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Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Germany. A Transnational History.

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Abstract
This dissertation examines European and especially German responses to Buffalo Bill's Wild West show during its two European tours in 1890-1891 and 1906. It argues that the different European countries creatively adapted the content and message of the show according to their own specific cultural values and needs. By considering Buffalo Bill's Wild West within the specific cultural contexts of the nations it toured, we are able to better explain reactions to it, including Germany's astounding positive response. The show was an entertaining event for American and European audiences alike with its exoticized figures, spectacular stunts, and colorful drama; however, this study contends that it had quite a different meaning for Europeans and Germans in particular than it did for Americans.

"Buffalo Bill's Wild West in Germany" contributes new scholarly perspectives on the German reception of the American West and Buffalo Bill's version of it by providing a transnational comparison. Instead of superimposing the current American assumptions about the show onto Europe, this study offers a detailed analysis of the specifically German reactions to the Wild West and argues that Germans responded much more to the ethnographic and romantic elements of the show than to the struggle and appeals of Manifest Destiny that secured its success in the U.S. By including a vast array of German secondary literature, the Wild West show is put into a larger national context that has not previously been made available for an English readership before. Similarly, the large volume of German newspaper articles that drive the argument in the later chapters comprise a research base that has never before been translated into English and analyzed by American scholars. Through the utilization of these primary and secondary sources, this study reshapes our understanding both of Buffalo Bill's show and, more broadly, of the image of the American West in Germany.

Keywords
Buffalo Bill; 1846-1917; Buffalo Bill's Wild West Company; Germany; Germans; Indians in popular culture; Show Indians; West (U.S.); Wild West shows
Buffalo Bill's Wild West returned to Europe in May 1889 as part of the Exposition Universelle in Paris, an event that commemorated the 100th anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille and featured the debut of the Eiffel Tower. The tour moved to the South of France and Barcelona, Spain, then on to Italy. Buffalo Bill performed in Karlsruhe, Germany, in the Südstadt Quarter. The inhabitants of Südstadt are nicknamed Indianer (German for "American Indians") to this day, and the most accepted theory says that this is due to Buffalo Bill's show. The show's 1892 tour was confined to Great Britain; it featured another command performance for Queen Victoria. The tour finished with a six-month run in London before leaving Europe for nearly a decade.