

13th American Indian Workshop

"In 1992 the American Indian Workshop became Sevillized" (Michael Friedrichs, Augsburg, Germany)

The 13th American Indian Workshop of 1992 took place as part of the European Association of American Studies (EAAS) Conference in Seville, Spain. This beautiful city, capital of the province of Andalucía and point of departure of Columbus's voyage of discovery to the New World 500 years ago, offered the appropriate setting for a conference on: "The American Columbiad: 'Discovering' America, Inventing the United States". All workshops and papers of the conference dealt with the quintcentennial of the discovery of America and its consequences in one way or the other.

Aside from this, Seville presented itself to the visitor as a crossing-point of the Occident and Orient, of the past and the future. With its fascinating combination of ancient and mediaeval occidental and Moorish architecture, in contrast to its modern EXPO park, she made it hard for the conference participants to concentrate on their workshops. Especially as the conference took place in the Moorish university building of Seville, the Old Tobacco Factory, which is much more famous as setting of the opera "Carmen". Not to mention the many nice little Spanish restaurants and bars, the reception of the Mayor of Seville in the Alcazar for all congress participants, the flamenco places and the friendly people of Seville.

But now it is time to come back to the American Indian Workshop (April 4-6, 1992): it was subdivided into two workshops with 18 papers read. The first session took place on April 4, and was organized by Markku Henrikson (University of Helsinki, Finland) under the topic "Visual and Material Representations of the Native American since Columbus". In his welcoming address, Markku Henrikson invited the participants to several conferences on the USA and Native American people, that will take place in the near future: the conference of the "Nordic Association of American Studies" in Reykjavik (August 5-10, 1992); a congress in Helsinki (September 7-10, 1992) on Native Americans, European immigrants and Black slaves ("Atlantic encounters and connections"); and the "American Studies Conference" in Tampere in 1993.

The first paper read in Henrikson's workshop was "Visual Representations of the Indian in Early American Imprints" by Barbara E. Lacey (Saint Joseph College, West Hartford, CT), who had analyzed 60 images of 17th and 18th century American imprints, woodcut or metal, she found in the Charles Evans Microfilm Collection. The imprints can be arranged in two periods, one from 1675 to 1770, the other from 1770 to 1800. The imprints of the first period (1675-1770) show close interactions between the Indians and the colonists like trading situations or warfare alliances, whereas in the imprints of the second period (1770-1800) colonists started to view Indians from a distance and in a more fictitious way, which was the result of the deportation of the Indians to the west. Additionally Indians were portrayed in

a more aggressive and barbarious manner after 1760, caused by the increase (and increased awareness) of difficulties colonists had with the Indians. Barbara Lacey summed up that the Indians in American imprints were shown in a variety of situations, were mostly male figures and can be interpreted as an emblem of America.

The next paper was on "Observing Native American Aesthetics; The Lakota Case study" by Imre Nagy (Tornyai János Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary). By means of slides of Lakota knife-cases Imre Nagy tried to disprove the statement of Lewis Henry Morgan, who said that because of the interaction (intermarriage, etc.) between the tribes of the Lakota area certain common styles emerged and differences in styles can hardly be detected by travellers. The examples of Sioux beadwork Imre Nagy showed were mostly Sioux knife-cases from the period 1780-1800, photographed in museums in Czechoslovakia, Colorado and Stuttgart, Germany. The main features of the knife-cases he chose for comparison were: 1) shape, and 2) color of background. Both in shape and in color of background the beadworks showed characteristic differences in style and proved that, typical styles can be identified for, and ascribed to, certain Sioux bands. A further result of Nagy's investigation was that in Sioux material culture functional objects, like knife-cases, rarely bear symbolic colors.

John F. Moe (Ohio State University, Columbus, OH) spoke about "Images of Encounter: The Impact of the Contact on Traditional American Folkways in the Southwest and the Great Plains". He showed slides with examples of Navajo weaving and Pueblo Indian pottery. In Navajo weaving the images of encounter displayed a high degree of Spanish influence during the early colonial period, resulting in an intermingling of Indian and Spanish images. Later Navajo textiles (since ca. 1880/1890) invented new images of the westward movement and civilization. The examples shown proved a continuous incorporation of images of encounter into Navajo textiles without huge negative effects on Navajo weaving - on the contrary, the increasing request for Navajo textiles by the immigrants resulted in an increased production, although it has to be noted, that for example trading posts often directed the design of rugs according to the taste of their European customers. The situation with Pueblo pottery is nearly identical. The slides showed traditional Indian images on modern objects and an intermixture of different Indian styles on the pottery. In his summary Moe defined Indian assimilation as a multistage process, with the integration of images of encounter into Indian art as one aspect of it, and said that artifacts can also be seen by the scientists as objects on which the moment of contact is frozen in.

The next paper read was by Mick Gidley (University of Exeter) on "Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian: A National Enterprise". He stated that Edward S. Curtis's photographs of the North American Indians (1892-1930) was a national American enterprise and only naturalized what was in effect a series of economic and political decisions. Furthermore he demonstrated with the help of slides, that Curtis was a pictorialist, who composed, constructed, reconstructed and manipulated the pictures he took of

the Indians by techniques of pictorialism (e.g. use of light and shadow, reflections, unnatural positions, etc.) and by manipulations during the printing process.

"Photography and Native American Pictographic Art: A Semiological Approach" was the topic of Adrianna Greci Green's (Rutgers University, NJ) paper, who said that there is "no photograph without the photographer" and that "photographs and pictographs can be analysed the same way". She differed between the "Studium", the general composition of the image, and the "Punktum", the detail. To proof her statement, she showed photographs and pictographs with umbrellas as common "Punktum" and as an example of integration of Euro-American objects into Indian culture.

The paper of Robert E. Bieder (The Smithsonian, Washington, DC): "Semiotics of Power: Controlling Images of the Indian" focused on photographs of Native Americans, too. By choosing some pictures from the photographic collection of Karl Hagenbeck, Hamburg, showing Native Americans posing in the Hagenbeck Zoo in the 1880s, he tried to demonstrate, how the photographer exercises control on his subject. As 19th century ethnology depended on photographs of this kind and photos like these were often used to educate the people in Europe, the artificial construction of the pictures created a specific image of the Indian for the viewer in Europe and a "specific reality" for the ethnologists who used them. By looking at these photographs the relationship of the viewer to the subject equaled that of domination to subordination, Bieder said.

On April 5, the 13th American Indian Workshop was continued by a workshop on "The Indian as Subject/Object in Colonial Discourse", organized by Susan Perez Castillo (University of Porto, Portugal). After the welcoming address by Susan Perez Castillo and some introductory words by Wilcomb Washburn, the first person to speak in this session was Shirley Foster (University of Sheffield, England) on "Negotiating the Indian: Male and Female Representations in Nineteenth Century Travel Literature". The travel literature Shirley Foster analyzed was 19th century travel literature by European and in particular British travellers to the USA. On the whole, Indian men and women were described the same way: as something exotic, strange and unknown. The writers tried to establish a separation between themselves, i.e. the superior white race, and the Indians, whom they described either in the romantic manner (as noble savage), or as a degenerated and animal-like savage. Foster summed up, that female and male travellers wrote differently on Indian men and women: Indian women were often characterized in a very negative way by male writers, whereas female writers displayed a more sympathetic attitude towards them.

The paper of Dolores Huff (California State University, Fresno, CA) focused on "Indian Civil Rights and J. Edgar Hoover". J. Edgar Hoover, later chief of the FBI, entered the U.S. Department of Justice in 1917. After a series of 30 murder cases in Osage country (Indian Territory, Oklahoma) committed in the years 1921-1923, which could not be solved by the prosecuting

authorities, he was charged with the prosecution of these cases. Dolores Huff described, how the investigation of these murder cases enabled Hoover, after he was appointed chief of the FBI in 1924, to expand the power of the FBI and how he tried to restrict Indian Civil Rights and infiltrate the American Indian Movement.

Maria Laura Bettencourt Pires (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal) spoke on Indian Rights, too: the "Indian Rights in Portugal". She chose Father Antonio Vieira, who went to Brazil in the 17th century and died in 1696, as an example for how Portugal rated Indian Rights. Father Antonio wrote in the letters he sent to Portugal that the Indians are men and creatures of god. How this viewpoint was rated by the Portuguese church and government demonstrates their reaction - Father Antonio was prosecuted by the inquisition for his statements.

"The Conquistador as Improvisor and the Magic of Colonial Discourse in Cortés and Hariot" was the topic of Gesa Mackenthun's (University of Frankfurt, Germany) paper. She had analyzed the letters of Cortés to his king reporting the speech of Montezuma, and Thomas Hariot's report of 1588: "A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia". Mackenthun showed how both had to convince their readers as being successful to justify their enterprises and the financial investments required, and how they imposed a sense of superiority on their readers.

Finally William Powers (Rutgers University, NJ) spoke on "The New Me: Self as Object in Lakota Texts". Powers said that Lakota song-texts can be interpreted like poems in other parts of the world. Lakota songs usually are composed by specialists and owned by someone. During the past decade William Powers was able to observe a change in Lakota songs: while the structure of the music remained, the contents of the song-texts changed. This meant a manipulation of the traditional structure of Lakota songs for the first time in history. The song-texts now show a particular focus, make references to the dancers and singers and frequently mention female dancers, which was not usual before.

The workshop of Susan Perez Castillo was continued on April 6, with a paper read by Loretta Manucci (University of Milan, Italy): "Espying the Indian: Presences and Non-Presences in Revolutionary Diaries". She had analyzed descriptions of Indians in diaries of the period 1775-1786, covering the American Revolution. As Indians were fighting on the American as well as on the British side during the Revolutionary War, the diaries described always those Indians as cruel, who fought on the enemy's side. The diaries furthermore showed, that American revolutionaries started to adopt Indian identity through the revolution, a phenomenon that could also be observed in the Boston Tea Party of 1773. This can be interpreted as for the writers being Indian meant being American, in contrast to being British.

"Women as Subject, Women as Object: The sacred and profane . . . Gender Among the Lakota" was the topic of the paper of Marla Powers (Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ). She said that Lakota women were placed from a superior position to an inferior position, both in the sacred and profane domain, as a consequence of colonialisms, which she defined as a continuous process. The Euro-American concept of gender intruded Lakota society, but this starts to break up again nowadays, as more Lakota women are going into jobs and show more economical activity. The Lakota male - female relationship of today can be described as complementary.

Elaine Jahner's (Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH) paper was on "Discourse Strategies in Boundary Literature: Some Native American Examples". A part of the literature on boundary discourse, she had analyzed, displayed anamorphic discourse strategies, like life-and-death-games. On the whole, the boundary literature predominantly described some kind of internalized boundaries.

The workshop was continued by Clara Bartocci, (University of Perugia, Italy), who spoke about "The Indian, This Unknown Man: English Images of Native Americans in Early Colonial Literature". Different authors of early colonial literature were discussed, many of them seeing the Indian only as a minor actor on the colonial scene. For Puritan writers the good Indians should be used as an instrument, while the bad Indians better had to be destroyed. Furthermore the term 'Indian' was often used as a synonym for 'America' in colonial literature.

The papers on Indians in colonial writings were complemented by María Elisa López Liqueste (Universidad del País Vasco) with: "The Indian and Nature: Antologies in Seventeenth-Century Colonial Literature". She stated that America was not discovered, but invented: America was first a dream and the act of discovery was an act of envisioning. The narratives of the colonists can be seen accordingly: in the beginning, America is described as a paradise, while later narratives speak of good as well as of bad periods. Taming America's nature and civilizing the landscape was the ideal of the colonists and the Indians were increasingly seen as the "serpent in the Garden of Eden". Colonial writers of the later period mention more and more the bad nature of America, which for example is demonstrated in the writings of John Smith, who designated the Indians as "devils" and the wilderness as "hell", and by the growing numbers of captivity narratives in the later period.

The final paper of this workshop was read by Vicenta Cortés (Archive of the Indies, Seville, Spain) on "Writing Among the Indians of Peru in the Eighteenth Century". Vicenta Cortés spoke about the three languages, that were used in eighteenth century Peru: drawing, Quechua and Spanish. As many Indians couldn't read and understand the drawings and were not able to write Spanish and/or Quechua, drawing and writing was confined to a small class of Indians.

The business meeting of the 13th American Indian Workshop was held on April 6. Christian F. Feest expressed his thanks to the participants and workshop organizers of the 1992 American Indian Workshop in Seville and invited to the 14th American Indian Workshop, which will take place in Paris in June 1993 and will be organized by Marie Mauzé (Laboratoire d'Anthropologie Sociale, 52 rue du Cardinal Lemoire, F-75005 Paris, France). The 15th American Indian Workshop will be held again as part of the 1994 EAAS conference in Luxembourg and the local organizer will be Carlo Krieger.

Renate Bartl