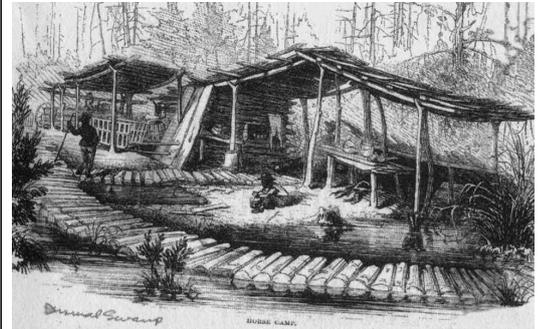
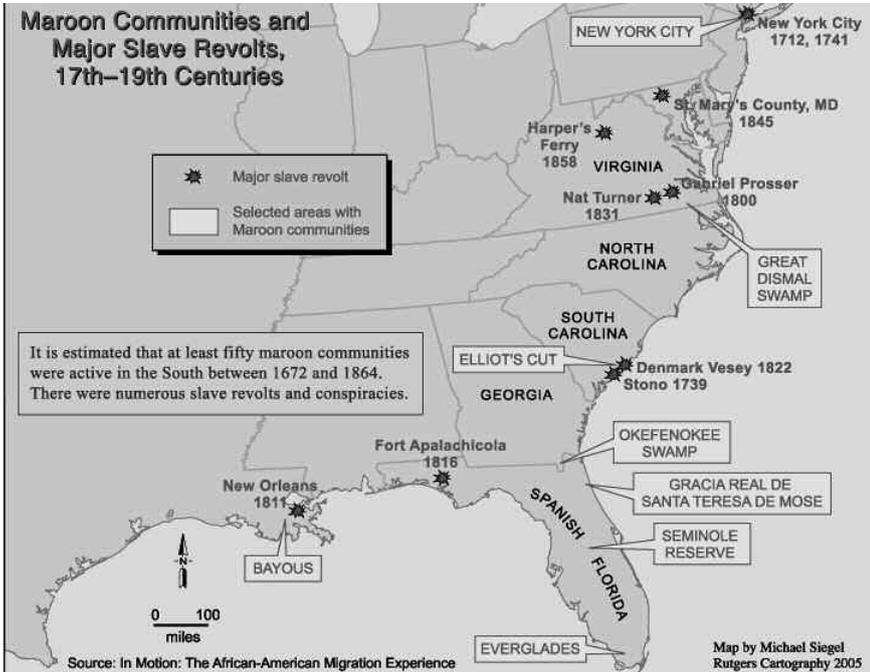




**TRAIL OF THE SPIDER - READER**

**MAROONS** - an excerpt from *The Black West*, W.L. Katz, *Harlem Moon*, 2005 (revised edition)

“From the misty dawn of America’s earliest foreign landings, Africans who fled to backwoods regions created “maroon” (after the Spanish word for runaway) settlements. Europeans saw “maroons” as a knife poised at the heart of their slave system, even pressed against their thin line of military rule. [...] From the Great Dismal Swamp to the Florida Everglades, African and Native American Maroon enclaves posed a fortified alternative to foreign domination. They served as beacons to discontented plantation slaves and drove slaveholders to fuming anger. They were agricultural trading centers with armies, and bore names such as “Disturb Me If You Dare” and “Try Me If You Be Man.” Maroon songs resonated with pride and defiance: “Black man rejoice / White Man won’t come here / And if he does / The Devil will take him off.”



Clockwise from left: a map of maroon communities & revolt; a settlement in the Great Dismal Swamps, US Marines searching for Seminoles in the swamps



**AFRICANS AND SEMINOLES**

“On the Florida peninsula Africans and Native Americans developed a unique and dramatic relationship unmatched by the rest of the country. It began during the last decades of the seventeenth century, when enslaved Africans held on British colonial plantations in the Carolinas fled south. Spanish Florida, often at war with England, granted runaways “complete liberty”. [...] When the Seminoles, fleeing persecution as part of the Creek Nation, fled to Florida at the time of the American Revolution, Africans did more than welcome them. Scholar Joseph Opala claims they thought the newcomers methods of rice cultivation they had learned in Sierra Leone and Senegambia. Then, on this basis, the two peoples formed an agricultural and military alliance that reconstructed the Seminoles as a multicultural nation. [...] Finally, in 1819, the United States purchased Florida from Spain to end what General Andrew Jackson called “this perpetual harbour for our slaves.”

Washington quickly found itself embroiled in tropical war against a seasoned foe defending its homeland. The “Second Seminole War” of the 1830s cost \$40 million, 1,500 American lives, and at times tied up half of the US Army.” Seminole resistance was fierce, “however, US burn-and-destroy operations, the seizure of hostages and bribery eventually persuaded a war-weary Seminole Nation to accept removal to Indian Territory.” *The Black West*, W.L. Katz

**THE TRAIL OF TEARS**

Indian Territory served as the destination for the policy of Indian Removal, a policy pursued intermittently by American presidents early in the nineteenth century, but aggressively pursued by Andrew Jackson, now President, after the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The Five Civilized Tribes in the South - Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks and Seminoles - were the most prominent tribes displaced by the policy, a relocation that came to be known as the Trail of Tears. The trail ended in what is now Arkansas and Oklahoma, where there were already many Native Americans living in the territory, as well as whites and escaped slaves. Other tribes, such as the Delaware, Cheyenne, and Apache were also forced to relocate to the Indian territory.



Left: Seminole Chief Osceola, a prominent resistance leader during the Second Seminole War; thought to have been of Native American and English ancestry and married to a woman of African descent. Below: Black Seminole leader John Horse.



Also see: <http://www.johnhorse.com> for more information & images

## BLACK COWBOYS

“Estimations of the number of African American cowhands vary, but the most reputable source on the subject has been George W Saunders, president of the Old Time Drivers Association. He judged that from 1868 to 1895, ‘fully 35,000 men went up the trail with herds’ and ‘about one-third were negroes and mexicans’. Recent authorities accept Saunders’ figures and have agreed that at least a fourth of all riders were of African descent”. *The Black West, W.L. Katz*



“I have decided to write the record of slave, cow-boy and pullman porter [which] will prove of interest to the reading public generally and particularly to those who prefer fact to fiction, (and in this case again facts will prove stranger than fiction)...To that noble but ever decreasing band of men under whose blue and buckskin shirts there lives a soul as great and beats a heart as true as ever human breast contained - to the cow-boys, rangers, scouts, hunters and trappers and cattle-men of the “GREAT WESTERN PLAINS”, I extend the hand of greeting acknowledging the FATHER-HOOD of GOD and the BROTHERHOOD of men”  
From the preface of the autobiography of Nat Love (AKA Deadwood Dick) “The Live and Adventures of Nat Love”, 1907



*The Rufus Buck Gang were hanged on Indian Territory after a 13 day killing spree.*

## DYNAMITE & REVOLUTION

“Dynamite! Of all the good stuff, that is the stuff! Stuff several pounds of this sublime stuff into an inch pipe, plug up both ends, insert a cap with a fuse attached, place this in the immediate vicinity of a lot of rich loafers who live by the sweat of other people’s brows, and light the fuse... In giving dynamite to the downtrodden millions of the globe science has done its best work.” *Johann Most, German Anarchist Agitator in the US. 1885 - quoted in DYNAMITE, A Century of Class Violence in America 1830-1930. Louis Adamic.*



*James Coburn plays Sean Mallory, an IRA revolutionary and explosives expert in Sergio Leone’s 1971 film A Fistful of Dynamite (also known as Duck You Sucker).*

## SERGIO CORBUCCI



*The eponymous hero and masked henchmen from Sergio Corbucci’s Django (1966) are pictured above. Corbucci was a communist who frequently loaded his exploitation Westerns with a social message - most famously in Il Grande Silenzio (1968) where the avenging hero is killed and townsfolk massacred.*

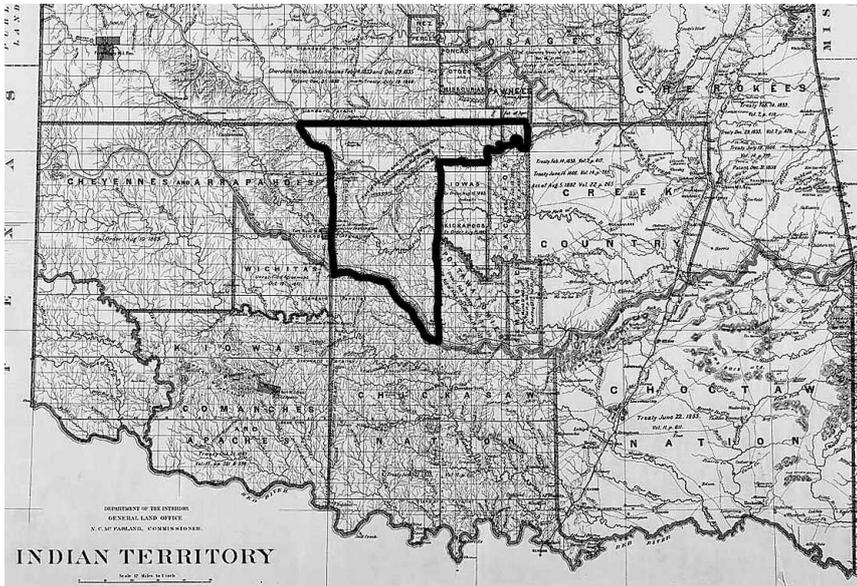


*Cattle Rustler Isom Dart*



*Japanese Poster for Il Grande Silenzio (Corbucci 1968)*





## THE UNASSIGNED LANDS

Slave-owners amongst the Five Civilized tribes sided with the Confederacy during the Civil War.

The Battle of Honey Springs, which was fought on Indian territory, in July 1863, saw white soldiers in the minority, with Indians and Blacks fighting in large numbers on both sides.

The postwar US government forced the Five Civilized Tribes to cede back large parts of their supposedly inalienable territory, including an 'empty' section known as the Unassigned Lands.

On April 22, at 12 noon, an estimated 50,000 prospective settlers poured into this 1.8 million acre tract, staked out their claims and founded the towns of Guthrie and Oklahoma City overnight.



## THE OKLAHOMA LAND RACE

The following text is an extract of the account by William Willard Howard, a 'trained observer', present on the day the Oklahoma territory was opened and who remained there for some time afterwards. It appeared on May 18, 1889 in the pages of Harper's Weekly and documents the massive stupidity of federal policy with regard to the disposal of the public domain, but makes no mention of poor squatters already present in the territory who had been forcibly evicted and scarcely more than hints at the tragic consequences to follow for the Indian tribes who had been forcibly relocated to Oklahoma under solemn promises that their land would be theirs forever. "The day was one of perfect peace(...) The whole expanse of space from zenith to horizon was spotless in its blue purity. The clear spring air, through which the rolling green billows of the

promised land could be seen with unusual distinctness for many miles, was as sweet and fresh as the balmy atmosphere of June among New Hampshire's hills. As the expectant home-seekers waited with restless patience, the clear, sweet notes of a cavalry bugle rose and hung a moment upon the startled air. It was noon. The last barrier of savagery in the United States was broken down. Moved by the same impulse, each driver lashed his horses furiously; each rider dug his spurs into his willing steed, and each man on foot caught his breath hard and darted forward. A cloud of dust rose where the home-seekers had stood in line, and when it had drifted away before the gentle breeze, the horses and wagons and men were tearing across the open country like fiends." [The full text can be accessed at: <http://www.library.cornell.edu/Reps/DOCS/landrush.htm> ]



**U.S. LAND OFFICE PRACTICE CONTESTS A SPECIALTY**

Above: Oklahoma Land Race, April 22, 1889 - lawyers were among the first to set up shop, profiting from arising land disputes



Arrival of the railway in Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968).



Plans for London Olympic Site

## OLYMPICS 2012

Lord Coe, director of the London Olympics, promised a successful bid would bring: "9000 new homes, many affordable for local people" and "new shops, offices, community and health facilities, plus world class sporting facilities in a new park. Local businesses are likely to benefit from the influx of new visitors and from potentially winning contracts to service the Games." Affordable housing sounds good, but a recent, high profile scheme for subsidised "low-cost" rent-and-buy housing in the East End requires applicants to have an annual income of at least £28,758 (£32,644 for couples)

The Olympics are very likely to have the opposite effect and make housing unaffordable for local people. In the run-up to the Sydney Olympics 2000, rents increases escalated and intensified evictions in the neighbourhoods alongside the Olympic development. In Barcelona, the 1992 Games were partly responsible for massive increases in costs of living in the city: between 1986 and 1992 the market price of housing grew by an average of 260%.

Extract from *The Regeneration Games* by Mark Saunders - <http://www.metamute.org/en/The-Regeneration-Games> [www.spectacle.co.uk](http://www.spectacle.co.uk)



## DALSTON TUBE

The arrival of the tube, Dalston Lane, Hackney (pictured left) has been part of new infrastructure linked to the 2012 Olympics and has led to intense property speculation in the area. Dalston Theatre (most recently the Four Aces Club) was demolished, despite protests, to make way for new developments. Many local traders were forced out in suspicious circumstances when Hackney Council's agents sold off properties on Dalston Lane, refusing tenants' bids in favour of a block sale to an offshore property developer. More at [www.hackneyindependent.org/content/view/170/2](http://www.hackneyindependent.org/content/view/170/2)

## Why not ask the black community?

WHILE it's good that OPEN Dalston are campaigning to stop the development of luxury flats on the site of Dalston theatre, do the people involved with OPEN have any idea about what the community in Dalston, particularly the black community, are thinking about what they are doing?

Most local people don't know what is referred to by the "Dalston theatre". They know it as the site of the old Four Aces Club and Cubies. These clubs were places where black people from all over Hackney and London went to meet each other, catch up with friends, socialise and share in their culture and music.

So many of the clubs that we enjoyed in the last 20 years have dis-

appeared - The All Nations, The Four Aces, Cubies, Phoebe's, Bronx Chungs and Club Norick. These are all gone. Often their licences were not renewed by the council and the buildings were left to rot, like The Four Aces.

Many have become gentrified - replaced by housing like the All Nations (so-called "affordable" housing, but not for the likes of us!).

Hackney Council made a big show about opening Ocean as a music venue for Hackney - but what was that? Impersonal and massively overpriced and then promptly closed due to mismanagement - what a joke!

The black people of Hackney fought long and hard to be accepted. Years ago pitch battles with racists were fought in a struggle to be counted in this borough.

These days we are under attack again, not from racists with baseball bats, but from developers, middle-class property owners and the New Labour council which supports them.

More and more people are being

pushed out of this borough. New buildings are going up left, right and centre, but where is the new social housing?

People who grew up here can't be accommodated in the borough and instead are being offered social housing outside of London, sent to towns in the Midlands and North.

The middle classes are now interested in the inner city again, but it seems they don't want to share. They live in the nice homes, their kids go to different schools and they use the expensive new shops. We might as well be on different planets.

Instead of the heritage centres and posh theatres suggested by groups like OPEN Dalston, we should be fighting for more social housing on empty sites.

The council owns this land, so let's see ACTUALLY affordable homes for working people, not just the fraction of so-called affordable flats demanded off profiteering developers by planning regulations.

Letter to the Hackney Gazette 30th March, 2006

## BELLE STARR

According to chroniclers, “no part of the West was more of a legal and jurisdictional nightmare - and a criminals paradise - than Indian territory”. Amongst its most famous outlaws were the James Gang, the Dalton brothers and the bandit queen Belle Starr.



Joan Crawford as Vienna in Nicholas Ray's "Johnny Guitar" (1954). Vienna has built a saloon on a site where the railway will eventually run.

*Belle Starr, Belle Starr, tell me where you have gone  
Since old Oklahoma's sandhills you did roam?  
Is it Heaven's wide streets that you're tying your reins  
Or singlefooting somewhere below?*

*Eight lovers they say combed your waving black hair  
Eight men knew the feel of your dark velvet waist  
Eight men heard the sounds of your tan leather skirt  
Eight men heard the bark of the guns that you wore.*

*Your Cherokee lover, Blue Duck was his name  
He loved you in the sand hills before your great fame  
I heard he stopped a bullet in Eighteen Eighty Five  
And your Blue Duck's no longer alive.*

Lyrics as reprinted in: Woody Guthrie, American Folksong, NY, 1961



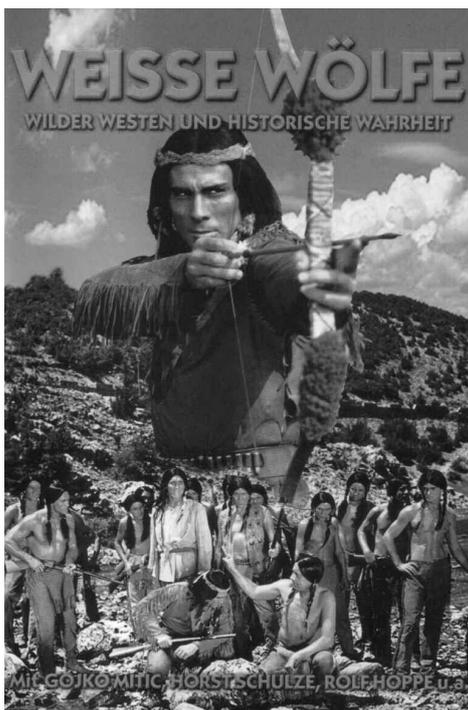
Belle Starr & her lover Blue Duck (in handcuffs)



Marlene Dietrich in Fritz Lang's 1952 film, Rancho Notorious. She plays Altar Keane, ex-saloon star and proprietor of 'Chuck-a-Luck', a far flung hide-out from where she oversees a band of outlaws.

## SHANE

In George Stevens' Shane (1953) a young boy, Joey, is drawn to a lone gunfighter as he helps a group of homesteaders fight a cattle baron who wants to force them off their land. The gunfighter defeats the cattle baron but is mortally wounded and rides off as Joey calls after him to stay. The film was reprised in Clint Eastwood's Pale Rider (1985) where a young girl summons up a ghostly avenging gunman to defend a miners' settlement from a ruthless industrialist.



Gojko Mitic in Weisse Woelfe (1969) - Mitic frequently played Indians and starred as Osceola in another DEFA production

## “WILDER WESTEN UND HISTORISCHE WAHRHEIT” (Wild West and Historic Truth)

This was the strapline of many “Indianerfilme” produced in East Germany in the 1960s and filmed in Croatia. They formed an ideological counterpoint to West German Karl May adaptations, and cast Native American characters as the proto-communist heroes pitted against North American capitalism. They also dwelled on the removal of the Native American population to reservations, a theme that gave them a degree of ambiguity (in what were otherwise highly propagandistic narratives), since the East German population were cut off from the rest of Germany and the West.

Many DEFA films were based on the popular novels of Liselotte Welskopf Henrich, a professor of ancient history (pictured left with her husband Rudolf Welskopf, a communist and prominent member of the anti-Nazi resistance movement, whom she concealed in her flat after his escape from a concentration camp). Commentators have often pointed to parallels between her descriptions of Native Americans and anti-fascist resistance fighters. Also listen to podcast by the Harvard Center of European Studies, Berlin, from Feb 4, 2008, entitled “Germans, Indians and the Wild West” which includes a presentation by Prof. H. Glenn Plenny on Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich:

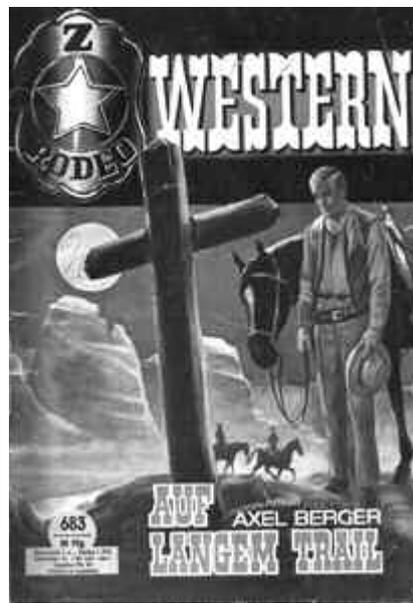
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~ces-ber/podcasts.htm>



Liselotte Welskopf Henrich & Rudolf.



George Grosz, *Burlesque Show* (1932).



German Western Pulp Fiction



Gunter Kaufmann in *Whity* (1971) Fassbinder's Brechtian Western about racism, incest and power shot in Sergio Leone's western town in Andalucia.

## PUBLIC HOUSE, PUBLIC SPACE

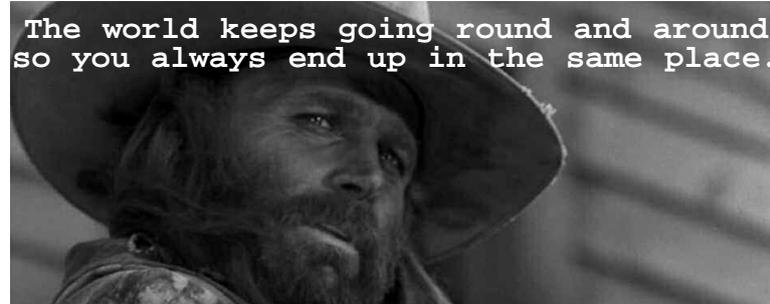
The colonising of East London has extended not just geographically, but in the manner that enclosures tend to do, culturally. In Hackney, it is most visible, and hurtful, in the disappearance in the last few years of at least three big pubs where the crack was fierce and wild. Public houses, public spaces. And they are going, the ones where there was some freedom to the public space. Maybe the cops leaning on the landlord the brewery – keep the noise down or shut the place down. First down was *The Albion* to the north of the borough. A big old Victorian affair that served a sub-culture of Goths and Mohicans, many of whom were stalwarts of that anti-capitalist movement on the streets. In this case it looks like the brewery just cashed in on the real estate. It is now large-scale apartments.

Further along at the top end of Mare Street was the *Samuel Pepys* where a really fine band might turn up out of the blue, and there was no one giving heavy manners. A place where locally made films got shown in the upstairs., and where you'd hear where that night's squatted rave was happening, and then get asked by the 20 year old on the door — **humiliating this** — if you was the law. Now reclaimed by the landlords, The Hackney Empire, and sterilized into an empty chrome and glass bar.

Worst of all in the Hackney pub clear-out was the closing of the *Crown and Castle*, on the corner of Dalston Lane and Kingsland Road, a pub the cops really hated, to become an eat in/eat out place, part of a chain. On weekend nights the place was mental. A DJ playing to a room of 20 to 60 years olds, black and white, and the Hassidic guy in the suit and the hat who loved dancing with the big black women. We danced packed tight, rush-hour style, and for a few hours it was sexy as hell.

Seen from the outside, in summing up phrases, how easy to make those wonderful nights sound naff. How tempting for someone with a taste for the rounded phrase and no taste for the crack “Dalston coming into its pomp after a railway carve-up, as an alternative for those who couldn't afford the trip ‘up west’, has all the buzz of a JG Ballard traffic island squatted by cowboys.” What a bloody cheek! And all part of the process: Police and developers in the street.

Excerpt from *Reader Flattery* - Iain Sinclair and the Colonisation of East London by John Barker  
[www.metamute.org/en/reader-flattery](http://www.metamute.org/en/reader-flattery)



Sequence from Enzo G. Castellari's *Keoma* (1976) a Spaghetti Western starring Franco Nero as an avenging 'Half breed' gunfighter.



*Claudette Bonney, in her Anansi storyteller's outfit. Search her name on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) to watch video of her performances*

## The Spider: Anansi

*"Trickster tales are a type of folktale in which animals are portrayed with the power of speech and the ability to behave like humans. The dominant characteristic of the trickster is his or her ingenuity, which enables the trickster to defeat bigger and stronger animals. A variant of the trickster tale is the escape story, in which the figure must extricate himself from a seemingly impossible situation.... In African and African American trickster tales, the trickster figure is often a monkey, a hare, a spider, or a tortoise."*

*The Essential Black Literature Guide*, by Roger M. Valade III, in Association with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Visible Ink Press, 1996.

A story teller commonly would open an Anansi story with a variation on the following phrase: *"Anansi is the spirit of rebellion; he can overturn the social order; he can marry the King's daughter; he can create wealth out of thin air; he can baffle the Devil and he can even cheat Death...."*

"As Nathaniel Mackey explains, Anancy refers to an Ashanti spider trickster figure that is also widely known in the Caribbean through folk tales and the limbo dance. Limbo refers to the "West Indian dance in which the dancer maneuvers his or her way underneath a bar that is gradually lowered. The outspread, spiderlike sprawl of the limbo dancers limbs relates the dance to the Africa-derived Anancy tales" (168). The dancer frequently wears an Anancy mask to symbolize the spiderlike role that he or she assumes, ritualizing Anancy's "faked death"; i.e., coming close to the ground—the grave—but not actually making

contact with it. According to Harris, this act symbolizes the "curious psychic re-assembly of the parts of the dead god or gods. And that re-assembly which issued from a state of cramp to articulate a new growth—and to point to the necessity for a new kind of drama, novel and poem—is a creative phenomenon of the first importance in the imagination of a people violated by economic fates". *(from the footnotes to "Masquerade, magic, and carnival in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man" by Christopher A Shinn, African American Review, Summer 2002)*

## ANANSI AND COYOTE

The Native American trickster Coyote has much in common with Anansi, and so has Brer Rabbit. In some cases the tales associated with Anansi, Coyote and Brer Rabbit are the same, only their names change - probably testimony to the way in which these stories traveled.

## COYOTE KILLS A GIANT

Coyote was walking one day when he met Old Woman. She greeted him with the words: "You better stop going that way, or you'll meet a giant who kills everybody." - "Oh, giants don't frighten me," said Coyote (who had never met one). "I always kill them. I'll fight this one too, and make an end of him." - "He's bigger and closer than you think," said Old Woman. "I don't care," said Coyote, deciding that a giant would be about as big as a bull moose and calculating that he could kill one easily. So Coyote went ahead, whistling a tune. On his way he saw a large fallen branch that looked like a club. Picking it up, he said to himself, "I'll hit the giant over the head with this. It's big enough and heavy enough to kill him." He walked on and came to a huge cave right in the middle of the path. Whistling merrily, he went in. Suddenly Coyote met a woman who was crawling along on the ground. "What's the matter?" he asked. "I'm starving," she said, "and too weak to walk. What are you doing with that stick?" "I'm going to kill the giant with it," said Coyote, and he asked if she knew where he was hiding. Feeble as she was, the woman laughed. "You're already in the giant's belly." - "How can I be in his belly?" asked Coyote. "I haven't even met

him." - "You probably thought it was a cave when you walked into his mouth," the woman said, and sighed. "It's easy to walk in, but nobody ever walks out. This giant is so big you can't take him in with your eyes. His belly fills a whole valley." Coyote threw his stick away and kept on walking. What else could he do? Soon he came across some more people lying around half dead. "Are you sick?" he asked. "No," they said, "just starving to death. We're trapped inside the giant." - "You're foolish," said Coyote. "If we're really inside this giant, then the cave walls must be the inside of his stomach. We can just cut some meat and fat from him." - "We never thought of that," they said. "You're not as smart as I am," said Coyote. Coyote took his hunting knife and started cutting chunks out of the cave walls. As he had guessed, they were indeed the giant's fat and meat, and he used it to feed the starving people. He even went back and gave some meat to the woman he had met first. Then all the people imprisoned in the giant's belly started to feel stronger and happier, but not completely happy. "You've fed us," they said, "and thanks. But how are we going to get out of here?" - "Don't worry," said Coyote. "I'll kill the giant by stabbing him in the heart. Where is his heart? It must be

around here someplace." - "Look at the volcano puffing and beating over there," someone said. "Maybe it's the heart." - "So it is, friend," said Coyote, and began to cut at this mountain.

He told the others to get ready. "As soon as I have him in his death throes, there will be an earthquake. He'll open his jaw to take a last breath, and then his mouth will close forever. So be ready to run out fast!" Coyote cut a deep hole in the giant's heart, and lava started to flow out. It was the giant's blood. The giant groaned, and the ground under the people's feet trembled. "Quick, now!" shouted Coyote. The giant's mouth opened and they all ran out. The last one was the wood tick. The giant's teeth were closing on him, but Coyote managed to pull him through at the last moment. "Look at me," cried the wood tick, "I'm all flat!" "It happened when I pulled you through," said Coyote. "You'll always be flat from now on. Be glad you're alive." "I guess I'll get used to it," said the wood tick, and he did.

from: <http://fiction.eserver.org/short/coyote-and-the-giant.html>