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The “Henry Rifle” on the German Stage: Karl May’s Depiction of the American West as “Dark and Bloody Grounds”

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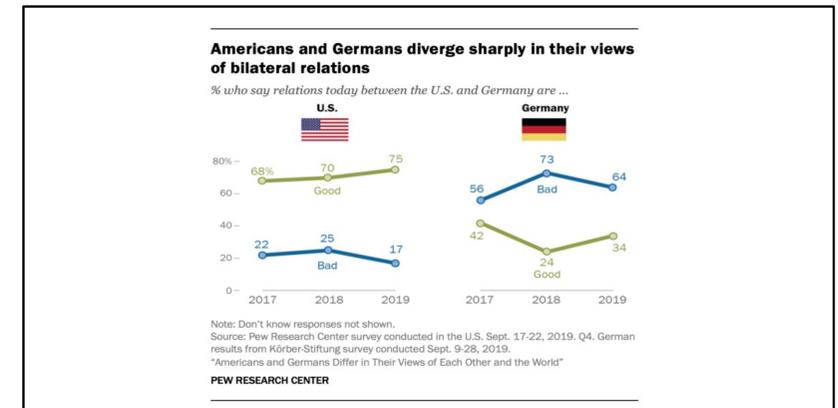
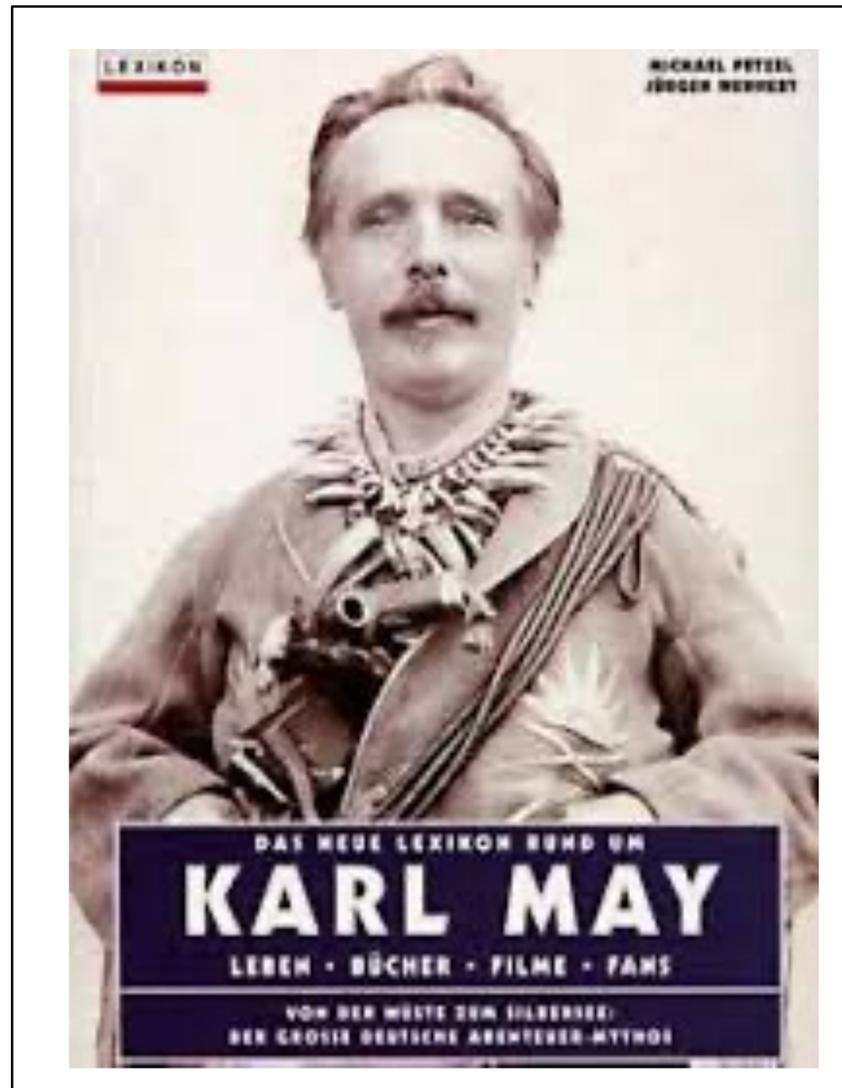
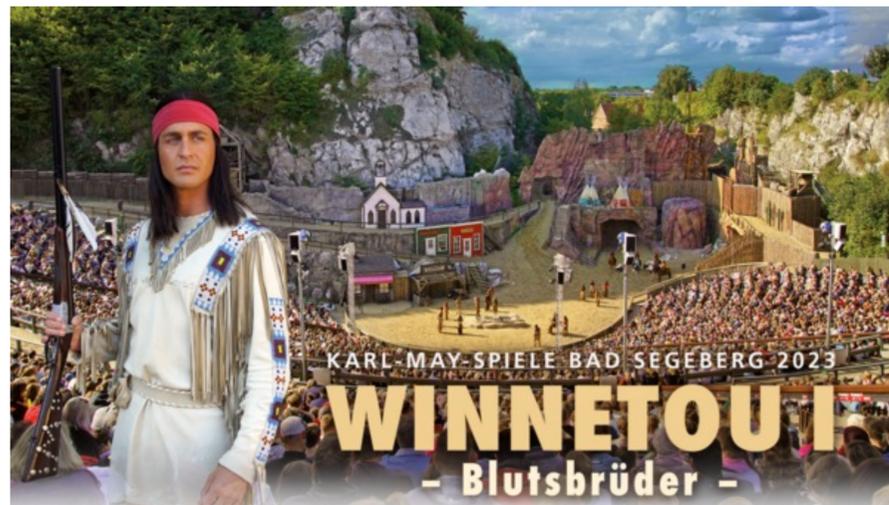
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The “Henry Rifle” on the German Stage: Karl May’s Depiction of the American West as “Dark and Bloody Grounds”

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‘If you create a gun that shoots 25 shots and allow any old lowlife to get his hands on one, you’ll see a horrible slaughter on the prairies and in the mountain passes. They’ll be shooting down Indians like coyotes, and in a few years there won’t be an Indian left. Do you want that on your conscience?’ Old Shatterhand, *Winnatou I*



German perspectives on the United States . . . derive from the twentieth-century historical experience of encounters with the United States, they also build on much deeper cultural-historical stances: the eighteenth-century German enlightenment idealization of the experiment of the American republic and the nineteenth-century German romantic suspicion of capitalism and democracy.



Nowhere in the Western world, outside of America itself, is the cult of the cowboy so firmly entrenched as it is in Germany. Doctors, lawyers, car mechanics, teachers and civil servants, sober people who bind themselves to Teutonic rules during the week, throw off their inhibitions on Friday nights to play cowboys and Indians. It is charades on a grand scale: there are hundreds of clubs dotted across the country with tens of thousands of members.

<https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/6569>

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