Among various destinations for travel and emigration, the United States of America has always had a very special fascination for Germans. While the nineteenth century saw several waves of emigration from the German lands to the United States – the US was the single most important destination for German emigrants in the nineteenth century – interest in the New World was not limited to real and realistic experiences. On the contrary, America also provided a space for German fantasies of any sort. Reality and imagination were blended together in the discussion of topics ranging from the United States’ political structures to issues of modernity, images of the land of plenty and its bountiful nature. The fascination with America’s native population played an important role in this preoccupation and fueled the German imagination unlike any other topic. It seems like everybody had something to say about Indianer. Contributions ranged from fictional romantic accounts of the Noble Savage – certainly influenced by James Fenimore Cooper’s Leatherstocking tales – to travelogues and popular scientific accounts of Indian cultures and languages to innumerable sketches and paintings. The authors of these works came from very diverse backgrounds – working-class emigrants writing letters home about their experiences, travel writers such as Charles Sealsfield or Friedrich Gerstäcker, explorers like Prince Maximilian zu Wied, or numerous armchair adventurers who never even visited the United States. Even though generalizing about such a vast amount of texts is difficult, it seems that most of these accounts, particularly earlier in the century, sketched a favorable picture of America’s native population. The image of the noble savage dominated well into the nineteenth century, later to be partly replaced with sympathy for what was perceived as a «dying race.» This portrayal of Native Americans found its peak in Karl May’s works, most famously in his Winnetou trilogy.

However, not everybody subscribed to the idea of the dying, yet noble Indian. Friedrich J. Pajeken’s (1855–1920) oeuvre, for instance, stands as witness to the contrary. The offspring of a Bremen merchant family, Pajeken followed suit and joined a trading company in his hometown, which sent him on
Nicole Grewling

his first trip overseas to Venezuela in 1876. After spending three years in Ciudad Bolívar, where he met South American Indians, he moved to the United States and lived on a farm in the Bighorn Mountains. His proclaimed goal was to get to know and study North American Indians («Abenteuerliteratur»). Pajeken lived the life of a hunter and trader on the frontier, interacting with several native tribes. As legend has it, Native Americans gave him the war name «Yellow Eagle,» due to his yellowish skin color and because he killed an eagle with a masterly shot. After spending two years on the frontier, Pajeken returned to Germany, utterly disillusioned about his experiences. He began writing adventure literature for young readers about life in the Wild West, with the explicit goal of correcting their romantic notions of the frontier and enlightening them as to the true nature of the American Indian, who, in his view, was a filthy, lazy, greedy, and bloodthirsty savage who deserved to be displaced and exterminated. Every story, no matter how insignificant the Indians’ role in it is, serves Pajeken as springboard for a repetition of the worst imaginable stereotypes. Yet, in his day, Pajeken was a popular author of youth literature – read by the same generation of readers who also first devoured Karl May’s novels about the «red Gentleman» Winnetou, a complete opposite of Pajeken’s Indians. What had happened to the image of the noble Indian, and how can this divergence be explained?

As has been widely argued elsewhere, attempts to portray natives of foreign countries in a negative fashion often form part of an effort to deny their abilities to govern themselves or their own lands. Relatedly, I argue that this negative picture needs to be understood in the context of Pajeken’s political and historical environment, most notably Germany’s imperial and colonial aspirations, whose impact on Pajeken’s texts I will trace next. The situation at home influenced how Germans perceived their ethnic others and other countries. In connection with these colonial and imperial aspirations, an aggressive imagery of German national and racial superiority was promoted, which fed into a pervasive national discourse. Its origins, however, date back to the times of a preunified Germany.

Susanne Zantop and others have argued that Germans had colonial fantasies long before they acquired actual colonies, and that these fantasies can be traced, for instance, in the ways Germans write about other – in particular non-European – ethnicities. As Zantop has shown in her pioneering study Colonial Fantasies, these fantasies took the shape of a colonial subjectivity and the drive for colonial possessions long before its realization. Colonial desire articulated itself, for instance, in literary texts such as «stories of sexual conquest and surrender, love and blissful domestic relations between colonizer and colonized, set in colonial territory, stories that made the strange fa-
German Heroes of Civilization

According to Zantop, these fantasies are part of the political unconscious of a nation and they can be discovered even in texts that do not explicitly address the topic of colonialism. Zantop writes, «More than any statements of intent or any complex work of high art, colonial fantasies provide access to the ‘political unconscious’ of a nation, to the desires, dreams and myths that inform public discourse and (can) propel collective political action» (3–4). Such narratives of colonial fantasies could appear in any shape or genre, and certainly also in adventure literature for young readers.

However, the meaning of these colonial fantasies involves much more than the obvious – the desire to possess colonies. In addition, they contributed to the construction of a positive German national self, an image that was much needed in the nineteenth century. Struggling with external enemies, striving domestically for modernization and unification, lagging behind other European powers, Germany was politically weaker than other states; it was a latecomer as a nation state and as an imperial power, and therefore maintained a sense of being disadvantaged relative to other European nations. These circumstances resulted in a particular development of German self-perception, evident in thinly veiled insecurity. Yet, while Germans tended to construct themselves as the underdog within Europe, they simultaneously drew a certain amount of self-assurance precisely from this position of being different. In the European context, Germans saw themselves as a vigorous people, not spoiled by civilization as much as other nations, most specifically the French. Thus, they aligned themselves to some extent with those groups of people who had been colonized by other European nations and who displayed these unspoiled qualities to an even greater extent. Simultaneously, the German position of relative political weakness was comparable to that of the colonized, providing the Germans with a further point of identification. Germans thus cast themselves as the oppressed and colonized, as the victims, within Europe – a peculiar self-image that nevertheless asserted an identity.

On the other hand, it was precisely Germany’s lack of actual colonial experience that caused other kinds of colonial fantasies. While other European nations, such as Great Britain or France, were actively engaged in colonial enterprises and had to deal with their problems and setbacks, Germans assumed the role of uninvolved observers who could judge and comment. The naïveté resulting from this lack of experience led Germans to fantasize about being better colonizers themselves. Not least because of the imagined affinity to the colonized, they envisioned themselves as humane and more understanding and thought they could become much better colonizers than other nations, if they only were given a chance. By fantasizing about their own superiority in
colonial matters, Germans constructed a positive national image that served to reassure them regarding their actual political situation within Europe. The perpetuation of this discourse eventually contributed to Germany’s becoming a colonial power in 1884.

German colonial desire was often translated into narratives dealing with the colonized of the United States, who might seem only remotely connected to the European colonial project. The nineteenth-century German preoccupation with the fantasy of the «Noble Savage» can be traced back to Tacitus, Columbus, Rousseau, and, in the German context, to the travel writings of Georg Forster and Adelbert von Chamisso. The affinity Germans felt with colonized and so-called uncivilized peoples found particularly strong repercussions in the fascination with the Indianer. As portrayed in nineteenth-century German popular literature, Indian characters often appeared as positive figures characterized by qualities such as honesty, straightforwardness, and loyalty in friendship. They were, however, depicted as a race doomed to extinction under the impact of white American settlers who, in turn, were shown without any understanding for the fate of this dying race, and were held responsible for it. Germans, on the other hand, were often inserted into these texts as morally superior and as sympathetic to and understanding of the Indians, which consequently suggested a particular German suitability for humane leadership and for the colonial enterprise that would distinguish Germany from both white Americans and other colonial powers. In addition, the imagined superior qualities in both German and Indian characters as well as their powerless position in political terms solidified the imagined affinity between them. Over the course of the nineteenth century, this kinship appeared in the shape of fictional relationships that were presented as mutually beneficial.5

With the establishment of the actual German colonial empire, however, disillusionment regarding interethnic relationships began to set in. Having had few first-hand experiences with other ethnicities and the problems of colonial administration, Germans began to face conflicts and setbacks similar to those they had only observed before. Their assumed understanding for other races was put to the test and, often enough, failed. Conflicts resulting in uprisings and violent persecution of colonized populations, economic failure, and unexpected expenditures made the colonial question a hotly debated issue in Germany. The procolonial side needed to find arguments to justify the project as a whole and the specific course of action taken. At the same time, Germany’s recent unification and its rise to economic and political power brought along a strengthened national self-confidence that sometimes took on ecstatic and aggressive forms. Nationalistic propaganda along with derog-
atory or outright racist observations was the order of the day in Wilhelminian Germany.

In this process, previously subtle colonial fantasies turned into outright propaganda and were, often enough, turned upside down. They became increasingly more negative and aggressive. The image of interracial symbiotic relationships began to disappear, and the good Indian turned into a barbaric and inferior enemy who needed to be civilized, if not exterminated. Consequently, the practice of demonizing the other in fictional texts was used to justify the colonial reality of the harsh treatment of natives.

It was in this context that Pajeken’s adventure novels were written, and the tendencies described above are even strengthened through his educational intentions. He chose to focus his quest of setting Germans right about evil Indians mostly on young readers. With this audience in mind, he was at pains to drive his message home by employing strategies very common to this type of fiction. These include most of all a simplification of elements such as plot, characters, etc. without subtleties or contradictions. Connected to this strategy is a simplistic binary opposition of good and evil, for instance in characters or actions, which enables young readers to comprehend and emulate the presented world view with its moral aspects. In Pajeken’s works, this intention becomes abundantly clear, and his one-sided portrayal of Indians as evil is part of these genre expectations. In this, Pajeken does not differ from many other authors of literature for young readers in the age of Wilhelminian imperialism and *Hurrapatriotismus*. Heinrich Wolgast and his circle of Hamburg *Reformpädagogen* fought against what they considered *Tendenzliteratur*, that is, texts bedeviling the «internal enemy», i.e., the Social Democrats, and promoting war against the external enemy, regardless of whether that meant the French, other European powers, or presumably inferior natives in the newly acquired colonies. All such texts did not find approval from the Hamburg circle (Kuhn and Merkel 167).6

A great number of such texts, which were supposed to promote the recently achieved national unification, and with it a sense of belonging and German national confidence, were flooding the book market: «Die vorab an junge männliche Leser gerichtete nationalistische und militaristische Massenliteratur entspricht dabei exakt dem preußisch-deutschen Herrschaftsinteresse an patriotisch gesonnenen und kampfsbereiten Untertanen zukünftiger Eroberungskriege» (Eckhardt 180). Literature portraying qualities such as belligerence or feelings of national and ethnic supremacy as positive examples catered to young readers. Adventure and travel literature played a crucial role in this context, particularly when such texts portray outstanding German travelers, explorers, or colonialists, or contrast superior Germans
with other ethnicities as wild animals. According to Kuhn and Merkel, «[D]as klassische Genre des Abenteuerbuches, der Indianerroman, [hielt] sich dagegen vergleichsweise frei von derart krassen chauvinistischen Tendenzen, was […] damit zusammenhängen mag, daß die Roten Amerikas im Gegensatz zu den Schwarzen in Afrika nicht Gegenstand der deutschen Expansionsgelüste waren» (170). I challenge this notion by showing that such tendencies were indeed present in Pajeken’s Indianerromanen.

The Reformpädagogen fought against such ideological tendencies and were therefore attacked by their opponents as antipatriotic. This reveals that politics is indeed at the heart of the debate. As Marieluise Christadler observes, «Wenn Hannah Arendts These stimmt, daß Kolonialherrschaft der Entwicklung autoritärer Regierungs- und Lebensformen förderlich sei, so kann aus dem politischen Normenkatalog, den die Jugendbücher für die Kolonien aufstellen, gefolgert werden, daß die Übertragung autoritärer Denk- und Verhaltensmuster in der Absicht der Autoren lag» (66). Even though not writing about German colonies, Pajeken suggested behavior patterns in his texts about the United States that aim at this goal as well, and his Bob trilogy can serve as a prime example of how German colonialist ideas were promoted in an aggressive fashion. In the novels Bob der Fallensteller, Bob der Städtegründer and Bob der Millionär, which appeared between 1890 and 1894, the story of young Bob Reinfels is related – from a boy suspected of horse thievery, who is raised by two old trappers, to a brave man who dedicates his life to settling and «civilizing» the American West for the benefit of his fellow citizens. The third part of the trilogy portrays his son, Robert Reinfels, who perpetuates his father’s mission and heritage.

What Pajeken’s texts share with earlier portrayals of colonial dreams is the figure of the good German colonizer, combined with a sense of mission when it comes to projects of civilization and cultivation. In Bob der Städtegründer, the protagonist is introduced as follows:

Wieder ist es ein noch unkultiviertes Land, in welchem sich Bob mit dem Verlangen nach einem festgeordneten, geregelten Leben niederläßt, indem er sich zugleich die Aufgabe stellt, als dienendes Glied der Gesamtheit zum Wohle seiner Mitmenschen zu schaffen und zu wirken. Abermals umgeben ihn mancherlei Gefahren; wieder bedroht ihn das immer kriegslustige, rote Volk. (n. pag.)

Bob is not German, but his father is, and both this family heritage as well as Bob’s conviction of the superiority of Germans and the German community make him embrace the German element – an attitude that is even passed on to his son Robert: «Ja – deutsch gesinnt wie mein teurer Vater will ich bleiben alle Zeit,» sagte Robert. ‹Bin ich auch nicht in Deutschland geboren, so ist es mir doch, als wäre es mein Vaterland›» (Bob der Millionär 204).
Here as elsewhere, German colonial fantasies are revealed in the portrayal of the (heritage) German as the unselfish hero of civilization who strives to make its benefits accessible to everyone. Notable here is the emphasis on the nature of the civilization project. Bob does not only want to provide for his charges in the best manner possible, this also has to happen in a specific way: the ultimate fulfillment is a society based on German values, customs, and ways of life – in other words, a new Germany is being/to be established. This goal is pursued persistently, without influences of other cultures being permitted, and everybody who wants to join the community has to adapt to the German way. This unquestioned dominance points to a more aggressive approach to German colonialism than earlier in the century. An example from Bob der Millionär will illustrate my claim. Young Robert continues his father’s work in settling land in the west with the ultimate goal of integrating the territory into the United States as a new state; for defense purposes, a militia is founded, modeled on the German example of paramilitary organizations. While exercising, the soldiers repeatedly sing the German national anthem, «Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, über alles in der Welt,» with a surprising outcome:

Robert […] durchzuckte es bei diesen Klängen wie ein Blitz, und laut begann sein Herz zu klopfen. Was die Leute sangen, war das Lieblingslied seines Vaters und Großvaters gewesen. Und mächtig erweckte es in ihm die Erinnerung an die Worte seines sterbenden Vaters: «Daß alle meine Unternehmungen einen so großen Erfolg erzielten, verdanke ich der Hilfe deutscher Biederkeit, Ehrlichkeit und Kraft.»

The national anthem becomes a leitmotif, appearing often when Robert is tempted to fall back into negative, un-German habits (such as laziness, arrogance, indifference toward his fellow citizens, etc.), and prompting him to return to the right, i.e., German, path. The national anthem makes its most bewildering appearance when Robert learns that his efforts have been successful, and his territory has become a new US state, with him as a governor. To celebrate this joyful event, the militia sings the Deutschlandlied yet again. What this seems to indicate is not only that German settlers and qualities contributed significantly to the making of the prosperous nation of the United States, but also that German authors such as Pajeken are claiming these accomplishments for their own nation. As far as its symbolic meaning is concerned, the singing of the national anthem can be equated with the act of planting a national flag on foreign territory, and in this novel, it asserts the fantasy of the successful German colonizer. It does so in a much more open and aggressive way than earlier in the century. While German emigration to the US often was seen as a loss of German work force and energy at home,
Pajeken’s approach here claims German settlements as outposts of German-ness or, in other words, colonies. This development can mostly be explained on the basis of a growing national self-confidence and pride that does not shy away from expressing openly expansionist ideas.

German superiority and the Germans’ particular suitability for the colonizing project are unquestioned. In *Bob der Millionär*, the dying Bob advises his son to rely on the German element because that is what made him successful in his colonial project, and even other ethnic groups acknowledge this superiority. German merits are discussed by Americans in depth. For instance, the American Harper discusses efficient and, in today’s terms, sustainable German agriculture. This does not only justify German participation in worldwide agriculture and colonization in general but it also portrays this participation as an advantage since everybody will reap its benefits. Mr. Harper’s praise of the Germans continues:

Mr. Reinfels sind die Deutschen als Bewohner seines Landes lieber, weil sie meistens ihr Geschäft in kleinen bescheidenen Verhältnissen anfangen und ein langsameres, sicheres Weiterkommen durch Sparsamkeit und festen Erwerb jeder gewagten Spekulation vorziehen. … Der Amerikaner hingegen – ich meine selbstredend im allgemeinen – will rasch vorwärts und setzt gern alles auf eine Karte. Glückt ihm ein Unternehmen nicht, so beginnt er ein zweites und drittes. Er ist unstät, und auf der Jagd nach Gewinn besinnt er sich keine Minute, seinen Wohnsitz immer wieder zu wechseln, wenn er darin seinen Vorteil sieht. Reichtum und Wohlhabenheit sind bei ihm einem raschen Wechsel unterworfen, und selten vererbts sich ein Vermögen auf die Kindeskinder; dann ist es gewöhnlich wieder zersplittert, während der Deutsche das Erworbene festhält und vorsichtig zu vermehren versucht. (*Bob der Millionär* 134)

These qualities and behaviors recommend Germans as colonizers of the American land in this context, and, by extension, of other lands worldwide. Such assertions ideologically foster German colonial aspirations and suggest a comparison to the British image of «the white man’s burden» – colonization not for selfish purposes but as a sacrifice taken on for the benefit of others.

However, a striking difference to the concept of the white man’s burden, which includes a responsibility for civilizing and educating the natives of the territory to be conquered, is the exclusion of the native population from society in Pajeken’s works. While some of his other novels focus on describing Indians and their negative qualities, such as their cruelty, treacherousness, filth, etc., in the *Bob* trilogy, Indians are mostly the savages at the margins. Living in the mountainous wilderness, they only appear in Bob’s realm and in the plot to threaten the white settlement while the new community is experiencing an internal crisis. Thus, they take on a double meaning by signifying savagery and anarchy. Indians have no space in Pajeken’s ideal new commu-
nity because in his view they are unfit for (European) civilization. This is apparently proven by the example of Schwarzfuss, an Indian who claims to have been expelled from his tribe and who lives in the white settlement for a while. However, he steals, does not work, and raises suspicion by his entire behavior. As one of the settlers knowingly remarks, «Man kann einen Wolf wohl zähmen, daß er zuletzt aus der Hand frißt; befindet er sich jedoch wieder in Freiheit, beißt er wie zuvor» (Bob der Städtegründer 56). This statement summarizes the white characters’ view of Indians as wild and treacherous animals. Most other Indians – in this trilogy as well as in other works by this author – only play a minor role and are part of a subplot; they may pose a short-term threat to the protagonist and the main plot but do not influence them in any relevant way. Thus, their insignificance mirrors the (dis)interest of contemporary society. It had moved from (a relationship with) natives as legitimization for German colonial aspirations to the colonial project per se, and a point in time when these aspirations no longer needed justification. Germans could concentrate fully on exploiting the land they had taken from (African, Asian, and Pacific) natives without including them.

If we read this exclusion of natives as symptomatic for Pajeken’s day, we can infer that German colonial interests had become so obvious that the pretext of a genuine understanding between Germans and Indians/natives was no longer needed; natives are no longer the reason for, but the obstacle to successful German colonization and are therefore erased from colonial idylls like Bob’s new American state. What is more, Indians are depicted as outsiders whose goal it is to destroy the order and prosperity Bob and his German settlers are striving to establish since they do not understand their advantages.

An incident with the Arapahoe chief Kleiner Rabe illustrates this perspective. On a visit, he inquires about further white settlements and whether that means that the Indians will be pushed back further west. The response he receives is as follows:

«Ohne Zweifel! Weshalb arbeitet Ihr nicht wie die weißen Männer; dann könntet Ihr bleiben, wo Ihr jetzt seid. Gern ist die Regierung erbötig, auch Euch Ackergerät und was zur Saat nötig ist, kostenlos zu liefern, wie sie dieses schon bei einigen Stämme weiter im Osten, die vernünftiger waren als der Eurige, gethan hat.» «Weiber arbeiten,» entgegnete kleiner Rabe verächtlich. «Bei Euch – ja – arbeiten sie allein, während Ihr in grenzenloser Faulheit Euer Leben verbringt; aber das ist nicht recht,» rief Fox entrüstet. «Dem Manne ist von der Natur die größere Kraft verliehen, folglich gebührt ihm die harte Arbeit und nicht dem Weibe.» Sämtliche vier Indianer schauten verwundert auf. In ihren Mienen war deutlich zu lesen, daß ihnen diese Behauptung vollkommen unverständlich war. (Bob der Millionär 64)
The Indians do not understand the white man’s way of thinking and reasoning, which, as the text suggests to the young German reader, clearly is the right way. This does not only concern the advantages of farming over a nomadic way of life but also the treatment of women. Instead of addressing cultural differences or attempting to bridge this cultural gap through further explanation, the narrator leaves the white settler’s statement as the correct one. The other is silenced and does not get the chance to explain his or her culture. This thus fosters the image that Indians are incapable of learning, and it would be futile to attempt and civilize them. The seemingly logical consequence of this perception is that, since Indians cannot be integrated into the expanding white society, the only solution is their removal or even extinction. If the Indian thus had degenerated from his formerly noble position, this conclusion is certainly also true for other native populations in other parts of the world who stood in the way of European expansion. Since they neither disappeared voluntarily nor fit completely into white colonial societies, their demonization was a first step to their forceful submission or extinction – a fate that is also accepted by some of Pajeken’s Indian characters. By presenting this view, Pajeken’s texts serve to implicitly indoctrinate German youth to believe in the inferiority and unavoidable extinction of the Indian – and, by association, of other «uncivilized» societies that might stand in the way of European progress and colonization.

The subtle connection between Native Americans and Germany’s savages, i.e., their colonial subjects, comes to the fore in a contemporary statement by Hermann Klingebeil:


Clearly, native societies are not recognized as cultures in their own right, and in the interest of Europeans, European civilization is to be forced on them in the name of (white) progress. The ultimate goal, in the *Bob* trilogy as well as in German colonies, is a society built on German values, customs, and economy.
Young Robert is on the right path when, elected governor of his new American state, he models his economic enterprises on the German example and has the German national anthem sung (Bob der Millionär 204).

In addition to the erasure of Indians from the plot, other ethnicities are arranged according to a certain hierarchy. Anne McClintock and others have examined this phenomenon of a racial hierarchy, which is not merely based on ethnic affiliation but also on more complex issues, such as how gender stereotypes, social position, occupation, etc. interact with this ethnic affiliation. In much of American or British ethnic discourse of the nineteenth century, for example, the Irish visibly rank at the lower end of this (white) hierarchy and are often depicted as villains. Pajeken thus does not differ from his contemporaries when he portrays the Irish as inferior European stock – they are lazy, heavy drinkers, and like to fight. For Pajeken, this characterization merely serves to illustrate the contrast between the industrious Germans and other groups, stressing their exemplary behavior; the Irish, in contrast, cause trouble because of their unmotivated and unexplained disdain for Germans. Furthermore, the main villain in Bob der Millionär and only major Irish character in the trilogy, Morton, is Irish. Morton is an unrepenting scoundrel who does not even shrink from associating with the ultimate inferior outcast, the Indians, in order to avenge himself for his shameful discharge from the mine. In tricking them into believing he is their long-expected apostle who will lead them against their white enemies, Morton proves his lack of principles and racial loyalty. His transgression, which threatens the boundaries of racial affiliation and destabilizes clear affiliations, cannot be tolerated; hence, he must die for order to be reestablished.

White Americans or Yankees are part of this racial makeup as well. Even though, by the time of Pajeken’s writing, Germans had their own colonies and therefore did not have cause for what earlier in the century could be considered colonial envy of Americans, Americans are still not represented in a positive fashion. Mining director Crackfield is the archetype of the greedy Yankee without morals: not only does he exploit workers and cheat his boss, Robert – albeit instigated by his Irish friend Morton – but when he and Morton no longer have any other allies, in their selfishness they even associate with the Indians. In this direct comparison of Indians and white ethnicities, however, an interesting reversal of earlier racial hierarchies takes shape. Despite this negative portrait of Crackfield, the Yankee still appears in a more positive light than the Indian. This differentiation seems to reflect a changing political discourse. While the Indian, by virtue of his connection with the German, used to be portrayed more favorably than the white American, the Yankee now appears in a more favorable light.
At the simultaneous peak and beginning crisis point of imperialism and colonialism, European supremacy had to be ensured by all means. Racism thus served imperial purposes by creating an apparently unified superiority of blood and culture. It became a physical justification when colonial appropriation was at stake. As Philip Yale Nicholson observes, the beginning decay of some European (colonial) empires, which contributed to instability and conflict, nevertheless actually strengthened frustrated national and imperialistic passions and rhetoric (120). In tune with these considerations, white Americans in the novel thus cannot be inferior to Indians – because like Germans, they are white people, with similar interests and culture, which implies some sort of racial as well as cultural connection. In *Bob der Millionär*, however, American superiority over the Indian is a very slight one: Crackfield loses all dignity in disguising himself as an Indian and agitating for a war against the white settlers (172). His minor triumph is that the inferior and superstitious Indians fall for his cultural cross-dressing. In the end, though, the white criminals are punished for their financial treason as well as for their conscious betrayal of their race through their disguise. Both are killed because white society has no room for elements that threaten its clear boundaries in the way these two do. Hence, against the backdrop of Irish villains and greedy Americans, industrious and honest Germans thus appear as an even more positive group, justifying again the aggressive colonialism exerted in the *Bob* trilogy.

All these features show how German colonial dreams are pursued aggressively in fictitious texts under the pretence of a civilizing mission, thus mirroring as well as justifying a reality of increasingly rigorous rule in German colonies, especially in Germany’s African colonies. Pajeken’s texts both reflect and construct the prevailing imperial, racist, and colonial discourses of his day in a simplified black and white scheme for maximizing the impact on his young readers. Whereas *Bob der Fallensteller* portrays the Yankee trappers at least as partly positive figures in their first attempts at conquering the wilderness so far only inhabited by Indians, the Germans’ more structured colonial attempts are clearly depicted as preferable. Hence, the old trapper Charley dies a symbolic death in *Bob der Städtegründer*, signifying the end of his era. The new generation of materialistic Americans such as Crackfield then serves as negative foil for German positive characteristics. Pajeken’s texts also signify the end of a purely imaginary German colonialism and an attempt to confront its reality. We can see the parallels between the actuality of German colonial subjects and colonial fantasies of wild Indians if we take a look at the changing perception of the Hereros in Southwest Africa. Dan Stone describes how they were originally seen in a positive light – of impressive
physical appearance, proud and noble warriors, full of pride in their cattle herd. When the Hereros, however, refused to sell those herds to the German settlers and interfered more and more with their plans, the Germans became increasingly frustrated, and eventually the Hereros «were depicted as wild children, whose warlike propensities made them a threat to the safety of the colonist. Rather than noble and beautiful, now they were more likely to be seen as unreliable, lazy and ungrateful for the benefits that German civilization had brought» (Stone 39). The changed view depicted in Pajeken’s good German colonizer and the bad Indian mirrors this colonial reality. In the end, the illusion of successful German colonialism was shattered by reality – at the very latest in the early 1900s, with the failure of the fantasy-turned-reality, as the good German colonizers committed genocide on thousands of Herero and Nama in Southwest-Africa.

Notes

1 Among them was Sophie Wörishöffer, who wrote adventure literature for young readers. She never left Germany and compiled all the information she used in her novels from books provided to her by her publisher Velhagen und Klasing.

2 In accordance with general practice (cf. Feest and others), in the following I will use the term Native Americans when referring to the actual native inhabitants of the Americas, and Indians when referring to their depictions in European/German texts and ideas – the (idealized) construct.

3 Pajeken records this incident in his story of the same name.

4 Cf. Edward Said’s Orientalism, Robert F. Berkhofer Jr’s The White Man’s Indian, or Peter Hulme’s Europe and Its Others.

5 Compare, for instance, the positive Indian-German relationships portrayed in the works of Friedrich Gerstäcker, Balduin Möllhausen, or, most famously, Karl May.

6 In addition, the very obvious didactic agenda that Pajeken pursued drew criticism from his contemporaries because of its heavy-handedness. According to Dieter Arendt, it «verstimmte schon die Leser seiner Zeit und hatte durch ihre trivial-traktathafte Intention gerade nicht den bezweckten Rezeptionseffekt gegenüber der trivial-exotischen Indianerliteratur» (3). In other words, Pajeken’s presumptuous moral lectures for children in novel-format drew criticism from many adult readers.

7 In Culture and Imperialism Said wrote, «[W]e have become so accustomed to thinking of the novel’s plot and structure as constituted mainly by temporality that we have overlooked the function of space, geography, and location» (84). It is precisely the location of the United States that functions to conceal German colonial interests by providing a sheltered space in which – conscious as well as unconscious – German colonial dreams could be developed and rehearsed far from political realities; after all, the US declared its independence in 1776 and achieved nationhood in 1783, hence concrete colonial aspirations in this territory were above suspicion.

8 Compare these allusions to a German sense of mission to the following, much more belligerent quotation from a colonial novel that addresses German activism in Ger-
many’s own colonies: «nun das Schwert wieder in der Scheide ruht, wird das deutsche Reich unter dem Banner eines hoffentlich dauernden Friedens die Kolonisation des neuen Gebietes mit demselben ritterlichen Ernst in Angriff nehmen, mit dem es seiner eigenen Veredelung entgegenstrebt. Und der Allvater über uns … wird seinen Segen den Kulturaufgaben verleihen, welche Deutschland über seine Grenzen hinaus zu erfüllen hat und denen es sich nicht mehr entziehen durfte, nachdem es ein einziges, großes, mächtiges Reich im Herzen der gesitteten Welt geworden war» (C.v.d. Boeck qtd. in Altnert 92).

9 Strikingly, the militia is founded by a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71 (Bob der Millionär 22).

10 Cf. quotation on p. 131.

11 «Wenn wir aufrichtig sind, müssen wir eingestehen, daß der Deutsche vor uns Amerikanern manches Gute voraus hat und sich hauptsächlich als Farmer nicht allein vor uns sondern vor den Angehörigen sämtlicher anderen Nationen auszeichnet. Abgesehen von seiner Ausdauer und Genügsamkeit, mit der er die Schwierigkeiten und Mühsale, welche das Ansiedlerleben mit sich bringt, überwindet, hat er stets das Ziel im Auge, sich eine dauern de Heimat zu gründen. Er dünkt kein Land, bevor es ausgesogen ist, und erhalt dadurch dessen Ertragsfähigkeit, während es der Amerikaner ausnutzt und es dann für irgend einen Spottpreis veräußert, um anderwärts diesen Raubbau fortzusetzen» (Bob der Millionär 133).

12 Kleiner Rabe, for instance, ruminates about the fate of his tribe: «Er [Jack, a white settler] forchtet uns nicht, weil die zwei Männer mit den weißen Haaren im Gesicht seine Freunde sind. Sie werden ihren weißen Brüdern helfen, daß wir von der Erde verschwin- den wie die Büffel, wenn nicht die Zunge meines Vaters, bevor er nach den glücklichen Jagdgründen zog, die Wahrheit redete und uns der gute Gott einen Führer sendet, der uns zurückgeleitet in die Jagdgründe, welche vor vielen Sommern unser Volk bewohnte, dorthin, von wo das große Licht kommt» (Bob der Millionär 68).

13 Of course, there were also more critical voices when it comes to the treatment of natives in the colonies. Klingebeil’s statement was in reaction to Karl Liebknecht’s critique before the Reichstag in 1891: «Die Früchte unserer Kolonialpolitik und die Kultur, die sie nach Afrika gebracht hat, sie heißen: Mord, Raub, Totschlag, Syphilis, Schnaps» (qtd. in Christadler 62).

14 McClintock examines the status of working-class women in England in the context of Great Britain’s imperial possessions. Other scholars write on the hierarchy of various nationalities, in particular in the context of their status in (nineteenth-century) immigration to the United States.

15 For instance, the Irish are described as a «hergelaufenes Volk, Spieler und Trinker. Sie brachten Unfrieden in die Ansiedlung» (Bob der Städtegründer 10).

16 The fatally wounded Crackfield kills the unrepentant Morton out of remorse and re-venge: «Stürb, Scheusal, Teufel, der du mein Leben vergiftet und mich zu allen Schand-thaten verführt hast!» (Bob der Millionär 186). This, however, again confirms a racial thinking in which the Irish are at the lower end of the white racial hierarchy.

Works Cited


