68). From the moment Blake sets foot on Western ground, none of his decisions are made by himself. This is tellingly visualized in the entering and exiting of Dickinson's metal work. Blake does not walk in or out, he is either directed or pushed out of the worker's way until he eventually finds the way out. Ironically, even the small success of spending the night with Thel turns out to be just the beginning of his end. Lying in bed together, Thel's ex-lover, who turns out to be Mr. Dickinson's son, enters her room in order to get her back. Finding Blake, he shoots and kills Thel who unsuccessfully tries to cover Blake. Blake kills the man, and, fatally wounded, he begins his uncontrolled flight, where he soon encounters our second main

---

[17] In the original William Blake line from "Proverbs of Hell" it says 'learn *of* the crow'.

character, Nobody.

Unlike William Blake, the character of Nobody is articulate and energetic. He seems to know what he is doing, his moves seem conscious. It soon becomes apparent that Nobody is the most educated as well as round character in the whole movie, characterized by the contradictions united in his personality. However, he does not only incorporate more interesting character traits than Blake. Nobody has also an interesting and eventful past to offer, which we learn during the numerous shots of Blake and him passing through the wilderness.

> Nobody: Eventually, I was taken on a ship, across the Great Sea, over to England, and I was paraded before them, like a captured animal, an exhibit. And so I mimicked them, imitating their ways, hoping that they might lose interest in this young savage. But their interest only grew. So they placed me into the white man's schools, it was there that I discovered, in a book, the words that you, William Blake, had written, they were powerful words, and they spoke to me. And I made careful plans, and eventually I escaped, once again I crossed the Great Ocean. I saw many sad things as I made my way back to the lands of my people. Once they realized who I was, the stories of my adventures angered them. They called me a liar: Exebutche! He who talks loud, saying nothing! They ridiculed me, my own people, and I was left to wander the earth alone. I am Nobody.

Nobody is not just an average Native American, but his story clearly indicates that "[he] is also an interesting variant of the Hollywood buddy-movie 'side-kick': he steals the show" (Cummings, (69). But more importantly, Nobody's background, compared to Blake's, does not only give him a past worth mentioning. The story of his endeavors thematizes the problematic attempt of white America to colonize the minds of Native Americans. The residential schools did not only try to form Christian and educated Indians, they tried to 'kill the Indian and save the man'. Returning from the East, Nobody experiences what many Native Americans had to face, his own people neglected him.

> Nobody is rejected by his tribe not only because he has been indoctrinated into Western culture, but because, in his western journey homeward, he witnesses and brings with him the sad record of Western expansion and the environmental devastation that piles up in its wake. Troubling to his own people, Nobody's hybridity is also clearly monstrous for whites.
> (Nieland, 187)

As we could see in the example of Zitkala Sa, people were left in between cultures; not white, but also not Native anymore. They spend their lives as something in-between, a hybrid that is not proof of a healthy form of assimilation but just a symptom of a nation's failed attempt to eradicate Native life on the American continent. However, Nobody's story equally suggests that racism is not an exclusively white trait. "My blood is mixed. [...] This mixture was not respected".

> While Nobody and Blake are both cultural orphans and sites of cross-cultural inscription, Nobody is introduced as already written by the West, endowed with a hybridized subjectivity and depth that distance him from Blake, a "blank page" awaiting inscription. (Nieland, 186)

Blake picks up his identity from various characters and instances throughout the movie. Nevertheless, the most important counterpart and subject of projection is Nobody. He introduces several layers of Blake's developing characters. "When Nobody first speaks to Blake after noticing his injury, he shouts, "'Stupid fucking white man.' No translation is required" (Cummings, 68). Nobody pronounces what the movie is slowly building on, the impression that Blake stands for the stupid white man. Rosenbaum even attests him that "he never learns anything. He's as uncomprehending about what's happening at the end of the film as he is at the beginning" (Rosenbaum, 36). One could argue about whether he really learns anything or not, since he does not only remember the Blakian line he recites when killing the marshals, but also improves his shooting skills. However, it is unquestioned that any of Blake's developments are unintended, but merely a reaction to what is projected onto him. Likewise, we learn from the first encounter with Nobody that Blake is a dead man, giving us a first impression of what is behind the ominous title.

> Nobody: There is white man's metal next to your heart. I tried to cut it out, but it's too deep inside. My knife would cut your heart instead and release the spirit from within.
>
> Did you kill the white man that killed you?
> Blake: I'm not dead.

The bullet in his chest seals his fate - somehow a manifest destiny - that corresponds with the numerous premonitions and signs of death encountered so

far. This makes the character of Blake the one who also represents the Western Indian as well as the fate of the Vanishing American.

The roles of Nobody and Blake are not simply swapped or inverted, though, which probably would have created an equally stereotypical image of whites and Natives alike. Nobody mostly represents a positive example of an educated and eloquent Native American, but without falling back into the classic noble savage patterns. Nevertheless, also Nobody incorporates negative, mainly white traits, for example the genre-immanent racism, calling Blake and other whites constantly 'stupid fuckin' white man'. Equally racist are his remarks about white people when he tells the story of his captivity.

> Nobody: I was taken to Toronto, then Philadelphia, and then to New York. And each time I arrived in another city, somehow the white men had moved all their people there ahead of me. Each new city contained the same white people as the last. And I could not understand how a whole city of people could be moved so quickly.

"His remark […] inverts one of the oldest and most degrading imperialist stereotypes: the 'Other'- whether 'Oriental', 'Indian', or 'African'- as an indistinguishable, non-individualised part of a threatening and faceless mass" (Gurr, "Native Cites Back", 197). However, there are even some instances where Nobody seems to play the naïve Indian, for example in the scene where he learns about Blake's name. Nobody acts as if he really believed him to be the dead poet William Blake. Compared to Nobody's education and experiences, this reaction appears somewhat implausible, and should probably be understood as mocking.

The audience soon learns that 'Nobody' is of course not his real name, but only the name this Native gave himself. This marks another interesting aspect that I have already covered in previous sections, namely the power of names and naming. Being able to name oneself implies a certain integrity usually not encountered in Native characters in classic Westerns. There is a tradition of naming 'the Others' and simultaneously undermining their ability to speak for and name themselves. Nobody, by consciously having chosen his own name, not only regains his integrity, but also suggests that a Native can call himself whatever he

wants to, because the white man does not recognize it anyway (because he already is a 'Nobody' in America). This is exactly what we see in the scene when Nobody introduces himself to Bill Blake.

> Blake: What is your name?
> Nobody: (hesitating) My name is Nobody. My name is Exebuche, he who talks loud saying nothing.
> Blake: He who talks … I thought you said your name was Nobody?
> Nobody: Well, I prefer to be called Nobody.

Although Blake is puzzled, he does not seem to recognize the obvious peculiarity of his opposite's name of choice. Furthermore, he does not even ask why his name is "He who talks loud saying nothing", or why he calls himself "Nobody"; he just accepts the fact. Equally confused seems Blake's reaction in a previous scene, when Nobody finds out about his own name, William Blake. Nobody's astonishment and excitement confuses him; and when exposed to a poem by William Blake, the poet, Blake does not really know what to say.

> Nobody: What name were you given at birth, stupid white man?
> Blake: Blake, William Blake.
> Nobody: Is this a lie, or a white man's trick?
> Blake: No, I am William Blake!
> Nobody: Then you are a dead man!
> Blake: I am sorry, I don't understand.
> Nobody: Is your name really William Blake?
> Blake: Yes.
> Nobody: Every night and every morn
>   Some to misery are born.
>   Every morn and every night.
>   Some are born to sweet delight.
>   Some are born to sweet delight,
>   Some are born to endless night.[18]
> Blake: I really don't understand.
> Nobody: But I understand, Willaim Blake. You are a poet and a painter, and now you are a killer of white men.

For various reasons Nobody's reaction to Blake's remarkable name is worth mentioning. First and foremost, "Nobody, regarded as a savage by the white men, [is] the only one in the film well enough acquainted with European culture to be able to recognize the name of one of its major poets" (Moliterno). This can be

---

[18] This is a quote from William Blake's "Auguries of Innocence".

interpreted as counter-caricature of the usual 'white man going Native'-theme, where the white character not only behaves like a Native, but eventually becomes the best Native American around; i.e., Natty Bamppo or Old Shatterhand. Secondly, wearing such a remarkable name, yet not knowing anything about it, perfectly juxtaposes the previous point I have made about Nobody naming himself. Thirdly, this Blake quote gives us an astonishingly fitting comment on the situation of white and Native people in America; some are born to sweet delight, some are born to endless night. Throughout the story, Jarmusch puts various other Blake quotes in Nobody's mouth. Despite the first quote, the other citations are deliberately not indicated as such. For the predominantly white audience, as well as for his co-traveler, the Blakian aphorisms presented by Nobody sound just like typical Native proverbs. "[C]onversely some of Nobody's own pronouncements sound like the poetry of Blake" (Rosenbaum, 74). The combination of Nobody's colloquialisms and William Blake quotes keep his namesake constantly uncomprehending.

> Nobody: Don't let the sun burn a hole in your ass, William Blake. Rise now drive your cart and plow over the bones of the dead.[19]

> Blake: What? What did you say? You know I have it up to here with this Indian molarkey. I haven't understood a single word you've said since I met you. Not one single word.

In another scene, Nobody informs Blake that they are being followed, who in return asks him what to do. Nobody snappishly answers: "The eagle never lost so much time as when he submitted to learn from the crow". This intertextuality exemplifies how much sophistication is behind some of Jarmusch's little details. Above the mere humorous effect of this sound bite, this quote also has to offer a sarcastic remark on white/Native relations. When the eagle stands for America -it is the US' heraldic animal - and the crow stands for Native Americans - a common clan animal amongst Natives- this line obviously comments in this context on the whites's ignorance of Native wisdom. Furthermore, this is also a very well hidden reference to the fireman's suggestion that Blake has come "all the way out here to hell"; Nobody's citing from "Proverbs of Hell" emphasizes the idea that Blake and Nobody are actually there. The intertextuality in this scene also epitomizes

---

[19] This is from William Blake's "Marriage of Heaven and Hell".

Jarmusch's inversion of another pivotal Western stereotype; the mutilated 'ugh and how' talk of celluloid Indians. In most Westerns, the Native characters hardly ever speak the language they are supposed to. Even if Native Americans are playing the Indians, most directors do not bother to pay attention to the authenticity of the Native utterances or what indigenous language that is, since the mainly white audience could not make a distinction anyway; a fact that Jarmusch resents:

> Jarmusch: I think it's in *The Searchers* where John Ford had some Indians who were supposedly Comanche, but cast Navajos who spoke Navajo. It's kind of like saying, 'Yes, I know they are supposed to be French people, but I could only get Germans, and no one will know the difference.
> (Rosenbaum, 47)

Hence, it is not surprising that Jarmusch has paid much attention to the genuineness of the Native languages used in the movie.[20] Even more so, the conscious refusal to subtitle any of the Native utterances was Jarmusch's gift to the Native communities, as he explains in the interview with Rosenbaum (c.f. Rosenbaum, 23). This is "a rare filmic instance of the privileging of an American Indian audience" (Cummings, 68). I may append here that this perfectly corresponds with my previous interpretation that the movie can only be fully comprehended from a Native point of view.

However, the Blake quotes are not only used as critique of the Western. The references to the English poet also reinforce the impression that Blake is in fact a dead man. For the storyline it does not really matter if William Blake is the resurrection, or if he is just wearing the name of a dead person. Both facts give him an aura of death - comparable to the one of Native Americans - making him appear more like a ghost than a real person. This impression is equally fostered by Blake's lack of background, attitude, or any other information on the young accountant from Cleveland, Ohio. However, Blake slowly adapts to the reinterpretation of the poet identity, which is suggested by Nobody. "That weapon will replace your tongue. You will learn to speak through it. And your poetry will now be written with blood". When they first come across a 'Wanted' poster of Blake during their

---

[20] Jarmusch had recruited a Native cultural advisor and worked hard on the realization of authentic Native dialogues with his team, including Native actors like Gary Farmer (Nobody) and Michelle Thrush (Nobody's fling) who contributed to the realization. (c.f. Rosenbaum 24-25, 35)

journey through the woods, the latter is obviously irritated: "This is complete fabrication!", but "as Blake's fame grows, and the 'wanted' posters of himself that he encounters mark the increasingly long record of his crimes, he begins to accept the identity Nobody has conferred upon him" (Nieland, 188). Before shooting the two marshals, Blake asks them: "Do you know my poetry?", and he even recites a Blake line when he puts one of the severely wounded marshals out of his misery. Asked at the trading post to sign one of his 'Wanted' posters, Blake pierces the missionary's hand with the pen.

> Before executing the missionary, who asks God to damn Blake's soul "to the fires of hell, "Blake remarks flatly: "He already has." This scene codes Blake's transformation as damnation; as both a magnet for the "white man's metal," and a tool of retributive violence against whites, Blake must both account for and mythologize their crimes, writing his poetry, like the tragic history of White-Native relations, in blood.   (Nieland, 188)

Blake's so-called transformation - not even taking his 'killer of white man' identity into account - is further spurred by the weakening conditions due to the gun shot wound in his chest. The closer it gets to the end, the more Blake incorporates Native attributes as well as represents Native Americans in one way or the other. The parallel development of these two transformations slightly blurs their relation, making it unclear whether the dying makes him more of an Indian, or if the collecting of more Native attributes pushes him closer to death. This ambiguity or fuzziness is further stimulated in the scene where Nobody is taking peyote.[21] He paints something on Blake's face, which looks like Native war paint, "causing [Nobody] to hallucinate a skull where his friend's face should be" (Nieland, 187). Blake is doomed to die, but only when Nobody paints his face he suddenly looks like death himself.

> The film illustrates contemporary theoretical notions of hybridity. As far as the 'inscribed body' in a literal sense is concerned, the key inversion lies in the fact that Blake rather than Nobody becomes the 'inscribed body'. Quite apart from the ritual face-painting Nobody leaves on Blake's face, Blake is a "blank page" on which everyone leaves a mark.
> (Gurr, "Native Cites Back", 196)

---

[21] Peyote is a type of cactus that is used ritualistically in many indigenous cultures. It is a psychoactive drug, therefore it is used for vision quests and meditation.

In my point of view, the figures of Nobody and William Blake represent four different types of characters; the two Western clichés of a white and a Native man as well as their reversed, stripped-off stereotypical versions. However, the various qualities are somehow disseminated across these two conflicting characters, so that a clear distinction of who represents what is almost impossible. They, together, represent the typecast and their inverted versions of themselves. I would even suggest that it is not really possible to say who of those two characters is actually the protagonist and who just represents the other's sidekick. Likewise, the question of identification is somewhat unclear, which is maybe the best thing one can say about these two dramatis personae Jarmusch has crafted. In the end, they just represent two people who should be treated according to their character and behavior, not by what they do or do not stand for. However, no matter how Native-friendly most other anti-Westerns are, almost no other director managed to depict a Native character that a white audience could equally identify with, although and/or because Nobody is maybe the most authentic Native characters in the American Western.

When Blake finds a gun under Thel's pillow, he asks her why she has this. Her answer is: "'Cos this is America" (24). Only instances later, Thel's ex-lover, Dickinson's son, storms the room, and Blake is about to find out why one needs a gun in the Wild West. After Thel and Blake are shot, Blake himself kills the attacker and starts his getaway. Yet, Blake's performance is everything else but elegant. He needs three shots to kill his opponent (who shot him and killed Thel with only one shot), and equally clumsy is his flight out of the window, which is more characterized by falling than by climbing out.

> Every time someone fires a gun at someone else in the film, the gesture is awkward, unheroic, pathetic; it's an act that leaves a mess and is deprived of any pretence at existential purity, creating a sense of embarrassment and overall discomfort in the viewer that is the reserve of what ensues from the highly aestheticised forms of violence that have become de rigueur in commercial Hollywood [...] and which have recently been revitalised by Tarantino.[22]   (Rosenbaum, 38-39)

Even the killings of the bounty hunter - "the film's most unsettling character, the sociopathic and infamous "killer of men and Injuns," Cole Wilson (Lance Henrickson)" (Nieland, 180) - are everything else but heroic. He shoots both his fellow killers in the back, which is usually against the pride of a gunman. However, most disturbingly, though, is what Jarmusch shows us next. After Wilson shoots Johnny "the Kid" Pickett (Eugene Byrd), "Jarmusch's camera holds disturbingly on the blood emptying slowly from the slain bounty hunter's head into a small pool of water" (Nieland, 180). Cole Wilson and Mr. Dickinson represent the classic, old Western villains, brutal and uncompromising as the West(ern) itself. Yet, they both incorporate character traits and habits which are usually associated with the Western's favorite enemy, the brutish Indians. Mr. Dickinson, for example, is characterized by his remorselessness and deceitful behavior. He tells the bounty hunters they would work on an exclusive basis; yet, as soon as they leave his office he informs the marshals and orders to put up 'Wanted' posters. Cole Wilson is drawn as psychopath who allegedly "fucked his parents [...] killed them, cooked

---

[22] Quentin Tarantino is a famous American director and actor. He became famous with *Pulp Fiction* (1994), one of the movies which re-introduced excessive and stylized brutality to (American) cinema. I may append here that Rosenbaum published his book on *Dead Man* in 2000, long before Tarantino published the *Kill Bill* (2003, 2004) sequel or *Inglorious Bastards* (2009).

them up and ate them". What could have been one of the urban legends around a famous gunman of the Wild West - especially because the story is delivered by the notoriously babbling Convey Twill (Michael Wincott) - turns out to be true. When Twill informs Cole that he has always seen him as Germany or Austria, Cole shoots his companion. In the next scene we see him chewing on an arm, flapping back and forth while Cole is eating on it. The figure of Wilson follows the old clichés that Indians do not only engage in incestuous relationships, but that they are also cannibals. However, the shooting of Twill after calling him a German or Austrian clearly indicates Jarmusch's intention to compare the reckless murderer Cole Wilson to Hitler. But more importantly, he consciously compares the Native genocide to the Holocaust "and thus drastically sheds a new light on all the other references to genocide in the film" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 12). Although comparisons to Hitler are much more frequently used in the US than in Europe – even President Barack Obama has been called Hitler for his health care program - this reference may appear too daring. Gurr has added a footnote to the last quote in which he declares that "[he is] not arguing that the film here engages in any kind of problematic comparison or setting off of one genocide with another" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 12). In the context of a movie set in the 1870s, the reference is obviously an anachronism, which undoubtedly softens the otherwise 'harsh' comparison. Yet, I would argue that everything in the movie suggests that Jarmusch asks for the acknowledgment of the Native genocide; a reference to Nazi Germany assures that his point comes across, but claiming that Jarmusch wants to do more than marking the mass-slaughter of Natives would appear as over-interpreting here.

The topic of institutionalized racism is undoubtedly present in the movie. Apart form the Western as the popular culture expression of it, we find numerous side blows against industrialization, capitalism, or the Westward Movement in *Dead Man*. All those developments are said to have negative effects on the indigenous population, but they are characterized through the passivizing of racism, taking responsibility away from the individual. An institution that is openly attacked in *Dead Man* is Christianity. Although the involvement of the church in residential schools finds no reference in *Dead Man*, Jarmusch denunciates the undeniable complicity of the church in the spread of smallpox and consumption. In

the scene where Blake and Nobody visit the trading post, we learn from Nobody about the dangers of blankets. The racist reverend, who runs the trading post, refuses to sell Nobody any tobacco, but he offers him a blanket instead, which Nobody just answers with a sad, but knowing grin. The theme of the passive violence of the Church is further supported by the reverend advertizing ammunition, which is said to have been blessed by the archbishop of Detroit. Jarmusch rounds up his criticism of the church with another Blake quote. When the reverend sees Nobody entering his tent, he mumbles:

> Reverent: Now Lord Jesus Christ wash this earth with his holy light.
> And purge this darkest places from heathen and philistines.
> Nobody: The vision of Christ that thou dost see, is my vision's greatest enemy.

When Mr. Dickinson hires the three bounty hunters, he calls them the "finest killer[s] of *man and Injuns* on this here half of the world" (my emphasis), suggesting that Indians are not humans. Mr. Dickinson verbalizes the classic stereotypes about indigenous people, although "the role of the raw, universally destructive and literally cannibalistic barbarians is clearly allocated to a number of white characters" (Gurr, "Native Cites back", 195). The trappers shooting buffalo out of the train wagon, the inhabitants of the town Machine, or the three trappers, who supposedly want to rape Blake, all those figures amount to "an unremittingly dark representation of whiteness; moreover, white civilization, and indeed, all forms of social organization are anarchic, primitive, and disturbingly feral" (Nieland, 177).

Notwithstanding the destructiveness of White America presented in this motion picture, "*Dead Man* contains no portrayals of the victimization of American Indians, the mise-en-scene is littered with evidence of genocide - ruined teepees, abandoned villages, and charred corpses" (Cummings, 67). The audience encounters no active murder of Native people whatsoever, apart from one (cf. Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 4). Nobody is killed in the end; and that is the exception.

4.5 THE GENOCIDE WILL NOT BE TELEVISED

Through Blake's eyes the audience is served the first piece of evidence of Native genocide. The burned-down tepees that Blake seems to casually watch while passing, indicate how delicately this subject is dealt with in *Dead Man*. Jarmusch offers many little hints and insertions, but he leaves it to the audience to put together the uncommented shots, little side notes and references to Native American genocide. The tepees, for example, were the typical housing of Native people of the Great Plains. Showing the charred Native dwellings implies that the train, and therefore Westward movement, has progressed already far enough to eradicate Native life in this particular region. This is further suggested by Nobody's story; he is originally from the Plains, but now lives on the Northwest coast. Also the buffalo-shooting scene emphasizes this, because "no buffalo, no Indians" (Rosenbaum, 27). This casts a rather different light on the fireman's explanation: "Government says they killed a million of them, last year alone". All those details are not actually shown in *Dead Man*, what we see are just some burned-down tepees along the railroad. Yet, this scene introduces the audience to a crucial mode of this motion picture, and that is "the consistent use of point-of-view shots designed to align the spectator with Blake, the character whose sight is challenged and enriched" (Nieland, 182). Even more so, Blake is not the only perspective the audience is exposed to; Jarmusch provides another important standpoint to the (predominantly white) audience, namely that of a Native person. In order to challenge and ultimately enrich the audience's sight, viewers are introduced to Nobody, a Native American whose appearing also raises the question of who the protagonist of the story actually is; but I shall return to this later in my paper. Those points of view, shot from either Blake or Nobody's perspective, establish a certain self-consciousness for subjectivity and different positions we rarely encounter in a Western. I would even interpret this as subtle criticism of American historiography, which has traditionally left out the perspective of the other side, especially that of the Native American.

Another scene that supports this notion of subjectivity and the limits of one's own point of view is the scene where the trappers suddenly start shooting out of the train wagon's windows. The fireman informs us that "[t]hey are shooting buffalo". Yet, what we see are just some trappers shooting out of the window, but

not one buffalo, neither dead, nor alive. This "dissociation of word and image" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 10) does not only support the point about the limits of perspective - we expect buffaloes to be there, but we can just see trappers shooting - it is a crucial tool for Jarmusch's presentation of the Native genocide. "Throughout the entire film, the verbal references are virtually never reinforced by any visual impressions" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 11). Since the verbal references and the according pictures are almost exclusively kept apart, the director is able to present the extinction of the indigenous population in almost every scene. However, the only time when the visual and the textual level are in fact synchronized is the flashback-scene when Nobody tells Blake the story of his captivity.

This 'dissociation of word and image', and its exceptional status just presented, suggest the interpretation that the Native American perspective is needed in order to put together the jigsaw puzzle of countless pictures and verbal references to the Native genocide we find disseminated throughout the movie. This very poetic form of criticism that asks for the acknowledging of the Native perspective has yet another interesting repercussion on the atmosphere of the movie.

> This visual representation of such images of destruction without any verbal commentary is frequently highly effective and haunting, arguably more so than conventional treatment with a correspondence of word and image could have been.   (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 11)

Jim Jarmusch's movie visualizes what American society is haunted by, the omnipresence of a Native genocide that has been kept deadly quiet for such a long time. Apart from the uncommented visual references, we also find various verbal allusions that find no optical realization in the movie. The episode about the infected blankets pointedly highlights the veiled threat of Native extinction. Looking down at a trading post, Nobody informs Blake what the place represents for him and his people.

> Nobody: White man's trading post. Indians get diseases there.
> Blake: What do you mean?
> Nobody: Smallpox, consumption, blankets are infected. Spreads to the
>   villages.

The undetectable viruses that have been transmitted via these blankets again support the notion of this invisible force that is working against the indigenous people. This supports the feeling that our protagonist duo is either secretly accompanied by death, or even that one of them is death himself.

Jim Jarmusch provides us with so many small details that it seems almost impossible to grasp all of *Dead Man* when watching it for the first time. The human brain is not capable of deciphering the single pictures of this film, though conscious that each second is composed of at least twenty-four single shots. The sheer impossibility of total perception adds another layer of uncanniness to this film. The well-crafted visual and textual depiction of this topic, with all its sophisticated juxtapositions and references clearly indicates that

> America [...] is haunted by the genocide that presided over its conquest, one thing that makes *Dead Man* a haunted film is a sense of this enormity crawling around the edges, informing every moment and every gesture, without ever quite taking centre stage. (Rosenbaum, 21)

Therefore, I would not only consider *Dead Man* a haunted movie, but a perfect example of what I consider a Native American Gothic movie. The extinction of indigenous cultures is always present, yet "the horror is not visualized" (Gurr, "Mass-Slaughter", 10).

In this paper I endeavored to show that whenever we encounter a Native American character in a film or novel it is haunted by Native genocide. This constant presence of death creates a particular atmosphere for the text, which I call the Native American Gothic.

Over the last five hundred years the Native's literary doppelgänger has developed its own characteristics, mostly far from realistic when compared to actual Native people. However, we cannot understand this parallel development as independent existence, since myths and clichés inevitably influence those whom they depict. Naturally, some of the characteristics the Native of literature and film has developed, unfortunately build on facts, i.e. the genocide of indigenous life on the American continent. American historiography and literature has successfully propagated the myths about the Native Americans which have fostered this legacy of death, reducing them to a literary cenotaph, a mere Gothic element that haunts American literature. The figure of the Native American works like a Gothic monster, representing the suppressed evilness of society rather than actual indigenous people.

The Gothic is known for its subversive character, thematizing those topics in a society that people try to repress. What haunts a society reverberates in this literary genre, working as a dry run of processing what moral codes forbid and society has failed to incorporate. Therefore, whenever we encounter a Native character in a novel or movie, s/he does not represent an authentic indigenous person, but just the morally depraved self of the white readership.

The Native genocide has haunted America for a long time; hence it is not surprising that attempts to deal with it have equally drawn back on classic Gothic tropes and themes. However, one of the major problems with the depiction of the Native American is in fact that s/he is limned as Gothic element, which even emphasizes the uncanny aura of Native Americans. A long time ago the cliché version of the Native gained the upper hand, and in order to produce an authentic depiction of an indigenous person nowadays, it is necessary to challenge and

invert those old conventions. With the analysis of *Monkey Beach* and *Dead Man* I tried to show that even stories that attempt to depict realistic Native characters, inevitably have to draw back on the old stereotypes about Native people.

Eden Robinson's novel as well as Jim Jarmusch's movie work within the same framework of reference. I assume that Eden Robinson as a First Nation writer has tried to produce authentic Native characters. Jarmusch, on the other hand, has focused on challenging the stereotypes of indigenous people that are transported in Westerns. Yet, the analysis of both the novel and the motion picture suggests that that there is indeed a common ground of stereotypes on which both whites and Natives have to draw on.

Both works start with a death premonition that constitutes a frame for the story. This enables the authors to approximate the constant threat of extinction that Native Americans have to bear. This omen creates an aura of death that qualifies all the twists and turns of the story. This classic Gothic trope is playing with the most prevailing fear of humanity, the inevitability of death.

Robinson and Jarmusch have equally incorporated corresponding references to the same old stereotypes of Native Americans as I describe in the first chapter. There are allusions to the Indian as godless and brutish animal of the woods, or as treacherous and simple-minded creatures not even averse to cannibalism or incest. This de-humanizing picture basically represents the negative side of a morally ideal Christian, creating the ultimate monster for white society. In *Dead Man* and in *Monkey Beach* the warning this monster stands for is inversed. Eden Robinson provides us with a different subject of 'Othering', the Sasquatch or b'gwus, whereas Jim Jarmusch simply turns the camera around, showing the audience the brutal and reckless white people from the perspective of an educated Native man. However, both authors put a mirror in front of the audience, showing that evil does not just come out of the woods, but that it is in every society and every person. Likewise both authors propagate a condemnation of the colonizer in general, and the Church as its humble servant in particular.

Another important resemblance is the hybridity of the two Native characters. Lisamarie and Nobody both are torn between their Native ancestry and Western culture, which is partly voluntary partly imposed on them. Furthermore,

both texts show a certain form of authorial reticence, providing the audience with highly biased points of view. Yet, what in other genres would be considered as flaw, is here the key to an authentic representation of Natives, acknowledging the subjective point of view that is the basis of integrity the Native American lacks in white America. Both Native protagonists are characterized by their diverse, sometimes peculiar personalities, but this also makes them more authentic, which brings me to my next point.

I discuss the question of whether whites are allowed to comment on Native American issues, and if it is possible as 'bystander' to comment on the authenticity of Native characters. I claim that there is one easy way of finding out; if the reader can identify with a character I claim the depiction of this character must be authentic in a way. I personally could identify with Lisamarie and with Nobody, for me both figures are authentic representations of human beings, therefore Native Americans. Besides wrong accents and attires, or pseudo indigenous myths, I am convinced that most Native critiques would settle for genuinely human subjects for a start, when it comes to the depiction of Native Americans in literature and film. The rest is mere detail.

Summing up, my analysis demonstrates that, firstly, it is irrelevant whether a white movie director creates a Native character stripped off its old stereotypes, or if a Haisla writer presents authentic Native figures; they can both depict authentic Native Americans. Secondly, the Native genocide haunts whites and Natives alike; therefore it should be of mutual interest to process this shameful part of history from both sides. *Dead Man* and *Monkey Beach* are two impressive examples of how this could be done. Thirdly, it is inevitable not to drift off into the realm of Gothic when dealing with Native Americans. Even more so, the exceptional status in American history and historiography, the legacy of being the anti-thesis of white America, and of course the disgraceful genocide of indigenous people give the Native American a specific uncanniness amongst the white readership, which I call Native American Gothic.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Dead Man. Written and directed by Jim Jarmusch. DVD. 12 Gauge Inc., 1995.

Robinson, Eden. *Monkey Beach.* London: Abacus, 2000.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Andrews, Jennifer. "Native Canadian Gothic Refigured: Reading Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 73 (Spring 2001): 1-24.

Appleford, Rob. "'Close, very close a B'gwus howls': The Contingency of Execution in Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*." *Canadian Literature* 184 (Spring 2005): 85-103.

Atwood, Margaret. "Canadian Monsters: Some Aspects of the Supernatural in Canadian Fiction." *The Canadian Imagination: Dimensions of a Literary Culture. The Canadian Imagination: Dimensions of a Literary Culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1977. 1-21.

Atwood, Thomas A., and Wade M. Lee. "The Price of Deviance: Schoolhouse Gothic in Prep School Literature." *Children's Literature* 35 (2007): 102-29.

Berkhofer, Robert F. Jr., *The White Man's Indian*: *Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

-----. "Cultural Pluralism Versus Ethnocentricism in the New Indian History." *The American Indian and the Problem of History*. Ed. Calvin Martin. New York: Oxford UP, 1987. 27-45.

Botting, Fred. "In Gothic Darkly: Heterotopia, History, Culture." *A Companion to the Gothic.* Ed. David Punter. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 3-14.

Briggs, Julia. "The Gothic Story." *A Companion to the Gothic.* Ed. David Punter. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 122-31.

Brown, Charles Brockden. *Edgar Huntley or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker.* 1799. New York, NY: Burt Franklin, 1970.

Bruchac, Joseph. "Contemporary Native American Writing: An Overview." *Handbook of Native American Literature.* Ed. Andrew Wiget. New York, NY: Garland Publ., 1996. 311-27.

Crevecoeur, Hector St. John de. *Letters From an American Farmer.* 1793. Ed. Warren Barton Blake. London: Dent, 1945.

Churchill, Ward. *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians*. Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1992.

Cummings, Denise K. "'Accessible Poetry'? Cultural Intersection and Exchange in Contemporary American Indian and American Independent Film." *Representation of American Indians in Contemporary Narrative Fiction Film.* Ed. Denise K. Cummings. *Studies in American Indian Literature* 13 (Spring 2001): 57-80.

Davidson, Cathy. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 2: The Time Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. Minneapolis, MN: U of Minnesota P, 1989, 254–55.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago, IL: U of Chicago P, 1995.

-----. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. New York, NY: Routledge, 1994.

Elmer, Jonathan. "The Archive, the Native American, and Jefferson's Convulsions." *Diacritics* 28 (Winter 1998): 5–24.

Fiedler, Leslie. *Love and Death in the American Novel.* New York, NY: Criterion, 1960.

Fixico, Donald Lee. Introduction. *American Indians in a Modern World.* Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2008. xiii-xviii.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud.* Ed. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 17 London: Hogarth, 1953. 219-52.

Gallagher, Tag. "Angles Gamble Where They Will: John Ford's Indians". *The Western Reader.* Ed. Jim Kitses and Gregg Rickman. New York, NY: Limelight Editions, 1998. 269-76.

Goddu, Theresa. *Gothic America: Narrative, History and Nation.* New York, NY: Columbia UP, 1997.

Gurr, Jens M. "The Mass-Slaughter of Native Americans in Jim Jarmusch's *Dead Man*: A Complex Interplay of Word and Image." *Proceedings of the 2006 "Word and Image" Conference of ASNE*. Ed. Michael Meyer. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.

-----. "The 'Native' Cites Back: Post-Colonial Theory and the Politics of Jim Jarmusch's Western *Dead Man*." *Anglistentag 2006 Halle*. Ed. Sabine Volk-Birke and Julia Lippert. Trier: WVT, 2007. 191-202.

Halpin, Marjorie. "Tsimshian Monkey Mask and the Sasquatch." *Manlike Monsters on Trial: Early Records and Modern Evidence*. Ed. Michael M. Ames and Marjorie Halpin. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980. 211-28.

Hoberman, J. "How the Western Was Lost." *The Western Reader.* Ed. Jim Kitses and Gregg Rickman. New York, NY: Limelight Editions, 1998. 85-92.

Jennings, Francis. *The Founders of America: From the Earliest Migration to the Present.* New York, NY: Norton, 1994.

Katanski, Amelia V. *Learning to Write "Indian": The Boarding-School Experience and American Indian Literature.* Norman, OK: U of Oklahoma P, 2006.

Kilcup, Karen L. Introduction. *Native American Women's Writing, 1800-1924*: An Anthology. Ed. Karen L. Kilcup. Malden, MA: Blackwell Anthologies, 2000. 1-12.

Kilpatrick, Jacquelyn. *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film.* Lincoln, NE: U of Nebraska P, 1999.

Kitses, Jim. "Authorship and Genre: Notes on the Western." *The Western Reader.* Ed. Jim Kitses and Gregg Rickman. New York, NY: Limelight Editions, 1998. 57-68.

Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection.* Ney York, NY: Columbia UP, 1980.

Krupat, Arnold. Introduction. *The Voice in the Margin: Native American Literature and the Canon.* Berkeley, CA: U of Califorina P, 1989. 3-21.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidefeld and Nicolson, 1966.

Lindsay, Vachel. *The Art of the Moving Picture*. 1915. New York: The Modern Library, 2000.

Lloyd-Smith, Allen. *American Gothic: An Introduction.* New York, NY: Continuum, 2004.

-----. "Nineteenth-Century American Gothic." *A Companion to the Gothic.* Ed. David Punter. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 109-21.

Martin, Calvin. Introduction. *The American Indian and the Problem of History.* Ed. Calvin Martin. New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1987. 3-26.

Martin, Robert K., and Eric Savoy. "The Face of the Tenant: A Theory of American Gothic." *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative.* Ed. Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy. Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 1998. 3-19.

Massè, Michelle A. "Psychoanalysis and the Gothic." *A Companion to the Gothic.* Ed. David Punter. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000. 229-41.

Mihelich, John. "Smoke or Signals? American Popular Culture and the Challenge to Hegemonic Images of American Indians in Native American Film." *Wicazo Sa Review* 16 (Fall 2001): 129-37.

Moers, Ellen. *Literary Women: The Great Writers*. 1976. New York, NY: Oxford UP, 1985

Moliterno, Gino. *"Dead Man." Senses of Cinema: An Online Film Journal Devoted to the Serious and Eclectic Discussion of Cinema* 14 (June 2001, online journal) www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/cteq/01/14/dead_man.html (accessed May 7, 2010).

Nieland, Justus. "Graphic Violence: Native Americans and the Western Archive in *Dead Man." The New Centennial Review* 1 (Fall 2001): 171-200.

Punter, David, and Glennis Byron. *The Gothic*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Rosenbaum, Jonathan. *Dead Man*. London: British Film Institute, 2000.

Ruoff, A. LaVonne Brown. "Native American Writing: Beginnings to 1967." *Handbook of Native American Literature.* Ed. Andrew Wiget. New York, NY: Garland Publ., 1996. 145-54.

Ruppert, James. "Indians in Anglo-American Literature, 1492 to 1990." *Handbook of Native American Literature.* Ed. Andrew Wiget. New York, NY: Garland Publ., 1996. 383-93.

Stromberg, Ernest. "Resistance and Mediation: The Rhetoric of Irony in Indian Boarding School Narratives by Francis La Flesche and Zitkala-Sa." *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic.* Ed. Ernest Stromberg. Pittsburgh, PA: Pittsburgh UP, 2006. 95-109.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Democracy in America*. 1835. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000.

Truffin, Sherry R. *Schoolhouse Gothic: Haunted Hallways and Predatory Pedagogues in Late Twentieth-Century American Literature and Scholarship.* Diss. Loyola U of Chicago. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI, 2002.

Veeder, William. "The Nurture of the Gothic, or How Can a Text Be Both Popular and Subversive?" *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative.* Ed. Robert K. Martin and Eric Savoy. Iowa City, IA: U of Iowa P, 1998. 20-39.

Velie, Alan R. "Gerald Vizenor's Indian Gothic." *MELUS* 17 (Spring 1991-spring 1992): 75-85.

Washburn, Wilcomb E., and Bruce G. Trigger. "Native Peoples in Euro-American Historiography." *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas.* Ed. Bruce G. Trigger and Wilcomb E. Washburn. New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1996. 61-124.

Yarsinske, Amy Waters. *No One Left Behind: The Lt. Comdr. Michael Scott Speicher Story*. New York, NY: New American Library. 2002.

In my paper I show that the Native American occupies a very special position in American literature and film. Based on the tradition of misrepresentation and Native genocide, it has become impossible to depict a Native American without drawing on Gothic themes and tropes. The constant threat of extinction has diminished the Native American to a mere Gothic element. Therefore, whenever a Native character is depicted, it has a Gothic effect on the white audience, comparable to the classic Gothic monsters like Frankenstein's monsters or Vampires. I call this effect Native American Gothic.

In the first chapter I summarize the most important historical facts that influenced the misnomers and misconceptions of Native Americans. I show that many of the prevailing stereotypes are mostly based on the sixteenth century accounts about America's indigenous people.

In the second part I give an overview on the development of the Gothic genre, because, on the one hand, the depiction of Native Americans incorporates similar themes and tropes. On the other hand, the Gothic and its tradition of subversively criticizing the repressed problems of society makes it the perfect genre to challenge and deconstruct the cliché of the Native American in American literature and film. Moreover, despite the generally haunting atmosphere American literature is said to have, the Native has played a significant role in the development of the American Gothic. As the first genuinely American Gothic theme, the Native American has not only become America's first literary enemy, but has developed to the ultimate 'Other' for U.S. society.

In the third section I analyze Eden Robinson's *Monkey Beach*. I demonstrate that even a First Nation writer explores the Gothic effect that the Native has on the white readership, owing to the fact that in order to create an authentic depiction of Native characters, it a necessity to deconstruct the old clichés. With my analysis of *Dead Man* I show in the last chapter of my paper that Jim Jarmusch's deconstructed version of a Western draws on the exact same stereotypical depictions Eden Robinson has used in her novel. Despite their different (ethnic) background, both writers work with the same image of indigenous people, based on the stereotypes that have developed since the sixteenth century.

In meiner Arbeit zeige ich auf, dass Amerikas indigene Völker eine ganz spezielle Position in amerikanischer Literatur und Filmkunst einnehmen. Das Bild des „Native American" basiert auf jahrhundertelangen Fehldarstellungen und einer von Massenmord geprägten Geschichte. Der amerikanische ‚Indianer', wie wir ihm in Literatur und Film begegnen, ist reduziert auf seinen mystischen Effekt den er auf die hauptsächlich weiße Leserschaft hat. Vergleichbar mit literarischen Figuren wie Frankensteins Monster oder Vampiren, stellt der ‚Indianer' längst nicht mehr eine bestimmte Ethnie dar, sondern bloß das Gegenstück zum perfekten amerikanischen Puritaner.

Im ersten Kapitel fasse ich die historischen wichtigsten Ereignisse zusammen, welche Einfluss auf die Fehldarstellung und die stereotypischen Bezeichnungen der amerikanischen indigenen Völker hatten. Weiters zeige ich, dass die heutige Darstellung des ‚Native American' großteils auf den im sechzehnten Jahrhundert entwickelten Konzepten basieren.

Im zweiten Teil meiner Arbeit beschäftige ich mich mit der Entwicklung des Genres, welches besonders wichtig ist für meine These ist, die sogenannte „Gothic". Erstens funktioniert die Darstellung des ‚Natives' wie die üblichen Elemente dieses Genres. Zweitens ist die „Gothic' vor allem dafür bekannt, die unterdrückten Themen einer Gesellschaft literarisch aufzuarbeiten. Daher stellt sie die ideale literarische Gattung für eine Dekonstruktion der stereotypischen Darstellung der amerikanischen indigenen Völker dar.

Im dritten Kapitel widme ich mich der Analyse von Eden Robinsons *Monkey Beach*. Hier zeige ich, dass selbst eine Autorin indigener Herkunft nicht umher kommt, sich auf dieselben alten Klischees zu beziehen, die sich seit dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert in den Köpfen von Europäern und ihren amerikanischen Nachfahren festgesetzt haben.

Im letzten Teil meiner Arbeit analysiere ich Jim Jarmuschs *Dead Man*, ein Antiwestern, der versucht durch das bewusste Dekonstruieren der alten Klischees das lang stillgeschwiegene Thema Genozid anzusprechen, und weiters dabei den vielleicht ersten wirklich authentischen ‚Indianer' in einem Western darstellt.

ZUR PERSON

Florian P. Sidlo, geboren am 06.12.1981 in Wien

SCHULE

1988-1992	Volkschule Schulbrüder Strebersdorf
1992-2000	GRg 21 Franklinstrasse 21

STUDIUM

2001- 2003	Architekturstudium an der Technische Universität Wien
seit 2003	Lehramtsstudium Englisch und Geschichte, Sozialkunde und Politische Bildung an der Universität Wien

AUSLANDSERFAHRUNGEN

Jänner -Juli 2008	Auslandssemester an der University of Chicago, USA
April 2000	Sprachaufenthalt in Toronto, Canada

BERUFSERFAHRUNG UND ZUSÄTZLICHE QUALIFIKATIONEN

seit September 2009	Vertragslehrer im Abendgymnasium Henriettenplatz
2009	Sight and Sound Studio (Englisch Konversation)
2003-2008	Verkehrsbüro: Tätigkeit in der Gastronomie (Nebenjob)
2001-2004	Ferialjob am Flughafen Wien

SPRACHKENNTNISSE

Deutsch (Muttersprache)

Englisch (Studienabschluss)