RE-IMAGINING INDIANS: THE COUNTER-HEGEMONIC REPRESENTATIONS
OF VICTOR MASAYESVA AND CHRIS EYRE

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE CULTURAL AND LITERARY STUDIES
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2007
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the continuing support of Barbara Babcock, Daniel Bernardi, Joy Harjo, Sarah Moore, and Susan White. Your collective intellectual creativity and discourse have served as an invaluable inspiration for this dissertation. Thank you all for your steadfast support.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Leah Marcine Andrez, who recognized the value of higher education and taking a “counter-hegemonic” stance for the San Carlos Apache community. I will miss our talking about the struggles in keeping an Apache community and family together in challenging times. Through our “talks,” you also sustained me to not give up on my academic pursuits and to question all instances of inhumanity.
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ABSTRACT

Contextualized within the discourse of United States nationalism, particularly the idea of Manifest Destiny in the nineteenth century, contemporary Native American representations from Victor Masayesva (Hopi) and Chris Eyre (Cheyenne/Arapaho) are counter-hegemonic since their representations interrogate stereotypes about Indians as “timeless,” “props” who create “color background” for the dominant imagination. For example, in *Imagining Indians* (1992), Masayesva presents a range of interrogating viewpoints concerning the exploitation, commodification, and Hollywood set treatment of Native Americans. Here, the interviewees are not passive objects but active subjects who interrogate the dominant culture’s assumptions about Indians. At the end of his film, images of various nineteenth-century tribal leaders constructed from George Catlin are destroyed through computer graphic manipulation. The camera’s possessive gaze is also de-naturalized and rendered powerless. Chris Eyre uses a different representational tactic than Masayesva. Eyre’s *Skins* (2002) seeks to build counter-hegemonic community through the love between two brothers. Despite rampant unemployment, poverty, and alcoholism, the brothers’ love sustains them and their family and thus helps them to survive in the fractured community of Pine Ridge. Here, the Lakota philosophy concerning the cultural concepts of *tisospaye* (“your clan or family”) and *oyate* (“your people”) are significant since these ideas help the brothers to overcome personal struggles with alcoholism and the effects of the trickster figure of Iktomi. In the ultimate act of countering the magisterial gaze of U.S. nationalism, *Skins* ends with the cathartic throwing of blood-red paint on George Washington in America’s much-vaunted Mount
Rushmore. In short, these contemporary representations from two key Native American filmmakers are counter-hegemonic since they assert agency in showing “get real” images of Indians and thus building community in the face of domination.
INTRODUCTION: THE FORMATION OF HEGEMONIC INDIAN IMAGES AND COUNTER-HEGEMONIC RESISTANCE

Recently, I was asked to speak at a high school near Sells, Arizona, on the Tohono O’odham Nation about any relevant topic for an audience of young, teenage Indian students. The intention of this presentation was also to impart to them my “role-model” status as one of the few Native American doctorate students at The University of Arizona. Though this was not my tribe, I immediately felt eager to interrogate the universal power of dominant representations for Native Americans because of its authority to teach. Without resorting to fancy academic theories about subjectivity, semiotics and discourse, I helped these Native students to see the nationalist and racist discursive framework surrounding the image of an Indian man, who is represented with an over-sized aquiline nose, Plains Indian-type feathers, and his being inaccurately placed in a John Ford-like setting. (He is also represented sending off smoke signals shaped with the numbers “66.”) This stereotyped image of an Indian comes from a 1960s advertisement for Phillips 66 and states, “Go with Phillips 66… the gasoline that won the West”¹. In what Ella Shohat and Robert Stam argue for in Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media (1994), I performed “a kind of pedagogic jujitsu, in the form of classroom hijacking or detournement of media texts” by interrogating and deconstructing this representation and thereby rendering its authority—to tell us Indians who we are or what we should be in real life—powerless². I helped these Native American students to unlearn the racist stereotypes from dominant, dominating representations. Similarly, Re-Imagining Indians: The Counter-Hegemonic Representations of Victor Masayesva and Chris Eyre critically studies and questions the
U.S. nationalist discursive and representational practices concerning constructions of white masculinity, Native Americans, and the symbolic uses of both white men and women within several key media and literary texts, namely, specific nineteenth-century American landscape paintings (c. 1830-1878), some of the pertinent novels of James Fenimore Cooper, and classic Westerns from John Ford.

In my critical discussion of discursive constructions of nationalist representations, I principally ground my interrogation from Michel Foucault’s three-part definition of discourse from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). Foucault remarks:

> Instead of gradually reducing the rather fluctuating meaning of the word ‘discourse’, I believe I have in fact added to its meanings: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements. (80)

Here, Sara Mills’s analysis in *Discourse* (1997) of this cryptic definition illuminates in what ways Foucault was attempting to define “discourse”. According to Mills, “the general domain of all statements” means “all utterances or texts which have meaning and which have some effects in the real world count as discourse”. For Mills, the first part of Foucault’s definition is “about discourse than about a discourse or discourses, with which the second and third definitions are concerned”. To be sure, the second and third parts of this general definition about discourse are what interest me, since it
delineates how an interrogative analysis of nationalist representations can be theoretically productive. Mills states:

The second definition that he gives—‘an individualizable group of statements’—is one which is used more often by Foucault when he is discussing the particular structures within discourse; thus, he is concerned to be able to identify discourses, that is, groups of utterances which seem to be regulated in some way and which seem to have a coherence and a force to them in common. (7)

Thus, as Mills aptly comments, using this definition for analysis, it is “possible to talk about a discourse of femininity, a discourse of imperialism” and, for my purposes, a discourse of nationalist representations. Mills goes on to examine Foucault’s third part of defining discourse as the following:

Foucault’s third definition of discourse is perhaps the one which has most resonance for many theorists: ‘a regulated practice which accounts for a number of statements’. I take this to mean that, here, he is interested less in the actual utterances/texts that are produced than in the rules and structures which produce particular utterances and texts. It is this rule-governed nature of discourse that is of primary importance within this definition. (7)
Foucault’s definition is useful as a tool of analysis in “looking” at the representational power behind dominant images of white frontiersmen and heroes of westward-moving civilization, Indian men and women as evil, ignoble savage/good, noble savage and reproducing figures of Pocahontas (respectively), and the symbolic, hyper-whiteness of white women standing in for the reproduction of America-as-Nation. In fact, all of these representations are found within particular nineteenth-century American landscape paintings, literary works from James Fenimore Cooper, and John Ford Westerns. Further, how are these representations being manipulated for “our” viewing and what discursive framework (and/or frameworks) “regulates” the production of visual and literary texts?

Certainly, like Foucault, I want to deconstruct and denaturalize the processes of regulation in the production and reproduction of these dominant images and how Native Americans are now challenging these same hegemonic representations. Thus, by examining the contextual discourses of American nationalism (primarily in the nineteenth century) and how it constructed the whiteness of civilization, the ideas of forward progress (“Manifest Destiny”) on the frontier in opposition to “uncivilized, timeless Natives,” and the reproduction of whiteness through gender, I will answer this central question. In addition, I think it is useful to study how Native Americans themselves construct and represent Euro-Americans, since this seems to be largely ignored from most of the scholarship in representations with a few notable exceptions. Finally, what theories of representation can be developed from indigenous epistemologies? Indeed,
where are indigenous epistemologies that can liberate us from containing hegemonic categories?

Oftentimes, mainstream academic representational theories drawing on (usually) French theorists (witness my own ironic use of Foucault, etc.) can devalue indigenous epistemologies by claiming a “universal” theoretical knowledge thereby unconsciously reproducing a form of colonizing minds and bodies in academia. At the risk of “universalizing” myself, my own lived experience tells me that indigenous epistemologies tend to construct phenomena in a holistic synthesis rather than a “deconstruction” into elemental parts and then seeing how the parts function within the whole\(^\text{12}\). Epistemologically, synthesis is where it’s at for indigenous peoples as opposed to analysis. In fact, I will employ some of my own earlier work on Apache epistemology on gender and the theoretical work of indigenous Hawaiian scholar, Manu Aluli Meyer, to critique some of the dominant images of Native Americans\(^\text{13}\). However, I am indeed drawn to Foucault’s approach towards defining discourse because it does, in fact, seem more diffusely holistic and fluid and, thus, similar to indigenous epistemologies.

In addition, besides analyzing representations through a Foucauldian lens and conscious of its ironic use by a San Carlos Apache informed by indigenous epistemologies, I want to define how the term “nationalism” is being used throughout my interrogation of Native American representations. In discussing nationalism, Benedict Anderson’s influential study of nations as “imagined communities” is highly important\(^\text{14}\). Anderson comments:

In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following
definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community—
and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.
It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation
will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or
even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of
their communion. (italics added, 6)
Likewise, Anne McClintock’s observation in Imperial Leather (1995) that these same
nationalist imaginations are gendered because “No nation in the world gives women and
men the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state” (353) and because of
this “Women are typically constructed as the symbolic bearers of the nation [Fig. 10.3],
but are denied any direct relation to national agency”15. This assertion is equally critical
for an analysis of U.S. nationalism and its artistic, literary, and cinematic representations.
Furthermore, these important ideas about the nation are crucial because they help to
deconstruct the nation as constructed based on a shared sense of “community” and that
this same “community” represents Euro-American men and women and Native Americans in very different perspectives.

Having defined discourse in Foucault’s terms, the development of counter
indigenous theories of representation, and the concept of nation, I want to define a
discourse of nationalism in nineteenth-century America and how scholars generally view
its shaping of hegemonic representations on gender and race. Specifically, the myth of
the frontier and its relationship with “Manifest Destiny.” For Richard Dyer, this
construction of the frontier is also the beginning of distinguishing between white and red peoples. Here, Dyer interrogates the constructed myth of the frontier:

The narrative energy of this moment [i.e., of moving in a westward direction] is suggested by the phrase ‘Manifest Destiny’, coined in 1845 by John L. Sullivan, who wrote of ‘our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions’ (quoted in Buscombe 1988: 180-1). Implicit in this, as in every Western, is a teleological narrative (a destiny), energetically and optimistically embraced, in the name of race (breeding, heterosexual reproduction) (cf. Horsman 1981). (33)

Dyer further states that this construction of the myth of the frontier was also about establishing a temporal and spatial concept since its construction is “not only in the sense of being the period and the place of establishing [white] presence, but also in suggesting a dynamic that enables progress, the onward and upward march of the human spirit through time, that keeps pressing ahead into new territory (and eventually outer space, of course, ‘the final frontier’).”

Similar to Dyer’s discussion on the “final frontier” is Daniel Bernardi’s perceptive analysis of the discursive context of the science fiction series Star Trek. During the 1960s, the U.S. government and space program invoked the myth of the frontier in dealing with nationalist concerns about Vietnam and the “exploration” of outer
space. Since the U.S. is left with no real West to dominate, the reproduction of the myth of the frontier takes “us” (as television spectators) by the 1960s into outer space. Quoting Richard Slotkin, and keenly contextualizing the Star Trek series in the 1960s, Bernardi remarks:

The myth was especially potent in the 1960s, the period that gave birth to Star Trek. Slotkin points to President John F. Kennedy’s political rhetoric about “the new Frontier,” i.e., the impetus for the space race with the former Soviet Union, as a contemporary articulation of this myth. He also points to instances in which United States troops described Vietnam as “Indian Country,” and search-and-destroy missions as “Cowboys and Indians.” (79)

The myth of the frontier, Bernardi states, continually reproduces itself from the “Monroe Doctrine to manifest destiny” to the politics surrounding after World War II to President Bush’s “‘new world order’” utterance. Thus, American identity becomes synonymous with the myth of the frontier and it is repeatedly reproduced, and with this reproduction is the unsubtle implication of a will-to-dominate the world.

As Dyer illustrates in White, this nationalizing of identity through the myth of the frontier is connected to discursive ideas about constructing boundaries and bringing “civilization” to the so-called untamed West. Dyer’s analysis interrogates this
construction of the frontier as a simultaneous establishment of not only literal boundaries but also figurative boundaries concerning race. Dyer comments:

The border is also of course between white and red peoples, which in turn specifies the nature of this border, namely that it establishes a border where there was none before. This is so not because there was no confrontation between white and red before this, but because the reds were borderless people, who had no concept of boundaries and of the order and civilization that this bespeaks in the white imagination...White cultivation brings partition, geometry, boundedness to the land, it displays on the land the fact of human intervention, of enterprise. (33)

For Dyer, this establishment of “boundedness” also brings a kind of “white” order to a perception of the land being in disorder associated with uncivilized Indians. bell hooks also denaturalizes the whiteness of “civilization” in discussing Columbus in Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations (1994). hooks remarks:

The key word, the one that was synonymous with whiteness, was “civilization.” Hence, we were made to understand at a young age that whatever cruelties were done to the indigenous peoples of this country, the “Indians,” was necessary to bring the great gift of civilization. Domination, it became clear in our young minds, was central to the project of civilization. And if civilization was good and necessary despite the costs, then
that had to mean domination was equally good. (199)

Therefore, in U.S. nationalist discourse, the myth of the frontier and its drawing of lines of demarcation is also a demarcation between white and red peoples and communicates the idea that domination of indigenous peoples is “good,” and thus, necessary. Similarly, Slotkin notes the importance of “The geography of the Frontier” “divided by significant and signifying borders” and “through persistent association, these border signs have come to symbolize a range of ideological differences”

Concerning this myth of the frontier, the teleological aspect of “Manifest Destiny” embedded in this myth is important because it denaturalizes the implicit whiteness of the discourses surrounding representations of the West, particularly in nineteenth-century landscape paintings. Before discussing specific paintings, however, the characteristic of present time in progression, in forward movement, in the idea of “Manifest Destiny” needs fuller elaboration. The construction of who occupies real, present time and who remains in timelessness is a key feature of representing whiteness as sign. Though drawn from anthropology, Johannes Fabian’s analysis of time is significant for a discursive analysis of the teleological feature of “manifest Destiny.” For example, Fabian, in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983), remarks on the “freezing” of “primitives” from the standpoint of the “ethnographic present”:

…at the very least, the present ‘freezes’ a society at the time of observation; at worst, it contains assumptions about the repetitiveness, predictability and conservatism of primitives (the present tense) reveals a cognitive stance
towards its object… it presupposes the givenness of the object
of anthropology as something to be observed. (81-82)

This has the effect of keeping “primitives” in a continual ontological condition of
timelessness, while “non-primitives” (usually non-indigenous) in the “ethnographic
present” of real time. If possession of real time allows for productive action, then it
follows that “primitives” are in a state of inaction because they do not possess “real
time.” Along with the construction of borders along the “Frontier,” the urgent need to
push West, in a progressive, advancing movement occurs because of the perception that
Native Americans possessed no sense of order, and, thus, no sense of time. Not only was
the construction of the borders in the “Frontier” significant, the establishment of order
through time was another noteworthy point in U.S. nationalist identity. Of course,
constructing Native Americans as “timeless,” “backward,” “primitive,” and “pre-
industrial,” allows for colonial domination because they have not progressed forward in
“real” time.

Yet the reality is that indigenous peoples did have conceptual knowledge about
time, but not in a rectilinear progression that advances forward. Time, especially among
indigenous peoples, is cyclical and moves from the past to the present to the future and
back to the present and past. For example, important Native American novelists such as
Leslie Silko and Louise Erdrich use multiple narrators and weave stories within stories
imbued with the past, present, and future continually mixing in metaphysical ways23. In
speaking about the writing process of her verse, noted Creek poet Joy Harjo has told me
that “the present speaks of the future and don’t ask me how this happens”24.
Indigenous time, furthermore, has a spiritual and social relationship with things in the environment. My father, for instance, taught me the San Carlos Apache names of cyclical seasons\textsuperscript{25}. The time of year was important for us because my ancestors moved campsites in conjunction with the seasons, primarily, winter and summer. The Tohono O’odham people, too, have words that roughly correspond to months based on the physical condition of plants\textsuperscript{26}. In addition, in Western Apache oral texts, specific geographic locations have profound influence on everyday social interaction, because of the \textit{memory} of ancestral presence in the surrounding landscape\textsuperscript{27}. Similarly, Hawaiian scholar Manu Aluli Meyer in “Our Own Liberation: Reflections on Hawaiian Epistemology” (2001) quotes a Hawaiian educational leader in the following passage\textsuperscript{28}:

[Knowledge] doesn’t only have to do with intelligence, it has to do with spirituality, it has to do with everything that has lined up before you, and all of the things that are lined up ahead of you. All sorts of coming together to make all of this happen. You, yourself, cannot make any of this happen. (Pua Kanahele, 15 January 1997) (128)

Therefore, despite the discourses of U.S. nationalism in the nineteenth century, many indigenous groups did indeed have a sense of time. However, this concept of time is culturally different based on different epistemologies than those found in the West. This difference does not mean that Native peoples were “timeless” as it is constructed within the discourses of American nationalist expansion. Nonetheless, Native Americans were
thought to be “timeless” who were arrested in their progression towards white “civilization.”

Repeatedly, representations in nineteenth-century American landscape paintings depict white male bodies placed on high prominent points overlooking vast stretches of empty landscape. For example, several noteworthy American paintings, which would include Emanuel Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1862), John Mix Stanley’s *Scouts in the Tetons* (1860), and to a lesser degree, Asher B. Durand’s *Kindred Spirits* (1849), exemplify what Albert Boime calls the “magisterial gaze” (1991) of westward progression in advancing U.S. “civilization.” Boime defines this gaze as one of possessive domination over the frontier.

It is this gaze of command, or commanding view—
as it was so often termed in the nineteenth-century literature—that I will call the magisterial gaze, the perspective of the American on the heights searching for new worlds to conquer. It presupposes the spectator as sightseer on the ledge or crest subjugating the boundless reality to a discipline scrutiny and simultaneously taking a reading from this orientation that is profoundly personal and ideological at the same time. The panoramic prospect becomes a metonymic image—that is, it embodies, like a microcosm, the social and political character of the land—of the desire for dominance. (21)
Typically, these white male bodies look at the “Frontier” in westward directions implying the forward movement of American expansion. In addition to this “magisterial gaze,” it is important to denaturalize whiteness within this gaze because of its vigilant position over constructed frontier boundaries. Why is whiteness as sign preoccupied with maintaining this gaze and then representing it in discursively complex ways within painting, literature, and film? Indeed, I want to apply Dyer’s ideas about the transcendent quality of embodied whiteness to the images of white frontiersmen in nineteenth-century landscape paintings because of those same bodies being constructed in a supposedly bordered opposition to Native American bodies.

In his important deconstruction of whiteness as sign in *White* (1997), Dyer has said that to talk about representations of people is to talk about bodies (14), and, for Dyer, to talk specifically about white bodies\(^30\). In “The embodiment of whiteness” section, Dyer aptly interrogates various representational strategic practices of white bodies, that is, the lighting of such bodies, the hyper-masculinity of muscled white bodies in adventure narratives, the powerlessness of white female bodies, and the suggestions of the deathly pallor of white bodies. Dyer remarks:

> Here what I want to suggest is that all of these involve a wider notion of the white body, of embodiment, of whiteness involving something that is in but not of the body. I approach this through three elements of its constitution: Christianity, ‘race’ and enterprise/imperialism. These do not just provide the intellectual foundation for thinking and feeling about the
white body, but also their forms and structures, the cultural register of whiteness. (14)

However, I am most interested in the transcendent quality of white bodies constructed in relation to the spirituality of Christianity, especially because of the placement of white frontiersmen’s bodies at and/or near prominent points within the “Frontier” landscape.

Within the context of U.S. nationalism during the nineteenth century and the discursive framework of “Manifest Destiny,” this upward movement and yet forward movement of placing white male bodies is significant because of its direction towards vertical transcendence and horizontal progression. Thus, two axes of movement are associated with this embodied whiteness: upward into incorporeal transcendence and forward in real, progressive time. These axes of U.S. nationalist movement are filled with signifiers of whiteness. Dyer states:

…white people are something else that is realized in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial. It is in this context that I look at a third element of whiteness: *imperialism*. At some point, the embodied something else of whiteness took on a dynamic relation to the physical world, something caught by the ambiguous word ‘spirit’. The white spirit organizes white flesh and in turn non-white flesh and other material matters: it has *enterprise*. Imperialism is the key historical form in which that process has been realized. Imperialism displays both the character of enterprise in the
white person, and its exhilaratingly expansive relationship to the environment. (14-15)

Because of whiteness being “something that is in but not of the body”, I want to argue for a critical discursive link among Boime’s notion of the “magisterial gaze,” the transcendence nationalist spirit of “Manifest Destiny,” the embodiment of whiteness within masculine bodies of frontiersmen (e.g., Emanuel Leutze’s Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way [1861]), and the symbolism of America-as-Female white body (e.g., John Gast’s American Progress [1878]). All of these signifiers of whiteness connect to a discursive framework of U.S. nationalism in a supposedly constructed, bounded opposition to Native Americans, i.e., the Native other.

Specifically, I want to denaturalize the whiteness in the “magisterial gaze” because of its symbolic deployment in regulating the discourse of U.S. nationalism. As I will demonstrate, the commanding whiteness of this gaze has far-reaching discursive effects for deconstructing representations in Cooper’s literature and Ford’s Westerns and the consequential contemporary Native American counter-response to its representational power. However, before discussing the discursive uses of this gaze in Cooper and Ford, I want to argue on another aspect of this “magisterial gaze.” I would like to illustrate its historic association with transcendence.

According to Dyer, the physical heights of mountains are synonymous with the spiritual transcendent power of whiteness. Boime, too, critiques the spiritual component of the “magisterial gaze” (21-22) in nationalist American representations such as “the Masonic-influenced Great Seal of the United States, in which the symbol of the Novus
Ordo Seclorum is the radiant eye coterminal with the apex of the pyramid (Fig. 4)\textsuperscript{33}.

Boime concludes that this representation highlights a divine quality. Dyer notes in \textit{White}\textsuperscript{34}:

The Aryan and the Caucasian model [of whiteness]
share a notion of origins in mountains. Bernal notes
the admiration of the Romantics, by whom such
notions were especially promulgated, for `small,
virtuous and “pure” communities in remote and cold
places: Switzerland, North Germany and Scotland’
(1987: 209). Such places had a number of virtues:
the clarity and cleanliness of the air, the vigour
demanded by the cold, the enterprise required by the
harshness of the terrain and climate, the sublime,…
even the greater nearness to God above and the
presence of the whitest thing on earth, snow. (21)

Whiteness as sign and mountainous heights are discursively connected\textsuperscript{35}. In addition,
Boime states other nationalisms, particularly European nationalisms, discursively link
their “imagined communities” (cf. Anderson) with mountains\textsuperscript{36}. For Boime, however,
U.S. nationalism took on a distinct visual quality from Switzerland, Germany, and
England because of its repetitive discursive emphasis on the “peak” seen in “such a major
body of visual and literary texts sharing a spatial and chronological coherence”\textsuperscript{37}.

Commenting on this stress on “peak” experiences, Boime observes\textsuperscript{38}: 
It is this systematic projection of the unlimited horizons as a metonymic image of America’s futurity that makes this body of material unique in its geographical, national, and temporal setting. It is not unique in its appeal to and hold over the individual imagination but rather in its manifestation as the collective and characteristic expression of the privileged national ideal, the ruling-class aspiration for American society that still endures. (26)

Here, I cannot resist thinking of a contemporary movie like 1993’s *Falling Down* whose central, middle-class white male character experiences an identity crisis precipitated by the summer frustrations of Los Angeles freeway driving and the letdown of an American system “seen” to benefit him. Ironically, since losing his defense industry job, he vents his white killing rage on marginalized racial others not characteristically viewed as being a part of U.S. citizenry. Thus, the movie’s title speaks loudly of this postmodern “falling down” from the snowy clean heights of whiteness into the disordered morass of smoggy, multi-racial Los Angeles. In fact, bell hooks sees this American movie as a drama about the metanarrative decline of the domination of Western civilization and the white man’s concomitant, emasculated inability to conquer “turf” any longer. Revealingly, the film’s narrative ends in the most westerly direction away from L.A. at the farthest end of Santa Monica Pier. Here, no glowing white light of westward “Manifest Destiny” depicted in some nineteenth-century landscape paintings exists to save the white man
from self-destruction, since he no longer can stand up and control both his own and racially othered bodies within a discursive framework of a nationalized U.S. hierarchy.

As Anne McClintock has noted in *Imperial Leather* (1995), “all nationalisms are gendered” and the U.S. is no exception to this assertion. Men and women are situated in different positions within the “imagined community” of nationalism. Likewise, Dyer comments, “…white women do not have the same relation to power as white men.” The gender difference of nationalism adds poignancy to *Falling Down* simply because it is, in fact, a white masculine body being represented in “out-of-control” crisis and not a white female body. Dyer, too, discusses the powerlessness of white feminine bodies within colonial representations in his “‘There’s nothing I can do! Nothing!’” section of *White*. Similarly, McClintock remarks:

As Elleke Boehmer notes in her fine essay, the “motherland” of male nationalism thus may “not signify ‘home’ and ‘source’ to women.” Boehmer notes that the male role in the nationalist scenario is typically “metonymic”; that is, men are contiguous with each other and with the national whole. Women, by contrast, appear “in a metaphoric or symbolic role.” Yet it is also crucial to note that not all men enjoy the privilege of political contiguity with each other in the national community. (355)

The embodiment of whiteness, which Dyer rightly interrogates, and the nationalism of Boime’s “magisterial gaze” are also dependent on its figurative and literal reproduction through gendered female bodies. John Gast’s *American Progress* (1878) uses the
symbolic representation of an excessively glowing white female body blown up to gigantic proportions to illustrate expansion into the “Frontier.” The huge white female body personifies “American Progress” by carrying the technological feats of white “civilization” such as telegraphic wire against fleeing, backwardly “primitive” Indians.

Seeing the various ways that whiteness is embodied and represented, Boime’s notion of the “magisterial gaze” can be usefully applied to literary, artistic and cinematic representations. As discussed earlier, this gaze also comes loaded with signifiers of whiteness that establish the following: the representation of “real” present time belonging to only white bodies (the ethnographic present); the construction of “Frontier” that creates a boundedness against the Native other (figurative lines of demarcation between white and red peoples); the axes of movement of time that are transcendent and horizontally westward; and the literal and figurative reproduction of the nation through symbolic representations (i.e., Woman-as-Bearers of the Nation).

In Cooper’s historic, nation-defining novels about the early republic, these signifiers of whiteness embedded in Boime’s “magisterial gaze” have an impact on how white and red peoples are represented. For example, the theme of miscegenation is a central concern in Last of the Mohicans (1826) and The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish (1829), which illustrates the boundedness of frontier identities. According to Boime, the economic potential and transformation of “Frontier” land development surround the ironically named “Mount Vision” and Judge Temple’s real estate in The Pioneers (1823). This is enterprising, transcendent whiteness on the “Frontier” with its “can do,” “against-all-odds” attitude of disciplinary control. Furthermore, the heterosexual
reproduction of whiteness is important in the “domesticating” of the early republic’s advance to the west. Finally, the crisis of white masculine identity (and the defining of that identity) between Harry March and Natty Bumppo in *The Deerslayer* (1841) recalls a “falling down” and a subsequent “rising up” to the heights of white manhood.

Similarly, the “magisterial gaze” could be applied to John Ford’s *Stagecoach* (1939) and the psychological crisis of that white man’s gaze in *The Searchers* (1956) within the filmic genre of the Western. Especially in Ford’s classic period of the Western film genre, spectatorship and nationalism (as “imagined community”) are key since “we” collectively watch the lines of demarcation in seeing savage Apaches randomly attack white travelers in a “Frontier” stagecoach. The boundedness of identities is very clear here in this representation. The fear of racial miscegenation reverberates in *The Searchers* because of the intensity with which the white patriarchal figure (John Wayne) “searches” for a captive white woman (Natalie Wood) held by Comanches⁴⁹. Likewise, the film’s racist and sexist representation of a portly Native American woman being violently pushed down a hillside after her vain attempts to couple with a white man, and yet we, as spectators, are expected to laugh⁵⁰. Finally, the reproduction of the commanding views of the white male body, i.e., John Wayne’s character, is in *The Searchers*. Yet Ford “problematizes” this commanding view as pathological. All of these elements signify the discursive power of a “magisterial gaze” of whiteness representing race and gender and, at the same time, its ambiguous limitations.

In succeeding, separate chapters—and after having analyzed the signifiers of “nationalized” whiteness in the “magisterial gaze” represented in nineteenth-century
American landscape paintings in this section—I want to interrogate and elaborate further on how the specific signifiers of whiteness in the “magisterial gaze” construct images in nineteenth-century landscape paintings (especially Emmanuel Leutze’s 1862 *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* fresco in the U.S. Capitol Building) and in John Ford’s *The Searchers* Western released in 1956. However, I will also examine how contemporary Native Americans in the 1990s take the means of visual production to challenge and complicate this supposed dominating gaze of whiteness. Hence, I will respond to the following questions about representations: What identifications in film spectatorship are occurring here?; What gaze am I being pressured to adopt in relation to representations?; What imperial power shapes Hollywood production in both the cinematic apparatus and celluloid representation of white and red peoples?; What pedagogic lessons are we learning about “savage and/or noble Indians” and white bodies when we “see” these representations? In these critical questions, I am also remembering my own unique story about Native American representations.

Finally, after examining the gaze of whiteness in representations in this part, I want to link its reproduction with masculine gender by deconstructing and interrogating the inherent phallocentrism of the “magisterial gaze.” White frontiersmen and their powerful guns are also repeatedly seen in nineteenth-century American landscape paintings. At the level of the Symbolic, I do not think this constructed image is merely coincidental within the discursive framework of U.S. nationalism and its domination of indigenous peoples and subordination of white women. No doubt, the power of dominant representations comes from shaping how we should perceive “reality.” In the
same way, Paul Smith’s analysis in *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production* (1993) brings up the notion of cinematic representation’s “intentments,” that is, “the semiotic and ideological pressure that it puts on its readers to interpret it in a particular and circumscribed way”\(^5\). Furthermore, in *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (1994) bell hooks, in her interrogation of hegemonic white images about black bodies, talks of the pedagogic aspects of white supremacist representations\(^5\).

Thus, in previous work, in interrogating the gaze in representations, I have found it extremely useful to argue for critical links among Western Apache epistemology through an analysis of gender in the oral tradition, the Western Apache epistemological influence on diffuse, pluralized subjectivity in visualizing “placenames” in the surrounding landscape, and the important work of Monique Wittig’s writing because of her insistence on multiplicity in constant, cyclical motion instead of the fixed unity of the phallus in dominant textual representations\(^5\).

Like Monique Wittig’s writing, Western Apache oral texts also work with very similar pluralized, narrative forms which breakdown dualistic, “Frontier” binary opposition. I become directly involved with the Apache storyteller’s strategic use of the story’s connection to certain geographic locations in the living landscape. I am *at* the location where my ancestors experienced meaningful events. Time and place are conflated into one continuum through the storyteller’s use of sacred, meaningful words that recall stories to be used for moral instruction. Therefore, from lived experience as a “Western Apache Native, progressive, two-spirit,” who is painfully aware of the dominant language’s constructed use of gendered sex and race categories, “I/i” am
continually working in, around, and through a pluralized, multiple counter-hegemonic epistemology that constantly critiques and interrogates how the dominant, white phallogocentric discursive gaze constructs me into fixed categories of representation. In a succeeding chapter, I will elaborate further on how using Western Apache epistemology and Monique Wittig’s writing challenges and denaturalizes what Boime sees as the “magisterial gaze” in U.S. nationalist representations, and thus offer this as a theoretical “next step” for Native American representations.

In this critical approach against the representational categories of gendered sex and race, I move to a politicized, pluralized subject position of denaturalizing whiteness and heterosexuality as sign, I begin to critically see how domination of the objectified Native other manifests itself through what Paul Smith sees in representations in that they exist in “cotextual histories” in “ever-shifting discursive possibilities that cohabit with any particular text in a given culture at a specific moment.” Here, I offer a telling story of the discursive power of representations existing in “cotextual histories.” At a prominent German university in the early 1990s, I was asked to lecture on the representational and cultural power of land on Western Apache identity. I arrived early to set up slides of Apache culture, etc., for this important presentation. While waiting for the invited guest presenter, the students, who were unaware of my own cursory knowledge of German, began asking, “Where’s the Native?”
Notes

1 In the 1990s, I received this advertisement from a friend who owned an antiques store in Tucson, Arizona. He thought that it would be ironic and amusing for me to have this advertisement. In fact, I occasionally use the image in my own classes to discuss how to develop critical thinking skills in reading visual texts.

2 See Shohat and Stam, Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media, (357). The authors also discuss re-thinking Westerns from the perspective of the “subaltern” like the “squaw” Look in The Searchers. How might filmic narratives be taught from her perspective?

3 Leslie Fiedler discusses the American cultural roots of Westerns in the historical romances of Cooper in Love and Death in the American Novel, (191). Cooper, according to Fiedler, was strongly influenced by Sir Walter Scott. Cooper “learned from Scott to invest his projections of the primitive with the pathos of the lost cause, and to play out his action on the ‘ideal boundary’ between two cultures, one ‘civilized and cultivated,’ the other ‘wild and lawless’” (179). Although Cooper’s novels present and construct literary representations, I want to concentrate mainly on the critical visual linkage between Emmanuel Leutze’s fresco titled Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way (1862) and its placement in the U.S. Capitol Building.

4 See Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, (80).

5 See Sara Mills, Discourse, (7).

6 Ibid, (7).

7 Ibid, (7).
See Albert Boime’s discussion about Gast’s *American Progress* (1878) in *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830-1865*. Boime also analyzes numerous other nineteenth-century landscape paintings that reflected the idea of Manifest Destiny and its inherent nationalism. Also, in an art history graduate seminar at The University of Arizona on frontier imagery, I noted how the imagery in Gast’s *American Progress* presents binary oppositions between light and dark. The light portion of the image presents the beneficial progress of civilization, and the dark portion depicts “savage” Indians fleeing in terror from the oversized personification of America-as-White Woman.

Fiedler in *Love and Death in the American Novel* discusses how Cooper reconstructs and substitutes the Romanticism of Scott’s North with the western U.S. frontier, (179). Fiedler also examines how masculine binaries are being established in Cooper’s literary work in the historical romance genre, (162-217). The lines of demarcation between “civilization” and unsettled “wilderness” is certainly emphasized in Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1862). While John Ford presents in his classic Western, *Stagecoach* (1939), a strong binary between unseen savage Apaches lurking in the landscape and the various white folks (representing different aspects of American society) in the crammed stagecoach, he “problematizes” the racial binary in such later films as *Fort Apache*, *The Searchers*, and *Cheyenne Autumn*.

See endnote above, Meyer seems to be developing indigenous epistemologies from a Hawaiian perspective. In my M.A. thesis, I theorized how focusing on Western Apache placenames and the oral tradition could challenge binary oppositions since identity is tied to the landscape in a spiritual, social sense.

See my comments above in endnote 11.

See endnote 11.


See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (353-354).


Ibid, (33).


See endnote 16.

See bell hooks, *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*, (199). Interestingly, hooks’s assertion connects to Gast’s imagery in *American Progress* (1878) where whiteness-as-sign brings the benefits of white civilization to the untamed West.


See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, (ix, 81-82). Also, Said, in *Orientalism* (240), and Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture* (86),
discuss the notion of ambivalence in the formation of colonialist discourse. In the latter nineteenth century, the idea of “freezing” indigenous people in the past becomes increasingly important in terms of the politics of displaying culture in both museums and world’s fairs.

23 Silko’s *Storyteller* especially emphasizes stories within stories, which lends them a concentric, circular quality.

24 When I was a student of hers at The University of Arizona, Joy Harjo and I endlessly talked about indigenous ideas about spirituality and its connection to Native American literature, (personal communication).

25 I remember my father, Philip Cassadore, showing me a San Carlos Apache calendar that illustrated the different seasonal times of the year.

26 Danny Lopez, a noted Tohono O’odham elder and scholar, discussed the cultural notion of time with me.

27 See Keith Basso, “‘Speaking with Names’: Language and Landscape among the Western Apache,” *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology*, (138-173).


29 See Boime’s discussion of these images in *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830-1865*.

See Pierre Bourdieu’s discussion about the misrecognition of symbols in *Language and Power*, (170). This, in fact, is how symbols obtain power because they are not recognized as symbols.

See endnote 3.


This assertion about whiteness-as-sign and a connection to mountains is evident in Leutze’s 1862 fresco, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*, in the U.S. Capitol Building.

Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (23).

See Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze*, (23).

Ibid, (26).

See Joel Schumacher’s *Falling Down* (1993).

See hooks, *Outlaw Culture*, (44-46).

See McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, (352).


Ethan Edwards in *The Searchers* behaves in a similar fashion in that he is “out-of-control.” Sara Mills, however, in *Discourse* (124), is frustrated by analyses that focus on psychoanalysis and individual psyches within colonial discourse since this masks real material, economic, and social imbalances. While I generally agree with her assertion, I think Ford (within the constraints of the Hollywood studio system) is attempting to
question the “magisterial gaze” within the psychological obsession of Ethan Edwards’s racist search for his niece Debbie. Also, Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1862) focuses on individual white male bodies, so U.S. colonial discourse depicts individual images that do indeed mask what Mills’s assertion discusses in *Discourse*.


45 See McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, (355).

46 See endnote 8.

47 See endnote 9.


49 Likewise, in *Stagecoach* (1939), when white passengers are under attack from Apaches and have depleted their ammunition, Hatfield (John Carradine) prepares to shoot Lucy Mallory (Louise Platt) to prevent a potential miscegenational act of rape.

50 Peter Lehman extensively analyzes the racist implications of Ford’s missing reverse shot to see Look’s reaction after she has been kicked out of bed by Martin Pawley in this section of *The Searchers* in “Texas 1868/America 1956: *The Searchers*, (405-412).

51 While Victor Masayesva and Chris Eyre are not making Westerns in the classic genre sense, they are certainly responding to Indian representations in the Western. Eyre, for example, in *Smoke Signals* has a Western playing on television screens in several scenes with Native American characters. Also, John Wayne is specifically mentioned on the bus when two racist white men take the seats of Victor and Thomas. I find it ironic that Native American characters in *Smoke Signals* are being pushed to the back of the bus
since Rosa Parks refused to move on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus in 1955. This non-
vviolent act of defiance took place one year before the theatrical release of *The Searchers*
in 1956.

As a child, I watched a long-forgotten black and white Western with the cavalry
chasing Indians. Even at that age, I wondered why Indians were always losing and
represented as “the bad guys.” In addition, my father explained that some of our Euro-
American relatives came from west Texas, which seems to me the heart of “cowboy
country.” This is ironic given the present study of Indian/Native American images.

See endnote 31.


See hooks’s discussion about *Falling Down* and *Menace II Society* in *Outlaw Culture*,
(45).

M.A. thesis drew parallels with Wittig’s theoretical work in her literature about resisting
categories of sex since Western Apache placenames also work to remove boundaries
between individuals and certain points in the surrounding landscape.

The use of the “I/i” is drawn from Trinh T. Minh-ha’s *Women, Native, Other*, and her
notion of a pluralized subjectivity that resists categories that contain, (90).

See Smith, *Clint Eastwood*, (xv).

Certainly, Karl May, the nineteenth-century German writer, must have influenced the
image of what an Apache should look like at this old German university. Yet I was
lecturing in the 1990s about Apache tradition and the impact of modern life on those traditions?
CHAPTER ONE: NINETEENTH-CENTURY DISCOURSES AND THE FORMATION OF HEGEMONIC INDIAN REPRESENTATIONS

As I have discussed in the Introduction, Native American representations are tied to whiteness-as-sign in the nationalist ideology that formed what is the United States. The legal, scientific, and artistic discourses of the nineteenth century republic are central to any discussion concerning the subsequent representations of Native Americans in Hollywood westerns of the twentieth century. The nineteenth century began with Native Americans largely autonomous and unfettered by Euro-American encroachment. However, this seeming independence changed with increasing westward expansion of the United States and John L. O’Sullivan’s coined editorial phrase in 1845 of “Manifest Destiny,” which was preceded by the Indian Removal Act of 1830. In the early nineteenth century, landscape artists such Asher B. Durand, Thomas Cole, Emanuel Leutze, and later Albert Bierstadt (born in 1830) generated representations that reflected and naturalized the celebratory aspects of increasing westward expansion as well as concurrent domination over land and Indian peoples¹. In the later nineteenth century, this political domination becomes what I discursively term “containment,” or domestication of the “authentic” Other, into literal and figurative glass cases. This notion of containment is a particular strain of scientific thinking that led to the museum display of “authentic” Indians as “primitive, savage specimens” at actual museums, in Wild West shows, and at the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893². Indeed, how and why did westward expansion seem natural and inevitable leading to the discursive constructions of “authentic” Indians? Interestingly, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, treaty making ends in 1871 with Native American tribal leaders as well as an increasing
movement to assimilate various Indian peoples away from collective tribal identities and into individual farmer citizens with the passage of the Dawes Act (1887) and the creation of boarding schools such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1879. Further, the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890 heralded the end of the century’s Indian Wars. Without a doubt, the nineteenth century provides aesthetic, political, and historic context to what Hollywood subsequently produced and what images it preferred for Native Americans. The political implications of these collective discourses have profound influences on what hegemonic images are preferred and, hence, offered by Hollywood for Indians, and what subsequently led to Native American filmmakers such as Chris Eyre to be counter-hegemonic in attempting to create representational complexity. Moreover, like Foucault’s notion of the panopticon, and Albert Boime’s idea of the “magisterial gaze,” I argue that these collective discourses have a categorizing or disciplining gaze that is inherent with power and with which they construct the Other. Power relations are established between nineteenth-century hegemonic discourses that seek to categorize and those who are categorized by them, yet how can Western Apache epistemology, for example, counter or disrupt what Boime terms the “magisterial gaze” and its establishment of binarism?

The legal discourse in the early nineteenth century sought to contain various Indian peoples through the passage of the Indian Removal Act of 1830 championed by a former Indian fighter, President Andrew Jackson. The act removed Indian tribes east of the Mississippi River to what is now Oklahoma. Despite Cherokee representatives’ attempts to prevent removal to the west, according to Hoxie, one hundred thousand
Indians from various tribes were removed in the fifteen years after 1830. In 1834, President Jackson proposed the Western Territory Bill that defined Indian Country as “that region bounded on the south by the Red River, on the north by the Platte and Missouri Rivers, on the east by the states of Missouri and Arkansas, and on the west by the international boundary with Mexico”\(^\text{10}\). This bill was not passed, however. Congress eventually passed legislation in 1834 that legally defined Indian Country “as that portion of the western United States that was not part of any state or territory”\(^\text{11}\). In subsequent years throughout the nineteenth century, various Indian peoples were removed to what would become Oklahoma in 1907. By 1889, the so-called Indian Territory contained 24 different tribes (including a portion of another group of Apaches not from the San Carlos, Arizona, area) from various locations in the United States. Tribal property, however, with the exception of the Five Civilized Tribes and the Osage, was divided and tribal agreements dissolved with the passage of the General Allotment Act in 1887. As Frederick Hoxie comments, by 1890, Indian Territory was separated away from what was called Oklahoma Territory, and the Dawes Commission allotted any remaining Indian lands in 1893 to 1898. This division was a precursor to Indian Territory being incorporated into Oklahoma Territory\(^\text{12}\).

Simultaneous with the Indian Removal Act (1830) and O’Sullivan’s coined phrase of “Manifest Destiny,” nineteenth-century Euro-American landscape painting was instrumental in the discursive naturalization of U.S. westward expansion and the process of containing Indians through re-presenting them in particular, preferred imagery. These are discursive constructions of the Indian Other. Indeed, scholars such as Schimmel,
Truettner, Goetzmann, Gitlin, and Anderson deconstruct the complex invention of the Indian and the concomitant images of progress in nineteenth-century representations\textsuperscript{13}. Schimmel, for instance, in “Inventing ‘the Indian’” argues that nineteenth-century paintings established binary oppositions within particular images to further nationalist interests, and concludes that:

Real Indians never inhabited the paintings of white artists. Paintings in which Indians were represented were created to embody whites’ attitudes about nature, the right of conquest, and the priorities of civilization. To whites, Indians at odds with Anglo-Saxon culture, refusing to abandon tribal custom and become “productive” citizens, were either primitive, savage, or doomed…In this image Indian culture no longer possesses even the myth of corporeal presence but has been reduced to an aesthetic arrangement of bric-a-brac devoid of function, impoverished of meaning, and \textit{displayed} against yet another grid of white construction. (italics added,186)

Similarly, William Truettner asserts in “Ideology and Image: Justifying Westward Expansion” that Euro-American representations post-1850 focused increasingly on various symbols of progress (e.g., “wild prairie” land becoming a cultivated farm, religion and learning subsuming the “backward” ways of the Indian, etc.) to the inevitable establishment of economic democracy\textsuperscript{14}. Schimmel and Truettner’s comments have profound implications for later Hollywood representations and Native American filmmakers responses to them. I might add that in representing and containing
“savage” Indians as impediments to Euro-American progress to “economic democracy” justification then exists for domination and colonization.

In addition, I assert that nineteenth-century landscape paintings function as colonial texts and that they contain discursive elements, that is, figurative symbols easily recognizable by Euro-Americans and thus deployed to further nationalist ideology. For example, images of trains pushing off frightened Indians in both Andrew Melrose’s *Westward the Star of Empire Takes Its Way—near Council Bluffs, Iowa* (1867), and Fanny Frances Palmer’s *Across the Continent: “Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way”* (in a Currier and Ives lithograph, 1868). Further, John Gast’s *American Progress* (1878) engraving seems to summarize all the signifiers of westward expansion with various images of technological progress with an oversized, symbolic Columbia-like figure (dressed in classical, pristine white Grecian attire with the Star of Empire on her forehead symbolizing the bringing of the light of civilization from the east to the dark wilderness of the west) carrying telegraph wire over the American Plains as frightened Indians move ever westward into darkness. Other images that illustrate westward expansion are cabins in the wilderness with blasted trees in the foreground to establish farming, and numerous frontiersmen on promontories majestically surveying the land below and from a left to right direction. No doubt, these nineteenth-century landscape paintings are part of a larger regulated discursive strategy that naturalizes the inevitability of the narrative of colonization and domination. The paintings tell nationalist stories that reflect westward expansion and in this way, too, they function as myth because they do not re-present the alternative realities of the frontier. Further, these representations fit
into what Sara Mills calls “discursive structures within colonial texts”\textsuperscript{17}. Mills, for instance, cites Mary Louise Pratt’s analysis of an example of nineteenth-century travel writing from John Barrow’s description of the footprints left by inhabitants’ food gathering in South Africa. Mills remarks:

By “emptying” the landscape of human presence, the “native” is erased from consideration when the colonial powers are considering which lands to exploit. She also notes that there are certain event-structures that occur within travel texts which are determined by the colonial context; for example, the surveying of land is often naturalized within travel accounts. The narrator describes the climb to the top of a hill or mountain and surveys the surrounding land. The terms within which the land is surveyed are often those of potential colonial exploitation: fertile land, lack of indigenous inhabitants, presence of water supply, and so on. (115) Mills then concludes that Pratt’s analysis of so-called innocent travel writing with its production of information is not so innocent since it claims to know the land better than the original inhabitants\textsuperscript{18}. Yet what of indigenous knowledge of the land? If, as Pratt has demonstrated, the travel writer claims knowledge that is supersedes indigenous knowledge, this becomes an act of claiming power within a colonial context. Nineteenth-century images of progress function in a similar way in that they produce information that better suits the economic uses of the land to further American ideology about democracy, which is the idea of American exceptionalism\textsuperscript{19}.
Mills’ assertions about Pratt’s analysis of colonial travel writing have several implications for understanding nineteenth-century landscape paintings as colonial texts because of the notion of representing indigenous peoples as presence in absence and the complex notion of what Pratt terms as “the contact zone”\textsuperscript{20}. First, as Schimmel has noted in “Inventing ’the Indian,’” even when Indians have a “corporeal presence,” they are “reduced to an aesthetic arrangement of bric-a-brac devoid of function, impoverished of meaning, and displayed against yet another grid of white construction”\textsuperscript{21}. Schimmel’s comments indirectly confirm Pratt’s idea about seeing original inhabitants as being present in absence. However, I am also interested in Pratt’s notion of “the contact zone” and “transculturation” because of their “problematizing” the constructed binary opposition that exists between colonizer and colonized within frontier spaces, and this, no doubt, has implications for later filmic representations in the twentieth century because so-called lines of racial, cultural demarcation become ambivalent especially in John Ford’s \textit{The Searchers} (1956)\textsuperscript{22}. Second, in an analysis of George Catlin’s representations, Goetzmann and Goetzmann assert that Catlin was motivated by “‘the production of a literal and graphic delineation of the living manners, customs, and character of an interesting race of people who are rapidly passing away from the face of the earth—lending a hand to a dying nation, who have no historians or biographers of their own to portray with fidelity their native looks and history,’” and conclude that Catlin was influenced by a combination of art, science, and human imagination as a moral act\textsuperscript{23}. Interestingly, indigenous epistemologies in oral traditions containing trace histories and knowledge about landscape, moral beliefs, spirituals beliefs, etc., are
conveniently ignored because they do not fit into a system of naturalized colonial categorization being used by Catlin. No doubt, Catlin was moved by a genuine desire to save the Indian from destruction and annihilation, but did Catlin ask tribal leaders for permission to be saved from westward expansion? Third, within the colonial context of American westward expansion, Jay Gitlin’s ideas about the historical, frontier narrative echo Pratt’s in that frontiers are complex, malleable zones of interpenetration with Indian people playing meaningful, active roles. Gitlin comments that:

The effort to reexamine the history of native/nonnative interaction makes it all the more important to look closely at the role of empires in the American West. As the American frontier expanded, state and settlers alike agreed that native political and cultural distinctiveness must disappear. (The question of how best to achieve this—by assimilation, removal, enclavement, or genocide—was sometimes a bone of contention.) In contrast, the agents of empire on the various imperial frontiers often promoted alliances with native peoples…Indians appear frequently, but usually as straw men. Indians are portrayed either as victims of progress or as hostile opponents who tested the mettle of westering pioneers. Neither portrayal acknowledges Indian people to have played an active, meaningful role in the shaping of the western past. (73) Gitlin further remarks that multiple frontiers existed because of his examination of French and Spanish frontiers, and concludes, “We may know the traditional frontier as a graft or overlay on the history of some regions rather than a transformation.”
conflicting notions about the narrative construction of the Euro-American frontier existed. Is it a clear line of binary demarcation or is it composed of multiple frontiers that continually transform in a malleable process?

I assert that the frontier is a combination of both aspects, since one view supports the discursive construction of nationalist ideology and expansion, and the other challenges what is meant by the idea of “frontier” by focusing on the reality of frontier life. This assertion necessitates the following questions: What is the reality and what is the myth of the frontier? Is it a space full of rugged, Marlboro Man individualism where whiteness regenerates/recreates itself for the civilizing process of westward expansion\textsuperscript{27}, or is it a peaceful Garden in Eden\textsuperscript{28}? What viewpoints did indigenous peoples have of Euro-Americans? What of environmental destruction and impacts on the land from both Native and non-Native Americans and therefore the compromised promises of Manifest Destiny\textsuperscript{29}? Certainly, the discourse of U.S. nationalism constructed binary oppositions between indigenous peoples and Euro-Americans, but, as Gitlin points out, multiple lines of demarcation on the frontier actually existed that “often promoted alliances with native peoples,” which further complicates the idea of a unitary, east-to-west movement, frontier. United States nationalist discourse through legal acts (e.g., the Indian Removal Act) and artistic representations (e.g., Emanuel Leutze’s \textit{Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way}, 1861-1862) construct the binaries to establish dominion over indigenous lands, and yet the harsh reality of day-to-day existence on the frontier necessitated alliances with native peoples\textsuperscript{30}. 
In analyzing the linkage between nationalist and artistic discourses, I want to focus on Emanuel Leutze’s mural entitled *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* in the U.S. Capitol Building for several reasons, but mainly for its depiction of the inevitability, and hence naturalization, of the expansionist narrative of Manifest Destiny\(^3\). As Boime and Fryd relate, Captain Montgomery C. Meigs, who was responsible for additions to the Capitol, asked Leutze, a German immigrant, over a period of time from 1854, to decorate the empty spaces on the walls and to tell “the history of our country arranged in chronological order”’ with its initiation in 1861 and its completion in 1862\(^2\). As I have remarked earlier, Boime’s notion of an all-encompassing, all-knowing, magisterial gaze becomes symbolically synonymous with who tells us “the history of our country.” The painting represents (re-presents?) a westward moving wagon train of emigrants arduously climbing, and then crossing the presumed Continental Divide in transit to the golden opportunities of California, which is painted on the left side of the mural. In the background of the mural, the Rocky Mountains loom over them. Boime comments:

> Leutze’s monumental fresco shows the irrepressible thrust of the pioneers, who pause momentarily to savor their triumph as they crest the Continental Divide. They stand heroically at the pinnacle of the Rockies—the most elevated of them prepares to raise the Stars and Stripes à la Frémont—gesturing in the direction of the vast spaces beyond. Leutze’s philosophical justification for the forward thrust of empire is inscribed in the
right-hand border, ornamented with a medallion of Daniel Boone:

“The spirit grows with its allotted spaces. The Mind is narrowed in a narrow Sphere.” But whose mind and whose spirit? (45)

Boime, however, in asking the last question, denaturalizes the inherent encoding of racism and sexism found in Leutze’s mural by recognizing the marginalization of Indian people (who are largely absent except in the upper margin), the black teamster, and the swooning wife of the unrealistically oversized frontiersman with a coonskin cap. Of course, all these othered bodies do not partake in the magisterial gaze of white frontiersman since none of them occupy the pinnacle of the peak.

By the 1860s, Fryd argues that the representations of Indian peoples in the margins of Leutze’s U.S. Capitol fresco about Manifest Destiny have become largely symbolic because of the general recession of confrontation. Indeed, the fresco’s completion 32 years after passage of the Indian Removal Act (1830) confirms this assertion. Discursively, Indians are moving into the realm of the artistic symbolism because of the political reality of colonial domination and containment. Ironically, Indian representations in this fresco’s upper margin are decorated with an “‘arabesque’” scroll in blue and gold colors with the words of “Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way” in the space of “mythic vignettes and the mythic text”\(^3\). As Fryd further asserts, Leutze’s strategic placement of three lone Indian figures is reflective of successful U.S. emigration to the Pacific coast. As I suggest in the Introduction, Dyer has argued that teleological narrative movement is associated with the idea of progress and thus progress becomes synonymous with whiteness as sign because of its need to advance so-called
civilization on the “uncivilized” frontier. In analyzing the concept of Manifest Destiny, Dyer comments:

This is both a temporal and a spatial concept, not only in the sense of being the period and the place of establishing presence, but also in suggesting a dynamic that enables progress, the onward and upward march of the human spirit through time, that keeps pressing ahead into new territory (and eventually outer space, of course, ‘the final frontier’). Moreover, it signals a border between established and unestablished order, a border that is not crossed but pushed endlessly back. (my italics, 33)

Of course, as Dyer further asserts, the idea of Manifest Destiny establishes a border between white and Indian peoples and that “it establishes a border where there was none before.” As Boime states above, the representations of whiteness in Leutze’s fresco are not innocent and ideologically free of U.S. nationalism because of the strategic placement of white bodies and non-white ones (e.g., either below the pinnacle or in the margins) as well as male and female bodies (i.e., below male bodies). Indeed, borders, both literal and figurative, are being established in *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* among categories of race and gender. Yet why was this representation chosen for the U.S. Capitol Rotunda?

*Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* represents not only a white corporeal presence on the American frontier, but also a figurative and reproductive presence of the nation. Near the center of this fresco, Leutze places a white
domesticating family at one of the pinnacles in the Rockies as the wagon train below them moves and advances inevitably westward. In fact, several representations of women and infants exist in the fresco in the wagon train as if Leutze wanted to emphasize the familial domestication of the frontier. However, the mother with an infant child on one of the pinnacles wears a reddish scarf over her head, which is reminiscent of the European iconography associated with the Virgin Mary. The over-sized white father in a coonskin cap protectively looms over them at the very top of the pinnacle. This image of the white, domesticating family in the context of Manifest Destiny and rising over the inhospitable wilderness represents both literal and figurative reproduction of the nation.

Literal, in the sense, that children are being produced to advance the nation through more citizens, and figurative, in the sense, that whiteness-as-sign moves into the symbolic, discursive realm with the male frontiersman in over-sized proportions.

Whiteness-as-sign in Leutze’s fresco has several meaningful implications in terms of Manifest Destiny, U.S. nationalism and the Indian other. With these ideas, what aspects of whiteness get repeated and regulated in artistic discourse to contain and/or suppress Indian representations, and thus, Indian peoples? Again, as I pointed out in my Introduction, Dyer argues that whiteness-as-sign becomes discursively associated with several key qualities, namely, the notions of embodiment, progress, enterprise, and transcendence. *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* illustrates these qualitative aspects of whiteness-as-sign. Here, I am struck by Dyer’s analysis of colonization and representations of whiteness-as-sign. Dyer states:

Enterprise as an aspect of spirit is associated with the concept of
the will—the control of self and the control of others. John Hodge (1975) identifies this as a central value in Western culture, tracing it back to Plato. Will is literally mapped on to the world in terms of those who have it and those who don’t, the ruler and the ruled, the colonizer and the colonized. Hodge Struckmann trace such dualism from the Greeks through Manicheism, Augustine and up to Freud, the latter considering that ‘the leadership of the human species’ had fallen upon the ‘great ruling powers among the white nations’ (‘Reflections upon War and Death’ 1915; quoted in Hodge and Struckmann 1975: 182). The idea of leadership suggests both a narrative of human progress and the peculiar quality required to effect it. Thus white people lead humanity forward because of their temperamental qualities of leadership: will power, far-sightedness, energy. (31)

Indeed, these key ideas discussed by Dyer, that is, “will power,” “far-sightedness,” and “energy” are represented in Leutze’s nationalistic fresco. Oftentimes, the terms “pioneering spirit” come to mind when looking at the “enterprising” wagon train in Leutze’s work. Yet I argue that that spirit should be denaturalized to reveal its inherent whiteness in the control (and hence organization) of the frontier and Indian peoples because white folks know how to put the land to its best use. As Dyer notes above, spirit in whiteness-as-sign wills the body to action and organization, and, thus, to take control of itself as well as Indian others36. Since Indian peoples are boundless and thus without
organization (without the spirit of will naturalized in the notion of a “pioneering spirit”), white frontier representations must be seen to be in control and bounded and making progress in terms of establishing a civilizing presence, and, hence, a nation. This assertion about establishing boundaries and being in control relates to the representation of the emigrants in the wagon train crossing from the east to the west as it makes an arduous climb up the Continental Divide with the goal of getting to the Pacific, and what is now San Francisco. Thus, this spirit of the will in whiteness-as-sign exemplified in Leutze’s nationalistic fresco underlies the push to represent Indians being controlled and concurrently Euro-Americans being in control.

The representations in Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* of enterprising white self-control and will power enabled these emigrants in the wagon train to conquer frontier adversities represented by both the harsh terrain and Indian peoples. Interestingly, pure, crystalline white, snow-peaked mountaintops form and echo the background of the emigrants’ willful climb up the Continental Divide\(^\text{37}\). Leutze’s fresco becomes a commemorative representation of frontier conquest and a paean to Manifest Destiny, but, also, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, a mythic construction since Leutze re-presents (i.e., interprets) an earlier, expansionist American past. Doubtless, by 1862, Fryd argues that the marginalization of Indian images in Leutze’s fresco to the margins illustrate that “With the Euro-Americans’ final thrust to the western coast, the Native Americans will be successfully defeated, Leutze’s mural implies, enabling the fulfillment of civilization’s providential progress from east to west”\(^\text{38}\). Thus, Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* illustrates the supposed “finalization” (to
use bureaucratic language) of containment and/or suppression of Native Americans through literal and figurative marginalization.

Leutze’s 1861 fresco in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda and its figurative marginalization of Indian representations mark an interesting point in the discursive construction of Indian peoples as the “authentic, nostalgic primitive” increasingly begins to assert itself through various world fair expositions when federal Indian policy moved from removal to assimilation. For example, in 1871, formal treaty making with North American tribes comes to an end, and with this the diminution of the tribes’ ability to protect sovereign rights. A concerted effort to forcefully educate, and thus, assimilate Indian peoples was realized by the formation of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1879 with its first director, Richard Henry Pratt, famously stating “‘kill the Indian and save the man’.” In 1887, the U.S. federal government attempted further forced assimilation by enacting the Dawes Act (or General Allotment Act). Hoxie comments, “The Dawes Act reflected both the assimilationist tone of the late nineteenth century and non-Indians’ belief in the ‘civilizing power’ of land ownership.” Yet this federal legislation ignored the profound cultural and spiritual relationship that many Native Americans collectively feel in connection to their respective tribal lands. Also, during the latter nineteenth century, General George Armstrong Custer met his demise against Cheyenne and Lakota warriors at the Battle of Little Bighorn in June 1876, and yet this last major battle marked the further winding down of confrontation with Indian peoples. This battle was to have devastating consequences in 1890 with the Wounded Knee
massacre. Huhndorf, in *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*, comments:

At Wounded Knee, a reconstituted Seventh Cavalry avenged Custer’s 1876 defeat by slaughtering around three hundred unarmed Lakota Sioux, mostly women, children, and old people. With them died any serious threat Native peoples posed to the consolidation of colonial power on the continent. No longer a challenge to white civilization, Native peoples thus began to play a more ambivalent role in the American cultural imagination…

At the same time, these events also assert white dominance. (21)

Huhndorf discusses the ambivalence concerning Euro-American national identity vis-à-vis the Native other within the context of key historic developments during the late nineteenth century, and the associative mass-cultural phenomena of world’s fair expositions. Further, Huhndorf analyzes the social, cultural, and political implications of Euro-American national identity as it pertains to the strategic, physical layout of the display exhibits of the world’s collective others around the “White City” with its strategic display of scientific and technological wonders (showcased in classical Greek-columned buildings) at the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 that were ephemerally constructed to commemorate Columbus’s discovery of America and subsequent technological development. In relation to this discussion about identity in *Going Native*, the first important historic development in late nineteenth-century America relates to “the rise of industrial capitalism, with its linear historical progress,” and the
second development concerns “the completion of the military conquest of Native America”\textsuperscript{49}.

In “The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893,” Curtis M. Hinsley also concurs and asserts that “The second half of the nineteenth century was the age of the industrial exposition in the North Atlantic metropolitan world”\textsuperscript{50}, and relates this assertion to the carnivalesque display of exotic others at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago as contained, commodified entertainment. Hinsley then elaborates by discussing various expositions in London and in New York, Paris, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Buffalo, San Francisco, Seattle, Atlanta, New Orleans, Nashville, and “many others announced regional, national, and international pretensions,”\textsuperscript{51} and, like Huhndorf, discusses the problematic racial, political, and, ultimately, the economic implications of live human displays of the Indian other. Hinsley remarks:

The London Crystal Palace exhibition was classically imperialist in conception and construction: on display was the material culture of an industrial, commercial empire, with an emphasis on manufactured goods derived from colonial raw materials. The Paris Exposition of 1867 celebrated another form of colonial appropriation in featuring archaeological and ethnological materials. Virtually all subsequent fairs embodied these two aspects: displays of industrial achievement and promise for the regional or national metropolis, and exhibits of primitive “others” collected from peripheral territories or
colonies. As a collective phenomenon the industrial exposition celebrated the ascension of civilized power over nature and primitives.

As Huhndorf states, too, in *Going Native*, the notion of technological and scientific progress was linked to race. Huhndorf analyzes the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 with the Columbian Exposition, concluding that they are “Both products of American nationalism, nativism and imperialism” and which “depended to some degree on particular conceptions of the white nation’s `superiority’” . In addition, Huhndorf argues that with increasing non-Anglo European immigration, the Columbian Exposition in Chicago emphasized that “not only was America’s story the story of white America, it was a story that privileged Anglos over all other Europeans,” and “Importantly, like the Philadelphia exhibition, the World’s Columbian Exposition delineated the boundaries of the nation in ways that excluded non-Anglos.” Ironically, a symbolically oversized statue of Columbus, a southern European, possesses a magisterial gaze over a supposedly virginal land is displayed in a brilliant alabaster-like white in front of the Chicago fair’s Administration Building. Similar to Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1862), the Columbus statue as representation looms majestically over the mostly white fairgoers as a pedagogic lesson in who initiated order, organization over “savage chaos” in celebration of a necessary notion of civilizing “progress.” As representation, Columbus is literally and figuratively white-washed of his southern “European-ness,” which bespeaks of the World’s Columbian Exposition as a conscious manipulation of history that delineates U.S. nationalism from its internal others, and equally suppresses
the terrible cultural and political cost paid by Indian peoples in terms of land loss, military confrontation, forced removal, and forced assimilation⁵⁵.
Notes

1 See Albert Boime’s *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830-1865* on the Hudson River school origins of American landscape paintings (35), and the ambivalence felt by Cole on the future destruction of the American wilderness through the notion of “progress” (7). However, Boime’s argument is that these artists were not “passive recorders,” but that “they participated in the very system they condemned and projected it symbolically in their work” (5). Similarly, Slotkin’s *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*, and Tompkins’ *Sensational Design: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860*, take a similar view concerning James Fenimore Cooper’s Leatherstocking series. Slotkin focuses on Cooper’s literary work in the historical romance genre as a product of the early U.S. republic’s nationalism. Tompkins, however, interprets the literary success of Cooper because of meeting “national exigencies” (121). For Tompkins, Cooper had a receptive audience for his narratives of westward expansion. Also, I use the term “peoples” in connection to Native Americans. *Indé*, for example, means “The People.” Similarly, the names for other tribal groups usually translate into “The People.” Thus, in this cultural scheme, “peoples” would be the plural form though it is not grammatically correct in the English language sense.

2 According to JoAllyn Archambault’s and William C. Sturtevant’s entry in the *Encyclopedia of North American Indians*, anthropology initially began in the mid-nineteenth century with its work centered on collecting artifacts in museums until 1920. After this date, museums ceased collecting. Also, Deborah Root’s “Art and Taxidermy:
The Warehouse of Treasures” in Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference discusses the problematic racial and cultural politics of museum displays as repositories of colonial “booty” and the need to display authenticity (107-149). Root states, “One of the most cherished convictions of high culture concerns the primacy of the authentic object, which is believed to provide an experience that a reproduction cannot” (110). In addition, Shari M. Huhndorf, in Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination, discusses Louis Henry Morgan and the scientific racism of viewing cultures in a progressive, technological continuum displayed in exhibits of the Native other at the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition in 1876. Huhndorf states that Morgan wrote in 1877 “that human societies inevitably progressed through the various stages of savagery and barbarism before finally breaking through into civilization (28). Slotkin, moreover, analyzes the ambivalent and symbolic use of the “Wild West” show at the World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago (80-81). While the White City displayed the technological calmness of peace and progress, Buffalo Bill’s Wild West shows revealed the “war-making spirit” of man’s earlier savage state. Citing the inherent social Darwinism of racial warfare in Theodore Roosevelt’s “Expansion and Peace” (1899), Indian peoples would inevitably be subsumed into American citizenry as “friend” instead of “foe.” This teleological process of civilizing the Indian also re-awakened the “savage spirit” of “the civil sons and daughters of the heroes who won the West.” Thus, the ambivalence about the Buffalo Bill Wild West shows in a triumphant arena of white technological achievement, which displayed “progress” beyond Buffalo Bill.
See Richard Monette’s discussion in the *Encyclopedia of North American Indians* of the end of treaty-making in 1871, and the subsequent use of the term “agreement” between tribes and the U.S. federal government (643-646). Also, see entries concerning the Dawes Act (154) and Carlisle Indian Industrial School (101-102) in the same text.

Paul M. Robertson discusses the key historical events that led to the massacre in 1890, and why it is considered the end of confrontation with Indian peoples in the *Encyclopedia of North American Indians* (697). Also, Huhndorf comments on the irony of the triumphant message of technological progress at Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the delivery of Frederick Jackson Turner’s “Frontier Thesis,” and the Wounded Knee massacre (54).

In *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production*, Paul Smith states that “the culture industry is always dialectically bound up with audience reaction and that, even if there is no predictable transcendent moment in that dialectic, a film or any other kind of cultural text directs a certain set of possibilities toward its readers. Thus I often stress what I call the intendment of the text—the semiotic and ideological pressure that it puts on its readers to interpret it in a particular and circumscribed way. *Intendment* is, of course, a word drawn from legal discourse, and I sometimes want to exploit the force of that origin. At other moments I refer to what the text profers. The word *profer* is a conflation of—or perhaps a pun on—the English words ‘offer’ and ‘prefer’ and the French word *proférer*—to utter. The conflation suggests then, that the text offers the reader preferred meanings” (xv-xvi).

Here, in “Colonial and Post-Colonial Discourse Theory” from Sara Mills’s *Discourse*, I am particularly interested in her analysis of the critique of colonial discourse by Edward
Said, Johannes Fabian, and Mary Louise Pratt (105-130). Said, Fabian, and Pratt essentially argue that colonized peoples are consistently set apart from humanity by denying civilized complexity. For Fabian, this denial of humanity occurs through the construction of binary oppositions with such terms as “primitive,” “backward,” and “pre-industrial” to the point that indigenous peoples do not belong in present time.

Furthermore, about Said, Mills states that he “argues that discursive structures circulating within the nineteenth century in particular informed the way knowledge was produced, so that seemingly ‘objective’ statements were, in fact, produced within a context of evaluation and denigration” (109). Moreover, although Pratt uses the term “‘seeing-man’” in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, to describe a “European male subject…whose imperial eyes passively look out to possess” (7), Boime states that he began conceptualizing male figures on elevated landscape pinnacles in 1968 while teaching in upstate New York. Boime’s term “magisterial gaze” may have a “Foucauldian ring about it,” but, he, nonetheless, conceptualized the term long before Foucault (ix-x). The notion of vision, too, undergirds the relational aspects of colonial discourse and racism. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha, drawing on his analysis of Said in *Orientalism*, discusses “ambivalence” in terms of colonial discourse as seeing the exotic Other as being in stasis (i.e., synchrony), yet the colonial presence creates “the diachrony of history” (86). As a form of “ambivalence,” Said, in *Orientalism* (239-240), critiques the “Orientalist” as an all-knowing colonial agent who introduces historic change in the presence of a seemingly static Orient. Frantz Fanon’s analysis of colonialism, too, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, states, “The settler makes history, his life
is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning: ‘This land was created by us’; he is the unceasing cause: ‘If we leave, all is lost, and the country will go back to the Middle Ages’” (51).

7 Drawing from Keith Basso’s research on the Western Apache community in Cibecue, Arizona, my M.A. thesis analyzed the non-binary relationship between the land and Western Apache individuals and how this epistemological orientation was similar to Monique Wittig’s literary work. Wittig also envisioned a non-binary relationship between the writer and the reader of a text as a way to free us from discursive oppression. For Wittig, this was a revolutionary act since it freed women from the determinants of language that constructed the categories of sex. In addition, I will elaborate further in the conclusion chapter about the implications of Western Apache epistemology and the possibilities for resistance in Native American film production and spectatorship.

8 According to Michael Rogin in Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian, Andrew Jackson’s early childhood was dominated by violence. This violence had a profound influence in his later life as president in setting federal policy regarding Indian peoples. Rogin comments, “Identifying with Indian ‘cannibals’ and triumphing over them, Jackson integrated primitive violence into mature political authority” (47).


10 Ibid, (272).

11 Ibid, (272).

13 See Julie Schimmel’s “Inventing ‘the Indian” in The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the American Frontier, Truettner’s The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the American Frontier, Jay Gitlin’s “On the Boundaries of Empire: Connecting the West to Its Imperial Past,” and Nancy K. Anderson’s “The Kiss of Enterprise”: The Western Landscape as Symbol and Resource.”

14 Similar to Boime, Truettner uses landscape paintings that justify and reflect westward expansion. Truettner argues that one of the major themes of two groups of paintings is the idea of American exceptionalism in democracy, and the other is “domestic life” (46). The idea of American exceptionalism is extensively discussed in Thomas R. Hietala’s “American Exceptionalism, American Empire,” and “The Myths of Manifest Destiny” chapters in Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire.

15 See Boime’s The Magisterial Gaze and Truettner’s “Ideology and Image: Justifying Westward Expansion” for images regarding cabins and blasted trees. In this text, Boime also discusses how viewers of these images assume a “magisterial gaze” with these landscape paintings. These ideological images thus teach you to take for granted the same gaze of conquest.

16 Slotkin’s influential idea about the frontier myth and its associative “regeneration through violence” is important here. In Gunfighter Nation, he argues that violence was a necessary part of colonization in the U.S. in making progress westward. As Euro-Americans moved west to settle, conflict ensued away from the civilized metropolis. Slotkin states, “According to this myth-historiography, the conquest of the wilderness
and the subjugation or displacement of the Native Americans who originally inhabited it have been the means to our achievement of national identity, a democratic polity, an ever-expanding economy, and a phenomenally dynamic and ‘progressive’ civilization. The original ideological task of the Myth was to explain and justify the establishment of the American colonies; but as the colonies expanded and developed, the Myth was called on to account for our rapid economic growth, our emergence as a powerful nation-state, and our distinctly American approach to the socially and culturally disruptive processes of modernization” (10). Yet in examining the nationalism of Leutze’s fresco in the Capitol Rotunda, the reality of conflict and violence on the frontier is largely unrepresented. However, as Schimmel asserts in “‘Inventing the ‘Indian,’” this does not mean that conflict iconography did not exist in nineteenth-century artistic representation, but even in these representations Indians were re-presented as aggressive savages. In addition, Annette Kolodny has shown in _The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860_ that women certainly experienced the frontier in different ways than men. Kolodny relates different accounts of the dangerous aspects of frontier life, and the deploring of environmental destruction in her chapter on Mary Austin Holley and Eliza Farnham (93-111). Further, unlike the images of frontiersmen proudly possessing a magisterial gaze over supposedly empty landscape, Kolodny conveys an account from Farnham about “‘the vastness which oppresses the mind’” (96).  

Mills uses this characterization when discussing Mary Louise Pratt’s analysis of travel writing (115). Also, see endnote 6, and Mills’s discussion of Said, Fabian, and Pratt about the dehumanizing aspects of colonial discourse in _Discourse_. In addition, Mills’s
analysis of Said’s work on Orientalism and the negative representations of the other in colonial writing have important implications in critically viewing Leutze’s fresco. Indigenous peoples are represented as “idle, weak, corrupt, their buildings were dirty, their culture a decaying version of a past grandeur. This negativity is a discursive feature of writing produced within the colonial context and, as with generalization and time-placement, constitutes the discursive structures available for writers within which to produce knowledge and factual accounts” (114). Although Leutze’s fresco is not a written text per se, it can be read as a text because of the knowledge and factual accounts that produce nationalist ideology related to an utterance of Manifest Destiny. The fresco tells us (whomever is placed within “us”) a nationalist narrative of conquest, as if this were inevitable and natural.

18 See Mills’s insightful discussion of Foucault’s idea about “‘power/knowledge,’” especially about “power struggles” and the subjugation of subjects. Mills asserts, “Foucault argues for the imbrication of power with knowledge, so that all of the knowledge we have is the result or the effect of power struggles. To give an example, what is studied in schools and universities is the result of struggles over whose version of events is sanctioned” (21). This analysis of Foucault relates to the representation of Manifest Destiny in Leutze’s fresco. What events are sanctioned and what events are not?

19 See endnote 14.

20 See Pratt’s discussion of the “contact zone” in Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation (6).
21 See Schimmel’s “Inventing the ‘Indian’” (186).

22 See Pratt’s discussion of “transculturation,” and the “contact zone” in *Imperial Eyes* (6). In analyzing Eyre and Masayesva’s representations as counter-hegemonic, I am especially interested in how “subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the dominant culture,” but “they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own, and what they use it for.” Moreover, Pratt defines the “contact zone” as “the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect” (7). In a key scene in Eyre’s *Smoke Signals*, the characters Victor and Thomas encounter racist white cowboys, who have taken their bus seats on a trip to Arizona. As a response, Victor invokes a Native American-style chant about the fake quality of John Wayne’s teeth, as if to reveal simultaneously the cinematic fakeness of Wayne’s iconic status in America.


24 Ibid, Goetzmann and Goetzmann discuss how Catlin in Philadelphia was “caught up in the heady atmosphere of science that so dominated the city” by visiting the Peale Museum and seeing the “Indian artifacts from the Far West” (16). Further, Catlin was influenced by the romantic characterization of Natty Bumppo in Cooper’s Leatherstocking series.

25 In “On the Boundaries of Empire: Connecting the West to Its Imperial Past,” Gitlin cites Leonard Thompson’s and Howard Lamar’s analysis of the frontier in *The Frontier*
in History as ““a zone of interpenetration between two previously distinct societies”” (72).

26 Ibid, (88).

27 Slotkin discusses the regenerative qualities of violence in Gunfighter Nation (10-16). In White, Dyer also discusses Slotkin’s idea, but sees it as a reproduction of whiteness-assigned to further U.S. nationalist expansion. In Tompkins discussion about mastery over the land, she describes “a person (of a certain kind)” that Dyer denaturalizes as white because “The notion of ‘manifest destiny’ seems to lay the land out before the white gaze, so new, but it is not to be possessed without effort, suffering and loss” (34). According to Dyer, these are qualities that are intrinsic to whiteness on the frontier because of the disembodied will to conquer.

28 See Kolodny’s The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860, and The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters.

29 See Patricia Limerick’s The Legacy of Conquest, Nancy K. Anderson’s “‘The Kiss of Enterprise’: The Western Landscape as Symbol and Resource,” and Annette Kolodny’s The Land Before Her concerning Mary Austin Holley’s lament about the cutting down of trees (105).

30 See Gitlin’s “On the Boundaries of Empire.”

31 See Boime’s The Magisterial Gaze for a historic analysis of the “magisterial gaze” as it relates to Manifest Destiny.
32 Quoted from Leutze’s letter to Meigs, Meigs Letterbook, February 14, 1854, by Fryd in *Art and Empire* (209).

33 See Barbara Babcock’s excellent essay on the history of the “Orientalizing” of the American Southwest and Pueblo Indian women, and her use of Said, in “‘A New Mexican Rebecca’: Imaging Pueblo Women.”

34 See European representations of Virgin Mary and Child iconography in *Madonna and Child* (around 1300) by Duccio, *The Benois Madonna* (1472), and *The Virgin and Child with St. Anne* (1510) both by Leonardo da Vinci. Also, see Dyer’s interesting discussion in *White* about the change in color tone and the “Marking of otherness by skin color” in Western European art coinciding with the Crusades in Bellini’s *Madonna and Child with John the Baptist and St. Elizabeth* (66-67). Finally, in a scene from Shekhar Kapur’s *Elizabeth* (1998), after Queen Elizabeth I (Cate Blanchett) has had several unsuccessful attempts with suitors, she politically assumes a transcendent, hyper-whiteness near the end of the film by declaring that she is a “virgin.” Interestingly, Cate Blanchett also plays a hyper-white, ethereal woman, Galadriel, in Peter Jackson’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001).

35 In *White*, Dyer argues persuasively that this visibility is necessary in relations of power and domination. Quoting Satya Mohanty, Dyer states, “Being visible as white is a passport to privilege; in colonial contexts,…the white man as spectacle is a crucial aspect of white rule, for ‘eminent visibility [is] the ability to command respect and fear in the subject race’ (1991:315). Visual culture demands that whites can be seen to be whites” (44). The visibility of the whiteness of the family is reminiscent of the Holy Family.
Dyer also discusses the constructed whiteness of the transcendent aspects of representations of Christianity vis-à-vis the Crusades (17) as well as Slotkin’s idea of “regenerative violence” on the frontier as a form of reproducing whiteness to clear the way for civilization (34).

36 See Dyer’s discussion about the embodiment/disembodiment of whiteness and its association with enterprising “imperialism” in *White* (15).

37 Dyer comments on how German fascism de-linked Aryanism from its Asian roots by citing the Caucasus Mountains as a determining factor on “white racial formation” (21). Dyer also discusses the European usage of mountain peaks as rhetorical symbols of “purity,” clarity, and cleanliness as synonymous with whiteness-as-sign, and the determined, disciplined, self-contained spirit of attempting to reach those peaks (21). This assertion has profound implications for the recent German immigrant Leutze’s fresco (1861-1862) concerning Manifest Destiny and westward expansion.

38 See Fryd, *Art and Empire* (211).

39 See Fixico’s chapter in *A Companion to American Indian History* concerning the change in nineteenth-century U.S. federal Indian policy (382-383). Also, R. David Edmunds provides an informative review of Indian-White relations from 1776 to 1900, *Encyclopedia of North American Indians* (288-292). Furthermore, Goetzmann and Goetzmann in “The View From Peale’s Museum” discuss the imagining of the west in “staid” Philadelphia in a “strange procession” that went through the city to showcase “exotic” animals from North America in 1794 led by Charles Willson Peale, who “styled himself an artist-naturalist” (3). Peale “was the sole owner and proprietor of America’s
first respectable museum, and at this moment it was being recognized as such by being accorded quarters in Philosophical Hall, in the very heart, if not mind, of the new nation.” Peale is mentioned since art and science are being conflated in Catlin’s representations as he sought authentic Indians on the frontier. This Philadelphia museum impressed the young Catlin because “Indian artifacts represented…a romantic horizon of the unknown” (16).

40 See endnote 39 pertaining to Indian-White relations from 1776 to 1900. Also, Taiaiake Alfred extensively discusses the idea of sovereignty in A Companion to American Indian History (460-473), and Williams’s argument in The American Indian in Western Legal Thought for indigenous forms of legal thought free from Eurocentric discourse embedded in legal decisions affecting U.S. federal Indian policy.


42 Ibid, (154).

43 See Louis S. Warren’s discussion about Native Americans’ intimate connections to the land in A Companion to American Indian History (301). Also, see endnote 7.

44 See Huhndorf’s Going Native (21).

45 See Willard Hughes Rollings’ discussion about Wounded Knee in “Indians and Christianity” in A Companion to American Indian History (131), and Huhndorf’s discussion about Turner’s Frontier Thesis and Wounded Knee in Going Native (54).

46 Shari M. Huhndorf, Going Native, (21).

47 Ibid, in relation to world’s fairs, see Huhndorf’s discussion about the brutal violent history of America, and reconciling this fact with democratic ideals of liberty and
equality in “Imagining America: Race, Nation, and Imperialism at the Turn of the Century” (19-78).

48 Ibid, see Huhndorf’s discussion in endnote 47, but also Hinsley’s perceptive analysis in “The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893” concerning the two types of human display at world’s fairs, the supposed “progression” of civilization, and the commodification of the exotic Other in the White City’s Midway (344-365). In White and Unthinking Eurocentricism, Dyer (21), Shohat and Stam (56-57), respectively, provide compelling arguments that counter the constructed whiteness and Euro-centricism of ancient Greece as the single point of origin of world history. Since the White City’s buildings were of ancient Greek design, the use of this ephemeral architecture to evoke European civilization is ironic. This is ironic because of the African influence on Greek culture, and the pre-dating of many other non-European civilizations around the world including the Americas. Yet, of course, the Columbian Exposition purposely ignored the antiquity of other non-European, hence, non-white civilizations. Certainly, too, this would upset the notion that all Indians were backward savages vis-à-vis the technological preeminence of the White City.

49 Huhndorf relates the idea of “linear historical progression” (14) and the dominant idea of social Darwinism in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Huhndorf comments, “During that period, anthropological theories inspired in good measure by social Darwinism equated industrial capitalism and technological advancements with white racial dominance and social progress. At the same time, however, the vast changes sweeping a rapidly modernizing American society created a nostalgia for origins, now
embodied in the cultural imagination in the ‘primitive.’ Idealizing and emulating the primitive, modernity’s other, comprised in part a form of escapism from the tumultuous modern world.” Huhndorf, further, states that military domination was achieved by the late nineteenth century. However, she asserts, “America has repeatedly enacted rites of conquest to confirm and extend its power over Native America, and these racial dynamics continue to shape contemporary American life” (15). The above assertions support my argument that the containment or the discursive racial categorization of the Indian Other in the nineteenth century and nationalist representations have implications for the next chapter on John Ford and The Searchers (1956), especially the Ethan Edwards character played by John Wayne. The Edwards character appropriates knowledge of Indian culture (i.e., the savage Other), but uses that knowledge against Indian people in the film. Huhndorf argues that this is another form of conquest in the twentieth century. Hinsley’s “The World as Marketplace” makes similar assertions about the domination of the Other at the Columbian Exposition with a conclusion that “At Chicago in 1893, public curiosity about other peoples, mediated by the terms of the marketplace, produced an early form of touristic consumption” (363). As Root remarks in Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation, and the Commodification of Difference, consumption is about power (9). These assertions have profound implications for the popular appeal of dominant Hollywood representations of “exotic” Indians in classic westerns because of the repeated narrative re-enactment of domination.

Several scholars, namely, Huhndorf, Shohat, Stam, and Dilworth (cf., *Imagining Indians of the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past*) analyze the social, racial, and political implications of “biologizing” intelligence of the indigenous Other vis-à-vis the influence of social Darwinism and the stages of development in civilization. This linkage between constructing the primitive Other and the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition Fair’s White City in relation to the idea of social Darwinism (i.e., the idea of civilization in progressive stages) helps to explain the persistence of “buying” the image of backward, frozen-in-time Indians in twentieth-century representations in John Ford’s westerns.

Huhndorf, *Going Native*, (39).

Ibid, (39).

Interestingly, the statue of Columbus, as an icon of America’s national existence, also has important implications for Euro-centricism found in Western legal discourse. This is Robert A. Williams, Jr.’s assertion in *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*. Williams states, “The Doctrine of Discovery was nothing more than the reflection of a set of Eurocentric racist beliefs elevated to the status of a universal principle—one culture’s argument to support its conquest and colonization of a newly discovered, alien world. In its form as articulated by Western legal thought and no longer declaimed. Europe during the Discovery era refused to recognize any meaningful legal status or rights for indigenous tribal peoples because ‘heathens’ and ‘infidels’ were legally presumed to lack the rational capacity necessary to assume an equal status or to exercise equal rights under
the West’s medievally derived colonizing law” (326). Further, see hooks’s *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations* (197-206) and Shohat and Stam’s *Unthinking Eurocentricism* (61-70) on a critical analysis of the implicit racism in Columbus as a colonizing, imperialist icon in the “discovery” of America.
CHAPTER TWO: JOHN FORD’S *THE SEARCHERS* (1956) AS AMBIGUOUS, “MONUMENTAL” MEMORIAL TO WHiteness-As-Sign

In my previous discussion about the displays of the primitive, exotic Other at the Chicago World’s Exposition, the White City’s Midway offered many revealing aspects about the future of cinematic representations of Indians. Curtis Hinsley, for example, examines Julian Ralph’s “shaping” description of the “jumble” of the display of exotica in the Midway as a “linear, kaleidoscopic passing of scenes, appearing quickly and discouraging valuation or judgment” where control of what is being viewed stays with the strolling crowd. Hinsley, further, observes that the implicit social Darwinism of the fair creates successive images similar to film. This, of course, is proto-filmic narration and the idea of montage. The narrative of progress (or colonizing conquest) at the Columbian Exposition with its ephemerally constructed façade of a technologically advanced White City, the human displays of exotic Others, nineteenth-century landscape paintings, the development of film and photography as mimetic devices, the presentation of Frederick Jackson Turner’s Frontier Thesis (that declared it closed) and rugged individualism, and Buffalo Bill Cody’s “Wild West” shows all have important implications for the formation of the Hollywood Western film genre. Certainly, these historic events had influenced the early development of film and the Western film genre and John Ford. Indeed, because of John Ford’s (1894-1973) iconic status as the Western film director and his professional development and association with an equally iconic John Wayne, I want to analyze *The Searchers* (1956) as a memorial to the white frontiersman as sign vis-à-vis the landscape of Monument Valley because of its problematic, ambiguous narrative treatment of race, and thus its implications for
subsequent responses from Native American filmmakers such as Victor Masayesva and Chris Eyre. To be sure, Ford, the son of marginalized Irish immigrants, was a cultural “product” of both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and this has profound and yet ambiguous implications for white and Indian representations in a Western genre film like The Searchers.

First, before I examine significant narrative aspects of The Searchers and discuss its linkage to Native American filmmaker responses, I will briefly review scholars and how they understand and define the Western film genre in various ways. This critical review of the scholarship becomes important, for it provides intellectual context for this study’s discussion about representations related to whiteness-as-sign and Indians/Native Americans. John G. Cawelti, for example, in The Six-Gun Mystique Sequel, interprets the Western film genre as “essentially defined by setting.” Cawelti further comments that:

I refer here not so much to a particular geographic setting like the Rocky Mountains or the Great Plains, but to a symbolic setting representing the boundary between order and chaos, between tradition and newness. It is this setting which generates certain kinds of crises which involve certain kinds of characters and call for the intervention of a particular kind of hero. And all of this is related to America and what was once its sense of itself and its destiny as a New World. (9)
Here, as Cawelti focuses on setting as an important element of the Western film genre, he concludes by implying the important role of history. Similarly, in *Westerns: Films through History* Janet Walker asserts, “The present volume begins, ends, and is shot through with historical considerations that have formed the western genre and its reception, for it is the western’s status as a historical phenomenon, a body of films multifariously bound up with the incarnate fortunes of North America and the United States, that seems to me its most salient and enduring aspect”⁸. Edward Buscombe and Roberta E. Pearson in their Introduction also contend⁹:

This collection ends where it began, with *history*. Much useless effort has been expended on telling audiences what they already know, that Western movies do not provide a reliable record of America’s Western past. *History*, nevertheless, is at the heart of the genre. (my italics, 6)

However, in *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns*, Jane Tompkins claims a mostly divergent viewpoint from interpreting the Western film genre as reflecting history by citing a controversial standpoint regarding social/political struggles between men and women. Tompkins comments:

The Western doesn’t have anything to do with the West as such.

It isn’t about the encounter between civilization and the frontier.

It is about men’s fear of losing their mastery, and hence their identity, both of which the Western tirelessly reinvents. (45)
Unlike Tompkins, however, most scholars still maintain the importance of history, or the re-presentation/reproduction of history as an important definitive element of the Western film genre. In *The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre’s First Half-Century*, Scott Simmon asserts:  

> …all of that cultural baggage carried by Western films should allow them to be unpacked through a *cultural history*, by which I mean examining film aesthetics within a wide context of literature and visual arts, of social histories of the eras depicted and of the years when the films were produced, and of the ideologies propounded by the films. Westerns have always felt free to express their belief in America and have been permitted to speak about religion and politics in ways generally forbidden Hollywood genres set in the contemporary world. (my italics, xiv)

Related to Simmon’s perspective about the Western film genre being allowed to express freely a nationalist “belief in America,” in *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*, part of an extensive, voluminous trilogy concerned with the myth of the frontier, Slotkin argues:

> The Western developed so early in the history of the American filmmaking that its origins have been confounded with those of the medium itself. But in fact the Western may be more dependent on pre-cinematic forms and conventions than any of its rivals. The
West was already a mythologized space when the first moviemakers found it, and early Westerns built directly on the formulas, images, and allegorizing traditions of the Wild West show and cheap literature. No other genre has pre-cinematic roots of comparable depth and density. The characteristic iconography, material settings, and historical references of the gangster or detective film, the police procedural, the suburban domestic comedy, the “women’s picture,” the musical comedy, and the combat film all belong to the “age of movies.” But for American audiences, their traditions do not compare in density, currency, and ideological presence to those associated with the Myth of the Frontier.

(my italics, 234)

As I discussed in the previous chapter on nineteenth-century discursive processes surrounding white/Indian representations, the Hollywood Western indeed has “pre-cinematic roots” that have legal, scientific, and artistic “depth” and “density.” Indian removal legislation, Emmanuel Leutze’s U.S. Capitol fresco (Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way), and the “museumification” process of authentic specimens of Indians (after removal and military defeat) at the Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 (binary oppositions established between the primitive exotics of the world and the line of demarcation which declared the frontier closed implicit in Turner’s Frontier Thesis) all contributed ideologically to what the Western used in its film genre. No doubt, excepting Tompkins, the aforementioned scholars overwhelmingly stress the
importance of historic context in interpreting the traits (or elements) of the filmic Western.

Second, Ford scholars particularly focus on different narrative aspects concerning the ambiguities of the culturally iconic Western, *The Searchers*. For example, these scholars focus on the opening scene, the unresolved attraction between Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) and his sister-in-law Martha Edwards (Dorothy Jordan), the problematic racial representation of the Indian character mistakenly named “Look” (Beulah Archuleta) who is kicked out of bed by Martin Pawley (Jeffrey Hunter), the mirrored antagonism between Ethan and Scar (Henry Brandon), the Hispanic presence of Emilio Figueroa (Antonio Moreno) in important scenes involving translation between Ethan and Scar, the tacit enterprising, imperialism of westward expansion (Where did Ethan mysteriously get the gold coins?), the obsessive racism of Ethan’s rescue search for his captive niece Debbie Edwards (Natalie Wood), the womb-like scenes in the film (which I will return to later in my analysis), and the odd ending where Ethan cannot enter the domestic space of the Edwards’ home among others. Yet the title of the film suggests a search for something metaphoric or figurative since according to Buscombe the original title was *The Searchers for Freedom* with its rooted echo of nineteenth-century American representations and exceptionalism. Beyond his niece Debbie, what is Ethan exactly searching for in *The Searchers* with its ambiguous sense of time and space? Further, how and why is it meaningful that the opening scene begins with the Edwards’ basic and rustic, adobe-like house and closes with the more “advanced” (progressive) and pristine white Texas Gothic-style house of the Jorgensen’s? What is the symbolic significance of
the location of Monument Valley in relation to the narrative focus on Ethan’s obsessive search for Debbie? Before responding to these questions, I will review the scholarship on Ford’s career in Studlar’s and Bernstein’s Introduction to *John Ford Made Westerns*, as this will provide context to those critical questions about ambiguous meanings in a supposedly classical Hollywood Western film like *The Searchers*.

Studlar and Bernstein note that Robin Wood, for instance, views Ford’s later films (post-1950s?) as “hollow” because Ford has become “disillusioned with American society’s failure” to meet “democratic and humane ideals.” Barry Grant makes this same argument in comparison to James Fenimore Cooper’s literature. Thus, later Ford films (except *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*) are “elegiac” and “nostalgic.”

From a different perspective, Gaylyn Studlar takes exception to critics (namely Tompkins) who view Ford’s treatment of women as “reactionary” and “traditional.” Instead, Studlar argues that Ford’s men exhibit, at times, emotional qualities traditionally associated with women. For example, Martin Pawley’s ability to be forgiving, compassionate, and tolerant, which are qualities stereotypically associated with women. Studlar concludes that “*The Searchers* may be used to challenge current claims that the spheres of masculinity and femininity are polarized in the Western, for Mrs. Jorgensen and Martin Pawley establish a constellation of ‘feminized’ values—Christian forgiveness, love, and tolerance—across the boundaries of gender.”

Similarly, Studlar and Bernstein examine Charles Ramírez Berg’s assertion that Ford has ambiguous depictions of ethnic Others. While acknowledging genuinely racist representations, Berg notes the use of Mexican characters that speak Spanish as well as
interpret Indian languages. For the time period, such usage of Mexican film stars was unprecedented. Berg, furthermore, stresses that Ford’s Irish heritage formed the basis of his sympathy for “marginalized ethnics”. Studlar and Bernstein assert that “Berg maps out a cultural poetics whereby Native Americans, Mexicans, African Americans, Swedes, Slavs, poor whites, and, of course, Irish-immigrant pioneers are pushed to the social margins by an oppressive ‘Yankee’ Protestant mainstream that seeks to dominate both them and the landscape.” Accordingly, such groups in Ford’s Westerns are celebrated and “question assimilation into the ‘heartless, oppressive, and intolerant’ WASP mainstream.”

Joan Dagle traces Ford’s filmic career in terms of his earlier Westerns’ focus on linear narratives to his later Westerns that have more “circular” or “episodic” narratives. For example, Studlar and Bernstein state:

Dagle contrasts the early, linear approach to storytelling of Ford’s prewar *Stagecoach* with the more circular and episodic storylines of *Fort Apache* and *The Searchers*. This general shift is accompanied by simultaneous complications in Ford’s rendering of Native Americans in the postwar films. *Stagecoach* simply opposes the diverse white passengers in the coach, who eventually become unified in their ordeal, to the distant, alien, and attacking Apache. An early skirmish with the Native Americans in *Fort Apache* seems to replicate the textual politics of *Stagecoach*, but the film subsequently complicates
this scheme, as we learn the reasons for the Apache’s departure
from their reservation and see the fort commandant’s obstinate
refusal of a peaceful mediation. (13)

As I have discussed in the previous chapter, Leutze’s Westward the Course of Empire
Takes Its Way (1862) celebrated and naturalized the linear nationalist narrative of
Manifest Destiny, and what Dagle terms the “meta-narrative” of the Hollywood
Western21. However, Ford’s The Searchers, and his later films (e.g., Cheyenne Autumn),
begin to denaturalize this discursive narrative of conquest because of the uncontrolled,
obsessive racism of Ethan Edwards’ search for his niece. As Dagle points out, too, the
racist representation of Apaches as pure savages (and as binary opposition) to the varied
white passengers in Stagecoach becomes complicated, “circular,” and “episodic” in the
filmic narrative of Fort Apache.

Furthermore, the complicated, “circular,” and “episodic” narrative of The
Searchers relates to Ethan’s “psychological epic” and “an inward journey,” as Dagle
quotes several scholars concerning his tormented psyche22. This psychological and
inward journey of Ethan fascinates me since it reveals a kind of pathological sickness of
what Boime termed “the magisterial gaze”23. Boime states, “I had already grasped the
symbolic connection between the disciplined focus that submitted the vast reaches of the
wilderness to an omniscient gaze and the larger national will to power in the form of
Manifest Destiny,” and that “the idea that unlimited growth is attainable predisposed
people in our society to leave unchecked the willingness to waste.” In addition, Boime
comments about the rapaciousness exhibited by American pioneers because of their
continual need to consume by clearing the woods, building a cabin, and then moving to the next site. Like log cabins, adobe houses were typically built from local material, which was found in deposits of mud along riverbeds. Yet riverbeds do not likely exist in Monument Valley, and it would certainly be very difficult to homestead in such a harsh, desiccated landscape. Interestingly, as Ethan Edwards mysteriously returns “home” to the odd Edwards homestead, after the Civil War with equally mysterious gold coins, he enters an adobe-like house supposedly in Texas during 1868. Yet this Texas symbolically moves to the iconic desert landscape of Monument Valley. Here, too, Ford begins the filmic narrative motif of framing shots through doorways (or entrances) by placing Martha in the frame and looking out to see Ethan approach.

After the Comanche attack the Edwards’ homestead, *The Searchers* becomes a familiar American captivity narrative exemplified in the Hollywood Western, but with a complicated psychological difference that denaturalizes the pathological magisterial gaze of Ethan’s frontier racism. After their parents prepare for the impending Comanche attack, Lucy and Debbie escape, and Debbie (as a little girl) hides near the family grave. As spectators, Ford cues us into the looming and foreboding appearance of Scar by casting his dark shadow near Debbie. Ethan’s subsequent, and long, episodic search for his niece Debbie begins the filmic narrative at the Edwards rustic home made out of adobe-like bricks. Ethan’s Dantesque narrative descent into a pathological hatred for Comanche Indians, his niece’s subsequent miscegenational association with the Comanche Chief Scar, and, as a result, his own magisterial gaze that becomes so focused (so diseased?) on Debbie’s captivity that he becomes captive to his own virulent racism.
Yet how and why does the opening scene with its introduction of the doorway motif relate to the other entrance shots throughout the film’s narrative?

As noted earlier, Wood asserts that Ford’s later films such as *The Searchers* were “elegiac” and “nostalgic” because of his disillusionment with America’s inability to uphold “democratic and humane ideals.” In 1956, beyond Ford’s own personal disillusionment, why was the Western within the social and political context of the 1950s—from its leading practitioner—becoming “elegiac” and “nostalgic”? Philip Deloria offers an insight in *Playing Indian* when he describes 1950s America as suffering from a nationalistic decline after the Great Depression and World War II. In addition, with increased living standards and newfound affluence, Deloria cites sociologist David Reisman’s work in associated, increased feelings of “detachment,” “alienation,” and “anomie.” Deloria comments:

Reisman was one of a large cohort of writers who feared the effects of a two-fisted combination of atomic shock and postwar materialism. William Whyte warned of the dangers posed by “the Organization Man,” and Sloan Wilson painted a disheartening picture of the colorless “Man in the Gray Suit.” (130)

As Deloria argues, it was this sense of alienation that lead many middle-class Americans to re-evaluate their identities as Americans. Deloria states:

If America looked to some like a land of liberty and sunshine, for others it was a world of McCarthyite paranoia, deep racial tension, and hysteria in the face of rock and roll, comic books,
and teen delinquency. And it was not just that these two emotional modes [i.e., high living standards and alienation beneath outwardly happy exterior] patterned postwar life. Many Americans perceived—and quietly obsessed about—the unresolvable disjuncture between them. The enormous distance between happily mythic and popular-critical ways of seeing oneself forced many Americans to think, not necessarily about reevaluating their lives, but about what it would mean to reevaluate their lives. Such difficult imperatives have rarely been welcomed or embraced. They are fertile ground for the contradictory kinds of consciousness so well represented by playing Indian. (his italics, 131)

This brings me back to Ford who described The Searchers as an “inward journey” or a “psychological epic.” Buscombe in his extensive analysis of the film also echoes Deloria when he asserts, “Hollywood, its nose to the wind, sensed the tensions that seethed beneath the tranquil surface.” Thus, 1950s America provides not only the social and political, but the cultural context for Ford to recall or reevaluate the meanings behind the myth of the frontier as part of the narrative history of the United States with a film produced and set in the iconic Monument Valley (which Ford helped to create as an icon) and the unsettled, psychological journey of Ethan Edwards. Indeed, with 1950s American hysteria and paranoia concerning communism, black-white racial tensions (e.g., Rosa Parks’ 1955 refusal to submit to segregation on a Montgomery, Alabama, bus), and the general angst about middle-class life, the myth of the frontier with its
certainty about who is the enemy (e.g., Indian savagery of Scar and the Comanches) and who is not (e.g., the Edwards and Jorgensen families) offered reassurance for Americans. Yet Ford begins to grapple with those clean certainties of the frontier myth (i.e., binary lines of demarcation illustrated by Leutze’s 1862 fresco, *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way*) in the narrative of *The Searchers* because of Ethan Edwards’ symbolism as psychologically troubled avenging hero.

This unsettled, psychological journey of Ethan Edwards with his niece’s return from captivity fascinates me since it relates to the rhyming visual motif about doorways (various shots of entrances in the film) that Peter Lehman analyzes because of the epistemological, narrative limitations of both spectator and Ethan’s character in “‘You Couldn’t Hit It on the Nose’: The Limits of Knowledge in and of *The Searchers*”\(^27\). Lehman points out several instances of ambiguity (e.g., Ethan’s mysterious absence from the end of the Civil War to his sudden appearance at the Edwards homestead, uncertainty about the time/space of the search for Debbie, Ethan’s knowledge of Comanche culture, etc.) in a supposedly classical Hollywood film with its straightforward narration where character dialogue and action tell us, as spectators, that a teleological end results. Yet, as Lehman notes, Ethan never fully explains why he does not kill Debbie near the end of the film in front of the cave. Ford keeps this knowledge ambiguous. In fact, as Lehman relates, explanatory dialogue was cut in film when Ethan states, “You sure favor your mother,” to Debbie\(^28\). Lehman comments:

> By cutting that dialogue, whether out of a trust in the visual image or out of a desire to mystify the events or even because
he did not think such a simple explanation adequate or even correct, Ford ensured the film’s profound ambiguity. Indeed, the notion that Ethan couldn’t kill Debbie because she reminded him of his beloved Martha does not fit with the lifting gesture, which recalls not Martha, but Debbie as a little girl. Ethan cannot kill her, the gesture implies, because of remembering something he did with her in her home as a little girl. (Perhaps also predictably, the script contains neither the lifting gesture nor the cave shot that are so central in the film.) (259)

Yet the lifting gestures are there visually within the film both in the beginning at the Edwards home and near the end of the filmic narrative with the cave shot. Near the beginning of the film, the first shot of Ethan lifting Debbie takes place in the Edwards’ home after we, as spectators, see Martha at the doorway. Thus, as Lehman argues, home becomes symbolically synonymous with Martha. Further, the “Lorena” theme music becomes associated with Martha as Eckstein and Kalinak have argued in *The Searchers*, but Lehman does not see this as sufficient evidence to support the claim that Ethan stops the desire to kill Debbie because of an associative memory of Martha vis-à-vis the earlier lifting of Debbie in the Edwards home. Nonetheless, Ford presents the visual motifs of the various entrances (e.g., the Edwards home doorway, the doorway where Ethan looks in to see Martha’s dead body, the teepee entrance where Look’s body has been found in the devastated Comanche camp, and the various cave shots where Ethan and Marty are
chased by Comanches, and when Ethan pursues Debbie) to us, as spectators, so that we know the psychological linkage that Ethan does not. I would argue, too, that the darkness of both the domestic space of the Edwards rustic home, and primal associations of the cave shot are symbolic of the unconscious mind. Thus, with ambiguity, Ethan certainly may not know what we know as spectators, and this would explain the darkness of the visual motifs as the camera looks out into the lightness of the exterior, particularly in the opening entrance shot of the Edwards home and the cave near the end of the filmic narrative. This does not mean, however, and unlike Lehman’s assertion, that Ethan could not have been motivated by some psychological memory of Martha through Debbie because of the first lifting gesture in the domestic space of Martha, who Ford emphasizes visually in the doorway shot.

In *The Subject of Semiotics*, Kaja Silverman analyzes Freudian theory as it relates to discursive subjectivity becomes highly important in understanding Ethan Edwards’ behavior near the end, and the associative filmic, visual motifs. In Freudian psychology, the subject is a “partitioned subject” with “conflicting imperatives” that “speak different languages.” As Silverman relates, the id, superego, and the ego comprise the different parts of the Freudian subject, which organizes itself around an “uneasy alliance” with the conscious and pre-conscious parts. If, as Lehman argues, the narrative of *The Searchers* is an “atavistic regression” focused on Ethan, this psychological regression returns Ethan to a primal state associated with the cave shot and the id. Silverman states:

“Id” designates that part of the psychic apparatus which is most rudimentary; it predates the development both of the
ego and the superego. It is unconscious, but only portions of it are repressed. In this respect, it differs strikingly from the unconscious of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which consists exclusively of repressed materials. The id differs from that unconscious in other respects as well: It lacks the signifying capacities, seeming to be little more than an area of instinctual anarchy. Freud associates it with the passions, and he attributes to it qualities like unruliness and lack of control. (133)

The visual motifs of *The Searchers* begins with the doorway of the rustic, “proto-civilized” (i.e., adobe brick) Edwards house to the Comanche teepee entrance to the primordial cave entrance of the last shot where the filmic narrative has its greatest emotional tension. Read within the frontier ideology of “progress,” the visual motifs go through an “atavistic regression” as well. Ford associates Ethan’s virulent racism and pathological obsession about miscegenation to this final shot of the visual motif about entrances to a primordial cave, so that this is a regression that comments on the linear progression of Manifest Destiny. Yet, in the final scene of Debbie’s return to “civilization,” Ford ambiguously returns us, as spectators, back to the pristine whiteness of the Gothic, Texas-style ranch house (that obtrusively stands out in orange and bronze colors of Monument Valley) of the Jorgensen’s that Ethan cannot enter into because of his becoming captive (in a captivity narrative) to his own savage racism.
Indeed, the ending of *The Searchers* creates further ambiguity because the now savage Ethan cannot (though he hesitates by placing his left hand on his right elbow) enter the domestic, civilized space of the Jorgensen ranch house with Mrs. Jorgensen prominently taking in Debbie from Ethan. As Buscombe states, the Edwards and Jorgensen families are ever present in *The Searchers*. Lehman, too, states, that this is what Ethan really wants, that is, a family. Marriage certainly plays a pivotal role also in the formation and reproduction of domesticating Euro-American families on the frontier. After a tediously long wait for Martin Pawley, Laurie Jorgensen marries Charlie McCorry, and earlier, in the filmic narrative, Ethan and Martin hesitantly walk into the party celebrating the marriage. At this party, Laurie explicitly states her white supremacy by declaring that Debbie has been permanently tainted by Scar and thus unbefitting for a return to “civilization.” As she makes these comments, Laurie wears a brilliantly white, satin-like wedding dress. What does Laurie’s racist statements about Debbie and the strong presence of domesticating families mean in interpreting Ethan’s behavior and everyone ignoring him and his subsequently leaving to wander aimlessly in the frontier?

Although *The Searchers*’ filmic narrative does not focus solely on Debbie’s captivity and nor do we, as spectators, hear her account similar to Mary Rowlandson’s 1682 account during Philip’s War, the regressive aspects nevertheless mentioned by Lehman intersect with the hunter mythology associated with Ethan, and discussed by Slotkin in *Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890*. Slotkin asserts that captivity narratives and the hunter mythology are characterized by what Lehman termed Ethan’s “atavistic regression.” Slotkin asserts:
Both the captivity and the hunter mythologies see the frontier as one of regression: civilized men and women leave contemporary society, and enter—willingly or as captives—a primitive, primal world. If they can maintain their racial/cultural integrity in that world, if they can seize the natural, original power that is immanent in that world, and if they can defeat the forces that seek to prevent their return to civilization, then on their return they will be capable of renewing the moral and physical powers of the society they originally left. The pioneer submits to regression in the name of progress; he goes back to the past to purify himself, to acquire new powers, in order to regenerate the present and make the future more glorious. (63)

Interestingly, Lehman asserts that Ethan’s psychological catharsis comes near the end of the film when he lifts Debbie up into the air. The lifting gesture simply recalls what he did in the past with Debbie, and this results and illustrates a “cleansing gesture.” Nonetheless, Ethan cannot enter the civilized domestic space of the Jorgensen ranch because he has gone too Indian. Slotkin argues that the danger of regressing too much can result in a loss of “integrity” in “his or her white soul,” and that “he or she may be tempted to remain in the past” becoming “a racial renegade,” who rejects “the social responsibilities of adult life in civilization.” Thus, at this point in The Searchers, Ethan cannot return to the figurative home of domesticating, nationalizing space represented by
the Jorgensen ranch house with its more advanced, refined wood structure of the Texas Gothic architectural style. Ethan cannot renew or regenerate the whiteness of civilization since he’s become too savage, too Indian, and too unrestrained for white domesticity. This inability, no doubt, to regenerate is akin to death, and Ford denaturalizes the inevitability of the magisterial gaze in the white, frontiersmen illustrated in Leutze’s fresco in the U.S. Capitol Building.

Finally, the death of the linear meta-narrative of Manifest Destiny in 1956 and the location of “stone monuments” (i.e., natural stelae) formed over thousands of years in geologic time in Monument Valley are what characterize *The Searchers* because of Ethan’s inability to regenerate nationalism both in a figurative and literal sense. In “Sermons in Stone: Monument Valley in *The Searchers*,” Richard Hutson argues that the iconic location of Monument Valley memorializes the problematic linear meta-narrative of Manifest Destiny colonization because of what stones represent in terms of death. Hutson quotes Roger Callois’ assertion about stones in that they have “‘a kind of gravitas, something ultimate and unchanging, something that will never perish or has already done so’”38. Hutson comments:

Ford’s and Nugent’s story is itself a memorial to perhaps the most primordial national narrative of the New World—the forward, heroic march of humanity, conquering and appropriating even the most desolate wasteland, refusing to remain on this side of the frontier. The human narrative of *The Searchers*, like Monument Valley, condenses in its monumentality all that is left of a spirit
still loyal to the traditions of Western civilization in general and of the United States in particular. Both human narrative, the coup de theatre, and cosmic narrative, the tableau, may trail off into an irrecoverable, absolute past, a past without origin. But the doubleness of the narrative modes presented the post-World War II United States with one of its most compelling spectacles. For Ford, however, narrative as memorial, as mourning and loyalty, is the surest way of possessing the United States—of repossessing it. (Hutson’s italics, 103)

This reposssession of the narrative of Manifest Destiny in The Searchers certainly functions within the unsettled, psychological narrative focus on Ethan, and Ford’s directorial genius denaturalizes the magisterial gaze of the Western. Yet the constraints of the Hollywood Western genre heavily weigh on the film because of the narrative focus remaining on a white character’s troubled psyche, and we learn and experience Indian culture under coercion and, ultimately, through the eyes of whiteness as sign. This limited knowledge and focus on whiteness, indeed, becomes the launching point for a much later filmic response from Native American directors Victor Masayesva and Chris Eyre in the 1990s, especially with the counter-hegemonic John Wayne chant in Smoke Signals (1998).
Notes


2 See David Bordwell’s influential Narration in the Fiction Film concerning how narration in film functions. The displays that Hinsley discusses in “The World as Marketplace” relate to Bordwell’s discussion about filmic “Narrative Comprehension.” Bordwell asks rhetorically how a series of “gestures, words, and manipulations of objects” add up to the action sequence we know as “‘buying a loaf of bread’?” (34). As Hinsley has argued, the World’s Columbian Exposition commodified the exotic Other because of how the displays were spatial arranged—to tell the national narrative of white, northern European progress initiated by Christopher Columbus in 1492—, as if the fairgoers were shopping in a department store. The exotic, non-white Others were placed farthest away from the classically Greek-columned White City in a linear fashion, as if to emulate physically the justified evolutionary narrative of technological and racial progress. Indeed, as Hinsley points out, how did the displays sequentially add up with the national narrative of “progress” to “buying a piece of the exotic Other”? Also, in Hollywood’s Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film, Peter C. Rollins and John E. O’Connor discuss The Vanishing American (1925) as implicitly informed by social Darwinism. Rollins and O’Connor state, “Although the movie attempted to be sympathetic toward the Indian, its Social Darwinism assumptions predicated a ‘struggle for existence’ and a (bogus) theory of racial evolution that would doom the Indian to
extinction” (6). Finally, Philip Deloria, Jr.’s highly insightful Playing Indian discusses post-Civil War technological innovations such as photography, film, and sound recordings as mimetic devices that influenced people’s perceptions of the “real” world (117-118).

3 Especially with nineteenth-century paintings and the development of photography and film, Edward Buscombe certainly makes this argument in his essay entitled “Painting the Legend: Frederic Remington and the Western” (155-162) in John Ford Made Westerns.

4 Masayesva’s Imagining Indians (1992) opens with a scene of a Native American individual walking in what appears to be a white straitjacket in Monument Valley, a frequent location of Ford’s. In the opening credits, Masayesva also uses the film title in a font reminiscent of those found in Ford’s films. Given the captivity narrative in The Searchers, Jeff Spitz’s The Return of Navajo Boy (2000) could interestingly be read as a reverse captivity narrative in a tacit response to John Wayne and John Ford. Also, see Gaylyn Studlar’s and Matthew Bernstein’s discussion about the continuing fascination with the iconic Ford and the development of his Westerns (beginning in 1917) in their introduction to a collection of essays in John Ford Made Westerns (1-20).


6 Following Robert Berkhofer’s discussion in The White Man’s Indian about the terms “Indian” and “Native American,” I use the word “Indian” to reflect its relational construction borne out of Columbian cultural, political, and historical roots, (4-6).
“Native American,” however, implies a more transformative sense of “Indian” in that it has more modern, less stilted connotations, (196-197). Although I make these intellectual assertions, I have heard the words used interchangeably in indigenous communities. Yet using the term “indigenous” has further epistemological complications since it implies connections to global indigenous communities.


10 Scott Simmon, “Preface: The Western and the West,” *The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre’s First Half-Century*.


12 Nonetheless, in *West of Everything*, Tompkins provides a perceptive summation of the Western film genre as she analyzes the impatience of Ethan Edwards’ (John Wayne) character when talking to a female character in *The Searchers*. (At one point, too, Ethan rudely interrupts a funeral for Lucy because the reverend is talking for too long of a period of time. He wants to exact revenge on Scar and the Comanches by moving into exterior action.) Tompkins states that the Western filmic character is typically impatient
with words (or language) and that this reflects the genre’s emphasis on “male” exterior action (not the “female” interiority of language and thinking something through). For example, chasing Indians, that an overuse of language is dangerous because it entails “reflection and negotiation,” and “The hero doesn’t need to think or talk; he just knows” (her italics, 52).


14 In *The Searchers*, part of the BFI Film Classics Series, Buscombe cites the financial backing for the film from Cornelius Vanderbilt Whitney, who recounts an interest in the West from seeing a Buffalo Bill Cody Wild West show in Madison Square Garden (41-42). Revealingly, Buscombe in an endnote describes Whitney’s familial relationship to Eli Whitney and Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney. Eli Whitney “invented the system of mass producing guns through the use of interchangeable parts and so provided cheap reliable weaponry for the conquest of the West” (72). In addition, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney “founded the Whitney Gallery of Western Art in Cody, Wyoming, where some of [Frederick] Remington’s pictures are preserved” (72). The idea of nineteenth-century American exceptionalism is discussed in Thomas R. Hietala’s *Manifest Design: American Exceptionalism and Empire*, (173-214).
See Gaylyn Studlar’s and Matthew Bernstein’s Introduction to *John Ford Made Westerns*, (10-16).

Ibid, (10).

See Barry Keith Grant’s “John Ford and James Fenimore Cooper,” *John Ford Made Westerns*, (193-219).

Ibid, (11).

Ibid, (11-12).

See Dagle’s “Linear Patterns and Ethnic Encounters in the Ford Western,” *John Ford Made Westerns*, (102-131).

Ibid, (102).

Ibid, see endnote 29 after Dagle’s essay, regarding “psychological epic,” and “inward journey,” (129). Ford apparently viewed *The Searchers* as a “psychological epic.”

See Albert Boime’s *The Magisterial Gaze: Manifest Destiny and American Landscape Painting, c. 1830-1865*, (ix-x), for a detailed discussion of “magisterial gaze.”

See Gaylyn Studlar’s “What Would Martha Want?: Captivity, Purity, and Feminine Values in The Searchers” in *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford’s Classic Western*. In her essay, Studlar asserts, “The symbolic importance of women as primary representatives of civilization and white society is a longstanding convention of the western” (171).

See endnote 21.

Buscombe cites several films (i.e., Douglas Sirk’s *Written on the Wind*, Nicholas Ray’s *Bigger than Life*, George Stevens’ *Giant*, and Elia Kazan’s *Baby Doll*) that illustrate the
tensions underneath the sunny façade of 1950s American family life. I would also include Nicholas Ray’s *Rebel without a Cause* (1955) in which the main character Jim Stark (played by James Dean) “rebels” against the repression in a white, middle-class family. Ironically, Natalie Wood also starred in this film.

27 See Lehman’s essay, “You Couldn’t Hit It on the Nose: The Limits of Knowledge in and of *The Searchers,*” in *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford’s Classic Western,* (239-263). Lehman points out that Ethan lifts Debbie near the end of the film in front of the visual motif dealing with an entrance, namely, the cave. This lifting gesture “rhymes” with the beginning scene in the Edwards home where Ethan also lifts Debbie into the air although he mistakes her for Lucy.

28 Ibid, Lehman quotes Nugent, (259).

29 Ibid, Lehman views the dark spaces of the doorway/entrance motifs as “Freudian vaginal or womb” images, (257).

30 See Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics,* (132).

31 Ibid, Silverman comments, “Finally, unlike the unconscious of *The Interpretation of Dreams,* the id is not a product of the same cultural prohibitions which establish the preconscious, but is rather a *primordial* category” (my italics, 133).

32 See Buscombe’s *The Searchers,* (64).

33 See Lehman’s “You Couldn’t Hit It on the Nose: The Limits of Knowledge in and of *The Searchers,*” *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford’s Classic Western,* (259).
The image of Laurie Jorgensen in the brilliant white wedding dress makes me think about John Gast’s *American Progress* (1878), which depicts various aspects (i.e., the train, the laying of telegraph wire, the progress of wagon trains, etc.) of so-called civilization overtaking the frontier. The image includes a gigantic personification of “progress” as a blonde-haired white woman with a white robe in classical Grecian style. One part of the robe hangs precipitously from one of her breast’s nipples, which also suggests her sexuality. Is this also suggestive of sexual reproduction, and thus figurative reproduction of the United States? Interestingly, Douglas Pye’s “Miscegenation and Point of View in The Searchers,” *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford’s Classic Western*, analyzes the rescued blonde captives at the fort, and how they are unable to withstand contact with the Indian Other. Yet Debbie’s brunette hair enables her to return to “civilization” psychologically unscathed (234-235).

Interestingly, the opening shot of the film has a Navajo-designed blanket on a hitching post foregrounding Ethan’s approach to the Edwards’ homestead. Further, his rifle is encased in beaded buckskin. Ironically, he also understands Comanche culture, too, when he violently shoots the eyes out of a warrior, so that his soul does not forever wander.


In “Sermons in Stone,” Hutson discusses the Texas Gothic architectural style as suggestive of a monument, too, that confronts the stone monuments of Monument Valley. Also, see Hutson’s discussion of this particular architectural style’s connection to Christian militancy and faith in the nineteenth century in his endnote 7, (107). This
spiritual transcendence and the whiteness of the Jorgensen house relates to Dyer’s discussion in *White* about Christianity, (17).

CHAPTER THREE: VICTOR MASAYESVA’S RE-IMAGINING INDIANS AS COUNTER-HEGEMONIC REPRESENTATIONS

Hollywood representations of Native Americans have a wide range of stereotypic characterizations, but they particularly fall into two distinct images: the noble or bloodthirsty savage. These two separate images have held a fascination for Hollywood-produced films from D.W. Griffith to John Ford to Kevin Costner’s *Dances with Wolves* (1990). Costner’s landmark, progressive Western garnered numerous Academy Awards and was noted for its humane treatment of Native Americans. While film critics paid attention to its progressive treatment of Indians, they also paid attention to the film’s flaws with inaccurate use of costuming (i.e., Lakota ceremonial dress used throughout the film) and language (i.e., the female form of the Lakota language for male warriors in council) to name a few. Critics also have charged that the film’s “going native” theme undermined the film’s progressive attempt at portraying Native Americans with complex humanity. *Dances with Wolves* and the filmic history of commodifying stereotypic Hollywood representations are what occupy Hopi video/filmmaker Victor Masayesva’s documentary *Imagining Indians* (1992). Although Masayesva’s title is *Imagining Indians*, a more apt title would be *Re-imagining Indians* since through a series of interviews and the creative, sometimes incessant, montage of counter-hegemonic images he actively challenges how and who constructs Native American representations. In this way too, Masayesva’s documentary film reveals—through the use of a staged dental office scene that grounds a critical range of interviews with a barrage of montaged images—the process by which Hollywood commodifies Indian people and how this both
leads to divisiveness among Indian communities and a subsequent disrespect of the sacredness of life itself.

In the opening title, soundtrack, and scene of Imagining Indians, Masayesva situates his critique of Hollywood westerns within a historic context. For example, the opening credit title’s font itself is reminiscent of John Ford films. The documentary’s opening soundtrack has an almost magisterial yet quirky and playful connotation. After this, Masayesva provides a long shot of a lone Indian figure (male? or female?) walking from right to left in Monument Valley, which was the location for many John Ford Westerns. Interestingly, this lone Native figure (in long shot) appears to be in a straitjacket. During this opening scene, the soundtrack begins to resemble a radio being tuned into various “stations.” The radio tuning finally stops at a voice speaking in a lofty, magisterial tone about the earnest need to eradicate “Sioux men, women, and children.” This radio voice speaking in elevated (almost nineteenth-century tones) provides continuity for the next key dental office scene.

In the next scene of the dental office, a Euro-American dentist (Ed Jones) questions an Indian woman patient (Patty Runs After Swallow) about various medical conditions that may affect her treatment. The dental office has various posters of notable Hollywood westerns and a Hopi katsina displayed on the walls. The dentist himself wears what appears to be a Plains tribal choker. As he continues with his questions, she is unable to verbalize any response except to non-verbally gesture back to him. During this scene, the soundtrack continues with the magisterial radio voice, which states:

The Indian Bureau keeps feeding and clothing the Indian till they get fat
and saucy and then we are only notified that the Indians are troublesome. I think it would be wise to invite all the sportsman of England and America there this fall for a grand buffalo hunt, and make one grand sweep of them all.

The dentist then examines the Indian patient’s dental x-ray and in the white of her teeth the view dissolves into what looks like a documentary interview. Here, the soundtrack also makes a humming, electrical-like buzz.

The interview is with a Native American extra (Marvin Clifford), who begins to recount his experiences on the set of *Dances with Wolves* to an unidentified Indian woman. However, this woman is the same woman (Patty Runs After Swallow) who plays the dental patient in the previous fictionalized scene. She simply states, “That’s why I decided to start the Lakota Film Commission.” He comments (in response):

The Lakota Film Commission? That sounds like a good idea because I was on that movie set, *Dances with Wolves*, also as an extra. Boy, I had quite an experience in that one, riding bareback all day with just a g-string on. Tell you, I earned my $45.00 on that set. Really, really worked every bit of that $45.00. Still sore from that as a matter-of-fact.

Ironically, as he recounts his experience, he wears a baseball cap with a Washington Redskins mascot. As this Native American extra continues to recall his experiences, Masayesva frames the interview within another frame. This other frame is a television set turned on by an Indian child. Here, Masayesva self-consciously reveals that he’s manipulating images for the viewer. Much like Paul Smith’s ideas about “profering” and
“intendments” in *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production* (1993), Masayesva relentlessly pushes us as spectators to read his montage of images in a particular fashion⁸.

Marvin Clifford continues with narrating his experiences with other Native American extras on the *Dances with Wolves* set to Patty Runs After Swallow. This time, however, he recounts how extras were transported and accommodated for Costner’s film. At first, he is impressed by the “fringe benefits besides a day’s pay” as an extra and that an unidentified film representative “really talked good to us” with promises of being transported in chartered buses and being lodged in motels. Nevertheless, according to Clifford, the promise of “fringe benefits” becomes quickly shattered by reality when an unidentified white woman shouts, “All you people for *Dances with Wolves* get on the white bus!” The bus is dilapidated. Clifford also asserts mistreatment with horses not being “broken in” and of poor quality. He also recalls a catering assistant who he assumed was bringing water for him and the other extras. The assistant instead brings water for various dogs. As Clifford discusses his experiences, Masayesva carefully juxtaposes images of local newspaper articles that discuss Clifford’s charges. These newspaper articles counter Clifford’s assertions about his off-putting experiences. Yet, too, it is interesting to note that other Native American extras working with Clifford want anonymity each time the assertions are countered in the local newspapers.

After this, Masayesva moves to a discussion occurring among several Native American women about the attempts at authenticity in *Dances with Wolves*. The women particularly focus on Stands with a Fist’s (Mary McDonnell) role and portrayal as a white
captive in mourning among the Lakota. Again, Patty Runs After Swallow appears in this discussion and she comments:

[I] had some complaints [about] one of the main actresses. If she was living with the Lakota people, she would have had long hair. She wouldn’t have had her hair all you know spiked out. People said, you know, that she would have had her pulled into braids.

Runs After Swallow then asks, “But she was in mourning right? Wouldn’t she have cut her hair? Another unidentified woman responds to Runs After Swallow’s assertions by stating “When she first got on, she was already in mourning.” Runs After Swallow then remarks, “Oh was she? OK, obviously, I didn’t see the film.” All the Native women in the group discussion then laugh. Here, Masayesva demonstrates early in his documentary that Indian people are not fully in consensus about how Native American culture (e.g., Lakota beliefs about mourning) gets represented in Hollywood.

Yet, in terms of montage, mise-en-scène—and the complex relationships that it establishes among images—, it is significant to note that Masayesva pulls the spectator back from this discussion about the authenticity of Mary McDonnell’s portrayal of Lakota mourning in Dances with Wolves to the dental office with the squirming and uncomfortable Indian dental patient (played by Patty Runs After Swallow). Why does Masayesva strategically place a movie poster of John Smith and Pocahontas behind the dental patient (played by Runs After Swallow) as she continues to wriggle in the dental chair immediately after the discussion about Mary McDonnell’s character? The repetition of representations of Pocahontas throughout American history has been
analyzed by as a symbolic figure that “saves” the white man from annihilation\textsuperscript{10}. Thus, her continual presence and appeal in the popular imagination serves to uphold dominant values about whiteness and patriarchy. Pocahontas symbolically saves whiteness, and this explains her recurrent appeal in representations. This movie poster image of John Smith and Pocahontas also reinforces the dental patient’s (Runs After Swallow) own struggle with issues about identity and representations because of her wriggling in the white dentist’s chair. The Native American dental patient does not want to be Pocahontas.

After this scene, Masayesva uses a linking visual image of focusing on the dental patient’s (Runs After Swallow) eyes and breaking them into rectilinear pieces.

This shattered image transforms the dental patient into Runs After Swallow once again, who now sits at a table talking to Charles Sooktis (a Cheyenne elder) about his lived experiences as an extra on the set of Cecil B. DeMille’s 1936 Western \textit{The Plainsman}. Sooktis recalls one particular day of shooting a scene in a river where Indian warriors (on horseback) attack the white soldiers’ fortification. DeMille had requested several riders and a chief for this scene. As he relates to Masayesva, Sooktis is amazed that “Just anybody could be a chief during that run you know.” He continues by narrating how one man enthusiastically steps forward and claims to be a chief from the northern Cheyenne tribe. However, as this scene unfolds in DeMille’s film, the Native extras are unaware of an invisible wire strung across the river that will trip them and the horses they’re riding on. Jacquelyn Kilpatrick states\textsuperscript{11}: 
Animal protection agencies would never allow such a thing to happen to horses today, so, in conjunction with the interview by the *Dances With Wolves* extra, the viewer is left to wonder, who’s protecting the Indians? (211)

Kilpatrick also states earlier in *Celluloid Indians* that Masayesva’s work in general presents an alternative view to mainstream representations because “he believes strongly that a filmmaker has a responsibility to show—and a responsibility to know what ought not be shown”12.

But Masayesva’s documentary also asserts that the idea of accountability in Native filmic representations helps to protect and maintain communal humanity despite the capitalist imperatives of Hollywood production. For example, Sooktis begins his account of his experiences on *The Plainsman* set by first contextualizing the impoverished economic conditions of most Indian communities. Sooktis remarks:

People realized that the money was scarce during that time during when that movie company came in and they were gambling…Men and women playing cards and nobody was hungry. There was always a couple of trucks coming in every morning from Sheridan, Wyoming, to bring out food to distribute to the people that were camping and they usually killed two cows a day for the people to have a meeting during the camping days there and it was such a scene that people never seen before, but after that nothing ever came by anymore.
While Sooktis recounts his experiences shortly after the Depression, Masayesva shows images of slot machines with the faces of various Indian leaders painted by George Catlin. Interestingly, Julie Schimmel and Nancy K. Anderson have interrogated the implied cultural lens with which Catlin painted Indian people on the Plains. For example, Schimmel argues that Catlin overly individuated tribal leaders by representing them in a Western portraiture style that directly contradicts communal values of identity. Of course, this artistic style appealed to the East Coast buyers of his work.

Still, within *Imagining Indians*, Masayesva uses these montaged images to comment powerfully on Sooktis’s lived experiences on *The Plainsman* set by both revealing the individuation of tribal leaders (i.e., identity) and how the lure of easy money disrupts Indian communities. Again, Sooktis is amazed “that just anybody could be a chief.” His disbelief reveals his astonishment at how particular filmmakers make things up as they attempt to be accurate and realistic.

Next, Masayesva interviews Ed Lonehill who recalls his acting experiences (as the character Spotted Hand) on Richard Brooks’s 1956 Western *The Last Hunt* starring Robert Taylor, Stewart Granger, and Debra Paget. Like Sooktis, Lonehill’s incredulous remarks subtly critique how the film represents the killing of buffalo and the payment for their slaughter by Metro Goldwyn Mayer. At first, Lonehill states that it was “comical” to see so many buffalo being killed, but then he realizes that “because of a movie you’re killing all our buffalo.”

Lonehill also comments on the direction he received to convincingly play Spotted Hand. He relates how his character tries to slyly shoot at Charlie Gilson (played by
Robert Taylor) who greedily slaughters the buffalo with almost sadistic pleasure and who profoundly dislikes Indians despite being attracted to the young Indian woman (played by Debra Paget). In the scene where Charlie Gilson kills Spotted Hand, Lonehill recounts how he positions his body with a gun facing Gilson. Lonehill states that “Indians were supposed to be sly and cunning” during the early 1880s and so he crouches low with knees bent\(^\text{15}\). At the end of the scene, Spotted Hand is killed.

As Lonehill comments on his experiences, it is ironic because of the film’s seemingly progressive narrative written by Brooks. As the film title notes, this is one of the frontier’s “last hunt.” While Sandy McKenzie (Stewart Granger) has grown weary of hunting, Charlie Gilson unapologetically kills one buffalo after another. Because of this “crazed” behavior, Charlie is isolated and this leads to tension with Sandy who ultimately has a confrontation with him. The film ends with Charlie dying in a snowstorm while waiting to kill Sandy who now is with the young Indian woman. Ultimately, Brooks wants us as spectators to sympathize with Native peoples as the frontier begins to close. Yet Lonehill ironically emphasizes how the studio paid $500.00 for each head of buffalo in the herd and how he was encouraged to adopt a stereotypic representation of Indians as “sly and cunning.”

After this interview with Lonehill, Masayesva moves us (as spectators) back to the complex interaction among the white dentist, the Indian dental patient, and an image of a dental syringe and various movie posters. As he further probes and examines her teeth with dental instruments, her image in the dental chair ironically juxtaposes with a movie poster of Lew Landers’ middling film *Captain John Smith and Pocahontas* (1953).
During this shot, Masayesva continues to use the earlier radio voice speaking in magisterial tones about justifying Manifest Destiny sentiments. This occurs, too, right at the moment that the Indian dental patient is getting numbed for a tooth extraction. At that moment, Masayesva frames a shot of a dental syringe consciously placed before another movie poster of *Taza, Son of Cochise* (1954). After she is numbed and unable to speak, the dentist, in his Plains Indian choker, relates how he wants to build “a higher consciousness resort” near Phoenix and that it will be “lucrative.”

Again, Masayesva intends for us (as spectators) to see this staged dental scene as contextualizing the larger issues of commodification of “Indian-ness,” that is, capitalizing on and appropriating beliefs about Native spirituality without Indian consent. This is, no doubt, a visual comment about ongoing appropriation of Native spiritual beliefs within the historic context of colonization. Leah Dilworth, in *Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past* (1996), states that “Imagining Indians is about representations” and thus “Masayesva’s dentist is a comic figure embodying the oppressive U.S. government and well-meaning non-Indians in Native Americans’ lives”¹⁶. Interestingly, as the Indian dental patient is numbed into silence, Dilworth notes, too, that the white dentist’s instrument is akin to a rape because of how he probes her mouth and how she is kept silent as she squirms¹⁷. However, the simultaneous radio voice’s magisterial, Manifest Destiny-like pronouncements in justifying Euro-American colonization and westward expansion while she is silent also suggests a figurative rape of the supposed virgin land of the frontier.
In fact, European representations of America as a symbolic and reclining Indian woman who’s “ready for the taking” can be found in the sixteenth (Jan van der Straet) and seventeenth centuries (Theodore Galle). Anne McClintock discusses these narrative representations of European male discovery in her “Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism” chapter from *Imperial Leather* (1995). McClintock argues that the marking of a frontier boundary is fraught with liminal danger and loss because of the male discoverer’s anxiety and paranoia at the geographic margins of the unknown. Thus, the European male discoverer fears a literal and figurative engulfment that gets depicted in representations and this anxiety necessitates a virile display of technological dominance. McClintock comments:

In a famous drawing (ca. 1575), Jan van der Straet portrays the ‘discovery’ of America as an eroticized encounter between a man and a woman [Fig. 1.1]. A fully armored Vespucci stands erect and masterful before a naked and erotically inviting woman, who inclines toward him from a hammock. At first glance, the imperial lessons of the drawing seem clear. Roused from her sensual languor by the epic newcomer, the indigenous woman extends an inviting hand, insinuating sex and submission. Her nakedness and her gesture suggest a visual echo of Michelangelo’s ‘Creation.’ Vespucci, the godlike arrival, is destined to inseminate her with the male seeds of civilization, fructify the wilderness and quell the riotous scenes of cannibalism in the background. As Peter Hulme puts it in a fine essay: ‘Land is named as female as a passive counterpart to the massive thrust of"
male technology.’ America allegorically represents nature’s invitation to conquest, while Vespucci, gripping the fetish instruments of imperial mastery—astrolabe, flag and sword—confronts the virgin land with the patrimony of scientific mastery and imperial might. (25-26)

While the Indian dental patient does not seductively invite the white dentist to probe her mouth, she does continue to squirm in an uncomfortable and passive position. Granted, Masayesva does not directly draw from European artists from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the overall representation of a white dentist wielding technological instruments over a passive Indian woman patient’s mouth is compelling in relation to McClintock’s psychological argument. Thus, the virile display of European-derived technological is what alleviates male anxiety over unknown, liminal space.

As stated earlier, during the Indian dental patient’s “numbing” scene, Masayesva frames a shot of a Novocain syringe in front of a movie poster that depicts Douglas Sirk’s 1954 western Taza, Son of Cochise. Steve Neale, in “Vanishing Americans: Racial and Ethnic Issues in the Interpretation and Context of Post-war ‘Pro-Indian’ Westerns” (Back in the Saddle Again: New Essays on the Western, 1998), asserts that in comparison to Anthony Mann’s Devil’s Doorway (1950), Sirk’s film is pro-assimilationist because of Taza’s insistence on wearing a non-Native American uniform to contain and control renegade Apaches, including prominent leaders like Geronimo. In comparing the two films’ main characters, that is, Lance Poole (Robert Taylor) and Taza (Rock Hudson), Neale remarks:
Taza’s uniform, which he wears as head of the Apache police on the San Carlos reservation, is a sign that he has accepted the identity proposed by Euro-American society and is thus an American in so far as he conforms to this society’s rules, regulations and norms. Where Poole fights these rules, regulations and norms as and when they are unjust, where he wants to determine his own identity and is eventually killed by the cavalry for doing so, Taza accepts them as just, and fights on behalf of the cavalry against the renegade Apache, Geronimo, Taza achieves the recognition that Poole fails to achieve, but precisely in so far as the basis of that recognition is fundamentally different. (18)

Interestingly, Masayesva juxtaposes this image of the Novocain syringe with this movie poster and the dental patient’s forced silence. She cannot assert agency to counter the dentist’s dominant, stereotypic assumptions about Indians being spiritual and at oneness with nature so that he can open a lucrative “higher consciousness” resort near Phoenix.

For Masayesva, Native Americans who assimilate into the larger mainstream American culture, and thus do not critique the dominant, risk breaking up traditional Indian communities. In the “numbing” scene, this explains the conscious juxtaposition of the Novocain syringe strategically placed in front of the movie poster of Taza, Son of Cochise. This assimilationist concern becomes evident during the upcoming interview with Rodney Grant, an Indian actor who played the Lakota warrior Wind in His Hair in Dances with Wolves.
Before this interview with Grant, however, more interviews follow with various tribal members who interrogate Hollywood’s attempts at realism and the commodification of Native spirituality in *Imagining Indians*. A Diné man (Ken Yazzie), wearing a black cowboy hat with a Native-designed silver band, discusses and laments the potential for Hollywood to commodify spiritual beings including the dreaded skinwalker. Yazzie deplores that Hollywood does not recognize the spiritual significance of these beings because of a lack of an understanding of the cultural, tribal context of Diné communities. Next, an unidentified Indian woman (Oglala Lakota?) comments on the sacrilegious representation of a sweat-lodge ceremony, Ghost Dance songs, and the inappropriate use of tobacco ties in Michael Apted’s *Thunderheart* (1992). Despite her repeated efforts to question the script and its depiction of the ceremonies and tobacco ties, the film’s production staff does not address her concerns by being intentionally evasive. Though Masayesva does not present her as a journalist, the inference can be made that she works for the *Lakota Times* because Masayesva films her in front of the newspaper’s building. Furthermore, she states that she didn’t want to do “a negative story,” but she was nonetheless compelled to ask, “Why did you feel it is necessary to exploit spiritual ceremonies?” Though this is not a silent film, Masayesva creatively “intertitles” this documentary shot with words that state that a noted spiritual leader, Fool’s Crow, consulted with *Thunderheart’s* scriptwriter John Fusco. Apparently, Fool’s Crow approved and sanctioned the script and the Oglala Lakotas accepted Fusco as one of them. Throughout *Imagining Indians*, Masayesva repeatedly uses this technique of
critical juxtapositions (i.e., “intertitles” and montaged images) to point out incongruent assertions\textsuperscript{21}.

Finally, a young (Oglala?) Lakota carpenter poignantly emphasizes that even when Hollywood gets it right, the depiction of sacred ceremonies is still inappropriate and trivializing when it ignores the historical and cultural contexts. In reference to the realistic (though inaccurate) depiction of sacred ceremonies and songs (i.e., Ghost Dance) in \textit{Thunderheart}, he remarks:

\begin{quote}
No matter how they do it, it still isn’t right because doing the Ghost Dance in a movie, that was a pretty spiritual thing back in Wounded Knee and them people gave their lives up and in the movie they were using powwow music for Ghost Dance and they were dancing like sun dancers and it wasn’t even right. I felt so low. I felt so bad watching them practice doing the Ghost Dance. You know, even if they have the right songs, the right dance, the right everything, it still doesn’t make it right. It still doesn’t make it right. I get so tired of people telling me it’s just a movie.
\end{quote}

As he comments on \textit{Thunderheart}, Masayesva (along with Native American flute music playing on the soundtrack) strategically juxtaposes photographic images of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre in which Lakotas were performing a ceremony that used Ghost Dance songs. These songs were part of a nativistic movement to counter continual Euro-American encroachment on Lakota territory. Again, the montaged images of his making the above statements and the historic images of the Wounded Knee Massacre contextualizes contemporary attempts at Hollywood realism. For Masayesva, these
attempts fall short because they ignore the painful, historical perspective of Lakota associations of Ghost Dance songs and Wounded Knee.

After these challenging statements, Masayesva interviews another unidentified Native American man who worked with Fusco concerning the cultural appropriateness of the script for Thunderheart. He first states that realism for Hollywood film provides good “box office.” Yet he then relates that culturally sensitive and respectful actions were done in Thunderheart to ensure that spiritual beliefs were not violated and that certain practices were adopted from previous films, especially A Man Called Horse (1970). For example, certain items were used like an eagle feather fan and sweet grass, but without intruding into the highly sacred space of a sweat lodge. As if reassuring himself, he repeatedly concludes, “So it was OK, it was OK.”

As stated earlier, Masayesva’s intention is to present a range of viewpoints about Hollywood representations and experiences on the set of various films, especially Dances with Wolves and Thunderheart. Yet, interestingly, the collective montaged sequences in Imagining Indians “profers” an “intentement” that interrogates Hollywood representations of Indians that, in turn, threaten traditional cultural values and spiritual beliefs in Native American communities.22 Dilworth comments:

More often than not, the interests of Hollywood (and the art market) have won out, but Masayesva doesn’t just paint a picture of victimized, exploited Indians; rather, he shows how individuals and communities are situated in a complex web of power, refusal and capitulation. (221)
Masayesva interrogates Native American representations within this “complex web of power, refusal, and capitulation,” but he also illustrates the cultural and spiritual costs of capitulation through assimilation.

After another brief interview, powwow images of dancing, twirling women in a Shawl Dance competition appear with a voiceover (from Darrel Kipp?) that addresses the general historic diminution of spiritual sacredness among Indian communities. Yet, as Dilworth noted earlier about Imagining Indians, the voiceover does not “just paint a picture of victimized, exploited Indians.” Instead, the narrator discusses how Native Americans themselves need to be accountable for any lessening of sacredness through various economic systems over time. The voiceover comments:

The Native Americans traded a long time ago…they started trading with fur traders. They started trading that whole trading system. I mean it started a long time ago. Used to be bartering. They would trade their furs for something. Then, it became money. Money became involved at some point and the money exchange started there. Even back then, the fur, you know, the Indian tribes they spent maybe all year collecting fur. I mean if you’re talking about what is sacred. It all started way back, a long time ago, and they would have all these, you know, these skins. You know, these skins and they would take all these skins to the trader so you’re talking about mass production even then. But there was no money exchange, you know. The Indians traded. I need this; I need that, maybe even guns. You know that they traded…but you know the object of that
fur was, ah, it was used to keep warm for covers. But even then, they were saying, ‘We’ve got to go trade to get what we need,’ you know, so my answer would be let’s look back. When did it start? When did the sacredness start losing its sacredness? You have to look back to the time when they started trading. That’s a long time we’ve been doing this. You look at you, you look at the ceremony and the language comes into play there. The white man has managed to record everything about that ceremony, but there’s secret communication. You have to talk your language and to be able to say the sacred things. That remains sacred where, you know, language is required or my language is required, you know, in the ceremony. That remains sacred, and that remains, even to the point that nobody knows about that. What do they say? I don’t know. So language wise it’s necessary that we keep our language. You know some of this maintaining of sacredness is our responsibility. We have to keep it sacred and this is why I go back with the filmmakers…That’s why I’m talking about accountability. We know what is sacred to us now and what we know of it. Maybe, purposely, you know we haven’t been told.

As the voiceover continues with these remarks, Masayesva places overlapping scenes of a petroglyph in which some of the figures become animated and a herd of running antelope. With this visual imagery, Masayesva wants to emphasize the time dimension, as well as, the fur trading aspect to the voiceover’s comments. The voiceover then concludes that experience and participation are highly crucial in any genuine
understanding of sacredness. This is how Native Americans obtain sacredness through collective participation and experience in ceremonies. Yet, as the voiceover emphasizes, Native peoples themselves must be accountable for what does or does not get represented on Hollywood film screens. Indeed, this important assertion about sacredness and ceremonies in *Imagining Indians* is vital in understanding subsequent Native American representations in Chris Eyre’s *Smoke Signals* (1998) and *Skins* (2002).

Masayesva’s next shot is back in the staged dental office with the Indian patient. This time, however, the camera focuses on her hand on the dental chair’s arm, which is highly agitated. Indeed, as the documentary progresses, the dental patient becomes increasingly anxious and uncomfortable. Masayesva moves to a shot of a dental drill spinning at high speed in front of the poster of *Taza, Son of Cochise*. Wearing a mask, the dental patient closes her eyes and then another scene appears.

In this scene, Masayesva shows various Native Americans “trying on” various Native American signifiers. A Native American woman and man place their faces behind a board depicting a life-size painted representation of a Diné woman and man. Their faces fit into the cut out faces of the painted representations. Another Native American woman puts a garishly colored headdress on her head and holds the torn open package with the words, “Chief Headdress,” at the camera. She also looks directly at the camera. Dilworth comments:\(^{24}\)

…The painted backdrop perfectly represents the absence of Indian subjectivity and the availability of Indian signifiers; here is the vanished Indian rendered as a collection of attributes that anyone can try on. Well,
almost anyone. When the Native American man and woman put their faces in the cutouts, the signifiers they are supposed to activate are rendered meaningless. The other occupying the subject position in this situation disrupts the chain of signification and shows how the Indian as other is only and always a `potential sign and symbol of the self’ (quoting Torgovnick 1990, 171). The viewer experiences a mild sense of shock as signification falls apart; assumptions fail; one is forced to see what’s there: a man and a woman surrounded by the broken apparatus of signification.

(Dilworth’s italics, 212)

Masayesva’s “emptying out” Native American signifiers and thus breaking the cinematic “apparatus of signification” reveals how these stereotypes are constructed by the dominant. As spectators, Masayesva is throwing these dominant constructions back into our faces. Fatimah Tobing Rony, in “Victor Masayesva, Jr., and the Politics of Imagining Indians” (1994), comments:

Who is photographing and what is photographed are no longer innocuous questions. Whether throwing stones at the camera, refraining to represent certain subjects, or taking up the camera, the visual poetry of Masayesva’s work—his ritual clowning—reveals to us the extraordinarily multivalent problems of representation that must be addressed in contemporary photography, video, and film as practiced at the end of the second millennium. (32)
Still, as Rony relates earlier, the role of the Native American media producer is intertwined with a complex negotiation among “several cultures, media, and languages.” Yet, as Rony points out, this same role can seem buffoonlike to a Hopi elder. Rony, quoting Masayesva from “Kwikwilyaqwa: Hopi Photography” (1984), remarks:

He was comparing me with a katsina, a spiritual being, one of that category of katsinas who involve themselves with buffoonery, burlesque, and social commentary…. At the time, what made me laugh was the knowledge of what I must look like to him, under my focusing cloth, bent over my view camera. The cloth must have looked like the blanket of juniper bark which Kwikwilyaqwa wears over his head. Later came the sober realization that he might have meant Kwikwilyaqwa in the perspective of what this being does: he duplicates. (Masayesva’s italics, 11-12)

This buffoonlike ability of Kwikwilyaqwa to reproduce and to provide social commentary also positions Masayesva in liminal space since he becomes a part of the technological apparatus of the camera with its possessive gaze and yet reflexive of what he is doing with the camera. No doubt, the final scene of Imagining Indians attests to his insider/outsider role with the camera and this indeed shows contemporary tension between being an individual and being part of a larger Native community.

After this scene, a large, light-blue Oldsmobile sedan slowly moves left in the frame past the Peak Trading Post (Picacho, Arizona), which ironically burned down after an electrically caused fire in 2002. The “trading post” has a large Indian chief statue in
the style of a cigar-store Indian with one arm raised up in the air. The Indian chief is wholly made of fiberglass. Various remnant parts of the statue, including a hand and its feet, are left abandoned with blackened scorch marks at the former site near Interstate 10 midway between Tucson and Phoenix.

In the next scene, Masayesva interviews Floyd Westerman and Rodney Grant, who both had significant acting roles in *Dances with Wolves*. Westerman states, “Everything about the culture was researched in a way.” Yet he qualifies this assertion with the inaccuracies of how the teepees were depicted. Westerman then relates how Lakota elders have come to him with praise for the realistic representation of Lakota culture. Westerman then remarks that *Dances with Wolves* provides “a reality of their culture” for Lakota youth. After this, Masayesva then interviews Rodney Grant in what looks like a southern California spa setting with palm trees and the San Gabriel Mountains in the background. Grant, quoted in Kilpatrick’s *Celluloid Indians* (1999), comments:

> I get squashed because I’m Indian but not pro-Indian. I’m a young actor but I’m not totally White assimilated in society. I got my foot in both circles. I’ve got to feed my family…. If I’m going to be an actor, then I’ve got to take the roles that are offered to me. I accept that. I accept that story being told from a white point of view because basically if a non-Indian hadn’t told the story, then the story wouldn’t have gotten made. I know that for a fact. We have Indian producers and directors who are up and coming and yet, how organized are they? Do they got twenty million
dollars to invest in a movie? I mean if they do, then heck, I’m speaking out of place. We’re getting noticed—we’re getting praised for it, finally depicting a true Native American story. Now let’s stop rocking the boat. Get on the bandwagon here. Shit, I mean, this is what Indian people are all about; they always have to cut something, something that happens to have a little success about it. (214-215)

Kilpatrick sympathizes with Grant’s statement about the roles offered to him within the highly competitive environment of Hollywood. Masayesva’s intention here—with the inclusion of Grant’s comments—is to present a range of opinions about Hollywood and its Native American representations. Dilworth states:27

This work is certainly polemical, but as each person speaks and develops stories and points of view, what emerges is a picture of complex relationships rather than simply a condemnation of Hollywood. (223)

As the previous voiceover remarked, the introduction of capitalism influences the decisions made by Native American actors like Grant in Hollywood. Again, Grant’s comments indirectly illustrate the contestation between maintaining communal, traditional values and beliefs about sacredness and ceremonies and the emphasis on the individual in making an economic decision to feed a family. This is no doubt true. However, Masayesva situates these interviews with Westerman and Grant within the documentary’s montage that reveals the emptiness of Native American signifiers historically used by Hollywood and the staged dental scene where the patient is now highly agitated with her tooth finally extracted. Indeed, as Grant speaks, Masayesva cuts
to a carnival-like roadside tourist attraction with large, brightly colored letters that read, “Dances with Wolves,” and then back to Grant’s interview.

In a subsequent scene, Hopi spiritual leaders are upset with the filming of Errol Morris’s *Dark Wind* (1991), which is based on a Tony Hillerman novel. The tribal leadership, however, seems to want the economic boon from the filming since they ultimately approve the filming. Here, Masayesva intercuts this scene of the meeting with Marvel Comic book illustrations that use representations of katcinas. Again, the exploitation of Native American sacredness is emphasized, as well as, the divisiveness this causes between Hopi spiritual leaders and tribal leaders. Here, Hollywood splits the Hopi community into conflicting factions. Before this heated meeting between Hopi spiritual leaders and production staff from *Dark Wind*, a Zuni man states, “They encroach into our land, now they encroach into our very lives”\(^{28}\).

Finally, after several more interviews, the dental patient (with drill in hand) rises from the chair and frightens the white dentist, who then simply ignores her. The dental patient then takes the drill to scratch the camera’s lens. As she scratches the lens, Masayesva superimposes George Catlin paintings of various Native American leaders. The Catlin paintings break apart into atomized particles. Though formally untrained in Western painting, Charles Baudelaire in France praised Catlin’s use of color (Anderson, 1992)\(^{29}\). Baudelaire was particularly “Moved by the intensity of the red paint on the Indians’ faces (‘la couleur du sang, la couleur de la vie’), as well as by the beauty of their native costumes”\(^{30}\). Anderson also stresses Catlin’s promotional mission in the early nineteenth century to capture the vanishing Indian and that his paintings were certified as
accurate and authentic, and yet, by 1979 in Truettner’s *The Natural Man Observed: A Study of Catlin’s Indian Gallery*, “Catlin’s paintings were discussed primarily by anthropologists and ethnologists, who, ironically, often found them ‘inaccurate’.”

As the dental patient completes the scratching of the camera lens, she knocks down the camera itself. The ending credits have multiple voiceovers from various Native American language speakers. This ending ultimately illustrates Masayesva own participation in looking at Native American representations because of the power inherent in the camera. Yet ten years later Chris Eyre takes up that same camera’s power, and uses it to different ends in a controversial film based on Adrian Louis’s novel titled *Skins*. 
Notes

1 Westerns, however, have been popular with American audiences since Edwin S. Porter’s *The Great Train Robbery* (1903). Ford began his film career in 1917 with *Straight Shooting*. See Gaylyn Studlar’s and Matthew Bernstein’s “Introduction” to *John Ford Made Westerns* (1-20).

2 Among others, see Pauline Kael’s “New Age Daydreams” in the *New Yorker* and Michael Dorris, Janet Maslin, and Vincent Canby in *The New York Times*.

3 Specifically, I am thinking of Ford’s opening credit film title font for *The Searchers* (1956).

4 Among other Westerns, Ford shot *Fort Apache* (1939), *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), *The Searchers* (1956), and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) in Monument Valley. Buscombe, in *The Searchers*, comments that spectators have “aesthetic expectations” about what the symbolic frontier West should look like, and thus the panoramic vistas with dramatic stone monuments of Monument Valley fit those expectations (41). I think the image of a straitjacketed Native American person illustrates a containing of identity in film, particularly Westerns. This may be “heavy handed,” but I think Masayesva does not want us to miss the point.

5 “Nineteenth-century tones” refers to the magisterial gaze inherent in the political process of containing Indians in specific categories such as “savage,” “primitive,” and “authentic.”
Here, Masayesva appears to show how white men sometimes romantically “play Indian.” Also, see Philip Deloria’s extensive historic analysis of this phenomena of playing Indian in *Playing Indian*.

7 Ward Churchill has drawn similarities between the Cleveland Indians mascot and German Nazi-era depictions of Jews in *Indians Are Us*. Also, Stephanie Fryberg has conducted research, which demonstrates the damaging psychological effects of Indian mascots and other stereotypical representations on Native American youth.

8 See Paul Smith, *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production*, (xvi). At times, too, it can be exhausting watching *Imagining Indians* because it sharply critiques hegemonic Indian with a bombardment of images and interviews. Masayesva may bombard us, as spectators, for the purposes of experiencing these images as oppressive.

9 Even among Native American people, disagreement ensues when discussing the “right” kind of images in visual representations. This was certainly evident after a recent screening of Eyre’s *Skins* at The University of Arizona, which focuses on an alcoholic Native American character played by Graham Greene. Yet most Native American folks in the audience ignored Eyre’s rare, complex filmic representation of a successful Native American woman physician, Dr. Fitzgerald (Tina Keeper), attending Mogie Yellow Lodge (Graham Greene) after he’s severely burned.

10 See, for example, Robert S. Tilton’s analysis of the recurrence of Pocahontas as a mythological figure who saves whiteness-as-sign (Smith) for the purposes of U.S. nationalism in *Pocahontas: Evolution of an American Narrative*, (1-33).

11 See Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film*, (211).
Ibid, (209).


See Julie Schimmel, “Inventing the ‘Indian,’” The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the American Frontier, (149-189).

This assertion is certainly true in Ford’s Stagecoach (1939) because of the unseen Apaches. When the characters merely mention Apaches, fright overcomes their faces.

See Leah Dilworth, Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past (221, 223).

Interestingly, with Ford’s representations of the fear of miscegenation in Stagecoach (1939) and The Searchers (1956), Dilworth’s assertion indicates Masayesva’s response to those images of miscegenation.

See Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather, (21-74).


Ibid, (18).

See endnote 8.

See endnote 8.

See endnote 16.

See endnote 16, (212).

See Fatimah Tobing Rony, “Victor Masayesva, Jr., and the Politics of Imagining Indians, Film Quarterly.
26 See endnote 11, (214-215).

27 See endnote 16, (223).

28 Here, an awareness of the history of the ideology of Manifest Destiny is self-evident in the vague pronoun “they.”

29 See endnote 13, (7).


31 Ibid, (8).

32 This assertion and the knocking over the camera as an apparatus of power relate to Shohat and Stam’s discussion in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* about empowerment from the previously disempowered. Shohat and Stam state, “‘Disempowered’ and ‘empowered,’ furthermore, are relational terms; people can occupy diverse positions, being empowered on one axis (say class), but not on another (say race and gender)” (343). Masayesva denaturalizes the power of camera, and its ability to control what is seen and not seen in the mise en scène. How has the camera empowered him, and yet disempowered the dental patient?
CHAPTER FOUR: CHRIS EYRE’S *SKINS* (2001) AS IMAGINED COUNTER-HEGEMONIC NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Near the end of Victor Masayesva’s *Imagining Indians* (1992), Darrel Kipp states, “Indian filmmakers would concentrate on life itself.” Life itself is about relationships in community and the “love ethic” that sustains and binds them¹. This “love ethic” is particularly true for many Indian communities through the traditional cultural value and emphasis placed on synthesis and reciprocation. While individuality is important, what is more culturally significant is your active place within the complex whole.

Epistemologically, what you do as an individual within a community is more important than what you say. In Chris Eyre’s *Skins* (2002) (based on Adrian C. Louis’s 1995 novel of the same name), Rudy Yellow Lodge (Eric Schweig) uses the Lakota terms *tisospaye* (“clan” or a “certain family”) and *oyate* (“your people”) to describe his troubled relationship with his older, alcoholic brother (his *ciye*), Mogie (Graham Greene), within the complex problems associated with contemporary reservation life². Despite their years of lived experience on the reservation with rampant unemployment, alcoholism, and domestic abuse, Rudy and Mogie remain strongly tied to one another through a brotherly love that both frustrates and heals. This love extends to his entire *tisospaye*. Together, the Lakota concepts of *tisospaye* and *oyate* are the spiritual foundation for Rudy’s eventual political awakening and open defiance of historic domination through the spiritually cathartic throwing of blood-red paint on Mount Rushmore’s George Washington³. I will analyze *Skins* scene-by-scene to illustrate how Eyre cinematically draws out this thematic focus on the “love ethic” through the Lakota concepts of *tisospaye* and *oyate*. 
To frame *Skins* with a realistic immediacy, Eyre begins the film with a documentary-like opening with some actual news footage about Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. (The use of a documentary-like opening diverges from Adrian C. Louis’s novel.) The camera first pans over the Badlands National Park and then various parts of the reservation. As statistics about poverty, alcoholism, educational dropout and death rates are read off from various reporters, it graphically shows the dire economic conditions on the reservation with its dilapidated housing and the despair exacerbated by alcoholism and incarceration. As *Skins* begins, President Clinton also comments on the desperate poverty that he sees from his 1999 visit to the reservation.

From a Cable News Network (CNN) report, Clinton remarks:

‘We know well the imperfect relationship that the United States and its government has enjoyed with the tribal nations, but I have seen today not only poverty but promise and I have seen enormous courage,’ Clinton said during his address at Pine Ridge. The president saw examples of the region's grinding poverty, touring reservation housing facilities. He was almost disbelieving as Geraldine Blue Bird, stifling tears, explained her housing situation. ‘She let me sit on her porch and she told me how she tries to make ends meet for the 28 people that share her small home and the house trailer adjoining,’ Clinton said. (1999)

Interspersed with the opening credits, a voiceover (from Eyre?) explains that these terrible conditions are only within 60 miles of America’s vaunted national monument, Mount Rushmore, which was built on the Black Hills (a Lakota sacred site). As the voiceover continues to explain the historical significance (Wounded Knee Massacre, 1890) of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, the camera approaches the Visitor Center of Mount
Rushmore and then pans up to the brilliant white stone faces of the various Euro-American presidents and their collective magisterial gazes over the surrounding landscape.

After the opening credits, Eyre then cuts to Rudy as he meets Iktomi (a Lakota trickster figure) in the form of a spider, who crawls across the bathroom sink, and this triggers a flashback about the tisospaye bond formed with Mogie when they were young boys. Before this, Rudy, a tribal police officer, anxiously comes back from some illicit evening event in a tribal police car to remove and to wash the disguise from his face (removal of stocking and black markings). (Later, as spectators, the full meaning behind the illicit event is understood.) In Rudy’s memory, Iktomi has bitten him on his testicles. Mogie, as his ciye, carries him to be seen by a physician. Interestingly, later in the film, Rudy will figuratively carry Mogie in reciprocation. Here, the cultural meaning behind Iktomi is highly important in understanding the “love ethic” of Skins. As a Lakota friend explained, Iktomi “teaches lessons and you choose if it’s going to be easy or hard”⁵. Both brothers will choose hard lessons as they come to fully embrace tisospaye and oyate.

The next day, Rudy looks for Mogie to invite him to an upcoming tribal police picnic, but he eventually finds him in White Clay, Nebraska. As he shops, however, at the local “Sioux Nation Shopping Center,” he tells the checkout cashier, Corky (Yellow Pony Pettibone), that it is “a beautiful day out there.” The cashier responds with a joke. He says, “Nice day for race day, isn’t it.” Looking quizzical, Rudy asks, “What race day is that?” The cashier responds, “The human race.” They both laugh at the joke. After this, Rudy drives (in a Chevy Blazer) to Mogie’s house, a rundown building (almost a shack) with some unused cars, a flimsy screen door and an old, idle refrigerator. Mogie is not there, and, instead, Rudy subsequently finds him drinking with his friend, Verdell (played by Gary Farmer), in White Clay, Nebraska, which is only two miles from the
reservation. White Clay’s major source of business comes from the various liquor stores, which seem too numerous for a small town. As the frustrated Rudy pulls up in a police car (not a Chevy Blazer) to invite Mogie to the picnic, Eyre frames Rudy, Mogie, and Verdell in the foreground of the shot and in the background, a mural on a building’s wall depicts Indian warriors from the past with the heading in red letters “Divided…We Fall.” During their conversation, Verdell stands up and accuses Rudy (as part of the tribal police force) of being “too good for us grass-roots Indians.” Despite this charge, Rudy gives Mogie some money. After Rudy leaves in frustration from both Mogie and Verdell, Mogie (ironically wearing a Madonna t-shirt) walks into a liquor store to buy two cans of Colt, and then notices a skylight window. Later, as spectators, we understand why this is significant.

After this, Rudy goes about his daily task as a tribal police officer on the reservation. In the evening, the dispatcher, Geraldine, sends him to investigate teenage trespassers in an abandoned house. Eventually, Rudy finds the trespassers and scares them away. Rudy also finds a young man’s dead body, which turns out to be Corky Red Tail from the shopping center. As Rudy pursues one of the trespassers, he accidentally trips and hits his forehead on a rock. While laid out on his back after hitting the rock, he has a vision of the stars, nineteenth-century tribal leaders, a battered young Indian woman, images from the 1973 Wounded Knee Standoff, Iktomi in spider form, and the newly discovered dead body. As these images appear, the soundtrack plays an Indian song (in Lakota?). However, in this investigation, Eyre diverges from Louis’s novel, since the young man’s murdered body was also violently raped.
Later, when Rudy leaves (walking pass Eyre playing a fellow police officer) the abandoned house, he discusses the case with his supervisor, Captain Eagleman (Leonard George), and a Euro-American FBI agent (Larry Dean Fuss). Eagleman first states that the cause of death was a punctured lung with a pointy shoe like a cowboy boot. Rudy then comments that he only noticed “lime green” shoelaces on one of the suspect’s shoes and that the abandoned house is a “known hangout for teenagers” and that collecting physical evidence will be “difficult.” Like most FBI agents investigating major crimes on reservations, Rudy hears the agent tell him not to get the Red Tail family’s “hopes up.”

In the subsequent “Mogie Toss Scene,” Rudy finally persuades Mogie (who still wears the Madonna t-shirt) to come to the tribal police picnic. At first, Mogie refuses to go by saying that the police are a bunch of “dipshits” and “dildoes” and that they will want to toss him around because of his numerous incidences of incarceration. As Rudy attempts to persuade him, Mogie is target practicing with a gun at his home. He shoots used beer cans and (in a slightly drunken haze) imagines that they’re members of the “VC” (or Viet Cong). Once Rudy finally tells Mogie that “free beer” will be available at the picnic, Mogie eagerly gets into Rudy’s Chevy Blazer. At the picnic, the tribal police officers and tribal council members play football, and Rudy helps his team to score a touchdown. In his enthusiasm, Rudy runs around with his arm raised holding the winning touchdown’s football as Aunt Helen (Lois Red Elk) and Stella (Michelle Thrush) look on from the sidelines. Rudy suddenly trips and Aunt Helen and Stella try to conceal their laughter at his fall. Mogie picks up the ball and takes it with him. Rudy angrily comes up to Mogie to ask for the football. As his ciye, Mogie comments on his earlier
behavior with the football and says, “Showing off is not a Lakota virtue.” They fight and Rudy then suffers and collapses from chest pain.

After Rudy leaves the hospital, Stella waits for him and then they leave for her home after she invites him. Rudy, however, asks, “Where’s Storks?” Stella explains that he’s in “Rapid” (City) living with his mother and now they are obviously not together. (As they talk, an older couple both dressed in red walk behind them from left to right in the mise-en-scène.) In Louis’s novel, Storks is Rudy’s first cousin, but this is not mentioned in Eyre’s film. Also, this is not the first time that Rudy “fools around” with a married woman. He has committed adultery before with Mogie’s wife and it is certain that it caused the marriage to end. As they sit at Stella’s kitchen table, Rudy explains that he thinks Mogie’s mind has “short-circuited” from his Vietnam experiences when he received several Purple Heart awards. Stella is amazed that Rudy maintains enough strength to tolerate both the demands of police work and Mogie’s ongoing alcoholism.

After listening to Stella’s remark and leaving her house, Rudy’s evening drive home triggers a flashback to when he and Mogie were playing at a local high school football game. His father and mother are watching from the bleachers. Their mother is obviously proud of her sons on the team, but the embittered father resents the attention given to the sons. In a drunken rage, he violently pushes the mother over and she falls onto her back (and amazingly does not break her neck). The father tells the mixed crowd of Indian and Euro-American spectators that he once “used to be out there running over you fuckers” and that he was “the fastest Indian out there!” Later, in the evening, Mogie fights with and then knocks out his drunken father. Mogie puts him into the back of the
pickup truck and tells Rudy to drive him to the local police station. Eyre then returns to Rudy’s present-time driving. For Rudy, this has been a painful memory.

Then Eyre frames Rudy eating chicken at the local Big Bat’s gas station, and he overhears and encounters two young Lakota men, who begin to fight. Rudy stops the fighting and begins to inspect them like a police officer and notices their shoes. One of the young men wears a pair of athletic shoes with green laces, which he recalls from the murder investigation of Corky Red Tail. The other young man wears a pair of black, metal-tipped cowboy boots. As this tense showdown ends, the young men leave with hip-hop music blaring on their “ghetto blaster.” Later, in the evening, Rudy finds them by a fire in the countryside boasting about their attack and murder of Corky Red Tail and his “punk ass.” Also during this conversation, one of the young men mocks a suggestion from a relative that he return to school. As Rudy listens to their conversation, he assumes his vigilante role and proceeds to break their kneecaps with a baseball bat. Clearly, Rudy’s violent act responds to the young men’s violent murder of Corky Red Tail. As Rudy removes his disguise in the reddish brown bathroom walls, Iktomi crawls across the sink.

After this latest instance of his vigilantism, Rudy consults with a young spiritual leader who tells him that he “doesn’t look like himself.” Rudy agrees. Rudy then relates his encounter with Iktomi and hitting his head on a rock and “messing around with a married woman” (i.e., Stella). The spiritual leader tells him that Iktomi assumes “many forms” and that a rock spiritually connects to “our sacred Black Hills.” Here, Eyre cuts to a panoramic shot of the Black Hills. The spiritual leader tells Rudy that Indian people
have forgotten that spiritual forces are all around them. He then advises Rudy to make a spiritual offering with tobacco ties, and that “if things don’t get better” he’ll do a healing ceremony. Finally, the spiritual leader tells Rudy to remember that people don’t control things, but spirits do.

Eyre then returns to White Clay where a news reporter states that she is conducting a three-part series on the “Oglala Sioux” and the “multi-million dollar” liquor industry and its exploitation of “Indian misery.” Here, Eyre uses actual news footage of an interview with a local Lakota woman who says, “They all drink. They all do drugs because it’s hard to live down here in Pine Ridge. There’s just not anything here.” While the reporter and the young woman talk, Eyre cuts to various images of alcoholic misery and a “Welcome to Nebraska” sign with a covered wagon. Later, in the evening, Rudy switches among various channels and then he tunes into the reporter’s interview with Mogie. Mogie jokes after the reporter asks him what he thinks the federal government should do “to improve the living conditions on the rez.” Mogie requests a “big woman” to “cover up all the cracks in my shack.” After seeing this televised image, Rudy becomes enraged and is determined to burn down the liquor store in White Clay. Rudy grabs a red can of gasoline from his shed. However, he does not realize that Mogie is on the roof attempting to steal liquor. This fire consequently sends Mogie to the hospital with severe burns. As Rudy realizes the full consequences of his actions, he repeatedly smashes his hands against his Chevy Blazer’s steering wheel, and then cries through his guilt. At the hospital, Rudy throws up his disgust at his actions that caused Mogie to get burned.
After this latest vigilante incident, Rudy returns to the spiritual leader for a healing ceremony in a sweat lodge. The spiritual leader asks, “Are you ready to get that Iktomi off your back?” Eyre then cuts to a long shot of several men preparing to go into a sweat lodge. A voiceover relates that they will collectively pray to help Rudy see and hear clearly. Eyre then uses a dissolve to a black screen as prayers are said in Lakota. Water is audibly heard splashed onto the sweat lodge’s rocks.

After this ceremony, Rudy discovers that Mogie is terminally ill. During his visit, Mogie jokes about Crow Indians and calls Rudy, “Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.” When he leaves Mogie’s room, Dr. Fitzgerald (Tina Keeper) stops him. (Interestingly, Eyre changes this character from an Irishman in Louis’s novel to a Native American woman.) She tells him that Mogie has a terminal illness, cirrhosis, along with other serious medical conditions. Rudy asks the doctor about what should be done to heal Mogie. Dr. Fitzgerald can only suggest that Rudy help Mogie “to help him say his peace.”

In the next shot, Rudy makes a heavy sigh as he’s sent to a home where a young woman (Misty Upham) is being attacked and beaten by her “half-breed,” abusive husband, Elton Blue Cloud (Zahn McClarnon). (Interestingly, mixed-blood Indians are disparagingly represented both in the film and in Louis’s novel. Such representations are violently painful and divisive as well.) It’s called into the police as “a drunken brawl.” Rudy and the police dispatcher joke about all the variations concerning violence. In the ensuing violence, Rudy restrains the husband. In the mise en scène, Eyre places an American flag on the wall with Sitting Bull’s superimposed image.
After this violence, Eyre’s next shot is of Rudy, Mogie, and Mogie’s son, Herbie (Noah Watts), who have gathered at Aunt Helen’s place to eat a meal before a local basketball game that Herbie hopes to win. (Mogie has recovered enough from his severe burns and this is his first day out of the hospital.) As Mogie and Herbie watch television, they see an old Hollywood western in black and white that interviewees in Masayesva’s *Imagining Indians* (1992) would have interrogated. (Eyre also used black and white television images of Hollywood westerns in 1998’s *Smoke Signals*.) Mogie explains that he used to be “drinking buddies” with Joe Thunderboots, who’s one of the Indian actors that he sees. Mogie then explains that the actor is a descendent of the controversial American Horse, who is associated with the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890. As Aunt Helen calls Mogie and Herbie to the kitchen table, all of them sit and discuss the history surrounding Wounded Knee as the television continues to show the Hollywood western. After Herbie asks, “Who’s American Horse?,” Mogie asks Rudy to explain. Rudy says:

He testified at the trial of the Wounded Knee Massacre. At that time, all Indian religious ceremonies were banned by white men because they were afraid of them. Now, up on the western end of the Cheyenne River Sitting Bull resisted, so they shot him and Big Foot knew that he and his people had to flee the area immediately. So they came to Pine Ridge and when they camped out, the Wounded Knee Troopers of the Seventh Cavalry Mogie then interrupts, 'That’s Custer’s old command. The Seventh Cavalry was called in to escort them to the reservation, and the soldiers disarmed them. Knee was nothing but a damn massacre of women and
children. American Horse testified before Congress.’

Herbie then asks what happened next after American Horse’s testimonial. Mogie angrily states, “They were all given Congressional Medal’s of Honor!” To break the tense and emotional discussion, Aunt Helen says, “Herbie scored 21 points in the last game.” Mogie responds, “I don’t give a rat’s ass!” Aunt Helen loses her appetite with this response and tells Herbie that it’s getting close to the beginning of the game. Aunt Helen leaves in frustration with Herbie.

After they leave, Rudy and Mogie sit on the sofa in front of the television, which still plays the Hollywood western. Rudy looks uncomfortable as if he wants to confess something to Mogie. Mogie asks, “You said that you had something to tell me.” He tells Mogie that he’s a “vigilante,” or from Louis’ novel, the “Avenging Warrior,” which causes Mogie to laugh, and then to ask, “You mean like Rambo?” Rudy answers, “No.” He explains that he is doing “little things to help our people.” Mogie seems unfazed and then asks, “Who’s our people?” Rudy explains that the “little things to help our people” have to do with the Lakota concepts of tisospaye and oyate. Mogie laughs again at this explanation and seems incredulous. After this reaction, Rudy explains his responsibility for the young boys’ broken kneecaps and for setting the White Clay liquor store on fire. After this uneasy confession, Mogie asks Rudy to help with blowing off the nose of George Washington at Mount Rushmore for “our people” (oyate). Rudy does not want to help him with this request and then leaves in frustration. Mogie sits by himself on the sofa as he returns to watching the black and white Hollywood Western with Joe Thunderboots.
Eyre then cuts to Rudy on patrol as a tribal police officer, and this time the dispatcher, Geraldine, sends him to the Roubaix residence where Verdell’s (Gary Farmer) body is found after being caught in a bear trap in their backyard. After checking for a non-existent pulse on Verdell’s body, Rudy asks if anyone heard him screaming from being caught in the trap. Addressing Wally Roubaix, Rudy angrily asks, “What kind of asshole sets a bear trap?,” Rondella Roubaix (Elaine Miles from Northern Exposure fame as the doctor’s receptionist, Marilyn) interrupts him and says, “Hey, don’t talk to him like that!” A tense verbal exchange then occurs between Rudy and Rondella. After Rudy’s question about Verdell, Rondella, who’s ironically wearing shell earrings shaped into hearts and a bright red-orange jacket and a black t-shirt that says, “Rez Lite” (in gothic letters), quickly and conveniently sends her three children back into the house because they have “no coats on.” Rudy continues to question the Roubaix family about the body. Rondella remains steadfast in not directly answering Rudy and she states, “It’s not our fault that that big, ole drunk got stuck in that trap.” After this heated exchange, Rudy takes the bear trap by shooting the chain. With this action, Rondella ironically accuses Rudy of being “Clint Eastwood.”

While Skins mainly concentrates on Indian men and brotherly love and oyate, the few images of Indian women range from Stella, Aunt Helen, Dr. Fitzgerald, to Rondella. These women, too, have different economic class associations (especially with Dr. Fitzgerald) and this is a significant representational move in Eyre’s film. Rondella’s representation, however, is problematic. While Stella embodies someone who Rudy finds seductive and, hence, attractive, Rondella is large and bitchy and antithetical to
Elaine Miles’ mild characterization of Marilyn Whirlwind in the 1990s television series *Northern Exposure*, that is, quiet, stoic, and unassuming with wise words used at the right time with Dr. Fleischman (Rob Morrow). Eyre’s use of the black t-shirt with its gothic-lettered, “Rez Lite,” and the heart-shaped shell earrings, points out the contradictions of the large-framed Rondella, and yet her image is juxtaposed with the earlier one of Stella’s easygoing characterization.

At the hospital, Rudy explains to the skeptical Euro-American FBI agent (Larry Dean Fuss) that Roubaix set a trap expressly to capture a “human being.” The agent smells the alcohol on Verdell’s body and then wonders if any material items were found on him. Rudy looks at the agent with disgust and disbelief.

Eyre then cuts to Mogie, who now wants to avenge the death of Verdell. Here, Eyre uses an unflattering low-angle shot on Mogie’s scarred face with cigarette smoke filling the frame. Later, and concealed under the evening’s darkness, he plots to kill Wally Roubaix with a shotgun. Mogie wears green military fatigues and a cap. As he sets up to target Wally sitting on a recliner in his living room, in Mogie’s point-of-view (pov) shot, he notices the children running around. This causes Mogie to give up on his “payback.”

Eyre then cuts to Herbie visiting Mogie, who’s drinking from a liquor bottle in his “shack.” Herbie is frustrated that he’s drinking again after promising to cut down. Herbie tells his father that it’s his birthday. Despite having little food, Mogie insists on preparing something for Herbie. He gets up and gets a plate of already made pancakes and then sprinkles cinnamon and pours honey on them for Herbie. As he carries it over
to Herbie, Mogie falls down. Herbie then carries his father over to the bed for him to sleep. Herbie becomes concerned and then goes to Rudy’s house for help with Mogie. Before they take him to the hospital, and as Rudy and Herbie pick him up, Mogie drunkenly says, “Bunch of gung-ho Yankee Doodle dandy motherfuckers getting all the little brown people killed.” Since Mogie was a Vietnam veteran, it’s not clear if this is in reference to Vietnam or to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. (In Louis’ novel, Rudy is also a Vietnam veteran.)

Later, Rudy and Herbie take Mogie to the local “Community Hospital” where Dr. Fitzgerald admits him because she has diagnosed a severe case of pneumonia. Rudy asks Herbie to get Aunt Helen. Aunt Helen then arrives with her “famous French toast” for Mogie, and she then cries about Mogie’s medical condition. Rudy, Herbie, and Aunt Helen then whisper in the hospital room how they plan to take care of Mogie at his home. Mogie wakes up as they talk in whisper tones. After Rudy mentions that he needs to check on his dogs (Malamutes in Louis’ novel), Mogie asks for several items including “a box of condoms.” (Aunt Helen grimaces at this request.) This will be the last time that Rudy will see Mogie alive. In his facial expression, Mogie senses that he will not see Rudy again.

As Rudy shops for Mogie at Big Bat’s with its red-colored gas pumps, Texaco sign, and the cashier’s polo shirt, he notices a t-shirt with several famous Indian chiefs (i.e., Chief Joseph, Sitting Bull, and Geronimo among them) in the place of the U.S. presidents on Mount Rushmore, as if to question the magisterial gazes of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt. Rudy says, “Perfect.” Because of Mogie’s earlier
request, he buys the t-shirt for him. As he returns to the hospital, Eyre quickly frames a shot of the words on the building, “Community Hospital,” in the film’s montage.

Interestingly, these words are juxtaposed with the famous chiefs on Mount Rushmore t-shirt. Further, the use of the color red as a motif throughout *Skins* visually increases from this point in the film’s montage. Indeed, as a motif, red ties together the red gasoline can used in the liquor store fire with Big Bat’s and the throwing of red paint on Mount Rushmore’s George Washington. Yet this visual motif becomes burdensome since Eyre seems to “overkill” the signifying red.

Returning to the hospital, Rudy passes a covered body being rolled out on a bed in the corridor. As Rudy enters Mogie’s room, it is empty except for Herbie and Aunt Helen sitting on the floor. Rudy then realizes that the passing body was Mogie’s. Uncontrollably, Rudy starts to cry with the (famous Indian leaders on Mount Rushmore) t-shirt slung over his shoulder and the plastic shopping bag from Big Bat’s. Countering the popular and stereotyped images (e.g., the stiff, stoic Indian statue at the Peak Trading Post) discussed in Masayesva’s *Imagining Indians* (1992), Eyre presents this representation of an emotionally complex, masculine Indian man crying. From the film’s representations of his lived experiences on the reservation, Rudy has become vulnerable, passionate, and yet strong in his middle age.

Eyre then cuts to Mogie’s funeral in a school basketball court. Rudy, Aunt Helen, and Herbie sit near Mogie’s body in an open casket. A letter is given to Rudy, who’s wearing a green U.S. Army jacket, as various people pass by to pay their respects. Here, Eyre’s version of the letter differs from Louis’ novel in a significant way because it
pointedly mentions the Vietnam War. Louis writes:

Couple weeks ago the Dr. told me the handwriting is on the wall. So I write this note while I can. Did me a lots of bad things in my life. But not all bad. The bad things, please try and forgive me. I don’t give excuses. But we all do bad things sometimes. And that war, that damn war. Well, you was there so you know. I love you, little brother. I always love you, Rudolph. For whatever I did to make you mad, forgive me…You must take care of my son. Watch over him and take care of him…All my VA benefits etc. and property will go to him. I love you…. (my italics, 278)

Of course, many Vietnam veterans felt disenfranchised after returning from an unpopular American war, and within the cultural, historic, and political context of Skins the tisospaye and oyate bond between the brothers is crucial for sustaining a sense of survival.

After the funeral, Eyre cuts to Rudy shopping in a convenience store in White Clay. In the establishing shot, the color red figures prominently on the store’s porch, supporting poles, front door, and in subsequent shots inside the store. Inside the store, Rudy mentions to the Euro-American clerk that he’s heard that the burned liquor store is being re-built. The clerk says, “The owner’s making a killing on the insurance. New store is going to be twice as big as the old and with two drive-through windows.” Rudy responds, “Just what we need.” Always conscious of community building, Rudy stops outside to give some men cigarettes before he leaves in his patrol car.

The next shot is at Mogie’s dilapidated house where Rudy walks around and then
picks up a stone from the ground. This stone triggers a memory concerning Mogie’s wish to blow up George Washington’s nose since Rudy looks at the rock and then slowly raises his head.

Eyre then cuts to Rudy, who purchases paint, at a local hardware store. In one of the shots, the red can of paint is framed by the redness of the counter. The sales clerk explains that the paint will be difficult to remove because of its oil base. The clerk suggests that he buy turpentine and other accessories for what he thinks is a home painting project. Rudy refuses and pays for the paint with cash and not with his credit card because of the possibility of being tracked by authorities. During their conversation in a reverse angle shot, Eyre almost completely frames Rudy in red from various items in the hardware store. Rudy also wears a burgundy red t-shirt. As Rudy leaves, a red sticker is on the front door. As emotional tension increasingly mounts, almost every shot in the hardware store has an element of red.

In the final Mount Rushmore scene of Skins, Rudy reaches the monument at night with his Chevy Blazer. He now has the can of red paint in a backpack. Rudy then begins the arduous hike up and then behind the monument. As he looks up at the brilliant white presidential faces heightened by various spotlights and further accentuated by the dark night sky, Eyre uses a low angle shot from his point-of-view. Their magisterial gazes are also heightened by these shots. When Rudy, however, finally reaches the top of George Washington’s head, he looks disgusted. Here, Eyre uses a low-angle shot on Rudy and then a point-of-view shot that looks down on the stone head of George Washington. After he pulls out the can of red paint, Eyre then uses a high-angle shot on Rudy to
emphasize his speaking to Mogie’s spirit. Rudy states, “This is a bad idea Mogie.” As Rudy prepares to throw the can of red paint, Iktomi appears once again crawling across the red paint. Rudy then throws the can of red paint over the face of George Washington and with arms raised to the skies. As if appealing to something even higher than this monument, Rudy cathartically yells, “I love you, Rudy!” This last empowering act is a plea to the love bond nurtured by the Lakota tisospaye and oyate despite years of historic domination that the monument represents. In Skins, it is this “love ethic” inherent in tisospaye and oyate that counters the ethic of domination. Hooks, in Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations, remarks:

The absence of a sustained focus on love in progressive circles arises from a collective failure to acknowledge the needs of the spirit and an overdetermined emphasis on material concerns. Without love, our efforts to liberate ourselves and our world community from oppression and exploitation are doomed. As long as we refuse to address fully the place of love in struggles for liberation we will not be able to create a culture of conversion where there is a mass turning away from an ethic of domination. (243)
Notes

1 hooks views the “love ethic” as a political form of empowerment because it entails engaging the community-at-large, and, for her, this is the black community. She states, “Whenever those of us who are members of exploited and oppressed groups dare to critically interrogate our locations, the identities and allegiances that inform how we live our lives, we begin the process of decolonization” (248). Eyre’s *Skins* begins to do this because of its depictions of the harsh realities of reservation life.

2 On September 9, 2005, Belva Morrison explained to me what these Lakota means in terms of cultural context.

3 According to Boime in *The Magisterial Gaze*, Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor and artist who memorialized the presidents on Mount Rushmore, was influenced by the chauvinism of his first-generation Danish parents (158). Boime, too, states that the idea of Manifest Destiny was part of Borglum’s theme for Mount Rushmore. Boime concludes that Mount Rushmore “permanently etched into the landscape the magisterial gaze” (166).

4 Boime discusses the desecration of the sacred site where Mount Rushmore was sculpted (164).

5 See endnote 2.

6 See Adrian Louis, *Skins*, (38).

7 Ibid.

8 Leslie Silko’s novel *Ceremony* also depicts a troubled mixed blood named Tayo.

9 Ibid.
Eyre seems to intentionally portray Elaine Miles’s character in this manner, as if to respond to the stereotypic representation of her stoic, mostly silent Indian character Marilyn in *Northern Exposure*.

The use of red as a signifier of rebellion or an “othering signifier” certainly was evident in Hawthorne’s title for *The Scarlet Letter*. Red seems also to appear at moments of greatest emotional tension in Alfred Hitchcock’s psychological thriller *Vertigo* (1958). However, even as recent as Beeban Kidron’s *To Wong Fu, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar* (1995), red was used by the conservative townsfolk in Nebraska as a liberatory signifier because of the presence of unsettling, rebelling against convention, New York drag queens.

See endnote 6, (278).

Yet several film reviewers found this film not as dramatically and/or technically developed as *Smoke Signals*. David Rooney in *Variety* states, “The key character of Rudy is unsatisfyingly [sic] drawn, his vigilante actions given inadequate grounding and his relationship with a reservation woman (Michelle Thrush) abandoned after being shakily introduced.” I do agree, somewhat, that Eyre’s earlier film has more interesting aspects such as the scene where Victor and Thomas have a tense, racially charged exchange with two white cowboys. Afterwards, Victor begins chanting a song about John Wayne’s teeth, as if to ameliorate the previous exchange. This scene certainly is more successful than Rudy’s constant emotive instances of anger and regret.

CHAPTER FIVE: LINEAR NARRATIVES AND NATIVE AMERICAN RESISTANCE AGAINST THE EFFECTS OF MANIFEST DESTINY, BUT WHAT NEXT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?

At a recent screening of *Skins* at a major American university, and in a racially mixed audience, young Indian college spectators found this film unsettling. They deplored the stereotype of drunken Indians and the impoverished economic conditions. These spectators also felt the issues were so deplorable that it should only be viewed by other Indian people\(^1\). The subtextual message: Keep this film in our own Indian community and contain speaking the truth about reservation life to the dominant structures. From lived experienced, the conditions represented in *Skins* (2001) on reservations are “real” though the film’s limitations are that it lapses and fixates too long on the theme of angry revenge and regret. Hooks, in reference to Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, states, “People have this fantasy (as I did when I was young) of colleges being liberatory institutions, when in fact they’re so much like every other institution in our culture in terms of repression and containment—so that now I feel like I’m trying to break out”\(^2\). Both Masayesva’s *Imagining Indians* (1992) and Eyre’s *Skins* are unsettling because they want to “break out” from being what one interviewee states as “the props, the colorful background” and to interrogate the nineteenth-century whiteness of the magisterial gaze of mainstream Hollywood film\(^3\). Masayesva and Eyre, no doubt, assert agency as contemporary Indian filmmakers because they both show the complexity of Indian lives, which counter the historic domination of the figurative magisterial gaze in dominant Hollywood images. Masayesva and Eyre re-imagine Indians as complex because they both represent Native American people with “real” issues concerning
ownership of their images and with maintaining tradition and yet seeking innovative ways to survive. Nonetheless, Masayesva and Eyre, in presenting resistant Native American representations and voices (especially *Imagining Indians*), also, ironically, re-center whiteness-as-sign in terms of the relational logic of racism. However, overall, Masayesva and Eyre are asserting agency by “throwing back/talking back” with images to the supposed discursive power of the figurative frontiersmen’s magisterial gazes atop the peaks of whiteness exemplified in Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1862).

As stated in the Introduction, Masayesva’s and Eyre’s work in situated within the history of a dominating U.S. nationalism and other key ideas about westward expansion. The discursive formation of Euro-American nationalism, concepts about the “magisterial gaze” (Boime), mapping (Shohat), and whiteness (Dyer) are relevant for my discussion of nineteenth-century landscape paintings and its discursive influence on mainstream Hollywood film. Boime’s definition of “this gaze of command, or commanding view—as it was so often termed in the nineteenth-century literature—that I will call the magisterial gaze, the perspective of the American on the heights searching for new worlds to conquer” (1991) links to Dyer’s discussion of whiteness needing to push upward. Again, in *White* (1997), Dyer is particularly interested in examining “the philosophical underpinning [Kant’s discussion of human development in his *Critique of Judgment*, (1790)] of the conception of white people (and, as I explore in Chapter 2, the colour white itself) as everything and nothing.” Once more, why are the bodies in these landscape paintings white and male and projecting a forward progression in time to the
supposedly empty West? Further, why is the white male body in these landscape paintings positioned and projected as “spectacle”? How does this “magisterial gaze” “map” out and thus claim (in a scientific sense) the supposed wilderness for colonial domination?

I place the “magisterial gaze” in quotation marks to indicate that it is discursive construction, and that more recent representations begin to denaturalize its symbolic power. For example, by the early 1980s, in Ridley Scott’s Blade Runner (1982), the whiteness of the magisterial gaze begins to wear itself out because Dyer argues that the central white character, Deckard (Harrison Ford), is a replicant (i.e., an android). Similarly, Joel Schumacher’s Falling Down (1993) has a central, white protagonist that attempts to take charge against the injustices and apathy in the sultry, teeming masses of multi-racial Los Angeles, but he ultimately falls down in the end. Finally, Eyre’s Smoke Signals (1998) does the same with Victor and Thomas focusing a chant about John Wayne’s teeth that includes the lines “Are they real, or are they plastic.” Rudy’s actions in Skins (2001) also demonstrates that the memorial to the magisterial gazes of several U.S. presidents is not real too. Similar to Dyer’s analysis of Blade Runner and Falling Down, contemporary Native American-produced images seem to communicate the idea that there is no there in whiteness-as-sign.

In analyzing recent Native American-produced representations (Masayesva and Eyre), nineteenth-century discourses that sought to contain Indians within particular categories (e.g., federal legislation concerning removal, nineteenth-century American landscape paintings including Leutze’s fresco), and John Ford’s The Searchers are
important. The nineteenth century discourses and John Ford’s Westerns contextualize and historicize the counter-hegemonic stance of these contemporary Native American representations in documentary and fiction film. For example, Masayesva’s late twentieth-century use of Catlin’s nineteenth-century painting of individual Indian leaders and their subsequent atomizing at the end of *Imagining Indians* reflects the influence of a discursive gaze that dominates because Catlin controls and “authenticates” the various Indian subjects. Yet Masayesva questions the othering aspect of those individuated portraits with their overly exotic, bright colors. This study, indeed, focused on the context of the discursive formation of U.S. nationalism and its implicit whiteness in constructing representations of the frontier myth (cf., Slotkin, Schimmel, Fryd, Truettner, Limerick, and Anderson), relegating Indian people in the nineteenth century to the discursive category of “primitive” and the Indian Other and how even Ford begins to question the dominance of the magisterial gaze in *The Searchers* and how recent Native American-produced representations (*Imagining Indians* and *Skins*) are counter-hegemonic.

Several key ideas emerged from this analysis of U.S. nationalism in the nineteenth century and representations of the frontier and the Native Other. First, is the notion of “real time” and whiteness and land. Richard Dyer’s ideas about the American frontier myth and the need to civilize it by establishing a (white) presence in that it “enables progress, the onward and upward march of the human spirit through time, that keeps pressing ahead into new territory”¹⁰. Second, these representations were not only a part of the discourse of U.S. nationalism, but also they taught, and continue to teach, particular
values and beliefs about whiteness and Indian people. In connection with whiteness, why do anachronistic stereotypes about Indians continue to exist in the general public? In my own lived Apache experience, I have been perceived as not wholly Apache in the stereotyped Hollywood sense. I yet again can never forget the experience of lecturing at a German university in the early 1990s about Indé (Western Apache) culture and history and students asking (in German, of course, and unaware that I was in their presence): Where’s the Native? This unspoken, pre-conceived notion experienced with these contemporary German students about what an Apache should “look” like has its origins in the persistent frontier myth of U.S. nationalism, which most Hollywood imagery perpetuated.

This linear notion of time and the construction of the American frontier contextualize both my own lived experiences and the themes and issues addressed in contemporary Native American-produced films such as Eyre’s Smoke Signals (1998) and Skins (2001). Once more, concerning this myth of the frontier, the critical, epistemological recognition of the teleological aspect of “Manifest Destiny” (coined in 1845 by John L. O’Sullivan) embedded in this myth is important because it works at denaturalizing the implicit whiteness of the discourses surrounding representations of the West, particularly in nineteenth-century landscape paintings. The specific artistic representation discussed previously in Leutze’s Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way (1862), however, illustrated the characteristic discursive idea of present time in progression, in forward movement, and in the idea of “Manifest Destiny.” Present, ethnographic time was naturalized as belong to whiteness-as-sign, and, no doubt, the
organizers of the World’s Columbian Exposition (1893) manipulated, structured the displays to perpetuate this fantasy. Indeed, the construction of who occupies real, present time and who remains in timelessness is a key feature of representing whiteness-as-sign and understanding the inevitability of the myth of the frontier. As aforementioned, though drawn from anthropology, Johannes Fabian’s analysis of time is significant for a discursive analysis of the teleological feature of “Manifest Destiny,” and subsequent representations in Ford, Masayesva, and Eyre. For example, Fabian, in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (1983), remarks on the “freezing” of “primitives” from the standpoint of the “ethnographic present”13:

> ...at the very least, the present ‘freezes’ a society at the time of observation; at worst, it contains assumptions about the repetitiveness, predictability and conservatism of primitives (the present tense) reveals a cognitive stance towards its object…it presupposes the givenness of the object of anthropology as something to be observed. (81-82)

This has the effect of keeping “primitives” in a continual ontological condition of timelessness, while “non-primitives” (usually non-indigenous) in the “ethnographic present” of real time. If possession of real time allows for productive action, then it follows that “primitives” are in a state of inaction because they do not possess “real time.” Along with the construction of borders along the “Frontier,” the urgent need to push West, in a progressive, advancing movement occurs because of the perception that Native Americans possessed no sense of order, and, thus, no sense of time. Not only was
the construction of the borders in the “Frontier” significant, the establishment of order through time was another noteworthy point in U.S. nationalist identity. Of course, constructing Native Americans as “timeless,” “backward,” “primitive,” and “pre-industrial,” allows for colonial domination because they have not yet progressed forward in “real” (white) time. From Masayesva’s and Eyre’s work, Native Americans are not “timeless,” exotic, “primitive” Others because *Imagining Indians* and *Skins* assert complex subjectivity that Trinh T. Minh-ha discusses in *Women, Native, Other*.

Yet again the reality is that indigenous peoples did have conceptual knowledge about time, but not in a rectilinear progression that advances forward. Time, especially among indigenous peoples, is cyclical and moves from the past to the present to the future and back to the present and past. For example, important Native American novelists such as Leslie Silko and Louise Erdrich use multiple narrators and weave stories within stories imbued with the past, present, and future continually mixing in metaphysical ways. In speaking about the writing process of her verse, noted Creek poet Joy Harjo has told me that “the present speaks of the future and don’t ask me how this happens.” In this same manner, Native American writer Sherman Alexie’s involvement with the production of Chris Eyre’s *Smoke Signals* (1998) emphasized a link with Native American literary tradition’s mode of circular narration where the present is imbued with the past and the future. Thus, a critical tension exists between traditional values and the contemporary issues facing Native Americans and, thus, how innovation works to define identity.
As indicated earlier, indigenous time, furthermore, places an emphasis on synthetic relationships because it has a spiritual and social relationship with animals, plants, and specific locations within the environment. The relationship between land and time is almost spiritually symbiotic, and not characterized by domination to reap economic rewards. My father, once more, taught me the San Carlos Apache names of cyclical seasons. The time of year was important for us because my ancestors moved campsites in conjunction with the seasons, primarily, winter and summer\textsuperscript{19}. The Tohono O’odham people have words that roughly correspond to months based on the physical condition of plants\textsuperscript{20}. In addition, in Western Apache oral texts, specific geographic locations have profound influence on everyday social interaction, because of the memory of ancestral presence in the surrounding landscape. Similarly, recall that Hawaiian scholar Manu Aluli Meyer in “Our Own Liberation: Reflections on Hawaiian Epistemology” (2001) quotes a Hawaiian educational leader in the following passage\textsuperscript{21}:

[Knowledge] doesn’t only have to do with intelligence, it has to do with spirituality, it has to do with everything that has lined up before you, and all of the things that are lined up ahead of you. All sorts of coming together to make all of this happen. You, yourself, cannot make any of this happen. (Pua Kanahele, 15 January 1997) (128)

Therefore, despite the discourse of U.S. nationalism in the nineteenth century, many indigenous groups did indeed have a sense of time. However, this concept of time is culturally different based on different epistemologies than those found in the West
because of what Masayesva emphasized in *Imagining Indians* (1992), that is, *spiritual accountability* to the history of your community. This difference does not mean that Native peoples were “timeless” as it is constructed within the dominant discourses of Euro-American nationalist expansion, and subsequent mainstream Hollywood Western representations\(^2\). Nonetheless, in most Hollywood Westerns, Native Americans were thought to be “timeless” savages who were arrested in their progression towards white “civilization.” Although Richard Morse made N. Scott Momaday’s novel, *House Made of Dawn*, into a film in 1972, mainstream Hollywood generally ignored modern Native Americans with real twentieth-century problems. This assertion is important since it explains the significance of Masayesva and Eyre as resistant filmmakers respectively\(^2\).

Once more, representations in nineteenth-century American landscape paintings repeatedly depict white male bodies placed on high prominent points overlooking vast stretches of empty landscape, especially in an important U.S. Capitol Building Leutze fresco\(^2\). For example, several noteworthy American paintings, which would include Emanuel Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1861), John Mix Stanley’s *Scouts in the Tetons* (1860), and to a lesser degree, Asher B. Durand’s *Kindred Spirits* (1849), exemplify what Albert Boime calls the “magisterial gaze” (1991) of westward progression in advancing U.S. “civilization.” As noted in the Introduction, Boime defines this gaze as one of possessive domination over the frontier, which is evident in Leutze’s U.S. Capitol Building fresco\(^2\). Boime remarks\(^2\):

> It is this gaze of command, or commanding view

—as it was so often termed in the nineteenth-century
literature—that I will call the magisterial gaze, the perspective of the American on the heights searching for new worlds to conquer. It presupposes the spectator as sightseer on the ledge or crest subjugating the boundless reality to a discipline scrutiny and simultaneously taking a reading from this orientation that is profoundly personal and ideological at the same time. The panoramic prospect becomes a metonymic image—that is, it embodies, like a microcosm, the social and political character of the land—of the desire for dominance. (21)

Typically, these white male bodies look at the “Frontier” in westward directions implying the forward movement of American expansion. In addition to this “magisterial gaze,” it is important to denaturalize whiteness within this gaze because of its vigilant position over constructed frontier boundaries\(^27\). Why is whiteness as sign preoccupied with maintaining this gaze and then representing it in discursively complex ways within painting, literature, and film? Indeed, in this study, I applied Dyer’s ideas about the transcendent quality of embodied whiteness to the images of white frontiersmen in nineteenth-century landscape paintings because of those same bodies being constructed in a bordered opposition to Native American bodies. Interestingly, Hollywood Westerns continually focus on contestations over possession of the land or, typically, male actions occur over teleological time and space. The implication of land links to Dyer’s ideas about the transcendence of whiteness and the magisterial gazes of the U.S. presidents on
Mount Rushmore and Eyre’s use of specific filmic techniques (e.g., low-angle shots, point-of-view shots) and the associations with red signifiers (e.g., blood, rebellion, and anger). *Skins’* shortcomings are that its narrative overly focuses on anger and regret, but, nonetheless, Rudy throwing red paint over George Washington’s face finally calls the pure, transcendent, authoritative (perhaps even authoritarian?) quality of whiteness-as-sign within Borglum’s Mount Rushmore into question.\(^{28}\)

In his important deconstruction of whiteness as sign in *White* (1997), recall that Dyer has said that to talk about representations of people is to talk about bodies, and, for Dyer, to talk specifically about white bodies and this is important in analyzing *Skins’* ending with the throwing of red paint on George Washington’s sculptural head, the so-called Father of the Country.\(^{29}\) In “The embodiment of whiteness” section, Dyer aptly interrogates various representational strategic practices of white bodies, that is, the lighting of such bodies (cf., the image of the hyper-whiteness of the presidential faces on Mount Rushmore in *Skins*), the hyper-masculinity of muscled white bodies in adventure narratives, the powerlessness of white female bodies, and the suggestions of the deathly pallor of white bodies. Dyer remarks:\(^{30}\)

> Here what I want to suggest is that all of these involve a wider notion of the white body, of embodiment, of whiteness involving something that is in but not of the body. I approach this through three elements of its constitution: Christianity, ‘race’ and enterprise/imperialism. These do not just provide the intellectual foundation for thinking and feeling about the
white body, but also their forms and structures, the cultural
register of whiteness. (14)

However, I am most interested in the transcendent quality of white bodies constructed in
relation to the spirituality of Christianity, especially because of the placement of white
frontiersmen’s bodies at and/or near prominent points within the “Frontier” landscape
and its representation through Mount Rushmore in Skins. Continually, the popular slogan
of “God Bless America” is invoked, especially concerning nationalism and times of war.
Skins’ strategic reuse of the flag with a superimposed image of Sitting Bull and Rudy’s
and Mogie’s Vietnam War experiences (Louis and Eyre) and their facing contemporary
problems in Pine Ridge problematize the transcendent goodness of whiteness in U.S.
nationalism. However, Skins prolongs its anger to the extent that it undermines the
narrative, dramatic development of the various characters.

Certainly, within the context of U.S. nationalism during the nineteenth century
and the discursive framework of “Manifest Destiny,” this upward movement and yet
forward movement of placing white male bodies is significant because of its direction
towards vertical transcendence and horizontal progression. Thus, two axes of movement
are associated with this embodied whiteness: upward into incorporeal transcendence and
forward in real, progressive time. These axes of U.S. nationalist movement are filled
with signifiers of whiteness. Dyer states31:

…white people are something else that is realized in
and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial. It is
in this context that I look at a third element of whiteness:
imperialism. At some point, the embodied something else of whiteness took on a dynamic relation to the physical world, something caught by the ambiguous word ‘spirit’. The white spirit organizes white flesh and in turn non-white flesh and other material matters: it has enterprise. Imperialism is the key historical form in which that process has been realized. Imperialism displays both the character of enterprise in the white person, and its exhilaratingly expansive relationship to the environment. (14-15)

Because of whiteness being “something that is in but not of the body,” I have argued for a critical discursive link among Boime’s notion of the “magisterial gaze,” the transcendence nationalist spirit of “Manifest Destiny,” the embodiment of whiteness within masculine bodies of frontiersmen (e.g., Emanuel Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* [1861]), and the symbolism of America-as-Progressive Female white body (e.g., John Gast’s *American Progress* [1878]). All of these signifiers of whiteness connect to a discursive framework of U.S. nationalism in a constructed, supposedly bounded opposition to Native Americans, i.e., the Native other. Indeed, Ford’s *The Searchers* begins to “deconstruct”/“dismantle” the power of the magisterial gaze of Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) by portraying it as psychologically imbalanced. By the 1950s, however, the magisterial gaze becomes memorialized in a landscape of stone monuments in Ford’s favorite location, Monument Valley. After the intervening social and political crises of the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., political assassinations, Vietnam,
Watergate, Wounded Knee Takeover in 1973, etc.), Masayesva and Eyre’s filmic work also, however, work at breaking down this binary because they both stress the complexity of contemporary Indian representations by highlighting exploitation of Indian images and presenting “get real” economic conditions on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Beginning with Ford’s ambiguous portrayal of Ethan Edwards, modern indigenous voices by the 1990s are finally being heard and empowered and “decontaining” themselves for the hegemonic categories (i.e., primitive, timeless, authentic other) of the nineteenth century.

Specifically, in examining Masayesva’s and Eyre’s filmic work, the whiteness in the “magisterial gaze” (Albert Boime) becomes denaturalized because these visual artists show how its deployment functions in regulating the discourse of U.S. nationalism and how contemporary Indians are working to counter it. Indeed, the commanding whiteness of this gaze has far-reaching discursive effects for deconstructing representations in Cooper’s literature and Ford’s Westerns and the consequential contemporary Native American counter-response to its representational power. As mentioned earlier, another aspect of this “magisterial gaze” is its historic association with spiritual transcendence.

Recalling Dyer, the physical heights of mountains are synonymous with the spiritual transcendental power of whiteness. Boime, too, critiques the spiritual component of the “magisterial gaze” in nationalist American representations such as “the Masonic-influenced Great Seal of the United States, in which the symbol of the Novus Ordo Seclorum is the radiant eye coterminous with the apex of the pyramid (Fig. 4)” Boime concludes that this representation highlights a divine quality. Dyer notes in White:
The Aryan and the Caucasian model [of whiteness] share a notion of origins in mountains. Bernal notes the admiration of the Romantics, by whom such notions were especially promulgated, for ‘small, virtuous and “pure” communities in remote and cold places: Switzerland, North Germany and Scotland’ (1987: 209). Such places had a number of virtues: the clarity and cleanliness of the air, the vigour demanded by the cold, the enterprise required by the harshness of the terrain and climate, the sublime,… even the greater nearness to God above and the presence of the whitest thing on earth, snow. (21)

Whiteness as sign and mountainous heights are discursively connected. In addition, Boime states other nationalisms, particularly European nationalisms, discursively link their “imagined communities” (cf. Anderson) with mountains. For Boime, however, U.S. nationalism took on a distinct visual quality from Switzerland, Germany, and England because of its repetitive discursive emphasis on the “peak” seen in “such a major body of visual and literary texts sharing a spatial and chronological coherence.” This was evident in my analysis of the symbolic positioning of white male bodies in Leutze’s *Westward the Course of Empire Takes Its Way* (1862) in the U.S. Capitol Building.

Commenting on this stress on “peak” experiences, Boime observes:

> It is this systematic projection of the unlimited horizons
as a metonymic image of America’s futurity that makes this body of material unique in its geographical, national, and temporal setting. It is not unique in its appeal to and hold over the individual imagination but rather in its manifestation as the collective and characteristic expression of the privileged national ideal, the ruling-class aspiration for American society that still endures. (26)

Thus, the naturalized whiteness of these peak experiences contextualizes how and why contemporary Native American-produced representations (e.g., *Imagining Indians* and *Skins*) counter and denaturalize the assumptions of the early formation of the frontier myth with real, complex problems.

As hooks asserts, dominant film has a pedagogic intent that can psychologically harm (*Black Looks: Race and Representation*) Indian people, but Masayesva and Eyre’s films work at countering this harm\(^\text{38}\). Their representations assert agency; they “talk” back at the dominant from between and betwixt spaces. With this assertion, I am struck by a passage in Alexie’s book, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993). Alexie writes\(^\text{39}\):

*There are things you should learn.* Your past is a skeleton walking one step behind you, and your future is a skeleton walking one step in front of you. Maybe you don’t wear a watch, but your skeletons do, and they always know what time it is. Now, these skeletons are made of memories, dreams, and voices. And they can trap you in the in-between, between
touching and becoming. But they’re not necessarily evil, unless you let them be…What you have to do is keep moving, keep walking, in step with your skeletons…But, no matter what they do, keep walking, keep moving. And don’t wear a watch. Hell, Indians never need to wear a watch because your skeletons will always remind you about the time. See, it is always now. That’s what Indian time is. The past, the future, all of it is wrapped up in the now. That’s how it is. *We are trapped in the now.* (21-22)

Yet this excerpt from Alexie points to the possible future of Native American representations. We, as Native Americans, are certainly trapped in the now, but that now comprises both the past and the future.

While the discourses (i.e., legal, artistic, and scientific) of the nineteenth century certainly “contained” Indians in specific discursive categories (i.e., primitive, savage, frozen-in-time Other) and thus influenced Hollywood representations of Ford, Native Americans such as Victor Masayesva and Chris Eyre attempt to counter those dominating categories. Masayesva and Eyre work to “decontain” the timeless Indian of the nineteenth century into the modern, complex Native American of the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century. Nonetheless, in looking ahead, must Native American representations always answer back to the dominant categories, to the hegemonic, in order to be relevant? Is not answering the dominant also re-centering it? Could we, as spectators, imagine representations that are more fluid, more diffuse, and that truly move away from re-establishing binary oppositions? Masayesva, no doubt,
stresses the aesthetic responsibilities for a Native American filmmaker (or whoever takes up the camera) in response to the indigenous communal belief in the sacred. Eyre seems to be doing this, too, in *Skins*, but with much less success than *Smoke Signals* since the film’s narrative thematic focus on revenge for Mogie’s death lapses into prolonged regret and anger that it undermines its counter-hegemonic stance. Anger indeed remains a key component in addressing the historic wrongs of Native American people, but what happens next in terms of healing and truly creating an indigenous form of cinematic aesthetics? In the process of “decontaining” ourselves from nineteenth-century discursive categories, is “talking back” to whiteness-as-sign the significant element for true liberatory forms of art in representation? In some ways, I marvel at Masayesva and Eyre for being counter-hegemonic artists, but, nonetheless, I also see that limitations exist in answering back to whiteness-as-sign since it re-centers whiteness.

In *Indigenous Aesthetics*, Steven Leuthold offers several viewpoints about the complications in creating a liberatory, resistant indigenous aesthetic. One viewpoint that he discusses is a critical tension existing between local, traditional concerns of tribal communities, and larger social, political concerns that go beyond reservation and continental boundaries. This site of contestation is crucial because here is where new, liberatory aesthetic forms can be found. Yet how do individual acts of indigenous artistic expression relate to traditional forms of art in indigenous communities? Leuthold asserts, “an argument against nation and tribe as sources of indigenous representation is that they are not fluid enough to reflect the lives, heritage, and goals of contemporary native artists”.
Yet in my M.A. thesis, I demonstrated how Western Apache placenames and their meta-communicating ancestors could be used epistemologically in terms of resisting binary categories of gender, sex, and race\textsuperscript{42}. Indeed, this use of the placenames may not be “traditional,” but it is theoretically an epistemological tool for resistance. Within the context of traditional Western Apache culture, direct criticism is considered highly inappropriate and rude. If a social infraction has occurred, \textit{Indé} (Apaches) traditionally called upon ancestral stories that had a moral intention and lesson. By calling the placenames in the landscape, the listener metaphysically goes to that place(s) where the ancestors are, so that time and place are indistinguishable and thus irrelevant. Indeed, binary oppositions are removed from one’s thought and from one’s gaze and this is where an epistemological understanding of subjectivity gets pluralized and risks overly focusing on the individual without regard for the traditions of the community. Indeed, this may not be the epistemological frame that traditional \textit{Indé} used, but fractured times call for such epistemological risks because even whiteness-as-sign has tired itself out in films like \textit{Falling Down} and \textit{Blade Runner}\textsuperscript{43}. Nevertheless, this epistemological move to blur the relational binaries in categorical boundaries is important for the future of Native American cinematic representations because it resists those containing categories of the nineteenth century. What would it mean to create an indigenous aesthetic that does not rely on the containing nineteenth century categories that influenced the political dimension of the displays at the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 and, instead, would imagine an indigenous aesthetic based on particular indigenous epistemologies
that imagine pluralized subjectivities, and yet accountable to specific indigenous communities? Eyre comments:

Film is a language that you watch—you expect an establishing shot, and then a medium shot, and close-ups, reverses and inserts. There are conventions, and a true Indian movie wouldn’t have the same conventions. But because people are so used to the standards, I don’t know if people would get it; it might not be palatable. Self-representation of Indians in cinema is important to me. It is one of the last frontiers left after a hundred years of cinema. It’s territory that the world still doesn’t know. But one day yet, there may be a real Indian movie. (25)
Interestingly, now that the master narratives associated with Manifest Destiny are supposedly crumbling into a postmodern morass, Native American people seem unable to determine which identity is appropriate. Instead, the debate should not be between “good” or “bad” images, but should focus instead on to what degree are the representations accountable to Native American communities.


Hollywood Westerns certainly inherited the notion of viewing Indians as entertaining spectacle from Wild West shows, landscape paintings of Remington, world’s fairs, and the prevailing myth of the frontier. Also, see D.W. Griffith’s *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1914) for an early cinematic representation of savage Indians.


See Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentricism: Multiculturalism and the Media*, (104-109), and their insightful discussion about the controlling gaze of the cinematic apparatus and its implication in representations of colonized others.

Ibid.

See endnote 20.

Interestingly, as Dyer has argued in *White* (213-223), the white male protagonist in *Blade Runner* is incapable of reproduction, and the homophobic fear of gay sex (also un-
reproductive) is prominent in *Falling Down*. This inability to reproduce biologically is synonymous with the hyper-whiteness of death in whiteness-as-sign.

10 See Dyer, *White*, (33).

11 As I have mentioned in another chapter, I cannot help that Karl May influenced these students’ perceptions of what an Apache should look like in reality. Ironically, this instance of misrecognition occurred at one of Germany’s more prestigious universities. In addition, the prevalent dominance and popularity of Hollywood Westerns and stereotypic images of Plains Indians in Europe certainly added to the influence of Karl May.

12 This is Boime’s central argument in *The Magisterial Gaze* though he does not explicitly state it as a form of whiteness-as-sign in Euro-American artistic representations in colonial discourse. Also, ironically, Eyre’s *Smoke Signals* shows two Native American women continually driving backwards. On one level, yes, the women drive a broken down “rez” car, but, on another level, why does Eyre film the women in a long shot in a highly, visually striking valley on a straight road? The long shot suggests a landscape painting. The implication, here, is that Eyre unconsciously reverses the teleological aspects of “Manifest Destiny” because the women in the mise en scène move from left to right. The women appear to be going east instead of west.

13 See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other*, (ix).

14 See her discussion about asserting a pluralized subjectivity as a form of resistance to domination, (90).
Again, I am thinking of Silko’s *Storyteller*, which has stories within stories that move in circular narratives.

Again, as a student at The University of Arizona, Joy Harjo and I talked endlessly about where the source of ideas comes from in Native American literature. No doubt, the source has a spiritual component that entails no boundaries between the past, present, and future.

Eyre’s *Smoke Signals* more successfully shows this through interesting camera shots where the spectator seamlessly moves from the filmic narrative’s present time to the past. Again, although read for the comedy about the unreliability of an old “rez car,” a long shot of the two reservation women driving backwards in the film seems to imply a reversal of the teleological aspect of Manifest Destiny. For these reasons, Eyre’s filmic narrative effort in this film was more successful since it did not present a barrage of images that deal with regret and anger as in *Skins*. Also, actual historical accounts about Native American history were somewhat awkwardly added to the film’s narrative especially when the characters discuss American Horse.

Steven Leuthold addresses this assertion in *Indigenous Aesthetics*, (28-44).

My father, Philip Cassadore, once showed an Apache calendar based on the seasons. Also, see Grenville Goodwin’s *The Social Organization of the Western Apache* (1942) for a discussion about seasonal movements of Apaches.

Danny Lopez, an important elder and community leader, discussed this with me.

If Indians were constructed as timeless savages to be eventually placed in glass cases in the nineteenth century, this would enable colonial domination since whiteness-as-sign possesses real, present, forward-thinking time. However, by the 1950s, the myth of the frontier and teleological progression was exhausting itself out as Hutson has argued in “Monument Valley in The Searchers,” *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford’s Classic Western*, (103-106). Hutson comments, “Ford’s and Nugent’s story is itself a memorial to perhaps the most primordial national narrative of the New World—the forward, heroic march of humanity, conquering and appropriating even the most desolate wasteland, refusing to remain on this side of the frontier” (103). Furthermore, Hutson argues that Ford’s memorializing of the U.S. national narrative is a way of “possessing the United States—of repossessing it” since it is about mourning and loyalty (Hutson’s italics, 103).

See Kilpatrick’s extensive discussion about recent Native American filmmakers such as Masayesva, Carr, Burdeau, and Eyre in *Celluloid Indians*, (206-232).

In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Pierre Bourdieu discusses the misrecognition of symbols, and that this fact enables them to hold power over subjects, (170). Again, Leutze’s fresco, no doubt, fits into Bourdieu’s assertion about power and symbols.

Boime discusses these representations in terms of the magisterial gaze.

See Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze.*
Ford begins to do this in *The Searchers* since Ethan Edwards becomes obsessed with the idea of miscegenation being committed with his niece Debbie.

In *The Magisterial Gaze*, Boime comments: “Lame Deer noted the psychological impact of the great white heads on the tourists who look up to them ‘and feel good, real good, because they make them feel big and powerful,’” (166). Boime further discusses the animosity that the Lakota felt towards Mount Rushmore and what it ideologically represented, (166).

See Dyer’s discussion about white bodies in *White*, (14-40).

Ibid, (14).


However, Jonathan Wacks’s *Powwow Highway* (1988) and Richard Weise’s *Harold of Orange* (1984) are some of the other examples of contemporary Native American representations. In addition, Richard Morse’s *House Made of Dawn* (1972), according Kilpatrick in *Celluloid Indians*, was the first important attempt at representing contemporary Native Americans. See Kilpatrick’s complete review of contemporary Native American representations in film and video in *Celluloid Indians*, (178-232).

See Boime, (italics added, 21-22)

Ibid, (21).

See Boime, *The Magisterial Gaze*, (23).

Ibid.

Ibid.

See hooks, *Outlaw Culture*, (186).
39 See Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*.

40 Also, using the term “indigenous” takes subjectivity to global arenas since indigenous people exist worldwide.


42 My M.A. thesis assertions about Western Apache placenames and using them as an epistemological tool of resistance are partly based on Keith Basso’s insightful research in *Western Apache Language and Culture*, (99-137).


44 See interview with Chris Eyre in *Native Peoples*, (25).
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