



Hartmut Lutz University of Greifswald Humanities Division

Citation

Hartmut Lutz was a pioneer in the field of Indigenous literary studies in Canada and the US, forming close ties with leading Indigenous writers and scholars since the 1980s. He continues to promote understanding of Indigenous literature through interviews, translations, lectureships and critical essays. His influential concept, “Indianthusiasm,” critiques the stereotypes in Karl May’s best-selling nineteenth-century novels that underpin the still-flourishing European “Wild West” industry.

Detailed appraisal

Throughout Hartmut Lutz’s career he has enacted the principle articulated by Indigenous people: “Nothing about us without us.” Some text-based disciplines, such as history and literary criticism, have not traditionally required contact with individual authors or contemporary communities. Reputations have been made by academics who have rarely spoken to an Indigenous person. Lutz, however, set out to learn from Indigenous people rather than to become an expert on them; he worked at finding out what they thought and collaborated on bringing their words to a wide public in North America and Europe. Although he has also engaged with and written about a range of North American minority writers, as his CV makes clear, this summary focuses on his early and continuing contribution to Indigenous Studies in Canada. Indeed, the word contribution implies that Indigenous Studies was an established field when he began publishing in 1980, when, in fact, it was not. His work was a catalyst that encouraged others in North America and Europe to shift from adjacent fields into this emergent one. The depth of his early first-hand experience at North American universities provided him with a unique comparative perspective. Before the field had formed to any extent, Lutz made important connections with Indigenous intellectuals, educators and activists. He shifted from a focus on mainstream stereotyping to getting the words and ideas of Indigenous intellectuals and writers into the hands of teachers, scholars and students.

As an American Council of Learned Societies and Fulbright scholar, Lutz spent a year teaching Native American Studies at UC Davis (1979-80) while conducting research for his 1983 habilitation at the University of Osnabrück on Indian stereotyping (published as *"Indianer" und*

"*Native Americans*" in 1985). The program was only ten years old; Lutz met and learned from the Native American faculty, leaders in the field, and his students. He also taught at D-Q University, the only two-year college founded by Indigenous people in California, and one of the six first such colleges in the US. His *D-Q University: Native Self-Determination in Higher Education* (UC Berkeley, 1980), helped disseminate a new educational concept. As a DAAD Guest Professor at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, Regina (later First Nations University), in 1990-1991, he was well positioned to take in both mainstream Canadian and Indigenous positions on the Oka crisis that year. In 1991, he published *Contemporary Challenges: Conversations with Canadian Native Authors*. This book appeared at a time when many mainstream academics were struggling to come to terms with the rift that Oka revealed in the dominant picture of Canada as a tolerant "peaceable Kingdom." The book's introduction and detailed bibliography became a route into the field and the interviews provided insight into writers coming out of distinctive worldviews.

As he was leading the discussion in Canada, he was also explaining to Germans and other Europeans that their image of Native Americans (the Noble Savage as imagined in the best-selling nineteenth-century novels of Karl May) problematically consigned Indigenous people to the past. He named this phenomenon *Indianertümelei* in 1985, translating it as 'Indianthusiasm.' He spearheaded change by ensuring that contemporary writing by Indigenous people was translated into German. For example, he was a founding member of OBEMA: Osnabrück Bilingual Editions of Minority Authors in 1989 and its editor until 1994; the first major anthologies in Canada appeared later: Thomas King's *All My Relations: An Anthology of Contemporary Canadian Native Prose* (1990) and *An Anthology of Canadian Native Literature in English* (edited by Daniel David Moses and Terry Goldie, 1992). He facilitated many speaker series at Greifswald and beyond featuring Indigenous writers and thinkers, particularly during his several leadership roles in the Association for Canadian Studies in the German Speaking Countries / *Gesellschaft für Kanada-Studien* (he was President, 2009-2011).

Because he knew so many Indigenous creative writers and scholars, he was able to promote their work from his position in the European academy. He facilitated the translation of activist Jack D. Forbe's early and still influential *Columbus and Other Cannibals* (1978) into German (1992) and wrote the afterword. He publicized the life and work of Métis writer Howard Adams (PhD Berkeley, 1966), a close friend, whose biography he co-edited in 2005. On his first visit to Canada in 1987 he learned of the diary kept by Abraham Ulrikab in 1880, preserved in a translation from Inuktitut into German by a Moravian pastor. Ulrikab and his family were recruited as displays in Carl Hagenbeck's ethnographic museum in Hamburg. Typically, Lutz involved students in translating and contextualizing the diary (in English in 2005 and in German in 2007). It is the only published first-person account written by one of the many hundreds of people from ethnic minorities displayed in these exhibits.

Three of the doctoral students he supervised at Greifswald, all mature students based in Canada, in turn had a huge impact on Indigenous studies and Indigenous students here. Jeannette Armstrong had already achieved a reputation as a writer, thinker and publisher and is now a Canada Research Chair in Okanagan Indigenous Knowledge and Philosophy (renewed 2018). Jo-

Ann Episkenew, whose thesis was published as *Taking Back Our Spirits: Indigenous Literature, Public Policy, and Healing* (U of Manitoba P, 2009), became director of the Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre at the University of Regina. There she set up a theatre- and art-based mental-health program for Indigenous teens, founded in 2006 and funded by CIHR from 2009 to 2017. Renate Eigenbrod's thesis was published as *Travelling Knowledges: Positioning the Im/Migrant Reader of Aboriginal Literatures in Canada* (U of Manitoba P, 2005); she was a full professor, SSHRC-holder and chair of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba at the time of her death in 2014. Their impact has been incalculable.

Lutz's experiences in both the US and Canada means that he is able to make comparisons that are uncommon in North American criticism. For example, he notes how the US Termination Act (1953) influenced the Canadian White Paper (1969), whereby lands and status were to be unilaterally removed from Indigenous people. He has also brought a whole body of German-language research on racism and genocide to bear on the North American context. The differences between European "Indianthusiasm," which dates from the colonial period, when contextualized by racist and genocidal treatment of Jews, Roma and other ethnic minorities, provides a distinctive angle on Indigenous-settler relations in North America. His most recent co-edited collection, *Indianthusiasm* (Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2020), canvasses Indigenous writers who have travelled to or studied in Germany for their opinions on Indianthusiasm.

Not surprisingly, he has received Fulbright, DAAD and International Council for Canadian Studies fellowships, the Harris Chair (Dartmouth), the Canadian Government's 2003 John G. Diefenbaker Award (University of Ottawa), the 2012/13 Killam Visiting Fellowship at the University of Calgary, a 2013 Certificate of Merit from the International Council for Canadian Studies, and a 2016 Reichwald Visitorship (UBC Okanagan). He was honoured by a festschrift edited by Kirsten Knopf, *North America in the 21st Century: Tribal, Local, and Global* (2011) containing articles by an array of distinguished scholars. His vital contributions to one of the most significant issues facing Canadian society deserves recognition by the Royal Society of Canada.