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# The Evolution of an Image: An Analysis of Defining Depictions of Native Americans in Popular Cinema 1913-1970

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THE EVOLUTION OF AN IMAGE:  
AN ANALYSIS OF DEFINING DEPICTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN  
POPULAR CINEMA 1913-1970

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Television, Radio, Film and Theatre

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Gerald T. Olson

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by

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## ABSTRACT

### THE EVOLUTION OF AN IMAGE: AN ANALYSIS OF DEFINING DEPICTIONS OF NATIVE AMERICANS IN POPULAR CINEMA 1913-1970

by Gerald T. Olson

Native Americans have been depicted in the movies since the birth of the medium. In this thesis, the depiction of Native Americans in seven exemplary films is analyzed. The films chosen illustrate the evolution of Native American depiction from the silent era through the classic studio era of the 1930s and 1940s, the post WWII era, and the 1960s Civil Rights period to 1970 when the Native American Civil Rights movement was at its most public. Classic tropes such as the Indian Princess/Squaw, the Screaming Savage, and the Noble Savage/Vanishing American that were defined in 19<sup>th</sup> Century literature and by Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows are shown to have evolved as audience attitudes about race and Manifest Destiny reflected a changing zeitgeist.

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To Darcée, Anna, Geoffrey, Alec and Theo, without whom life would be much less.

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## Chapter 1

### *Introduction*

Native American peoples have been the subject of cinematic depiction since motion pictures were first exhibited publicly by Thomas Edison, at the Chicago Columbian World's Exhibition in 1893 (Jojola 12). *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), the most successful American film before 1912 (Mast and Kavin 54), began the American love affair with the Western film genre. In that genre, which often traded in stories about the settling of the West, depiction of Native American people was frequent. The Western genre was by far the most popular film genre between 1903 and 1970, accounting for nearly 25% of all American motion picture output in that period (Mast and Kavin 803). Thousands of Western movies made subsequent to the 1903 debut of *The Great Train Robbery* have depicted the American Indian, bringing to the admission-paying public narrow depictions of Native American people that frequently deny genuine human dimensionality and reinforce tropes that pander to the mainstream, white-dominated viewing audience. The sheer volume of depiction of Native Americans in American cinema, most often in the Western genre, has surely shaped the American public's view of American Indians.

While much has been written about the depiction of Native Americans in American popular cinema, there has been little discussion of broad categories of that depiction with a view toward the evolution of those images over time. The image of Native Americans in cinema has been subject to environmental pressures that include prevailing cultural shifts, fashions and beliefs that affected the receptivity of studios in their decisions to put certain types of movies into production. The box office response to a motion picture



however, is often the final arbiter of the longevity or death of an approach to depiction and is the clearest signal of the success of a mode of depiction in the environment into which it is released. A new approach to depiction in tune with the cultural zeitgeist of a given moment in time might succeed and be imitated in subsequent film if that depiction is accepted by the audience and translates into box office success.

Because it would be nearly impossible to analyze each of the thousands of films made between 1913 and 1970 (the period of this study) that depict Native Americans, seven films are analyzed in this work. Each film exemplifies a cinematic image of the Native American. By 1913, the preeminence of the genre was firmly established. This study continues through 1970, when cultural shifts in the American audience responded to new approaches of depiction, and the Western lost its status as the most frequently produced film genre (Mast and Kavin 803).

Seven films were analyzed: silent pictures *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch* (1913) and *The Squaw Man* (1914); classic studio era epic *The Plainsman* (1936); *Broken Arrow* (1950); produced at the dawn of the civil rights era, the John Ford apologia *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964); the “authentic” Western, *A Man Called Horse* (1970); and the revisionist Western, *Little Big Man* (1970). All with the exception of *Cheyenne Autumn*, were validated by success at the box office and exhibited definitive depictions of Native Americans in the periods in which they were produced. In particular, reoccurring images of the Savage Indian, Noble Redman, Vanishing American, Indian Squaw, and Indian Princess, and variations on those tropes were analyzed in relation to the era of production and the evolution of the image over the period of this study.

*Literature Review*

As vestigial traits persist in the evolutionary process of a biological species, in the evolution of the cinematic depiction of Native Americans, some of the earliest representational conventions persist throughout the time period of this study. In his article “Absurd Reality” Native American critic Ted Jojola notes that in the 1970s:

Native Americans were ready for a new cinematic treatment – one that was real and contemporary. Native Americans had grown accustomed to the film tradition of warpaint and warbonnets. When inventor Thomas Alva Edison premiered the kinetoscope at the 1893 Chicago Columbian World’s Exhibition by showing the exotic *Hopi Snake Dance*, few would have predicted that this kind of depiction would persist into contemporary times. Its longevity though is explained by the persistence of myth and symbol. (12)

The persistence of the Screaming Savage depiction, as seen in the 1970 release *A Man Called Horse*, reinforces Jojola’s assertion. That the film was released in the same year as *Little Big Man* with its humanized Indians, reinforces the fact that older forms of depiction can persist along side newer more popular modes of depiction.

The depiction of American Indians in the cinema has a genealogy that goes back to Christopher Columbus’s use of the misnomer “Indians” to describe the diverse peoples that populated the New World he had chanced upon in his effort to reach Asia by sailing West:

Indian is not an imported name for a category that pre-dated Columbus; it is a name that brought a new ethnic or racial category into being by precipitating extended, multilateral discourse about the name’s meaning.

Europeans triggered the discourse when they applied Columbus's misnomer to everyone they found in the Western Hemisphere. (Buscombe 10)

In Edward Buscombe's *'Injuns!' Native Americans in the Movies*, the author analyzed images and modes of depiction of Native Americans in motion pictures, in a historical context that goes back to the first moments that Europeans came in contact with the Native Peoples of the Americas. Buscombe noted that Native people have been portrayed through the lens of the dominant white society in painting, sculpture, theatre, poetry, and the novel from the earliest days of white settlement in the Americas. In defining the broad categories of depiction later used in motion pictures, Buscombe cited plays, such as *The Indian Princess or La Belle Sauvage*, which told the story of "good" Indians like Pocahontas who helped the Whites. Conversely, the play *Metamora or The Last of the Wompanoags* (1829), in which chief Metamora fights white takeover of his people's lands but whose resistance to the advancing white settler "is made more acceptable to a white audience by virtue of his melancholy premonition of the fate of his people, an early statement of the concept of the Vanishing American" (Buscombe 33). The Vanishing American trope and the inevitable white domination of the United States was played out in each of the films analyzed in this study with the exception of *A Man Called Horse*, which was set in a milieu outside the context of European acquisition of Indian lands.

Buscombe also discussed the sexual threat of the untamed Native male as depicted in the perennially popular novel *The Last of the Mohicans*, by James Fenimore Cooper. *The Last of the Mohicans* contains the most popular version of the captivity

narratives that were ubiquitous in the Post-Civil War era. This story resonates so powerfully with the American public that it has been made into a feature film five times (Walker 170-173). In captivity narratives, the threat of the fate worse than death, that of a white woman being forced to have sex with a Native male was often a featured story element. Cooper's "good" Indians, Chingachgook and Uncas, Hawkeye's friends, are contrasted with the "bad" Indian, White-hating Magua, an abductor of white women. A significant detail in the politics of race depicted in *Last of the Mohicans* is that Cora Munro. Cora the white woman Magua wants to marry in Cooper's book, is part African, her mother being of mixed race:

"I had seen many regions, and had shed much blood in different lands, before duty called me to the islands of the West Indies. There it was my lot to form a connection with one who in time became my wife, and the mother of Cora. She was the daughter of a gentleman of those isles, by a lady whose misfortune it was, if you will," said the old man, proudly, "to be descended, remotely, from that unfortunate class who are so basely enslaved to administer to the wants of a luxurious people." (Cooper Chapter 16)

This detail, revealed mid-book, reveals Cora's mixed-race origin (Cooper Chapter 16). She is unfit to marry a white man. Her unrequited affection for Uncas, the last of the Mohicans, and his for her, is understandable to Cooper's audience because she is not truly white.

As printing technology and distribution of novels and magazines paved the way for true mass media to develop, thousands of dime novels appeared that featured stories

of conflict with Indians, many laced with lurid descriptions of narrow escapes from sexual abuse at the hands of Native American predators, reinforcing the idea that these outcomes were frequently enacted in real life (Buscombe 42-50). In this study, the sexual threat of the Native male is strongly alluded to in *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch*, and in Cecil B. DeMille's *The Plainsman*. In *Little Big Man*, the protagonist's older sister, rescued by a Cheyenne male, seems disappointed when her imagined captivity narrative does not play out in the way she expected.

*Celluloid Indians* by Jacqueline Kilpatrick analyzes the stereotypical representations of Native Americans in movies, looking at the entire scope of film history. Kilpatrick looks at each film as art:

...and art is a social, historical, cultural artifact- a socially situated utterance, a reflection of the film's time of birth and the social and political milieu into which it was born. At the same time, Native Americans *are* living human beings, not evanescent avatars of alterity, and therefore questions of appropriate depiction must be addressed. (xvi)

Using Kilpatrick's definition of a film as a cultural artifact bound to its time, one may conclude that the box office success of a motion picture's mode of depiction, and therefore its longevity in the marketplace, depends on how well its mode of depiction is tuned in to the cultural environment at the time of its release. How a film fares at the box office is a clear parallel to the way in which a species success depends on its ability to respond to the environmental pressures of the natural world.

Kilpatrick, Buscombe, and Rollins and O'Connor discuss in some detail the foundational importance of Buffalo Bill Cody in the creation of the mythos of the Indians

of the Old West. In 1869, a writer known as Ned Buntline wrote a dime novel about an army scout he met. That scout was William Frederick Cody. The book, *Buffalo Bill: King of the Border Men*, launched hundreds of books extolling the largely imaginary exploits of Buffalo Bill as an Indian fighter in the West. Beginning in 1883, Cody's Wild West Shows, a mixture of rodeo, circus and stage performances, highlighted by "historical" reenactments, became popular. The reenactments starred Buffalo Bill and a cast of cowboys and real Indians, including Sitting Bull, who worked for Cody for one year. Reenactments usually featured Buffalo Bill and his cowboys saving settlers from marauding Indians. Cody's shows cemented the image of the screaming mounted warrior in the minds of the public (Buscombe 57-61, Kilpatrick 12-15, Rollins, and O' Connor 123). As Buscombe notes:

The huge success of Cody's shows was a major factor in fixing a certain image of the Indian in the popular mind. The mounted warrior of the plains, painted, befeathered, wielding his tomahawk or rifle and whooping his war-cry, was so pervasive that it threatened to drive any alternative image from the public imagination. And white heroism came to be defined in relation to this (thankfully now overcome) threat. (62)

The depictions of Native warriors in each of the films analyzed in this study, with the exceptions of *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Little Big Man*, which might be seen as oppositional responses to it, were largely based on the template established in Cody's Wild West Shows.

The Screaming Savage and Vanishing American/Noble Savage categories of depiction are almost exclusively restricted to the Native male. S. Elizabeth Bird in

“Gendered Construction of the American Indian in Popular Media”, addresses issues of representation in media, of both Native American men and women. Bird notes:

...popular imagery of American Indians has tended to focus on males.

They traced the tradition of portraying Indian women on postcards, which usually took the form of photographs of anonymous women, unlike the male images, which usually named the chiefs and warriors they portrayed.

Whereas American Indian men appear in White mythology as named individuals (e.g., Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Geronimo), women are represented only by Pocahontas, Sacajewea, and nameless artisans or squaws. (72)

In *Killing the Indian Maiden*, M. Elise Marubbio analyzes and defines modes of depiction of Native women through the entire history of motion pictures. Both Marubbio and Bird note that the Indian Princess myth is typified by the story of Pocahontas, in which the Native Princess allies herself with a white man and thus European civilization, to the detriment of her self and/or her people (Marubbio 29, Bird 72-73). In a variant of the Native Princess story, as good, exotic and desirable as the native Princess is, when she marries a white man, racial mixing culminates in a bad outcome for the native woman and her offspring. As Bird notes: “The ‘Indian princess’ is defined as one who helps or saves a White man, but if she actually has a sexual relationship with a man, she becomes a squaw, who is lower even than a bad White woman. The squaw is the other side of the American Indian woman” (Bird 73). Numerous films including *The Kentuckian* (1908), *The Indian Squaw’s Sacrifice* (1910), *The Squaw Man* (1914, 1918, 1932), *Broken Arrow* (1950), *The Searchers* (1956), *A Man Called Horse* (1970), and *Little Big Man* (1970),

depict the fatal outcome for Native women who marry white men (Hilger 3-4, Marubbio 26-71). Marubbio further notes the following tragic outcome, in her description of the Indian Princess figure in early Hollywood movies: "... she is a full blooded Native woman and usually a chief's daughter; she often has children who are being taken from her to be educated in the East; and she commits suicide" (30). This story and its popularity are concretized in the 1914 feature film *The Squaw Man*. In the story, the Native wife of the self-exiled member of an English noble family who takes the rap for his cousin the Earl's embezzlement, commits suicide so that her husband, now exonerated, can return to England with their son, claim the title he is heir to, and marry the Englishwoman he was in love with all along (Apfel and DeMille).

Michael Hilger's book *From Savage to Nobleman*, discusses the binary of the Savage Indian and Noble Red Man in American Film from the silent era through the 1990s. As Hilger notes, his book "...will reveal little about Native American people of the past or present, but a lot about the evolution of white American attitudes and values" (Hilger 2). Hilger's *The American Indian in Film*, is a list of 830 films depicting American Indians. Each listing comes with a brief synopsis and key credit list. An analytical essay about the trends in depiction in each decade is positioned at the start of the list for each ten-year period. The fact that all feature films that depict Native Americans in the period covered by this thesis were made by white owned studios, white writers, and white directors, makes Hilger's assertion about the evolution of white attitudes unassailable. The two films in this study that utilize Native actors in key roles: *The Squaw Man*, and *Little Big Man*, are the only films in the span of this work, where Native influence had any significant impact on a production.



The preceding discussed works provide a critical and theoretical base from which to analyze movies made before and after the American Indian Civil Rights Movement that began with AIM's formation in 1968, and the occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969 by over 5,600 Native Americans (Winton, Jojola 13). Ben Winton's journal article, "Alcatraz, Indian Land", Discusses the 18-month occupation, and it's impact on the public's awareness of Native Americans and their issues. The high profile of the event bolstered the sense that Native people could actively affect their destiny in the hostile environment of The United States of America. John Plutte's documentary *Alcatraz is Not an Island*, details the story of the occupation, its effects on gaining Natives their rights from the federal government, and how it empowered those in Native communities. Hollywood's attempts at the new modes of depiction seen in *A Man Called Horse* and *Little Big Man*, coincided with the aforementioned formation of AIM and the occupation of Alcatraz.

### *Methodology*

The depiction of Native Americans in films of the silent era beginning in 1913, and in those of the sound era through 1970, will be analyzed in order to define the modes of depiction in each era. Depiction of the Savage Indian, Noble Redman, Vanishing American, Indian Squaw, Indian Princess, and variations on those tropes, in each film where they occur, will be analyzed. Key films from each era will be looked at for definitive depictions of Native People. Each of these films either helped define classic modes of depiction, such as the Screaming Savage or the Indian Princess, or was among the first films to attempt a new approach. Films from the Silent Era include: D.W. Griffith's *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch* (1913), and Oscar Apfel and Cecil B. DeMille's

*The Squaw Man* (1914).

D.W. Griffith was the most popular and accomplished director of the early silent era. His one and two reel films, of which he directed hundreds between 1908 and 1913, were the mainstay of the Biograph Company's success (Mast and Kawin 82). *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* was Griffith's penultimate film for Biograph. In the film, Griffith, with his powerful storytelling technique, depicted the Screaming Savage as unapologetically as he would depict the "savage" former slaves in his 1915 racist tour de force, *The Birth of a Nation*. Griffith was an important influence on directors Cecil B. DeMille and John Ford, whose films are also examined in this study (Bogdanovich 40, Pratt 137).

The second silent film in this study, Apfel and DeMille's *The Squaw Man*, is an essential film in the study of the Indian Princess/Squaw narrative. The film's story was so popular, it was made and remade three times with Cecil B. DeMille in the director's chair for each version (Buscombe 93, Mast and Kawin 137, Kilpatrick 51). The film is notable for the powerful performance of Native actress Lillian St. Cyr in the female lead role. Films from the sound era prior to 1970 include Cecil B. DeMille's epic *The Plainsman* (1936), *Broken Arrow* (1950), directed by Delmer Daves, and John Ford's last western *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964).

Popular director Cecil B. DeMille's *The Plainsman*, an epic Manifest Destiny story, devotes considerable screen time to interactions between Indians and whites. The story weaves together the lives of iconic American characters Abraham Lincoln, Wild Bill Hickok, Buffalo Bill Cody, Calamity Jane, George Armstrong Custer, in a quest to make the West safe for white settlement. The film depicts the American Indian as the

Screaming Savage and sexual threat in a number of set pieces designed to dehumanize Native Americans. The film starring Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur was a box office success.

1950's *Broken Arrow*, is based on the true story of a peace treaty brokered by a white prospector and U.S. Army scout, between Apache Chief Cochise and the U.S. Government. The dawning Post-WWII Civil Rights movement's influence is felt in this popular, "pro-Indian" Western.

John Ford's last Western, *Cheyenne Autumn*, was Ford's attempt to show the Indian's side of the story of their treatment by the U.S. Government (Bogdanovich 104-106). Ford is the director most identified with the Western, and is considered one of the finest directors in American cinema. No discussion of Western movies and their depiction of Native Americans would be complete without the addition of at least one of Ford's movies.

By analyzing the depiction of Native Americans in the motion pictures *A Man Called Horse* and *Little Big Man*, when the well-publicized Occupation of Alcatraz was still in force (1970- 1971), we will attempt to discern new approaches in the depiction of Natives, in a cultural zeitgeist that included the Native American Civil Rights Movement. Both *A Man Called Horse* and *Little Big Man* were very popular films. *A Man Called Horse* was popular enough to merit two sequels. Both films, with their makers attuned to the cultural context of 1970, attempted modes of depiction that differed from the conventional approaches seen in earlier films.

Close readings of the movies in this study, will focus on moments in each film where Natives are depicted onscreen, and where they are the subject of dialogue.

Particular attention will be paid to *mise en scène* and its effect on meaning in visual representation. Dialogue, its delivery and its prosaic and sub-textual meaning will be analyzed. Interviews with key participants will be sourced, and written analysis and commentary from the existing literature will be taken into account.

### *Terminology*

In this study, the terms Native American, Native, Native people, American Indian and Indian are used interchangeably. These terms refer to the descendants of the indigenous people who occupied North America previous to the migration of Europeans to this land.

What follows in Chapter Two, will illustrate and analyze foundational cinematic approaches to depiction of Native Americans, as found in two definitive works of the silent cinema. *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1913), and *The Squaw Man* (1914) contain early, but well-defined depictions of the Screaming Savage established by Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows in the Nineteenth Century. *The Squaw Man* also presents the Indian Princess/Squaw narrative in the first of three versions, all produced prior to the enforcement of the Production Code and its restrictions on the depiction of sexual relationships outside of marriage. The reverberations of the depictions in both these films, are felt in each of the other motion pictures analyzed in this work.

## Chapter 2

### *Depiction of Native Americans in Films of the Silent Era*

Hundreds of Westerns were made during the Silent period, and as Russell Merritt states in his audio commentary on D.W. Griffith's *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1913), "By 1913, the Western had become the dominant film genre" (Merritt).

Biograph's constant need for product to supply the growing number of neighborhood theatres, or nickelodeons, provided Griffith with a laboratory in which he concocted a coherent technique of cinematic storytelling, that is the foundation on which the classical Hollywood style grew. His work has been studied, analyzed, and imitated by countless filmmakers who have walked the cinematic storytelling trail he blazed (Mast and Kawin 70, Johnson 2-13). Griffith, as noted by Gerald Mast and Bruce Kawin, was cinema's "...first poet, moralist and master storyteller" (Mast and Kawin 79).

As much as Griffith pointed the way to the future of the medium, he was also a link to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century theatre tradition of David Belasco, the purveyor of moralistic melodrama to an audience steeped in the Victorian worldview. Griffith went into motion pictures only because he was unable to break into the New York theatre world that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, was dominated by David Belasco (Mast and Kawin 72). Griffith, a Kentucky native and son of a Civil War combatant on the Confederate side, held strong beliefs regarding the natural superiority of people of White European heritage (Jay 3-6).

Griffith's powerful and unmitigated portrayal of the savagery of the generic Indians seen in *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, if anything, upped the ante in its use of motion picture storytelling technique, particularly cross-cutting, to depict Buffalo Bill's Screaming Savages in a profoundly defining way that could not be duplicated in a live

theatrical show such as Cody's Wild West shows, in spite of the fact that their war whoops couldn't be heard. Griffith's Indians are depicted as a vengeful, violent, sub-human species. At every turn in the story, Griffith's hammers home how dangerous and different the Indians are from the civilized whites, especially the sentimentally portrayed Orphans and Young Mother.

In the following analysis of *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, Griffith's storytelling technique will be dissected in order to explain how Griffith established the Indian's otherness, savagery and sexual threat in juxtaposition to his sentimental portrayal of the white settlers, particularly the two Orphan Girls and the Young Mother, and how he helped establish the negative tropes that became part of the generic Hollywood Indian.

Griffith first establishes the purity, innocence and loveable qualities of the young Orphan Girls and the Young Mother and her babe in arms, and juxtaposes them against the otherness of two Indian men. The movie begins with the two Orphan Girls being packed off to live with an uncle they've never met. Their few belongings include two puppies that they take with them in the wagon that transports them. Griffith establishes the cute puppies in the girl's wicker picnic basket with a close-up. One could imagine the puppies as metaphors of the girl's innocence. When the girls arrive in Elderbush Gulch, a white frontier town settlement, it seems the whole populace rushes toward the stagecoach as it pulls into town. It is here that we are introduced to two Native American characters who will prove pivotal in the story. Their otherness is emphasized by their prominent presence in the arrival scene. They are fish out of water. The two Indian men, wrapped in blankets that cover their entire bodies, with feathers in their unkempt long hair, look on stoically as the girls are met by their uncle and it seems half the town.

Griffith places the first meeting of the girls and their uncle squarely in the foreground of his wide-angle frame. The Young Mother (Lillian Gish), with babe in arms, stands as a backdrop to the girls and their uncle's first, joyous meeting. The Indians, in the background, are the only ones who don't seem to belong. No one looks at them or acknowledges them. They share none of the townsfolk's enthusiasm. The Native men stand as impassive observers of the proceedings, behind the young woman and her baby, peeking through at the meeting of the girls and their uncle, and observing the young white woman with her baby. Uncle and girls get in a wagon and go off.

Title: THE ONLY BABY IN THE SETTLEMENT.

In the next shot, Griffith moves the young mother to the foreground. The young woman's husband and an older man arrive, chat, then they all exit frame, leaving it dominated by the two Indian men in a head-to-toe shot, scowling and immobile. Griffith has established the Indian's presence and their otherness in this arrival sequence. He has used the juxtaposition of portrayals to create uneasiness in the audience. The Indians don't belong. A visual tension is established between the loveable Orphans and Mother, and the strange looking, silent observers.

Next, Griffith inserts the inciting incident. The Orphan's uncle rents from a man who is friendly to the girls, but will not allow pets in his building. The little puppies must stay outside.

Griffith wastes no time and immediately increases the tension in the audience by ratcheting up the Indian's already established otherness. He reveals the "truth" about the Indian tribe. They are inhuman crazed savages. Again, Griffith uses juxtaposition to make his point. The audience sees the little basket containing the puppies, sitting alone

outside the building where the Orphans are staying. The cute puppies push up on the wooden flap lid of the picnic basket. The puppies are in danger. They could possibly be eaten by predatory animals.

Next, Griffith illustrates in no uncertain terms that the local Indians are crazed dog eaters, less than human, animals themselves.

Title: THE DOG FEAST “SUNKA ALAWAN WAYATAMIN SUNKA  
E YA E- E YO” (“MAY YOU EAT DOG AND LIVE LONG”).

The film cuts to an Indian encampment. In a wide shot, a shirtless Indian man in an eagle headdress dances wildly in the foreground. In the middle ground, a group of feathered, shirtless, loin-clothed men frenziedly dance around a fire pit with a dog suspended over it on a spit. In the background is the Indian encampment. Teepees, squaws, and smoky fires are seen. A buckskin-clothed, eagle head-dressed chief raises his arms to the sky, and all the men converge over the dog turning on the spit. The Indians will feast on dog meat.

The juxtaposition of the scene in which the girls reveal the exceedingly cute dogs only to be told they can't stay in the boarding house, with a tableaux that shows the Indians as crazed savages preparing to eat a ritual meal of dog, leads the audience's imagination as to what could happen next. Cute dogs that will soon be put out of the house and savage dog eaters, are living in the same neighborhood. The audience cannot but be full of apprehension for the cute dogs and the young white girls who are their protectors. The Indians savagery is established: No tribe is identified, the language they speak not being from any specific tribe, is pure mumbo jumbo. Their otherness and clear



savagery is well defined, and can only lead to a bad series of events as they encounter white civilization.

In the following sequence, more negative tropes are utilized to depict the film's generic Indians. The problem of Native American alcoholism is alluded to, and Griffith establishes that the life of an Indian is worth no more to the whites than that of an animal.

Title: THE CHIEF'S SON AND HIS FRIEND RETURN TOO LATE  
FOR THE FEAST.

The same wide frame used to establish the Indian encampment is now strewn with the Indian men seen earlier, but now they are stretched out on the ground as groggy as if they had just indulged in a night of heavy drinking: a clear allusion to the drunken Indian trope. The chief's son and his friend, the two Native men who were seen in the town when the Orphans and Young Mother arrived, run into frame and up to the now empty fire pit. They are clearly upset that they missed the dog meat feast. The Chief's son runs to his father who is positioned in the foreground. His father the Chief partially raises himself up to wave his son off as if he is suffering from a major hangover. He collapses back to the ground as the two unhappy men exit camera left.

At night in their bed, the Orphans are bereft.

Title: "THE PUPPIES WILL DIE OUTSIDE"

In a medium close up the puppies are shown escaping from the sisters' basket just outside the boardinghouse. Big Sister sneaks past her sleeping uncle and finds an empty basket. The two hungry Native men enter frame in a head to toe two shot. They are in the woods. The chief's son holds a rifle. He sees the two pups scampering in his direction. His friend grabs the two pups as they run right up to them. The juxtaposition of the two

small pups against the rifle brandishing men is almost comic. The two little puppies will not provide much nourishment, but eating dog matters to Griffith's *Crazed Savages*.

Title: "WANNA WATINKE" ("NOW WE EAT")

Uncle steps out of the boardinghouse to see his niece running into the woods. Big Sister sees the friend brandishing his knife at one pup held up by the scruff of the neck. The other pup is held in his teeth. She runs at him, knocks him over, and grabs the dogs, but the chief's son grabs her. Uncle sees his niece in the clutches of the chief's son and shoots immediately. There is no warning, and not a moment's hesitation or remorse. He's protecting his niece as if from a wild animal. Vine Deloria, in discussing white attitudes toward Native Americans, notes: "Because the Indian occupied large areas of land he was considered a wild animal" (*Custer* 8). Deloria explains: "Scalping, introduced by the English, confirmed the suspicion that Indians were wild animals to be hunted and skinned" (*Custer* 6).

After Griffith's display of the Indians dancing wildly around a dog turning on a spit in preparation for a meal of dog's flesh, and the two men's willingness to slaughter the puppies to satisfy their craving for dog's flesh, any "civilized" white person in the film's audience, would see these Indians as little more than wild animals themselves. In addition, non-white men manhandling a white woman was completely forbidden among people of Griffith's white Southern viewpoint and was reason enough to kill the offending party.

In the next sequence the Natives vengeful nature and hatred of all whites is revealed. The chief's son's body is recovered by furtive Indian men and brought back to his father.

Title: THE DEATH OF THE CHIEFTAN'S SON FANS THE EVER  
READY SPARK OF HATRED TO REVENGE.

In the familiar frame encompassing the Indian camp, the chief's son's body is stretched out in the foreground next to a man beating a tom-tom. The Indian men, several in eagle war bonnets, dance flailing their rifle holding arms in the air. Griffith has let the audience in on something the townsfolk do not know: the Indians are getting themselves whipped into a frenzy to attack the settlers. There is no adjudication and no restraint. All the whites must die. The Screaming Savages are unleashed upon the innocent whites.

Back at the boarding house, Young Mother gives her baby to Dad, who is taking baby to town. Griffith lets the audience know what's at stake: White motherhood, family, and the life of innocents.

The Natives ride off to battle urged on by their women.

Young Dad, shows off his baby in town as people gather round. A woman holds the baby.

Title: THE PROUD FATHER LEAVES THE BABY IN CHARGE OF  
FOND ADMIRERS.

Dad leaves baby with the woman, and enters store with the girl's uncle.

Title: THE ATTACK.

The next section of the film depicts a brutal assault on the white townsfolk by the Savage Indian tribe. The threat of miscegenation rears its head. The utter savagery of the Indians is absolute. Griffith succeeds in removing the slightest trace of humanity in his depiction of the Indian tribe. They are a pestilence that must be eradicated for the civilized town to survive.

Young Dad is wounded. Some of the settlers valiantly defend themselves; some flee, relentlessly pursued by the crazed savages. The sequence anticipates Griffith's attack scene in *The Birth of a Nation*, two years in the future. In *The Birth of a Nation*, instead of crazed Indians attacking white settlers, Southern whites are attacked by an army of crazed black people.

The brutality of the attacking Natives is unrelenting. A mother is killed and her baby picked up and brutally smashed into the ground. The town is set afire. The Young Mother flees into the woods as the Indians approach the house she and her family is staying in. Young Mother cries out "My baby!"<sup>1</sup> An older man trying to hold off the encroaching Natives, is shot and scalped. Uncle gets the seemingly oblivious men at the boardinghouse to take up arms. They hunker down in the house. One man exits the building.

Title: THE MEXICAN RIDES TO BRING THE TROOPS

Rescue by the U.S. Cavalry is established as the settler's only hope. A man rides off into the scrubby landscape. The young mother stumbles outside the house deliriously.

Title: "MY BABY!"

Uncle pulls Young Mother into the house. The Indians are shown in a high angle wide shot circling and shooting at the house while on horseback. Griffith effectively uses a wide lens to feature the anguish on the young mother's face in a medium close up, while the audience can still see the inhabitants of the boardinghouse shooting out the windows in the same frame. The Man with Baby, runs for the main building with other

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<sup>1</sup> The young mother's words were discerned by lip reading.

settlers. They are shot down. Young Mother faints. Big Sister goes through a doggie door and rescues Baby. The Indians storm the burning house.

A gun is put to Young Mother's head as it seems the Indian attack will overwhelm the white settlers barricaded in the house where the children who precipitated the events leading to the attack cower under the covers. Similarly, in Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), when a state militia composed of black soldiers is close to vanquishing the defenders of a cabin which is home to a white former Union soldier and the hideout of the parents of the founder of the Ku Klux Klan in the story, the Union soldier positions his rifle butt above his daughter's head, about to knock her brains out. At the last possible moment, the cabin's occupants are rescued by the Ku Klux Klan, the films force for "good," as Griffith saw it (Jay 12). Griffith, a Southern white man of his time, believed that white women needed to be protected from the threat of miscegenation, especially rape by non-whites, even if it meant killing them to do so (Jay 4; Stanfield 101). Finally the Cavalry and the Mexican, with Baby's revived dad in tow, arrive in the nick of time. The Indians are decimated, the young family is reunited, and the girls have their puppies.

Griffith's skill at establishing the Indians as irredeemable savages was extremely effective. He sets up a stark contrast between the puppy and baby loving whites, and the puppy eating, baby smashing Indians. Griffith uses the Dog Feast to draw a contrast between the pure puppy loving white girls, the white mother and child, their admirers in the white town, and the savage Indians. His technique in *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* is reminiscent of his use of a similar juxtaposition in *The Birth of a Nation* where blacks

are shown to be barbaric by their behavior in the Georgia state legislature. In that film, the new African American lawmakers are shown barefoot, drinking whiskey, eating fried chicken and leering at white women while on the job, in contrast with the genteel behavior of the whites (*Birth*). The success of Griffith's depiction with audiences in the United States in 1913, whose population according to the 1910 U.S. Census was 89% white, is not hard to imagine (Gibson, and Jung). Griffith took the already successful Screaming Savage trope established by Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West shows, and used his highly manipulative, juxtaposition based cinematic technique to further dehumanize Native people, reducing them to the level of dangerous animals. Griffith's version of the Screaming Savage trope as a mode of depiction persists to some degree in the films of this study, with the exceptions of *Cheyenne Autumn* and *Little Big Man*.

Oscar Apfel and Cecil B. DeMille's 1914 seven-reel motion picture adaptation of *The Squaw Man*, based on Edwin Milton Royle and Julie Opp Faversham's successful stage play and 1906 novel ... "is a defining one for cross-racial romance narratives, and the film is a major landmark in the evolution of American cinema" (Hearne 182). It is the only film made and remade three times by the same director. It was first produced in 1914, again in 1918, and finally as a talkie in 1931. It is the first feature film shot in Hollywood (Buscombe 93, Mast and Kawin 137, Kilpatrick 51). It is also the first feature length Western (Hearne 181). The studio used for interior sets, including those of Capt. James Wynnegate's ranch house, sits across the street from the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles and is now a studio museum.

Apfel and DeMille, in the 1914 version *The Squaw Man*, like Griffith in *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, effectively use juxtaposition to emphasize the otherness of the

Native American characters. The gentility and high moral character of the protagonist James Wynnegate, and Diana, the English woman he loves, is presented in contrast to the Native Utes, who are presented as alcoholic, violent toward their women, simple minded, furtive, and in the case of Nat-u-ritch, the “squaw” in the story, sexually forward. The Screaming Savage trope surfaces briefly. Like Griffith’s depiction in *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, the Natives are presented as little better than animals. The defining depiction in the film, however, is that of the Indian Princess/Squaw, who marries a white man, and as a result of the miscegenationous union dies. In this case, she dies by her own hand.

The Princess/Squaw narrative in *The Squaw Man* contains elements common to numerous motion pictures that preceded and followed it. M. Elise Marubbio writes:

Often called “squaw man” films because the white hero marries an Indian “squaw”, their themes of interracial marriage reflect concerns about cultural difference, miscegenation, and interracial families. The blueprint for later manifestations of the Celluloid Princess, this early figure differs from those of other eras in the combination of plot elements that define her nature. Four key elements surface in these films: her character holds a primary role in these stories; she is a full-blooded Native woman and usually a chief’s daughter; she often has children who are being taken from her to be educated in the East; and she commits suicide. (30)

*The Squaw Man* contains all these elements.

The protagonist Capt. James Wynnegate, for the honor of the Kerhill name, has

taken the rap for his cousin Henry, Earl of Kerhill's crime of embezzling funds from the orphan's fund of the 16<sup>th</sup> Lancers. Henry is married to Lady Diana who loves James, and Henry knows it. James and Diana unable to be together, have a chaste friendship. To escape the authorities James books passage to America. Once in New York, James saves a man in a restaurant from being bilked by a couple who have pickpocketed his cash heavy pocketbook. The grateful man, Big Jim, invites James (Jim), to go out West.

In the following sequence Apfel and DeMille establish the clear difference between the Native Utes, and James (Jim) and his buddy Big Jim. The Utes are uncivilized compared to the ultra-refined Jim, and are furtive where Jim is upright and straightforward.

In a composition similar to the type of framing favored by Griffith, DeMille puts Tabywana chief of the local Ute tribe and Nat-u-ritch his daughter, in the foreground of a frame photographed with a wide-angle lens, as the Englishman and Big Jim ride into frame and acknowledge the Indians. The Natives do not rise at the arrival of the two white men as any civilized person would. Nat-u-ritch sits cooking a piece of meat over an open fire. The Natives stay where they are, until Nat-u-ritch gets up to get a better look at James. She furtively peeks around the backside of a Palomino, watching James make camp for the night. Next, night has fallen and Nat-u-ritch, crouching low to the ground, sneaks over to where James is sleeping. She lights a match to get a better view of his face. When the men leave at dawn, Nat-u-ritch watches them ride off. The Indian princess is smitten with the noble white man but will not engage him directly. Furtiveness is a big part of her character, and that of her father Tabywana. The juxtaposition of Jim's admirable qualities that were established in the preceding scenes,



with those of the furtive Indians, is important in creating a negative Native character trait, and in establishing the Native's otherness.

In his *mise en scène* and use of juxtaposition, it's not surprising to see DeMille using a similar technique to that of Griffith, whom DeMille admired greatly. In a 1958 interview De Mille states: "He was the first one—and the one who taught us all— ...And Griffith is my Number One director. THE BATTLE AT ELDERBUSH GULCH [1913]—it's a two-reeler. That was a wonderful picture—I ran it not long ago" (Pratt 137).

Even though Nat-u-ritch and Tabywana wear costumes indistinguishable from those worn by the generic Indians in *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch*, she in beaded and fringed buckskin and Tabywana in a blanket with a feather in his hair, the two are identified as Utes, which takes them out of the generic by identifying them as members of a tribe that lived in Wyoming at the time of the story. In both silent pictures, costumes that will become a Hollywood generic standard, are worn by Natives of Griffith's generic tribe, and *The Squaw Man's* Utes. They help establish a pattern of disregard for cultural accuracy in the depiction of Natives in Hollywood films.

In the next sequence, the wildness and otherness of the Utes is established in a tribal dance scene. Nat-u-ritch's display of sexual desire in her selection of Jim to be her dance partner, is clear to everyone but Jim. In his society, a respectable woman wouldn't be so forward.

James, now a cattle ranch owner, and Big Jim, watch as a number of Ute men, several in big eagle feather headdresses dance wildly. Nat-u-ritch, dressed in white buckskin, the only woman among them, taking him by the arm, pulls Jim into the dance. Jim, a little taken aback, looks over to Big Jim who reacts enthusiastically. James and a

happy Nat-u-ritch dance surrounded by the frenzied encircling Ute men. Nat-u-ritch is clearly a wild creature, especially in comparison to the refined Lady Diana, James' true love. Nat-u-ritch doesn't know the rules of white courtship, especially, those of Jim's Victorian society. Propriety and the rules of civilized society are as alien to her as is her behavior to James. So far, Nat-u-ritch is the only woman seen by the audience in the entire Wyoming part of the drama. It is clear that Nat-u-ritch, who has been observing James from the moment she first saw him, has chosen him whether he understands this or not.

In the following sequence Jim's nemesis is introduced, and Tabywana is shown to be an alcoholic. The film exploits and reinforces the alcoholic Indian trope. Nat-u-ritch's furtiveness is also shown to be integral to her character.

Back on the range, unsavory Cash Hawkins and his henchmen are seen rustling Jim's cattle. Jim's men stop the rustlers at gunpoint, who back down and leave.

Title: Cash tries to cheat Tabywana in a cattle deal.

Cash plies Tabywana with alcohol by waving an open bottle under his nostrils. Tabywana doesn't hesitate. He drinks down the entire pint immediately. Nat-u-ritch observes from around the corner of a building. Cash gesticulates as Tabywana staggers. Nat-u-ritch watches from a distance as Cash gestures that there will be more drink, but her father shakes his head no to the cattle deal.

Tabywana, true to stereotype, cannot resist alcohol for even a second. He's a violent drunk too. Nat-u-ritch attempts to stop him as he staggers to the saloon where Cash has gone. Her father tripping as he steps up to the boardwalk, swings at her and misses: he's inebriated. Once he's inside the saloon Cash plays with Tabywana, waving

a bottle in front of his face then taking it away as Tabywana lunges toward it, a wild look in his eye: the Crazy Savage. James stands in the doorway as Nat-u-ritch sneaks up behind Cash and knocks the bottle from his hands. Her drunken father swings at her again. Cash paws at her in what looks like the beginning of a sexual assault. James comes between them. Nat-u-ritch helps her father out of the place, as a standoff between Cash and Jim develops.

Nat-u-ritch, portrayed by Native American actress Lillian St. Cyr, also known as Lillian Red Wing, is portrayed as a loyal daughter. She attempts to prevent her father from being swindled by Cash, even confronting him in the saloon. Aside from her transparent qualities such as loyalty to her father and the forward sexual interest she displays toward Jim, Nat-u-ritch often operates under cover: she is a sneaky Indian. When she first sees James, she peers around the backside of a horse. When she wants to get a good look at James she sneaks over to him in a semi crouch at night, while he's sleeping. She peers around the corner of a building as Cash plies her father with drink. When Cash is taunting her father in the bar, she sneaks up behind him in order to knock the bottle from his hand. Nat-u-ritch being a Native, doesn't play by the white people's rules. Her Native American powers of observation however, superior to those of the "civilized" people, serve her and other characters well as the story unfolds.

Just as the confrontation between Cash and James ends, Diana, Henry, the Earl Jim took the rap for, and another Englishman, in America for Diana's health, arrive in the Saloon. James recognizes Diana, and as Big Jim calms him, Cash barges in shooting his pistols into the ceiling.

Title: "Everybody in the Longhorn drinks with Cash Hawkins."

Cash points his gun at James, then hands Henry a shot of whiskey.

Title: "To h-l with the English."

The other Englishman protests. Cash sticks his gun in his chest. Cash is disarmed by Jim. When offered a drink, Jim won't drink with Henry.

Title: "I won't drink with a man who robbed the orphans of the king's soldiers."

Henry and friend leave. Diana lingers for a moment and allows Jim to kiss her hand. The Brits leave on the train. Cash, furious, acquires two new guns from a man outside the bar. He heads back to the Saloon. Nat-u-ritch furtively enters the saloon and observes James, desolate. She knows Cash is on his way back. Nat-u-ritch enters a storeroom in the saloon. She pulls a pistol from a chest pocket in her dress, a beaded pouch falls onto the floor. Cash rushes in with guns blazing. James turns and Cash falls to the ground, shot dead before James can fully turn around. The Sheriff and a group of men rush in. The Sheriff kneels over Cash's body. He takes Jim's gun, but finds it hasn't been fired. Nat-u-ritch runs back into the saloon and crouches on the floor as a bar employee enters and goes into the storeroom, where he finds and pockets the beaded pouch that fell out of Nat-u-ritch's clothing. Back in the saloon, Nat-u-ritch rushes over to Jim. She kneels before him and strokes his arm.

Title: "Me kill 'um."

Jim clasps his hand over Nat-u-ritch's mouth, putting his arm around her shoulder, drawing her to him. Her classic "Indian" talk, serves to remind the audience of her otherness, her primitive nature. Jim's physical reaction, pulling her to him, presages their future intimate relationship. Nat-u-ritch's protection of Jim from Cash's murderous

intentions, results in her committing an unforgiveable crime: she killed a white man. However Jim, knowing she saved his life, keeps her culpability a secret. Nat-u-ritch's wildness, that she does not understand the ways of white society, leads her to act as she does. She kills to prevent harm coming to the man she loves. This is the second time Nat-u-ritch has shown Jim that he is important to her. However, Jim just having been allowed to kiss Lady Diana's hand only thinks of the woman he wants but cannot have.

Title: Six months later.

Jim seated in his study, reads a magazine. As he reads, looking at an illustration of a woman draped over a chair, his imagination (and an excellent visual effect) morphs her into an image of Diana. She raises her head and mouths the word "Jim," then morphs back into the illustration. Jim's men enter the room. Horses are missing. It is the dead of winter. Jim puts on his coat and follows.

Jim and Big Jim ride to Tabywana's encampment. Tabywana, swathed in heavy blankets points to where the missing horses are. Nat-u-ritch in a fur trimmed buckskin dress, comes out of her teepee to watch Jim going off into the snow. Jim, snow blind, falls off his horse, struggles in the snow, and falls into the "Death Hole", a volcanic vent that emits poisonous gases. Jim's riderless horse is seen by Nat-u-ritch, who mounts up and follows tracks to find Jim. Nat-u-ritch suffers the noxious gases, rescues Jim and gets him back to Tabywana's camp. Tabywana enlists a medicine man to dance over Jim as Nat-u-ritch and Big Jim minister to him. The use of the medicine man's dance over Jim, underscores another element of the otherness of Nat-u-ritch and her people. They are pagans who have a belief system that includes supernatural forces completely alien to those of the white man. Jim is returned to his home, where Nat-u-ritch sits, watching

over him. Big Jim pays Tabywana for his help. Tabywana wants Nat-u-ritch to come with him. She wants to stay with Jim. Tabywana indignant, gestures as if he will strike Nat-u-ritch, but backs off. Nat-u-ritch remains with Jim, sitting on his bed.

In the previously discussed sequence, Nat-u-ritch shows the depth of her caring for Jim. A white woman, especially a pampered aristocrat like Diana, could not have conceived of following Jim into the snow. Nat-u-ritch, connected to the fundamental necessities of a life spent living off the land, has the skills, resourcefulness and will, to brave near mortal danger to rescue the man she loves.

In the next sequence, Jim feeling he'll never have Lady Diana the woman he truly loves, sits in front of the fire smoking a pipe. Nat-u-ritch kneels next to him. Jim gestures for her to go. She makes it clear she doesn't want to leave. He strokes her head. She strokes his hand. He brings her to his chest. Nat-u-ritch finally gets Jim, but she is not the woman he wants. She is the woman who is there.

Title: Several Months Later.

Jim sees a pair of baby moccasins that awaken emotion in him. Nat-u-ritch lowers her head, she doesn't look at Jim, who mounts up and rides away. Jim returns with the Justice of the Peace, who when he sees he's being asked to marry the inter-racial couple refuses, until Big Jim persuades him at gun point. The couple is married.

Jim the principled aristocrat seems to have had no moral problem cohabiting with Nat-u-ritch the past several months. As Elizabeth Bird states: "Clearly, some relationships between White "squaw men" and American Indian women were caring partnerships, but the overwhelming image of the squaw is indeed that of a sexual convenience" (74). Nat-u-ritch seems to be the only woman in all of Wyoming and Jim

has her. Indian Princess or not, Nat-u-ritch is not a fit spouse for a man of aristocratic background like Jim. But impending fatherhood has worked its magic on him. He can live with Nat-u-ritch without benefit of clergy<sup>2</sup>, but his child will not be a bastard.

The sexual relationship with and marriage to Jim has affected a change in Nat-u-ritch, one that she is probably not aware of. She has transformed from Princess to squaw. Elizabeth Bird notes: “American Indian women have endured the burden of both racial and gender stereotyping. Just as popular imagery defined White women as either good or bad, virgin or whore, so it forced images of American Indian women into a similar dichotomy” (Bird 73). As mentioned in the introduction, Elizabeth Bird notes: The “Indian princess” is defined as one who helps or saves a White man, but if she actually has a sexual relationship with a man, she becomes a squaw” (73). Joanna Hearne elaborates further:

The “squaw” figure denotes a shameful sexuality that taints the men she associates with (hence the derogatory term “squaw man”). Mixed-race relationships, especially those between Indian women and white men, are one way in which the landscape and resources of the American West were represented cinematically as available for sexual, economic, and sociopolitical exploitation. (183)

We next see Hal, Jim and Nat-u-ritch’s son, at about three years old on horseback,

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<sup>2</sup> DeMille made and remade *The Squaw Man* three times, all before 1934, and the active enforcement of the Hollywood Production Code, which discouraged depictions of adulterous relationships. “The sanctity of marriage and the home shall be upheld. Pictures shall not infer that low forms of sex relationship are the accepted or common thing. 1. *Adultery*, sometimes necessary plot material. Must not be explicitly treated, or justified, or presented attractively” (Quigley, and Lord ).

holding a gun. Nat-u-ritch objects. Jim holds her back and then delivers the boy to her. Jim consistently disregards all input that Nat-u-ritch puts forward regarding their son's upbringing. The sexism that was common in movies and society in 1913, contributes to Jim being the only one making decisions about Hal's future. It is Nat-u-ritch's Indian identity with its attendant primitiveness that negates her input into decisions regarding Hal's upbringing. Jim's disregard of her opinions eventually becomes total, with their son being taken from her. It drives Nat-u-ritch to suicide.

The unusual casting of a Native woman in a leading role in a movie with important Native characters, makes the 1914 version of *The Squaw Man* unique. Not until Dan George appeared in *Little Big Man* (1970), is a Native actor again cast in such an important role in an American film, and delivered the same level of authentic depiction. Nat-u-ritch displays affection to her son holding him close, which is infrequent in films depicting Native American women and their children. M. Elise Marubbio notes: "The power and reality that St. Cyr brought to the film as a native actress, is unparalleled by the performances of actresses later cast in the part. Her performance and the large Native cast of this version separate it from the subsequent versions" (51). More true to the standard stereotypical Hollywood portrayal of Native women was that of Ann Little in the 1918 version. "According to the press reaction, Ann Little's portrayal in 1918 was more indicative of a popular conceptualization of Native Americans, as illustrated in a review of her acting as a "wonderful characterization of the female Redskin, with her expressionless features, changing little in suffering or in joy" (Marubbio 52-53). This culturally pervasive white preconception of the emotionless Indian mother is also reflected in the voice over narration of Tom Jeffords in Delmer



Daves' 1950 production, *Broken Arrow*. When the injured teenage Indian boy Jeffords has nursed back to health says:

BOY: In the wikiup my mother is crying for me.

Jeffords is astonished.

JEFFORDS: "My mother is crying" he said. Funny. It never struck me that an Apache woman would cry over her son like any other woman. Apaches are wild animals, we all said.

In the meantime, the barkeep who found Nat-u-ritch's beaded bag shows it to the sheriff. Henry takes a fatal fall in the Alps, exonerating Jim with a note written moments before he expires. Diana, back in England and accompanied by two gentlemen, speaks.

Title: "We are going to find Jim and bring him home."

The Earl's death makes Jim the new Earl. Diana, now a widow could marry him if he were single, as he was when Diana last saw him.

Back in the saloon the sheriff is put on notice that unless he finds Cash Hawkins' killer he won't be re-elected. Tabywana, furtive, is in the bar as the white men who completely ignore him, look at Nat-u-ritch's beaded bag. Tabywana recognizes the bag and rides away to warn Jim that the sheriff is coming after Nat-u-ritch. The train arrives carrying Lady Diana and two male companions. The sheriff and his men mount up and ride off. Back at the ranch, Jim tells Big Jim that he's broke. Jim offers a rifle and military medals to his men in lieu of payment. Tabywana arrives and warns Jim that the sheriff and his men are coming for Nat-u-ritch. The sheriff rides up to the ranch at a furious pace. Big Jim waves him and his men off. The older of the two men

accompanying Lady Diana rides up, bows to Jim and informs him that he is now Earl of Kerhill. Jim, a broken man minutes ago, re-inflates. He imagines himself back in England at a posh party, reviewing the Royal Lancers on parade. He is brought out of his reverie by the embrace of his son Hal, whom he introduces to the gentleman who takes Hal by the hand, admiring the lad. Nat-u-ritch walks by carrying a bucket, the gentleman asks: “who’s that”? When Jim indicates that Nat-u-ritch is his wife, Hal’s mother, the man lowers his head sadly. The thought that a member of a noble family, the new Earl, would be tied to a savage by marriage is hard to swallow. The change in Jim’s status does not bode well for Nat-u-ritch, his wife. She becomes an obstacle to Jim in claiming his birthright.

Tabywana concerned about his daughter’s welfare, lurks under a wagon in order to listen in on a conversation between the Sheriff and his deputy. The invisibility of both Nat-u-ritch and Tabywana is an important component of Apfel and DeMille’s version of Indian-ness. They are invisible to the whites they furtively observe. They count for so little to the whites, that they barely react to their presence when they are in their midst, as in the scenes in the saloon.

Title: “He is the future Earl of Kerhill. He is entitled to the education of a gentleman - Send him home with me.”

Home of course is England. The gentleman presses his case with Jim. Jim embraces and kisses the boy. He comes to the realization that the boy must go and assents to him leaving with the gentleman. Nat-u-ritch is not even asked her opinion before Jim agrees to send the boy away. Jim walks to the house and calls out to Nat-u-ritch. As he explains what will happen, she looks increasingly apprehensive realizing the

rug has been pulled out from under her. A look of utter bleakness comes over her. M. Elise Marubbio points out, “Hal’s removal parallels that of many Native children who were forcibly taken away from their parents to be educated in religious and military schools as part of the civilizing mission of the period” (Marubbio 50). When Nat-u-ritch finally realizes that soon she’ll probably never see her son again, she rushes to embrace him. Jim appears to be annoyed. She’s behaving against type. Good Indians are supposed to be stoic and accept their fate. Jim pries the two apart. The look of betrayal on Nat-u-ritch’s face is powerful. St. Cyr’s reaction when her son is taken from her in the film was entirely personal. As Dustin Farnum (Jim) reported in the press:

When we were rehearsing the scene where the baby is taken from Nat-u-ritch to be sent back to England this pure blooded-Indian girl broke down and went into hysterics. It was pitiful. It was twenty-five minutes before we could proceed with the picture. In all my years on stage I never saw anything like it. It was absolutely the reverse of what we have been taught about Indians. (Marubbio 50-51)

The English gentleman stands with back turned as Nat-u-ritch walks away at Jim’s insistence. She turns to Jim and Hal once more, arms outstretched. Jim sternly points his finger as if gesturing to a bad dog to go away. The expression on Nat-u-ritch’s face and her entire body language, looks like that of a beaten dog as she exits frame, going away from the ranch house.

Title: Diana, impatient, starts for the house.

Diana, the second Englishman and a deputy ride toward Jim’s ranch. Jim gleefully cavorts with Hal playing horsey ride in Hal’s bedroom. At dawn, Nat-u-ritch is alone on

the plain, kneeling before the rising sun, despondent. She, a chief's daughter, married to the most upright of white men to whom she has given a son, has no standing with her husband, or anyone. She is truly a squaw.

Morning comes and the Sheriff and deputy are looking around Jim's ranch. Tabywana crouching behind a hay bale, pressing himself against a wall, surreptitiously follows their every move. The sheriff goes inside the house to the very drawer that holds Nat-u-ritch's pistol. He grabs the pistol, but is attacked by Tabywana. Big Jim wrestles the gun away from the men.

Title: "This gun belongs to Nat-u-ritch."

Jim and Big Jim confront the sheriff telling him to leave the ranch.

Near Jim's horse corral the sheriff, covertly observed by Tabywana, plans to apprehend Nat-u-ritch. Tabywana threatens.

Title: "You take Nat-u-ritch- Me fight"

The sheriff and his deputy laugh at Tabywana. Aside from his stupid sounding Indian talk, Tabywana has been established as a drunken Indian. The only white person in the entire picture besides Jim who even acknowledges Tabywana is Cash Hawkins, who plies him with alcohol in order to cheat him.

Diana, Gentleman #2 and the deputy ride up. Jim and Hal and the first Englishman are outside the house as Jim hugs and kisses Hal. Diana strides right up to Jim and opens her arms, as if expecting an embrace. Jim holds onto Hal looking down.

Title: "Whose little boy are you?"

Hal gestures to his father. Diana is momentarily disturbed, but then embraces the boy. Diana, Hal and the men enter the house. The sheriff and his posse ride off from Jim's

corral. Nat-u-ritch emerges from her hiding spot inside the corral. Nat-u-ritch hesitatingly moves closer to the house, then backs into the barn. Even though this is a silent picture, she reacts as though she can hear the voices of the English making plans for her son and husband. Tabywana, rides into his encampment, dons a war bonnet, and exhorts his men to ride with him to save Nat-u-ritch from the sheriff. The Screaming Savages will ride to her rescue. Jim and Big Jim pack young Hal off with the Brits. Jim, out of his sense of marital duty, plans to stay behind. Nat-u-ritch in one of the few true close ups in this movie, peers down from an opening in the barn loft at the scene below. The authentic emotion packed into Lillian St. Cyr's performance is profoundly moving. Her otherness is emphasized by her location, removed from the scene of her son's departure she can only look on as her heart is cut out. She has no standing whatsoever with Jim, Big Jim, or any of the English. She is invisible even to her son: he never even asks where his mother is as he is taken away. Jim has taken on the role of both mother and father as much as one who has been widowed must try and fill the void. He hugs and kisses the boy. Diana never once questions whether the boy has a mother. By her embrace, she makes him hers. A future lord can't be the son of an animal.<sup>3</sup>

As the English take Hal away, Jim picks up Hal's little moccasins. He clutches them to his chest. Jim sits on a bench, head in hands, as Nat-u-ritch, shaking her head, walks unseen into the house. She gets her pistol from the dresser. She walks in her usual furtive way with gun visible, directly behind Jim. For a moment one might think she will shoot Jim for what he has done, but she reaches down and gets Hal's moccasins without

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<sup>3</sup> See Vine Deloria's description of the white view of Indians as wild animals: Chapter Two, page 5

Jim knowing she was even there. Invisible to Jim, Nat-u-ritch exits frame. The sheriff and posse stop the wagon containing young Hal.

Title: I'm going to arrest Nat-u-ritch for killin' Cash Hawkins and I hold you all as witnesses."

The sheriff, the wagon containing Hal, and Tabywana's war party all converge at Jim's ranch. Next we see Nat-u-ritch kneeling, facing the sun with arms outstretched as if praying. She clutches Hal's moccasins to her breast, then shoots herself. Tabywana brings Nat-u-ritch's body back to Jim as Hal looks on, holding close to Lady Diana who has fully assumed the mother role. Jim holds Nat-u-ritch's body in the foreground as Tabywana and Diana look on. Cowboys are next in line. Indian warriors are in the far background. Diana shields Hal's eyes. Jim accepts the inevitability of the ill-fated relationship.

Title: "Poor Little Mother!"

Apfel and DeMille's *Squaw Man* reinforces many of the expected qualities of the Hollywood Indian in behavior, dress and in spoken language. Both Tabywana and Nat-u-ritch are wild creatures that display a consistent furtiveness that is completely unlike the straightforward behavior of the white characters. The only time Nat-u-ritch is straightforward is in expressing her sexual desire for Jim. This is seen most obviously when she pulls him into the dance circle, and when she finally stays with him after she saves his life. When Diana, Jim's true love comes to fetch him, Jim almost immediately agrees to send his and Nat-u-ritch's son off with Diana, so Hal can realize his destiny as a British lord. Jim doesn't concern himself for a moment with Nat-u-ritch's feelings for their son. Regardless of the reality of Nat-u-ritch's deep pain, Jim buys into the trope of

the stoic emotionless Indian mother. The shameful carnal relationship with the squaw is beneath him. He never acknowledges his marriage to Nat-u-ritch by introducing her to the British as his wife. When asked about Hal's mother, Jim gestures to Nat-u-ritch as she walks past, carrying a bucket of water. Nat-u-ritch, her heart shattered by the loss of her son and her husband's disdain, her fate at the hands of the sheriff almost certain to be her execution, kills herself. By her death she allows her son and the white man she loved to achieve his white destiny. Nat-u-ritch fulfills her destiny as a squaw through her act of self-sacrifice.

Even though Nat-u-ritch is a stereotypical character who reinforces white society's view of Native people as primitive and unable to exist within civilized society, it is St. Cyr's genuine experience of the miserable fate of her people at the hands of white assimilationists that brought emotional authenticity to *The Squaw Man*. As Dustin Farnum (Jim) said: "It was absolutely the reverse of what we have been taught about Indians" (Marubbio 51).

In spite of Lillian St. Cyr's strong performance in the 1914 version of *The Squaw Man*, the film itself reinforces negative stereotypes of Native Americans that would persist for decades. Apfel and DeMille have depicted the Native people in this story as inferior to whites, beings whose emotions are less important than those of white people. The only time an Indian matters is when he or she can help a white person, or is in the way of what a white person wants. In Nat-u-ritch's case, she provided a sexual outlet for Jim, but she was in the way of Hal realizing his white destiny and had to sacrifice herself to allow her son and Jim to live as they should. In the movies analyzed in the next chapter, the same values hold true. The problem for white people in *The*

*Plainsman, Broken Arrow* and *Cheyenne Autumn*, is Native resistance to the white concept of Manifest Destiny.



### Chapter 3

#### *Depiction of Native Americans in films of the Sound Era 1930s-1960s*

In this chapter, depictions of Native Americans will be examined in three films of the sound era that were made prior to the Native American Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s. Cecil B. DeMille's *The Plainsman* (1936) was selected for analysis as it represents the classic cinematic modes of depiction of Native Americans with the enhancement of synch sound, and enough screen time for the depiction to make an impact on the audience's perceptions of Native people. Its depiction is a direct descendant of the depiction of Natives in Griffith's *Battle of Elderbush Gulch*, which is a direct descendant of the depiction defined in *Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Shows*. *Broken Arrow* (1950) was selected because it is widely considered the first *pro-Indian* Western. The film is a cinematic exemplar of the changing racial attitudes in the post-WWII United States. *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) bears scrutiny as it is the last Western film directed by John Ford, the pre-eminent director of Western films. It was a conscious attempt by Ford to mitigate the negative stereotypes of Native Americans that he reinforced in his previous Westerns (Bogdanovich 104).

In Cecil B. DeMille's *The Plainsman* (1936), the modes of depiction explored by Griffith and Apfel and DeMille in their early work solidify in their classic form for the overwhelmingly white audience of pre-WWII America.

By 1938, paid admissions to movies in the United States totaled roughly 80 million per week, or 65% of the nation's population (Mast and Kavin 268). The success of the modes of depiction seen in *The Plainsman* and hundreds of other films in the classic Hollywood Studio period that closed with the end of WWII in 1946, was

supported by the approval of the enormous, largely white audience. The depictions survived because there was little environmental pressure for them to change.

Soon after the end of WWII a changing environment required changes in the product that the studios were putting into production. Box office revenues peaked in 1946 and then rapidly declined into the 1950s, as other forms of mass entertainment such as television became popular. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1948 decision in *U.S. v. Paramount Pictures, Inc.*, required the studios to sell off their theatres, forcing each film to have to succeed on its own, as the studios had no guarantee that all their films would find favor with exhibitors (Mast, and Kavin 328-329). Receptivity to change in the mode of depiction of Native Americans in the movies, prompted by growing acceptance of the post WWII audience to ideas of racial equality, paved the way for *Broken Arrow* (1950), the first of the "pro-Indian" movies, to succeed.

*Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) was John Ford's attempt to show a story from the Indian point of view (Bogdanovich 104). Although Ford is widely regarded as the greatest of Western directors, his attempt at changing the way Native Americans were portrayed was not entirely successful with his audience. The environment would not be receptive to the portrayal of the Native point of view, until *Little Big Man* succeeded at the box office in 1970.

*The Plainsman* presents an entirely different Indian than the furtive, alcoholic Tabywana of *The Squaw Man*, or the members of the savage, vengeful tribe Griffith depicted in *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch*. The Natives in *The Plainsman* present a potent threat to the entire enterprise of Manifest Destiny. Cecil B. DeMille, known for his Biblical epics, and co-director of *The Squaw Man* (1914), produced and directed *The*

*Plainsman*. The film is an epic fantasy about the challenges of America's Western expansion. The film features iconic Western characters Buffalo Bill Cody (Gary Cooper), Wild Bill Hickok (James Ellison), Calamity Jane (Jean Arthur), and General George Armstrong Custer (John Miljan), in a mix that defies the historical record, but makes for an entertaining movie that reinforces white points of view regarding Native Americans. The film is a straight-up Manifest Destiny story featuring the expansion of white control of the West, in opposition to the efforts of Native people to preserve their land free of white encroachment. This picture epitomizes the blatantly racist depiction of Native people that will prevail in American Cinema until the 1950s.

In a cabinet meeting on the last day of his life, President Lincoln informs his cabinet that the influx of men returning from war could create a glut of men on the labor market, and possible domestic unrest. Lincoln and his cabinet concur that there are vast lands to the West that could absorb the returning soldiers and their families. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton mentions that this plan can work only if the land is made safe for the settlers. Stanton then describes the problem.

STANTON: The Indians attacked and massacred our settlers there.

On his way to Ford's theatre, Lincoln's parting words are:

LINCOLN: We will continue this tomorrow, for the frontier must be made safe.

*The frontier must be made safe for white settlement* is the controlling idea behind *The Plainsman*.

At a board meeting of the Winchester Rifle Company, a board member laments that the government has cancelled orders for hundreds of thousands of rifles. Board

Member #1 suggests that the Indians need rifles. They currently use bow and arrow to hunt. They will pay \$100 a rifle. Several board members object, concerned that the guns will be used against white men. Board member #1 answers that they will sell to peaceful Indians who will use the rifles for hunting. Board Member#1, who initiated the gun selling idea, explains that there will now be civilian control of Indian affairs, and they, Winchester, will have “a certain” participation. Gruff, unkempt looking John Latimer (Charles Bickford) is introduced to the board as the rifle distributor for the entire region West of St. Louis. Just as one of the objecting board members interjects that Mr. Lincoln will not approve of this plan, shouts are heard in the streets. Lincoln has been assassinated. All the board members rush out of the room. Only Board Member #1 and John Latimer remain.

BOARD MEMBER #1: It’s a terrible thing Mr. Latimer. Yes, a national calamity. You will leave at once for St. Louis.

The preceding line presages the disastrous results that will occur as a result of the rifle sales to the Indians.

In the next scene a Mississippi riverboat is unloading amidst a crowded dock scene. The camera cranes over the scene, finally resting on a close up of a box labeled Farming Tools, with John Latimer’s name and monogram on it.

A Man in a Union Army uniform is revealed, sitting on the box. The Man engages a young teenage boy in conversation. They talk about fancy shooting and Buffalo Bill. The riverboat whistle blows, and the Man checks his pocket watch. The boy sees a picture inside the watch of the Man and an attractive blonde who stands in

front of him. The boy asks if the woman is his sister. The Man reveals that the picture is of Calamity Jane.

BOY: Is she your best girl?

MAN: Son, one of these days you're gonna grow up and you ought to know about women. See, the thing is this... women are... well they're... Well son, I can tell you what an Indian will do to you, but you never know what a woman will do.

A carriage unloads pretty women and a dandy looking man. The Man shoots the dandy (Buffalo Bill) with the kid's slingshot. It's Wild Bill Hickok in the Union uniform. The two friends have a reunion. Buffalo Bill's wife hurries him onto the boat. Prim, attractive and well spoken, she epitomizes the Civilizing Woman From the East. She lets Hickok know that she intends to change Cody.

LOUISA: Will's promised me to give up scouting and killing Indians, and all that nonsense.

The next scene begins, with Calamity Jane on foot, singlehandedly bringing in a team of six horses to hitch to a stagecoach. DeMille establishes Jane as a rough and ready woman of the frontier, but glamourized in the person of Jean Arthur. The riverboat has docked at Leavenworth. Latimer asks where his cargo is. Hickok questions Latimer of the need for farming tools in Hayes City.

HICKOK: Didn't have any use for farming tools last time I was there. Calamity Jane runs up to Hickok throws her arms around his neck and plants a kiss on him. Bill is standoffish. Calamity has had too many other men. The Codys and Hickok

are on their way to Hayes City. Cody introduces Calamity to Louisa who is uncomfortable with Jane's coarse manner. Calamity drives the stagecoach.

On the way to Hayes City, Hickok stops the stage. Breezy, an old scout is slumped over his horse on the side of the road. Arrows protrude from his body and his carry pouch.

BREEZY: Why Bill Hickok, I thought you was off to the war.

HICKOK: War's over Breezy.

BREEZY: Yeah, just beginnin' where I come from. Two or three thousand Sioux Indians claimbing (?) around Fort Piney with war paint on.

Hickok reports to General Custer upon arrival in Hayes City, filling him in on Breezy's condition and the need for ammunition at Fort Piney.

CUSTER: I'll get that ammunition to Fort Piney somehow, but I can't spare more than one troop to take it. Here at Hayes City I'm faced by Satana's Kiowas... the whole Sioux nation's up here... Now Yellow Hand's on the loose with his Cheyenne. I can't move from Hayes City until I find out where that he-wolf's headed for.

*The Plainsman's* Indians are numerous, organized, and are armed with rifles that are superior to the soldiers', thanks to unprincipled profiteers like Latimer and his bosses at the Winchester Rifle Company. In this picture, unlike the potent cavalry in *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch*, Custer's cavalry is ill-equipped, undermanned, and under constant pressure from hostile natives. DeMille sets up the threatening situation posed by the lethally armed, massed Native forces before even one Indian appears on the screen.

Custer wants to get Cody to scout for the ammunition train to Fort Piney. Hickok lets him know that Cody has a wife and wants to settle down.

CUSTER: There's an Indian war starting. Women lying on these plains with Indian arrows in them. Get Cody here.

Hickok promises Cody will leave with the ammunition train. Hickok will locate Yellow Hand.

Hickok stops by the Cody's cabin where Calamity has arrived with food and whiskey. Hickok fills Cody in on the desperate situation with the Indians. Louisa isn't happy about it. Hickok bluntly lets her know what's at stake if the Indians aren't stopped.

HICKOK: You've never seen the Indian tribes at war ma'am. You've never seen men killed and mutilated, and bodies of women burned, and babies dragged from their mother's arms and dashed against the rocks.

Cody stops Hickok's diatribe. Calamity says she'll stay with the fearful Louisa. Both men ride away. Louisa is pregnant, but didn't get a moment to tell her husband before he rode off with Hickok.

It's night. The women play dress up. Calamity puts on a dress and woman's hat for the first time in her life. She looks at herself in a distorted mirror, similar to the kind you'd find in a carnival fun house. Louisa hears the sound of a coyote. Peering through the window, Calamity sees Indian faces lit from below to look more scary. Calamity gives Louisa instructions to sneak out, take her horse and ride to town. The next scene is on a par with D.W. Griffith's notorious depictions of black people as subhuman buffoons

in *The Birth of a Nation*. In *The Plainsman*, all major Indian roles are played by white actors in redface. This is similar to Griffith's casting of all major black roles in *The Birth of a Nation*, with white people in blackface (*Birth*). The emotional authenticity displayed in Lillian St. Cyr's performance in the 1914 version of *The Squaw Man* is nowhere to be found among this bunch of pretend Indians. In fact, DeMille's Indian advisor on the film, Iron Eyes Cody, was a false Indian. Cody was entirely of Sicilian descent, and had DeMille completely fooled as to his ethnic origin (Aleiss 30, Kozlovic). The following scene rivals the worst of Griffith's for its unvarnished racism.

A group of seven Indian men come in the door to Cody's cabin. They look suspiciously around the room. Calamity hands the Indian men some of Louisa's hats to try on. All the men speak in a low Indian-speak cadence similar to the speech of Hollywood's version of African natives in "Bwana" movies (Kozlovic).

CALAMITY: Go... Go look at the pretty feather you, you painted buzzard.

Indian#1 goes to check himself out in mirror. He has no idea what she is saying.

CALAMITY: Here, here look, pretty? (Jane holds up a piece of fancy satin.)

INDIAN #2: No mah. (he bats it down.)

CALAMITY: Oh you don't like it huh? Here, take this. I got sumpthin' for all of ya. Presents for all of ya. We've been savin' 'em, look. (She brings an armload of hat boxes.) Presents for my brothers the Cheyenne. You red hyenas. Here, ma, see.

Jane distributes hats and an umbrella.



CALAMITY: Come on in. Look, look. ready? here!

The Indians make unintelligible mumbled responses. Indian #1 smells the fabric roses on a lady's hat, then puts it on. He looks ridiculous as he peers at his image in the distorted mirror. Jane offers a hat box.

CALAMITY: Papoose, see.

The sound of a horse's gallop is heard off screen. Jane looks around nervously. The men are upset. Jane picks up a cake plate.

CALAMITY: Want a piece of cake?

Indian #1 knocks the cake plate out of her hand. The men ransack the place. Jane reaches for her gun, but a tomahawk throw stops her. Indian #1 takes her gun and confronts Jane.

INDIAN #1: No ta, Sold- jer.

CALAMITY: Soldier... me no talk Cheyenne.

INJ#1: Doe sah no tach. Ee ho.

CALAMITY: I'll never tell you where they've gone you hairless coyote.

One of the men throws a tomahawk and shatters the room's lamp. Jane looks apprehensive. The Indian men close in around her in the dark. Rape is implied, but no moves more aggressive than the men drawing close to her are made before the scene fades to black. The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930 stated that rape... "should never be more than suggested, and only when essential for the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method" (Quigley, and Lord ).

The unbridled racial epithets that flow from Calamity Jane's mouth are indicative of the position *The Plainsman* takes regarding Native Americans as a class of people, or

more accurately, as a class of creatures who are somewhat less than human. The depiction of the Indian men wearing women's hats, with one man peering into a distorted mirror in fascination with his twisted reflection before he throws the hat down in anger, is no different than the type of scene one sees in movies such as the Johnny Weissmuller *Tarzan* films, in which Cheetah the Chimp, plays with human artifacts. As noted by Anton Karl Kozlovic, the language the Cheyenne speak in *The Plainsman* is gibberish.

In the next scene, the Natives who hold Calamity captive with a rope around her neck march her to their encampment. Hickok sees Calamity, rides up and lets himself be captured.

In Yellow Hand's camp, Native men are unloading Winchester rifles from boxes with Latimer's name on them. Inside a teepee, Wild Bill and Jane are tied with their hands over their heads. A Native man in buffalo robe and blanket enters. It's Yellow Hand. He recognizes Hickok and insists they speak in English. Bill asks why Yellow Hand is on the warpath.

YELLOW HAND: Where sun rise, white man's land. Where sun set,  
Indian land. White man come, take our land, kill buffalo, our food.  
White man promise us food. White man lie. Now, Cheyenne buy  
white man thunder stick. Soon war drum sound in all Indian land.  
All tribes ride with Yellow Hand. We drive white man back, like  
buffalo away, back to rising sun. Yellow Hand has spoken.

Yellow Hand's solemn sounding delivery is halting, nearly zombie-like, filled with hand gestures supplied by Indian advisor Iron Eyes Cody, the Sicilian Indian (Kozlovic). Yellow Hand and his Indians behave much like zombies in contemporary

cinema. They look human but aren't, really. Just like zombies, they must be eradicated. Hickok reminds Yellow Hand that he and his people can't win. The whites will not go away. Yellow Hand insists that Hickok tell where he can find the ammunition supply convoy.

Hickok is the no nonsense American pragmatist. He knows what's at stake in the conflict with the Indians: the triumph of white American civilization. He knows what side he's on, and he never wavers. Hickok won't talk. Jane is scared and confused she asks Hickok what is on his mind.

HICKOK: I'm thinking about John Latimer's farming tools that came up on the boat. Better rifles than we have. Seven shot repeaters, and each shot may mean the life of a white man.

Yellow Hand's savagery is on display as Bill is taken out and suspended over a fire pit. Calamity is forced to watch. Yellow Hand offers both their freedom, if Calamity will give him the information he wants. Hickok hollers to Jane not to tell. During a second round over the fire pit, Calamity gives in and talks.

Soldiers lead by Buffalo Bill ride through a valley. Yellow Hand in war bonnet looks over the valley as they draw closer. Yellow Hand frees Jane and Hickok.

YELLOW HAND: Mo ees kee. Squaw no lie, Yellow Hand no lie. You free. Go. Nee see. Ko he eebah.

Yellow Hand is an Honest Injun, The Noble Savage, The Vanishing American, but he and his people won't go down without a fight. In the previous scene, Yellow Hand gives legitimate reasons why the Native People should band together and drive the

whites out of their land. Hickok and the audience of course, know what the final outcome will be. The Indian must give way to white civilization.

Jane tells Bill she couldn't help telling Yellow Hand the supply train's route. She begs Bill to look at her.

HICKOK : I hope I never have to look at you again.

Thousands of Indians are massed, ready to attack. Wild Bill yells a warning, but it isn't heard. Cody senses that things are not right. The Indians attack. Wild Bill jumps an Indian on horseback, steals his pony. He sends Calamity to tell Custer what has happened. It's clear to Buffalo Bill and the soldiers that the Indians have repeating rifles. Hickok charges at the army on two horses.

CODY: Hold your fire, men. That's a white man!

One horse is shot from under him but Wild Bill keeps on. Indians are in pursuit. Cody directs his men to shoot at the pursuers. The second horse is shot. Wild Bill flies off the horse into the river. He Crosses the river under cover fire and makes it to the army and Buffalo Bill. At Custer's headquarters Custer tells Calamity he wishes had the authority to execute her for what she did. The siege lasts seven days. A massive Indian charge comes at the soldiers from across the river. The soldiers, few in number, make a stand. Wild Bill kills Indian #1 and gets his watch back. The men are starving, in despair, delusional, when Custer and the cavalry charge in to save the men. The Indians retreat. Back in Hayes City, the men want to run Calamity out of town. Hickok stops them, blaming Jane's feminine nature for her inability to keep quiet about the army's supply route. Hickok lets the crowd know he was there, fighting Yellow Hand. He invokes Lincoln's words.

HICKOK: Lincoln said this country's got to be made safe. Those are his words. And I'm on my way to settle this thing with the man who sold those rifles.

As Hickok speaks, Jack McCoy a small man looking to ingratiate himself with Latimer, runs to let Latimer know that Hickok is gunning for him. Bill confronts Latimer, who hires three deserters from the army to kill Hickok. Hickok kills all three but is wounded. Cody shows up and takes Hickok home. Louisa isn't happy. Hickok, a killer, is in their house. Louisa urges Wild Bill to put down his guns. But he won't until he finds Latimer. Jane arrives to warn Hickok that Custer has put a price on his head. A soldier arrives to summon Cody to scout the Little Big Horn for Custer. Latimer in his wagon is headed to make more sales to the Indians.

Cody walks in to Wild Bill's camp. Both men have lost their horses. Cody was sent by Custer to bring Hickok in. They hear the sound of an Indian singing. The Indian carries a Seventh Cavalry flag and has an officer's coat with a bullet hole in it. Hickok asks him in the (fake) Cheyenne language where he got the items from the cavalry. The young Indian (Anthony Quinn), wide eyed and animatedly, describes the annihilation of Custer's cavalry at the battle of Little Big Horn, which is displayed on screen. The young Indian speaks ecstatically. Hickok translates.

HICKOK: Yellow Hand is meeting Sitting Bull. There will be no more white men. The white man friend is bringing rifles to Sitting Bull. That's Latimer. ...to the new village in the canyon. That's Deadwood.

Hickok tells Cody to warn General Merritt to get between Yellow Hand and Sitting Bull. Hickok is going back to Deadwood. They'll settle his prisoner status there.

In Deadwood Hickok confronts Latimer, and his wagons filled with "farming tools". Latimer draws on Bill and is shot dead. Hickok rounds up all Latimer's men and Jack McCoy, the little man who tipped Latimer off that Bill was looking for him in Hayes City, into the saloon. He insists they wait for General Merritt to arrive, so Latimer's guns can be turned over to him. Hickok pulls all the men except McCoy into a card game. Calamity comes into the bar to watch Bill's back. An Indian, Charlie, enters the bar. Hickok makes him sit where he can see him. Charlie once tried to kill Hickok. One of Latimer's men says it would have made him a big man to kill Wild Bill. A bugle sounds, the general and Cody are in town. Calamity goes to fetch them. McCoy shoots Bill in the back. Latimer's men escape the saloon. Cody and Merritt enter the saloon to see Calamity on the floor, cradling Hickok in her arms.

CODY: There's your prisoner General Merritt.

MERRITT: We won't forget what Bill Hickok has done Cody. We'll remember.

CODY: All of us will... all of us.

Calamity kisses the dead Hickok's lips.

CALAMITY: (wistfully) That's one kiss you won't wipe off.

The image dissolves into a traveling shot of Custer and Wild Bill riding, finally focusing on Wild Bill Hickok as the following words are superimposed on the screen.

It shall be as it was in the past...  
Not with dreams, but with strength and courage,  
Shall a nation be molded to last.

Yellow Hand and his Indian hordes are not the real villains of *The Plainsman*. The unscrupulous, profiteering members of the Winchester Rifle Company's board of directors take that title. John Latimer is simply their operative, however Charles Bickford's performance as the odious Latimer, embodies the corruption of the unseen men behind him. Unlike the retaliatory savages of *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch*, Yellow Hand and his men are organized and have a justifiable reason to go to war, as clearly stated by Yellow Hand before he tortures Hickok. The film's point of view however, is that the Natives are primitives who stand in the way of a more worthy white civilization. Whiteness and white lives are prized. The white supremacist attitudes expressed in *The Plainsman* reinforce those of the white society that constituted the vast majority of the motion picture audience.

Hickok is willing to sacrifice his life and that of Jane in order to keep the convoy route secret. When Hickok is trying to explain the importance of keeping the convoy's route secret, he notes that each shot out of the rifles Latimer has sold the Indians could mean the life of a white man. He explains that he and Jane are just two lives against the lives of all the men in the ammunition train.

It stretches believability that Buffalo Bill Cody can discern that the rider coming toward the hunkered down ammunition convoy is a white man, but he does. It's important the white man (Hickok) get safely through to them, therefore shooting should stop until he's safe. The ethos of *The Plainsman* is simply "It's us or them." The Natives must and will be subdued.

The post-WWII zeitgeist introduced ideas of racial equality into the mainstream of American culture. Both *Broken Arrow* (1950) and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) responded and contributed to that new, more tolerant zeitgeist.

Delmer Daves' *Broken Arrow* was a box office success in 1950, and as Edward Buscombe notes: "*Broken Arrow* has been widely regarded as a breakthrough in the representation of the Indian on the screen, and regularly cited as a milestone on Hollywood's road towards a more liberal view of Indian–white relations" (101). Jacquelyn Kilpatrick explains: "Consistently cited as an example of burgeoning cultural awareness in Hollywood, *Broken Arrow*, was prompted in part by resistance to McCarthyism. Stereotypes were reinvestigated and cultural norms, such as the righteousness of manifest destiny were questioned. The film even made attempts to create multidimensional characters who were Apaches..." (58). The screenplay, credited to front Michael Blankfort, was actually written by Albert Maltz, one of the blacklisted Hollywood Ten (Buscombe 103). In this same period, movies like multi Oscar winning director/writer Joseph L. Mankiewicz' *No Way Out* (1950), in which African American characters were portrayed as multidimensional human beings, began to surface as Hollywood was trying to discover new ways to reach a fast eroding audience. As Jacquelyn Kilpatrick notes: "When Hollywood found itself under attack, the film industry reacted by producing films with a startling degree of tolerance" (58).

*Broken Arrow* recounts a dramatized version of the friendship between white scout and gold prospector Tom Jeffords and Cochise, chief of the Chiricahua Apaches. The film shows how the trust between two men from different cultures, led the way to a peace treaty negotiated by Cochise and General Oliver O. Howard. The film covers the



period 1870 -1874, the year the treaty was ratified. *Broken Arrow* covers an historical period roughly contemporaneous with that of *The Plainsman*, which begins with Lincoln's assassination in 1865, and ends shortly after the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 with Wild Bill Hickok's death. Both films are set in the period of Western expansion, and in them, white settlers are under constant attack by Native people.

The film begins with a wide shot, establishing the harsh, vast landscape of Arizona, with a saguaro cactus prominent in the frame. Tom Jeffords (James Stewart) rides toward camera. His voice over narration begins the tale.

JEFFORDS: This is the story of a land, of the people who lived on it in the year 1870, of a man whose name was Cochise. He was an Indian, leader of the Chiracahua Apache Tribe. I was involved in the story, and what I have to tell happened exactly as you will see it. The only change will be, that when the Apaches speak, they will speak in our language.

Two things are immediately obvious from the narration. First, Jeffords is presenting the film's interpretation of events as fact, which is not even broadly true, as the film takes license with history to create more sympathy for Cochise. It also misrepresents the historical Geronimo within the context of the peace process, in order to create greater dramatic conflict (Manchel 64-65). Second, *Broken Arrow* may have a reputation for sympathy toward the Natives, but the Apache people are designated as "the other" right from the start, when Jeffords says in his retrospective narration, that the Apache language will not be spoken in the film, but that the Apache characters will speak in "our" language. Jeffords further explains that the whites and Apaches had been

engaged in a bitter war for ten years, when he spies an Apache boy struggling in the bottom of a wash. He gives the Boy some water. The Boy immediately tries to stab him with a knife, but Jeffords easily disarms him. Jeffords digs buckshot out of the Boy's infected back and nurses him to health, as he pans for gold. When the Boy is most of the way healed, he tells Jeffords that he must return home.

BOY: In the wikiup my mother is crying for me.

JEFFORDS: "My mother is crying" he said. Funny. Only it never struck me that an Apache woman would cry over her son like any other woman. Apaches are wild animals, we all said.

Jeffords' kindness toward an Indian, and his introspection make him a unique character in the Western genre in 1950. The grateful boy lets Jeffords know that he has prayed to his gods for him. He offers Jeffords a talisman necklace to ward off sickness. A howl is heard. Jeffords pulls his gun. Arrows fly.

BOY: They could have killed, put away your gun. I know my people, they have been watching us. They see I am not harmed. (More arrows fly.)

BOY: This is clear talk. It says they can still kill.

Jeffords hands the Boy the gun.

BOY: This white man is my friend! This white man is my friend!

A troop of Apache men ride up on horseback. Jeffords is backed up to a cliff. The boy fills in his father and the troop's leader who we find out later is Geronimo (Jay Silverheels), that Jeffords healed him. Silverheels is the only Native American cast member in *Broken Arrow* with a speaking part. Unlike Silverheels' role in the *Lone*

*Ranger* TV series, where Tonto speaks using low tones in Pidgin English, the dialogue in *Broken Arrow*, is English in a stylized, but not dumbed-down form. It is not the stiff Indian speak heard in *The Plainsman*. Geronimo questions Jeffords. They don't understand why he didn't kill and scalp the boy.

JEFFORDS: If I kill an Apache it'll not be for scalp or money.

GERONIMO: Why not? My people and your people are at war.

JEFFORDS: It is not my way to fight.

The Apaches question this unusual white man further but let him go. He didn't kill they won't kill. The Apaches stay as Jeffords breaks camp.

JEFFORDS: They wanted to kill me allright, but they let me go. I learned things that day. Apache mothers cried about their sons, Apache men had a sense of fair play.

Jeffords has developed a serious case of empathy toward the traditional enemy.

The Apaches spy a group of miners. They attack with arrows, killing two men.

JEFFORDS: Two men were killed and for the others it was much worse, because they were only wounded. But this was war and there was terrible cruelty from both sides.

Geronimo and his men tie Jeffords up and make him watch the prospectors' grisly deaths.

The Apaches may have a sense of fair play, but they still engage in "savage" behavior against their enemies. Geronimo lets Jeffords know not to return to Cochise's territory.

When Jeffords returns to Tuscon, visits a boarding house dining room for a meeting with the colonel who has taken command of the local forces. Off-screen the voice of a drunken diner is heard.

DRUNK: Wipe ‘em all out . Butcher ‘em.

Pompous Colonel Bernall (Raymond Bramley) strides in explaining to Jeffords that he has orders to wipe out Cochise and his Apaches. He wants to hire Jeffords to scout for him. The drunk was one of the miners who escaped the Apaches. Bernall gives Jeffords an amplified account of what happened according to the drunk, including the wounding of Cochise. Jeffords tells Bernall it’s all bunk, he was there. Ben Slade (Will Geer) questions how Jeffords made it out alive. Jeffords’ explanation leads Slade to suspect Jeffords is a traitor to his own race. When Jeffords lets the Colonel know what a formidable opponent Cochise is, and that his plan to defeat Cochise is pure fantasy, Slade questions Jeffords loyalty to his own people.

SLADE: ...if you don’t fight against ‘em  
you’re with ‘em.

Slade whose wife was killed by Apaches keeps pressing Jeffords.

SLADE: Cochise started this and any man...

Jeffords fires back in an unprecedented barrage of words that contradicts Slade’s assertion.

JEFFORDS: Hold on, let’s just get the facts straight here. Cochise didn’t  
start this war. A snooty little lieutenant fresh out of the east started it.  
He flew a flag of truce which Cochise honored, and then he hanged

Cochise's brother and five others under the flag.<sup>4</sup>

SLADE: Oh you hear all sorts of stories...

JEFFORDS: You wanna know why I didn't kill that Apache boy? For the same reason I wouldn't kill your boy or scout for the army. I'm sick and tired of all this killing. Besides who asked us out here in the first place?

Jeffords' last statement is a significant departure from the attitudes expressed in any other Western that deals with Manifest Destiny. Edward Buscombe comments: "Fired up by the hostility of the whites toward the Apaches, Jeffords is provoked into a truly radical remark" (103).

Jeffords, disgusted with the status quo and now convinced that the Apaches are human after his encounter with the Apache Boy, decides he'll try and get a meeting with Cochise. In order to do this he realizes that he must improve his command of the Chiricahua Apache language. He hires Juan a local Apache, to teach him the language and customs of the Chiricahua. Juan doesn't want any money because he thinks Jeffords' venture will end badly.

Once Jeffords has learned the language adequately, Juan sends smoke signals to alert the Apache that Jeffords comes in peace. Juan gives Jeffords a final admonition.

JUAN: Remember then, if you see him, do not lie to him. Not in the

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<sup>4</sup> Even though it justifies Cochise's hostility against the whites for the audience, Jeffords' assertion that the war against the white settlers was started by a "snooty little lieutenant fresh out of the East" who hung hostages from Cochise's family isn't entirely true. Cochise hanged hostages as well, and no one knows in what order. Hostilities began in 1861(Manchel 63-64, "World History: The Modern Era").

smallest thing. His eyes will see into your heart. He is greater than other men.

After a three-day trek, Jeffords arrives at Cochise's stronghold. Edward Buscombe notes the authenticity of the "...ethnographically correct wood and grass wickiups..." the Apache live in (102). Frank Manchel takes exception to the idealized depiction of the camp.

Audiences learn a lot about *Broken Arrow's* understanding of history and the Chiricahua Apaches while witnessing Jefford's experiences in Cochise's camp. Instead of seeing a weak, hungry and ravaged tribe, viewers see an idyllic setting where many strong, healthy Native Americans live peacefully and comfortably with their families. Instead of a tired and weary Cochise, eager for peace because he understands that the whites are too numerous and too strong for his people to overcome, audiences see the Noble Savage, all wise and all-knowing. (64)

While the depiction of Cochise does not represent the Screaming Savage, the audience is introduced to an equally inauthentic representation, the All-Wise Noble Savage.

Once Jeffords gets to the camp and relieves himself of his guns, Cochise reveals himself. Jeffords makes a case for letting the mail through.

COCHISE: This mail carries war signals against us.

Jeffords assures Cochise that the mail is not used for war signals. Cochise asks Jeffords if he has fought against the Apache. Jeffords admits he has. A wary Cochise has Jeffords follow him.

In Cochise's wikiup, Jeffords brings up the fact the Apache are outnumbered by the whites. Cochise doesn't wish to discuss it. Jeffords asks Cochise if the two people can live together like brothers. Cochise doesn't believe the whites want peace, as shown by their past hostile behavior. Jeffords notes that he is a white man and he is there. Cochise tells Jeffords that they must take a walk, be seen together for Jeffords' safety.

That evening Cochise and Jeffords watch a ritual dance. Men in elaborate headdresses sing and dance. Young women dance in a group. Jeffords asks if it's the dance that comes before the sunrise ceremony for a girl. Cochise is surprised at Jeffords' cultural awareness. He mentions that Jeffords is an unusual white man. They come upon a young woman in an elaborate costume and headdress seated inside a wikiup. Cochise notes that she is "White Painted Lady, Mother of Life" for four nights. M. Elise Marubbio explains:

Jeffords' first glimpse of Sonseeahray shows her seated on the floor of the wikiup, wearing a white buckskin dress and a ceremonial headdress. A warm orange backlight contrasts to the darkness outside, giving her headdress a halo affect. Her motionless pose, the lighting, and the rounded doorframe recall iconic images of Mary and other Christian saints. Her symbolic and primordial status in Apache culture is reinforced through her incarnation as White Painted Lady, Mother of Life (Changing Woman in Apache tradition) (67).

Cochise kneels down for the healing of old wounds from White Painted Lady. The imagery she uses and the titles she bestows on him are very similar to the titles borne by Jesus in the Christian tradition. They must have resonated powerfully with the film's audience.

COCHISE: I have wounds.

White Painted Lady speaks calmly in a measured voice.

LADY: Yes, but each scar is a mark of love for your people. The path of your people is stretched long behind you. And you are the head, and you are the heart, and you are the blood. The killer of enemies is your father and you are his son.

Cochise mentions that he has brought someone with him who has an old arm wound. Jeffords kneels in front of White Painted Lady. Their eyes meet. He looks intently at her as she does at him. She takes his arm, asks him if it hurts him. He replies that it does sometimes.

LADY: It will never hurt again. Your life will be long. The good things will be yours, The sun will shine for you.

Jeffords moved, and completely taken with her, backs away. White Painted Lady closes her eyes and sits motionless as if she is reconnecting with the earth, the source of her power. Once out of the wikiup, Jeffords asks what her name is.

COCHISE: Sonseeahray, it means morning star.

Writer Maltz, and Director Daves, create a multicultural set of references that tap deeply into mythic roots with the introduction of Sonseeahray. M. Elise Marubbio explains:

Through her various names, Sonseeahray resembles a pancultural goddess figure. For four days, she is White Painted Lady, Mother of Life, a name that confirms her connection to the earth, reproduction, and sustenance.



Another of her names, Morning Star, links her to the heavens, specifically the planet Venus, also called the morning star. Her names entwine classical Western mythology, Apache cosmology, and the the other-worldly: Morning Star unites her to the Roman goddess Venus, protector of gardens and fields, who is also identified with Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, and all coalesce in White Painted Lady. Sonseeahray's purity, more so than any other Celluloid Princess, encompasses the earth and the spirits so thoroughly that she attains goddess status. And, through her connection to Tom Jeffords, the white American hero- the American Adam- she becomes the American Eve. (68)

The morning after their first meeting in the wikiup, Jeffords is shaving at the river. Sonseeahray is out gathering juniper berries. Never having interacted with white civilization, she is fascinated by Jeffords' shaving and his mirror. He gives the mirror to her. She runs off to pick berries. Jeffords finds her and the two declare their love for each other. In this scene Sonseeahray's purity, simplicity and lack of the corrupting influence of white civilization is made clear. She is indeed the American Eve.

Sonseeahray runs away when she hears Cochise coming. He's decided to allow the mail go through. Jeffords will take the news to the whites.

When Jeffords arrives back in town, he faces the skepticism of the whites. They see no let up in Cochise's war on them. Jeffords reminds them that this is only about letting the mail through. John the whiskey merchant bets Jeffords \$300 that the deal is phony. Five safe rides, \$300. Jeffords takes the bet. Milt says he'll ride. Milt makes four safe rides, the Apaches watch.

A wagon train crosses Apache territory. General Oliver O. Howard, who is in the convoy as a guest, questions Colonel Bernal's wisdom in crossing the Apache's territory. Bernal says that he is praying for an ambush. All his mule drivers have rifles, and he has fifty armed men hiding under blankets. Cochise leads a strategically planned attack on the wagon train. In a departure from previous practice, Cochise gives orders in the Apache language then repeats them in English for the audience's benefit. The Apaches decimate the soldiers, and take all the supply wagons. General Howard survives.

In the saloon in Tuscon, the town's men are angry about Cochise's attack. Slade accuses Jeffords of tipping off Cochise. The fifth rider comes in safely. John throws Jeffords' winnings at him. Jeffords' throws the money at the bar. Drinks are on him. One of the men in the bar says he won't take drinks from an Indian lover. A fight starts that leads to Jeffords being lynched. General Howard intervenes as the rope is about to go around Jeffords' neck.

In an interview in Howard's office, General Howard states that President Grant wants him to make a treaty with Cochise and the Apaches. Jeffords is skeptical. He notices a Bible on Howard's desk. Howard, an historical character is known as the "Christian General." Jeffords asks him how he reads his Bible. Is he a racist?

HOWARD: My Bible preaches brotherhood for all God's children.

JEFFORDS: What if they're not white? Are they still God's children?

HOWARD: My Bible says nothing about the pigmentation of the skin.

Jeffords wants to know if it will be a fair treaty. Howard asks what Cochise wants.

JEFFORDS: Equality. The Apaches are a free people. They have a right to stay free on their own land.

HOWARD: You mean the whole Southwest?

JEFFORDS: No, even Cochise wouldn't ask for that now. He's a realist.

But a clear territory that is Apache, ruled by Apaches. That's what I mean. No soldiers on it.

Jeffords and Howard agree to go forward. Jeffords will discuss the idea with Cochise.

When Jeffords arrives back at Cochise's stronghold he is met by Sonseeahray. Cochise is away and will return in a few days. During this time Sonseeahray and Jeffords meet secretly and fall more deeply in love. In the next scene, Cochise returns to his stronghold like a Roman general triumphant. He and his warriors parade into the camp on horseback, with much booty. Later, Cochise and Jeffords discuss the peace proposal. That evening, Cochise tells Jeffords that Sonseeahray has been chosen by someone else. Sonseeahray and Jeffords go off by themselves. They realize they can't be seen together. Cochise surprises them, angry. This is not the way things should be done. Jeffords tells Cochise he wants to marry Sonseeahray, and will fulfill all the requirements Apache custom requires. Sonseeahray says she will reject Nahilzay her Apache suitor yet again. Cochise is happy Jeffords will do things the right way, but he warns the two of the difficulty of an interracial marriage.

COCHISE: Where will you live, here? Here will always be Apaches who have suffered from white men who will hate you for it. Tuscon maybe? Will there not always be whites who will hate your wife because of the color of her skin? You will go far away maybe, in new places. But your eyes will never see anything. Always they will be

turned backwards, toward home. And you Sonseearay, they will look at you as at a strange animal, and make jokes.

Maltz puts words in Cochise's mouth that put the white view of Native Americans as animals clearly in the open. Cochise doesn't pull any punches in his warning, but the couple is determined to be together. Cochise agrees to be the go-between for the couple.

Cochise decides that it is worth pursuing peace if the general is an honest man, but the decision will not be Cochise's alone. He must sell the idea to the other Apache leaders. In the midst of wedding plans being made, Jeffords and Howard negotiate the treaty with the Apache leaders. When the time comes for a vote, all the leadership approve a three month trial for the treaty except for Geronimo, who refuses to cooperate. He leads a band of renegades who try to sabotage the treaty by attacking a stagecoach. Jeffords sees the attack happening, and summons Cochise's men who drive the renegades away. The stage driver is amazed.

DRIVER: Apaches protecting Americans. And I lived to see it.

JEFFORDS: Suppose you remember to talk about it when you get back to Tuscon.

Depicting Geronimo as a renegade during the period of the peace treaty is another liberty the filmmakers have taken with history. Geronimo was a supporter of Cochise, and didn't make war on the whites until after the U.S. Government broke the treaty it made with Cochise, after he died. Geronimo, this movie's bad Indian, is the only major speaking part in *Broken Arrow* played by a Native American actor: Jay Silverheels. In spite of *Broken Arrow*'s pro-Indian stance, as Ward Churchill, Mary Anne Hill, and Norbert Hill put it: "The only bad Indian is a real Indian" (39).

Sonseeahray and Jeffords are married in an elaborate ceremony concocted by Mr. Maltz. Jacquelyn Kilpatrick explains: “They are married in a ritual that includes the slicing of wrists and mixing of blood, an occurrence more likely found in children’s pacts than Indian cultures” (59). The happy couple ride off on white horses to their honeymoon wikiup. The wikiup is in a lush, green spot near a river. Sonseeahray’s well-established innocence, youth, and sexual purity connect her to Eve before the fall. In the first honeymoon scene, Sonseeahray walks along the riverbank and finds Jeffords lying on his back with eyes closed.

SONSEEAHRAY: You are asleep.

JEFFORDS: No... I’m quiet because I’m so happy. I’m afraid if I open my mouth my happiness will rush out in a funny noise, like Ya Hoo!

SONSEEAHRAY: What does that mean? Is it an American word?

JEFFORDS: Uh huh. I think it was a word made by Adam when he opened his eyes and saw Eve.

SONSEEAHRAY: Who are they?

JEFFORDS: Don’t you know?

SONSEEAHRAY: The world is so big, and I know so little.

M. Elise Marubbio explains the mythic significance this scene.

This short interchange reinforces her pagan innocence about his world. It also establishes America as an Eden, Tom Jeffords as an Adam figure—something already suggested through his frontier hero status and his desire to forge a new and peaceful West - and a deified Sonseeahray, as his Eve (70).

The innocence and purity of the Adam and Eve-like relationship between Sonseeahray and Jeffords is only possible in their personal Eden. America, with its Manifest Destiny ideology and agenda exists in opposition to it.

Subsequent to Geronimo's attack on the stagecoach, Cochise orders his men to protect white travelers.

COCHISE: If this peace does not hold let it be the whites who break it. It must not be Indians, even bad Indians.

Cochise is giving Jeffords an archery lesson when Slade's son shows up complaining about Apaches stealing his colts. It's an ambush. Jeffords is shot and Sonseeahray killed. Cochise, out of arrows, kills Slade with a thrown knife. Jeffords is devastated. Cochise returns with a troop of his men on horseback. Jeffords wants to kill the remaining renegade white. Jeffords says the peace is a lie.

COCHISE: It is not a lie and I will not let you make it a lie. Are you a child that you thought peace would come easy? You who taught me so well? Is it my brother who asks me to spit on my word? ...As I bear the murder of my people so you will bear the murder of your wife. I am Cochise I do not betray my people or their children. No one in my territory will open war again. Not even you.

The film concludes with Jeffords riding off into the vast Arizona landscape. Jeffords narrates.

JEFFORDS: ... as time passed, I came to know that the death of Sonseearay put a seal upon the peace. And from that day on, wherever I went. In the cities among the Apaches, in the mountains, I always

remembered my wife was with me.

*Broken Arrow* certainly modifies many elements in the cinematic depiction of Native Americans as seen prior to 1950. The Natives in the film do not speak a made-up gibberish as in the older films in this study. Instead, they speak a stylized form of English that has a different feel than English spoken by native speakers. Although the Indian speak of earlier films is gone, Natives still do not speak in their own language. One of the consequences of the abandonment of old-fashioned Indian speak in *Broken Arrow*, is that Jeff Chandler's native Brooklyn accent surfaces on occasion. In the one scene where there are no white people for Cochise to interact with, the attack on Colonel Bernal's convoy, Cochise speaks one word commands in his language and then repeats the commands in English for the audience's benefit. In spite of the continuation of the Hollywood tradition of casting white actors to play American Indians, with the notable exception of Jay Silverheels, who plays Geronimo, *Broken Arrow* gives us a Cochise who is a complex character portrayed as a reasoning human being, instead of a primitive bent on destruction. The angry "bad" Indian portrayed by Jay Silverheels, fills the need for an internal antagonist for Cochise to deal with, and gives the audience the familiar character they have seen in many movies before. Cochise is portrayed as exceptional an Indian as Jeffords is portrayed as an exceptional white man. This film says that it takes exceptional people to solve seemingly impossible situations. That a Native is one of the people who solves the problem of peaceful coexistence and then insures that the solution lasts, is something new in the movies. The audience sees an Indian who is wiser and more level headed than his white counterpart. If anything Cochise is too level headed, too wise to be a flesh and blood leader. The desire for peace however is posited on Jeffords' argument

that the whites outnumber Natives, so they are fighting an ultimately losing battle. This is the same line of reasoning Wild Bill Hickok gives to Yellow Hand in *The Plainsman*, before he is tortured. It doesn't stop Yellow Hand for a second. Cochise, the wise reasonable Indian, is only too aware that the whites have the advantage, so he takes the path that he believes will avoid extermination of his people. He does, however, in his "wisdom" buy into the Vanishing American scenario. The ideal of the assimilationists and U.S. government policy from 1869-1906 was to assimilate Natives into American society so they would lose their Indian identity (Gilbert).

The depiction of the Apache stronghold was much different than what had been seen in earlier depictions of Native camp or village settings. Authentic wikiups were used instead of the usual teepees. The life of the camp is shown to have its own tribal government and rich culture. The Apache are depicted as the other, but the richness of their culture as shown in the film contradicts the prevailing white view that they are animals. This is in opposition to depictions like those seen in *The Plainsman*, and *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch*. The idyllic nature of the camp was however, a complete distortion, as Frank Manchel pointed out in his article "Cultural Confusion: A Look Back at Delmer Daves' Broken Arrow." The reality was grim, with rampant disease and starvation (64). The authenticity of the wikiups is offset by the fantasy wedding ceremony that was a complete fabrication.

Sonseeahray's character is another twist on the established trope of the Indian Princess who marries a white man and then dies. Unlike Nat-u-ritch in *The Squaw Man*, Sonseeahray's sexual purity and goddess-like status is established when she is first seen. Jefford's is immediately drawn to her like no other woman he has seen. Nat-u-ritch is



immediately interested in Jim Wynnegate, but he has a sexual relationship with her only because the white woman he loves is unavailable. Nat-u-ritch commits suicide because her son is being taken from her. She realizes Jim is only staying with her out of a sense of marital duty, while his true place is back in England with their son, and Lady Diana. Sonseeahray's purity on the other hand, and her goddess-like persona, makes her the spotless sacrificial victim needed to seal the peace. Finally, *Broken Arrow* contradicts the Vengeful Savage character that prevailed in American Cinema prior to its release, by its multi dimensional portrait of Cochise, and the culture of the Apaches.

*Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) has the distinction of being John Ford's last Western in a long directing career that stretches back to 1917 (John Ford-IMDb). Edward Buscombe notes: *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) was John Ford's attempt to set the record straight about the ways in which the U.S. government had maltreated the Indians. A sincere if occasionally ponderous film, it tried hard to give the Cheyenne dignity even if all the major Indian roles were played by non-Indian actors (Buscombe 123).

The story based on an historical event, tracks the return of a group of Northern Cheyenne from a desolate reservation in Oklahoma, back to the home they were deported from in the Yellowstone country. U.S. Cavalry officer Captain Thomas Archer (Richard Widmark) narrates the story, which begins with the three great chiefs of the Northern Cheyenne praying that the promises made by the white man one year ago would be honored today. A congressional delegation is scheduled to arrive and bestow food, clothing, and medicine on the tribe. The Cheyenne walk to the rude military outpost near their encampment, which contains a school run by a Quaker woman, Deborah Wright (Carroll Baker). The Cheyenne wait for the men from Washington. Old Chief Tall Tree

(Victor Jory) collapses while waiting. A rider returns late in the afternoon to report that the Delegation returned to Fort Reno to ready themselves for the officer's ball that night. The Cheyenne's leaders are furious, but not surprised. Deborah's father asks the commanding officer where the supplies for the Cheyenne are. The Cheyenne return to their camp. Deborah reminds the commanding officer, that 1000 Cheyenne were brought to this place but only 286 are left alive after one year. The commanding officer notes that his job is to guard the Indians, nothing more. He won't get involved. The next morning, Captain Archer arrives at the Indian's camp. Speaking to Little Wolf (Ricardo Montalban), he reminds him that even though the terms of the treaty were not honored, his tribe must still obey the law.

LITTLE WOLF: Indians are asked to remember much, the white man remembers nothing.

The Cheyenne decide that there is nothing but death facing them in this place, so they will return to the Yellowstone country. Deborah makes a visit to the camp since the Cheyenne have stopped sending their children to her school. Captain Archer lets Deborah know that the beaten down reservation Indians she knows don't represent the "real" Cheyenne, who are fierce warriors. Deborah replies that he is focused on the past, while she is focused on the future.

Deborah, disgusted with white treatment of the Cheyenne, goes with them on their trek back home in order to help care for the children. She leaves a note for Archer, who has been courting her, even though she has not shown much interest. The next morning, the soldiers arrive to find the camp empty. It is their job to follow the Cheyenne and

bring them back. A young Second Lieutenant is excited because he can now avenge his father's death by killing some of the Cheyenne.

The rest of the movie is a road trip that leads back to the Cheyenne's home in the Yellowstone region. In the harsh landscape the old chief dies. The Natives struggle against the environment, and repulse an impulsive attack lead by the young Lieutenant. All the while, the press is amplifying their deeds, making it seem that they are a serious threat to the military, the settlers, and commerce.

As the tribe moves North, the expected buffalo migration doesn't occur because white hunters have exterminated almost all the buffalo. Faced with starvation the Cheyenne steal or beg the occasional cow from trail drivers. When two young men ask three cowboys for food, one who wants to kill himself an Indian, does just that. He scalps the young man too, so he can show off to the old men in Texas. In the harsh winter, the group splits. One group lead by Dull Knife, containing many old people, women, and children, seeks refuge at Fort Robinson. Little Wolf's group finds a safe spot to spend the rest of the winter. While at Fort Robinson, the Prussian Captain Wessell, imprisons the Cheyenne and plans to deport them. When Dull Knife threatens mass suicide, Wessell denies them food, water, and firewood. He justifies his harsh treatment because he is following orders. As Jacquelyn Kilpatrick notes: "The comparison to German concentration camps of World War II is unmistakable and obviously intentional... Later, a Polish sergeant sees the Indians' predicament as analogous to the killing of his people by the Cossacks- the U.S. Army exterminating a people only because they are not the same" (Kilpatrick 68-69). Taking a leave while Wessell is doing his worst to the Cheyenne, Archer gets Secretary of the Interior Schurz

(Edward G. Robinson) to consider reversing the onerous relocation policy. In the meantime, the Cheyenne are at the end of their rope. Dull Knife makes a rousing speech to his people in his language. Using their secreted weapons, the Cheyenne break out of the warehouse they are imprisoned in, and escape during a bloody melee with the soldiers. The two groups of Cheyenne reunite at a place called Victory Cave. In the spring a large contingent of the U.S. Army arrives, boxing the Cheyenne in. At the last moment, before the soldiers are given the order to attack, Secretary Schurz arrives with Captain Archer. Schurz stops the commander and parleys with the Cheyenne, guaranteeing them a return to their traditional home. The film ends with Archer and Deborah, both now with a fuller understanding of and respect for the Cheyenne, leaving an Indian child behind at the Cheyenne's Yellowstone home. They go off together into the sunset.

Aside from the fact that no Native actor has a speaking part in this film, it does represent a different depiction of Natives than we have seen in any of the previous films analyzed in this work. Unlike *Broken Arrow*, *Cheyenne Autumn*'s Natives largely speak their own language. However, there is some question about how authentic the language is. Jacqueline Kilpatrick notes:

Ford made an attempt to portray the Cheyenne as real people, although his actors were of almost every ethnic background except American Indian. He made an effort to use the Cheyenne language in the dialogue between the Indian characters, and even though a genuine, Cheyenne speaking Native American might have been confused or amused by the verbiage, it was a great improvement over previous efforts to "sound Indian" (69).

Where the realism of language breaks down most obviously is when Ricardo Montalban's distinctive accent inflects the "Cheyenne" dialogue. The primary Cheyenne roles were played by Montalban, Gilbert Roland and Delores del Rio, all Mexican born, by Sal Mineo an Italian American (Buscombe 156) and Victory Jory a white Canadian (Victor Jory-IMDb). The extras were all Navajo people from the Monument Valley area where the movie was shot. There is some question as to whether the dialogue is Cheyenne or Navajo (Nolley 79).

In spite of any issues with the authenticity of the Cheyenne spoken in the film, Ford's commitment to authentic depiction does not glamourize the Cheyenne. Their living conditions are far from idyllic. It is clear they are a people under duress. Their leaders are portrayed as flawed humans as opposed to the unerring sage-like character Cochise in *Broken Arrow*. Little Wolf has a problem with Dull Knife's son Red Shirt, who is trying to steal one of his wives. Dull Knife and Little Wolf have a disagreement about what to do when faced with starvation. The two leaders split the group, even though they reunite after the breakout from Fort Robinson.

One of the other unique features of *Cheyenne Autumn* is in the dramatic structure. All the forces of antagonism in the film are arrayed against the Natives. In *Broken Arrow*, Cochise and Jeffords evolve into a dual protagonist as they both have the same desire: Peace. The forces of antagonism come both from the Apache and white camps. This is completely different from movies such as *The Plainsman*, or Ford's earlier *Stagecoach* (1939), where the Indians are the force of antagonism.

What the white characters Archer and Deborah learn in *Cheyenne Autumn*, is that the Cheyenne are a complex people: fully human. They are not victims, villains, or saints.

They are resourceful and fierce in protecting their interests. *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964), with its more dimensional representation of Native Americans, with the whites clearly as the bad guys, was not a box office success. The studio didn't like the film's approach to the material. Not knowing how to sell the film to the 1964 audience, its mode of depiction was not repeated until 1971, when *Little Big Man* depicted the hounding and betrayal of the Cheyenne by the U.S. government.

## Chapter 4

### *Depiction of Native Americans in the Native Civil Rights era 1970-1971*

By any estimation, the social and political upheavals of post World War II America that culminated in the late 1960s and early 1970s, changed the social and political order of the United States. American's relationship with traditional ideas of race and the entrenched social structure dominated by white Anglo-Saxon men began to erode. In April of 1968 "the Civil Rights Act of 1968 passed, titles 2-7 of which had to do with Native Americans. In effect the Civil Rights Movement produced changes that had tremendous impact on the rights of Native Americans, as well as African Americans and other minorities" (Kilpatrick 70). M. Elise Marubbio notes:

...it was "a time of upsurge" that included student rebellions against the establishment, antiwar demonstrations on a massive scale, women's rights activism...and Native American organization. In addition to the ongoing occupation of Alcatraz Island "in the name of all American Indians by right of discovery," Native Americans performed symbolic acts of political protest by taking over federal property, including Ellis Island and Bureau of Indian Affairs offices across the country. (172)

In this volatile cultural climate, in which the visibility of contemporary Native people was frequent in the news media, the image of the American Indian in cinema was likely to be taken in a different direction than seen previously. This chapter analyzes the depiction of American Indians in two films: *A Man Called Horse* (1970), and *Little Big Man* (1970). The films are addressed in order of release.

*A Man Called Horse* was promoted as “the first authentic portrait of the American Indian set in a time of savage innocence and beauty” (Marubbio 173). The protagonist in the film, Lord John Morgan, is a bored British aristocrat who when the story starts, has spent five years in the wilds of the United States hunting game. After a day of bird shooting, his copper bathtub riddled with holes by his drunken support team, Morgan heads to the river for a bath. His encampment is attacked by a band of Sioux lead by Yellow Hand. This is not the Yellow Hand of *The Plainsman*, being that this story begins in 1825. Morgan’s three men in the camp are killed. When Morgan is discovered in the river bathing, he is roped by the Sioux and made prisoner. Morgan is covered by a blanket and ridden like a horse. He is kept on a rope and dragged back to the Indian encampment. He is given as a gift to Yellow Hand’s harridan mother Buffalo Cow Head, who keeps him tied to a stake.

Upon the raiding party’s return to camp, the elderly mother of one of the dead warriors cuts off a finger symbolizing her lack of a son to provide for her. She is doomed. Two women engage in a fight over an object brought back from the raid. Emotions are over the top. The two women keen and wail at each other with abandon. That night, Morgan is tormented by the yowling, yelping tribe. People ride him like a horse. Next morning, Morgan awakens tied to a post next to a dog. He tries to escape, but is cornered by the tribe at the edge of the cemetery which consists of biers suspended on poles, so aerial scavengers can clean up the bodies of the dead. Boys throw spears that land around him, hemming him in. Screaming tribe members throw vegetables at him. He shouts out.

MORGAN: I am a man! I am a man!



The crowd leaves, but Buffalo Cow Head throws horse dung at him, hitting him in the face. The Sioux of *A Man Called Horse* are no less the Screaming Savage than Griffith's Indians in *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch*, or DeMille's in *The Plainsman*.

Next, Morgan meets Batise, a half French, half "Flathead" Indian. He acts as Morgan's interpreter. They plan to escape together. Buffalo Cow Head drives Batise away. The doomed, old lady's teepee, is destroyed by tribe members. Her belongings are divvied up. With no teepee to shelter her, the old lady dies in the winter. In *A Man Called Horse*, the Natives are even unfeeling savages to their elderly.

Next spring, Morgan is picking something from a flowering bush. Running Deer, Yellow Hand's sister approaches him. He gives her a flower to take to Buffalo Cow Head who howls like a banshee when she is given the flower. Running Deer tells Morgan that when you send someone a flower, it means you want to have sex with them. Running Deer seems to like Morgan. Batise explains she is a virgin and is available.

Next, a boy sees two Shoshone intruders. The boy shoots one in the leg with an arrow. Morgan attacks and kills both Shoshone men. He scalps the second one in front of the tribe's men who watch him from horseback. He rides the dead men's horses into camp and offers them as a bride price for Running Deer. Morgan's status is now that of a human being. Yellow Hand says yes he may marry his sister, but he must prove himself by taking the Sun Vow.

Morgan, who tells the assembled Sun Vow initiates that he will be a chief some day, submits to the torturous ceremony where he is suspended by hooks put into his pectoral muscles. He has a vision of Waka Tanka, the white buffalo god, and one of

Running Deer naked, running through a stream toward him. She embraces him. In the vision he says to her...

MORGAN: I want you, my hunger is real, but freedom is what you mean to me.

Morgan and Running Deer marry. As seen in many previous films, the white man has his Indian Princess. After the ceremony, Yellow Hand sees his wife with Black Eagle, a rival. He takes a vow to never retreat in battle, in order to save his honor. Batise is happy because Morgan will become chief sooner.

The Shoshone mount a major attack on the village. The Sioux are caught unawares. Yellow Hand is killed. Morgan assumes leadership and gets the men to form a two row British style archery line. The Sioux are triumphant, but Running Deer is seriously injured and dies. The tribe mourns their dead. Morgan tells Buffalo Cow Head he will be her son now that Yellow Hand is dead. The Sioux pull up stakes for a new camp. Morgan looks down and gives a whoop as he prepares to go back to civilization.

*A Man Called Horse* is set in the world of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Sioux, but it is about John Morgan and his rise to chieftain status among his Sioux captors. On the surface, the authenticity of the film is impressive. Dan Georgakas explains:

The Sioux language makes up 80% of the dialogue, the impressive Sun Dance ceremony is a central plot element, and all the action takes place within an Indian environment. The headdresses, dwellings, artifacts, masks, and ceremonial paint are as genuine as research can make them.

The only trouble is that all this authenticity is an illusion and a waste. The film is a fantasy from start to finish. (134-135)

That the film is another white man's fantasy film, in which Native American culture provides a backdrop, should not be a surprise. The film was written, directed and produced by white people, for a white run movie studio with the intention of making a profit from an audience base that was largely white. For authenticity's sake, the studio did hire Clyde Dollar an historian of the Sioux, but he also was white, and became the target of criticism by Sioux actor and activist Russell Means (Buscombe 134). Jacquelyn Kilpatrick explains: "A very popular film, *Horse* played off the recycled American appetite for knowledge about the "real" American Indians and the emergence of the headline-making 1970s warriors that had sharpened public curiosity and an urge by some to go Native" (79).

Following standard practice, all the film's key Indian roles were cast with non-Native American actors. Manu Tupou who played Yellow Hand was Fijian, Dame Judith Anderson cast as Buffalo Cow Head, was a White Anglo-Saxon, and Corrina Tsopei who played Running Deer, is Greek.

As illustrated above, the story is about how the captive Lord John Morgan, rises from the status of chattel animal to that of warrior-Chief. Similar to Hawkeye in Michael Mann's *Last of the Mohicans* (1993), Morgan is better at everything than the Indians (Kilpatrick 142). "Stripped of its pretensions, *Horse* parades the standard myth that the white man can do everything better than the Indian. Give him a little time and he will marry the best-looking girl (a princess of course) and will end up chief of the tribe" (Georgakas136).

In spite of all the research done for the film, the filmmakers ignored authenticity when it came to Sioux cultural practices. Numerous Native American critics have

lambasted the film for its total misrepresentation of the Lakota Sioux culture circa 1825. Some of the most egregious errors include the treatment of Morgan upon capture. The abuse and torture of Morgan at the hands of the tribe and specifically by Buffalo Cow Head, is not the kind of treatment he would have received even if his capture resulted from hostilities (Marubbio 70, Georgakas 135). The screaming, wailing tribe's people depicted in the scene where Morgan is tormented, poked at, and ridden like a horse during a fire-lit nighttime tribal gathering, brings back the mindless Screaming Savage trope that was most often seen in movies prior to *Broken Arrow*. The abuse suffered at the hands of Buffalo Cow Head further reinforces that trope, extending it to tribal women. Dame Judith Anderson's performance is embarrassingly over the top. She behaves more like a wild chimpanzee than she does a human being. In another incident, two women fight over booty from the raid on Morgan's camp, with an abandon one might see in a cheesy women in prison movie.

The cold-hearted treatment of the elderly seen in the film, has particularly raised the hackles of Native critics (Georgakas 136, Kilpatrick 80). Kilpatrick notes: "...leaving an old woman out in the snow would have been an abomination" (80).

Critics have also pointed out that the motivation for Morgan to undergo The Vow to the Sun, or more correctly the Sun Dance, is out of synch with the actual motivation for and practice of the rite. Dan Georgakas elaborates:

...to establish full membership in the tribe, Horse undertakes the Sun Dance ceremony, and here the film is simply sacreligious in terms of Indian beliefs. The Sun Dance was not designed to show individual courage to other men or to win a bride. The Sun Dance was the highest

religious rite of the Sioux. In it, a man proved his humility and worthlessness to the spirits by mortifying his flesh. Elaborate purification rites were absolute prerequisites as a successful dance might bring a vision of use to the entire tribe. In *Horse* the ceremony is reduced to a primitive sadistic test of courage in which the vision is the byproduct (135-136).

Morgan's resulting vision has come under criticism as well, because much of the vision's screen time is taken with a shot of Running Deer, played by a former Miss Universe, running naked toward camera. The centrality of the naked image of Running Deer in Morgan's vision leads one to the conclusion that the display of her nude body was blatantly used for exploitation.

Morgan's motivation for participating in the Sun Dance is personal; he sees it as a path to full membership in the tribe, and eventual freedom. It also is a requirement Yellow Hand demands of him, if he wishes to marry Running Deer (Georgakas 135, Kilpatrick 81, Marubbio 174).

The marriage to Running Deer echoes the Indian Princess story seen both in *The Squaw Man*, and in *Broken Arrow*. Like Jim in *The Squaw Man*, Morgan cannot have a married relationship with a woman of his own background, because where both men are, there are no white women. Unlike Jim and Nat-u-ritch, Morgan and Running Deer are both interested in being together. There is an emotional connection. Unlike Jeffords, who has full access to the white world, and who intends a lifelong relationship with Sonseeahray in *Broken Arrow*, Morgan plans to leave the tribe and Running Deer behind, when the time is right. Even though he cares for her, Morgan is using her for position in

the tribe, and to satisfy his sexual desire for her. M. Elise Marubbio however, sees another dimension in the relationship as experienced in Morgan's vision:

Although Horse's point of view prevails in the dream, the sequence suggests that Running Deer controls his vision and calls him into it. Her physical and spiritual connections to the land - relationships that Horse does not have - reinforce such a reading. Running Deer's metaphoric name and naked body link her to the plains landscape and the other animals of the vision. Additionally, the spiritual qualities of the sweat lodge suggest her connection to other realms of the natural world and to the supernatural. Her movement from the physical plane of reality onto a psychic level where she interacts with another vision seeker implies her oneness with the universe. Clearly a reference to countercultural transcendental meditation and spirituality movements, these brief moments code Running Deer as the quintessential earth maiden who is mystically or spiritually connected to the world around her and her lover.

(177)

Jacquelyn Kilpatrick sees the vision as "...more akin to an erotic dream than a Sioux spiritual vision" (81). In the 1970s with the Production Code dead, studios frequently used their newly won freedom from censorship to exploit women's bodies. Whether Marubbio's analysis is valid or not, studio executives saw dollar signs when nude women were displayed on screen.

In the last act, the white filmmakers throw historical accuracy out the window with the final Shoshone attack. Dan Georgakas explains:

The men of the plains never waged war in European fashion; small bands went out to steal horses or to fight small engagements more akin to dueling than war. In *Horse*, the Shoshone attack like the U.S. cavalry. Horse-still-Morgan saves the day when shouting orders, he lines up the tribal youth in English archery rows and their arrows cut down the Shoshone who attack like the Light Brigade itself. (136)

Georgakas goes on to point out that “Rather than a tale of Indian life, *Horse* is really about a white nobleman proving his superiority in the wilds. Almost every detail of Indian life is incorrect” (136). The tribal milieu Morgan is immersed in may lack genuine authenticity, but it provides the filmmakers with an exotic setting and set of obstacles for Morgan to overcome as he makes his journey from animal to savior.

Finally, a pregnant Running Deer achieves the destiny of Indian Princesses who marry white men, when she dies from injuries she receives during the attack (Bird 75). This fact leaves Morgan with no heavy familial ties, so he is free to leave the tribe when he finds an opportune moment.

In *A Man Called Horse*, purported ethnographic authenticity may have been an effective audience draw, but the film largely presents well-worn modes of depiction in newer packaging.

Arthur Penn’s cinematic adaption of *Little Big Man*, Thomas Berger’s satirical novel of the same name has an approach quite different from the previously discussed films. “*Little Big Man* by Thomas Berger gives a good idea of Indian attitudes toward life” (Deloria *Custer* 16).

The film version, through a series of reminiscences narrated by 121 year old Jack Crabb (Dustin Hoffman), for the benefit of a condescending white Indian Historian/Anthropologist (William Hickey), "...combines elements from two literary traditions: the picaresque (the roguish hero encounters a series of adventures) and the initiation archetype (the hero attains mature insight through experiences that shape him)...through his exposure to both white and Cheyenne Indian cultures, he develops and is able to choose between them" (Kasdan & Tavernetti 121-22).

Crabb claims to be the only white survivor of the Battle of Little Big Horn. When the scholar disbelieving, tries to get him to change the subject, Crabb tells him to turn on his tape recorder.

CRABB: Now you jest sit there and you'll learn somethin'. I knowed

General George Armstrong Custer for what he was, and I also knowed the Indians for what they was.

Crabb presents the story of his life from when he was ten years old and taken in by the Cheyenne, to Custer's defeat at the Battle of Little Big Horn. Berger's novel is very even-handed in its depiction of the whites and the Indians. They are both seen as flawed peoples, but Penn and his screenwriter Calder Willingham tend to skew the social satire more in the white's direction (Kilpatrick 85; Kasdan; and Tavernetti 125).

Crabb's story begins with Jack and his sister Caroline (Carole Androsky) huddling inside a tipped over wagon surrounded by burning debris, resulting from a Pawnee attack on the wagon train. A Cheyenne brave, Shadow That Comes in Sight (Ruben Moreno), pulls them out of the wagon and takes them to the camp of the Cheyenne, where Old Lodge Skins (Chief Dan George) is chief. When brought into the chief's tent to smoke,



Caroline is convinced that this is the beginning of her own captivity narrative, with her as the sexually used victim.

CAROLINE: It's plain as day what they want Jack. Me.

The chief passes the pipe to Caroline, who he thinks is the eldest boy. He thinks again, and has a woman feel Caroline's body to determine if she is a boy or girl. Caroline wears baggy boy's clothes and looks sexually ambiguous. Caroline is surprised they didn't know she was a woman. Jack doesn't think they will bother her.

CAROLINE: No such luck Jack, they'll get me tonight for sure.

Caroline waits. Nothing happens. She steals a horse and takes off into the night, leaving Jack behind. This is the first of many traditional narratives depicting American Indian behavior that is exploded in *Little Big Man*. These Indians aren't interested in raping Caroline. Jack describes his captors in terms completely contrary to any description a white character has enunciated in any of the earlier films in this study.

JACK: Next morning I found myself in that Indian camp all alone. (A barking dog nips at Jack. A woman clubs it.) But the Cheyenne who call themselves the Human Beings had no idea to hurt me. I was an honored guest and they gave me a real treat for breakfast: boiled dog. Dog ain't bad neither. A bit greasy I'll admit, but you'd be surprised how downright delicate the flavor is. Especially when you're starvin'. You see, the Human Beings adopted me as one of their own.

In complete contradiction to the treatment exhibited toward John Morgan by the Sioux in *A Man Called Horse*, Jack is adopted by kindly chief Old Lodge Skins, who teaches him all the survival skills needed by an Indian male. In contrast to the abuse and

torture suffered by Morgan, Jack is pretty happy.

JACK: For a boy it was kind of a paradise. I wasn't just playin' Indian I was livin' Indian.

Jack's only complaint is that he is small for his age. One of the other boys, Younger Bear (Cal Bellini), gives him a hard time because of his height. Jack gets fed up with the bullying, and punches Younger Bear in the nose, bloodying it. Jack notes the Indians didn't know anything about fist fighting. Jack apologizes to Little Bear, which creates an enemy.

JACK: The Indian way: you should never feel bad about conquering an enemy unless you want his spirit as well. I had made the first real enemy of my life.

When a group of men is preparing to raid the Pawnee. Jack makes the situation worse by saving Little Bear's life during the raid. Little Bear now owes Jack a life.

Jack's heroism is recognized by Old Lodge Skins who gives him a warrior name: Little Big Man.

When the emigrating tribe comes upon a burned out Indian encampment with corpses of women and children strewn about. Jack is incredulous.

JACK: Why kill women and children Grandfather?

OLD LODGE SKINS: It's because they are strange. They don't seem to know where the center of the earth is. We must have a war on these cowards and teach 'em a lesson.

Another unprecedented feature of *Little Big Man*, is Old Lodge Skins ongoing analysis of white behavior. It is completely baffling to him. Even in pro-Indian films

such as *Broken Arrow* and *Cheyenne Autumn*, the Indian characters don't take the time to reflect on white behavior, as they are too busy reacting to it.

As the company of warriors is preparing to leave on their raid, Old Lodge Skins offers Jack an out.

OLD LODGE SKINS: This is the first time my son, I face the whites as an enemy. I don't know whether you remember before you became a Human Being and as dear a son to me as I made with Buffalo Wallow Woman and the others. But I won't speak of that unfortunate time, I just want to say, if you believe riding against these white creatures is bad, You can stay out of the fight. No one will think the worst.

JACK: Grandfather, I think it is a good day to die.

OLD LODGE SKINS: My heart soars like a hawk.

Although though Jack is white, he identifies as a Human Being. Even though his connection with the tribe is the result of an Indian raid that killed everyone in his family except for him and Caroline, Jack is with Old Lodge Skins when he wants to teach the whites a lesson for their massacre of a Human Being encampment. He is more than willing to support and participate in an attack on the whites, which he as an old man describes as "kind of pitiful".

JACK: Not that the Human Beings wasn't brave. No warrior ever walked the earth more brave than a Human Being. Old Lodge Skins' idea of war an the whites idea of war were kind of different. Half our party didn't even use weapons. What they done was take coup. Hit the

enemy with a little stick. Humiliate 'em, that's how the Human Beings taught a coward a lesson and won a war.

Again, *Little Big Man* refutes the crazed Indian bent on revenge stereotype that goes back to the days of Buffalo Bill's Wild West shows (Buscombe 12; Jay 5). Penn's Indians want to "teach 'em a lesson," not wipe them from the face of the earth. They are more interested in counting coup, in humiliating the enemy, than in massive bloodshed.

In the encounter with soldiers that follows, The Indians are routed, and Jack is about to be killed when he yells out...

JACK: God bless George Washington. I'm a white man!

Jack, faced with death as a Human Being, realizes he can play both sides of the Indian /white fence, which he does throughout the film. Identifying as white, he is adopted by a fire and brimstone preacher Silas Pendrake, who wants to beat the devil out of him, and his sexy wife Louise (Faye Dunaway), who wants to give him an immediate bath during which she sings hymns as she assists Jack in his bathing. Jack adapts to his new environment, becoming a great hymn singer. He fights temptation, even though he has fallen in love with Mrs. Pendrake. One day, Jack accompanies her on a shopping trip. They stop at a soda fountain. Left by himself for a while, Jack goes to investigate a faint sound of someone calling for help and finds Mrs. Pendrake having sex with the shop owner. Ancient Jack, notes that event ended his religious period. Jack next falls in with amoral snake oil salesman Alardyce Merriweather (Martin Balsam), who has lost several body parts to angry past customers. Merriweather gives Jack his version of the human condition.

MERRIWEATHER: Your problem is that the Indian gave you a vision of

moral order in the universe and there isn't any.

Their association comes to an end when the men are tarred and feathered by a mob led by Jack's sister Caroline. When Caroline realizes she has found her long lost brother, she is determined that they will have a real family life. She goes about teaching the inexperienced Jack how to use a gun.

CAROLINE: Why a man ain't complete without a gun.

Jack learns quickly, and Caroline determines that he's a natural born gunfighter. Jack enters his brief gunfighter period.

Jack enters a bar dressed in a black gunfighter's outfit. Wild Bill Hickok (Jeff Corey) is in attendance. He invites Jack, "The Soda Pop Kid", to join him. Hickok is jumpy, he's got lots of people gunning for him. A man pulls a gun and Wild Bill shoots him down before he can fire. The gruesome reality of the man's death sours Jack on the gunfighter business. Caroline is disgusted by Jack's aversion to killing people. She leaves town. Next, Jack becomes a storekeeper and marries Olga, a Swedish girl who barely speaks English. Jack loses his store because of the thievery of his business partner. General George Armstrong Custer (Richard Mulligan) happens upon the auction sale of Jack's business. Olga is wailing.

OLGA: Ruined... that's what we is Jack, ruined!

Custer advises the couple to go West. Olga is terrified of Indians.

CUSTER: You have nothing to fear from Indians, I give you my personal guarantee.

In the next scene, Olga and Jack are on a stagecoach that is attacked by Indians. The scene is a parody of the famous Indian attack on the stagecoach in John Ford's

*Stagecoach* (1939). Like John Wayne in Ford's movie, Jack jumps onto the backs of the galloping team of horses. Unlike the events in *Stagecoach*, an attacking Indian does the same. The scene ends with Jack falling into a river, the stagecoach tipping over, and Olga being abducted by the Indians. Jack looks for months for Olga, then decides to go deep into Cheyenne country to find her. He is captured by a party of men from his old band who are ready to kill him, until he says he is Little Big Man. They don't recognize him.

He is taken to Old Lodge Skins who welcomes him back and questions him about his time among the whites. He is particularly interested in Jack's marriage to a white woman. He asks if she enjoyed sex.

JACK: Well Grandfather, all the whites aren't crazy.

OLD LODGE SKINS: I'm glad to hear that my son, I thought they were.

Jack tells him of General Custer and what a brave and good warrior he was in the Civil War.

Soon Jack resumes his quest for Olga. Before Jack leaves, Old Lodge Skins assures Jack he'll return to the Human Beings. He describes a dream in which Jack has three or four wives that he must satisfy in one night. Jack is puzzled, how could he have so many wives, since the Human Beings usually have only one wife.

OLD LODGE SKINS: I don't know. It worries me.

Jack runs into Custer again and volunteers to scout for him. Custer pegs Jack as a muleskinner, and won't allow anyone to contradict his inerrant judgment. *Little Big Man's* Custer is a big contrast to the intense, pressured Custer of *The Plainsman*, and the jaunty, gallant, and respectful-of-the-Indians Custer of Raoul Walsh's *They Died With*

*Their Boots On* (1941). Penn's Custer is self absorbed, convinced of the rightness of his god-like judgment, and bent on annihilating the Indians (Hutton 37-42, 53-54).

The night before a police action directed at a band of Cheyenne, the sergeant in charge of Jack tells him the best thing for his wife would be a bullet in the head, and that he should take his revenge on the "bucks." The next morning after a perfunctory admonition to spare the women and children unless they resist, the Indian camp is attacked and completely decimated. The sergeant kills Shadow That Comes in Sight. Jack finds his daughter Sunshine giving birth, hidden in some bushes. Jack is devastated after witnessing the senseless slaughter. He returns to the Cheyenne. Old Lodge Skins is now blinded as the result of a white raid on the tribe. Jack asks Old Lodge Skins if he hates the whites yet.

OLD LODGE SKINS: (He holds up a scalp.) Do you see this fine thing ? Do you admire the humanity of it? Because the Human Beings my son, they believe everything is alive. Not only man and animals but also water, earth, stone. And also the things from them, like that hair. The man from whom this hair came, he's bald on the other side, because I now own his scalp. That is the way things are. But the white men, they believe everything is dead. Stone earth animals and people, even their own people. If things keep trying to live. White men will rub them out. That is the difference. You will stay with us, my son.

Jack, his white life a disaster, chooses to live as an Indian. The tribe considers itself safe from white attack because they are staying on land ceded to them by a treaty with the

United States. Jack runs into his old enemy Younger Bear who is now married to Olga, who doesn't recognize him. The *heemaneh* Little Horse, played as a contemporary homosexual stereotype, offers to cohabit with him. Instead, Jack marries Sunshine, the girl he rescued from Custer's raid. As she is to go off and give birth, she convinces him to marry her three husbandless sisters as well. Fulfilling Old Lodge Skins dream/prophecy, Jack has sex with all three in one night. When Sunshine returns with the new baby, she is happy that he succeeded with her sisters.

SUNSHINE: I knew you were a good man.

Jack's hindsight reflection is that that was when he came closest to turning "pure Indian".

The depiction of the Cheyenne women in this sequence has much more to do with the film giving a nod to the late sixties flower child culture of communal living and belief in sexual freedom, than it does to any authentic representation of Cheyenne marital practices (Kasdan, and Tavernetti 132; Marubbio 182). Kasdan and Tavernetti note: "In reality, Cheyenne women were constrained by strictly maintained rules of chastity; even courtship was conducted over a period of years..." (132).

Moments after being presented with his newborn son, Jack notices the horses in the corral whinnying. Something is wrong. He tells Sunshine to stay in the teepee and runs toward Old Lodge Skins who tells him to listen. On the soundtrack *Gary Owen*, Custer's favorite song is heard. Jack sees the approaching Seventh Cavalry. The Indian settlement is decimated. Jack walks Old Lodge Skins to the river away from the devastation. Old Lodge Skins is convinced he's invisible because he didn't see the soldiers in his dream of ponies being shot. Custer orders the ponies shot. He immediately turns to a lieutenant who has agreed to do as asked.



CUSTER: You think it's shocking to shoot a few ponies? Well let me tell you, the women are far more important than the ponies. The point is they breed like rats. The point is however lieutenant, this is a legal action, and the men are under strict orders not to shoot the women, unless of course they refuse to surrender. Isn't that correct?

Jack, unable to get to her, watches as Sunshine and his son are killed.

The attack on the Washita River camp was used as a metaphor for the U.S. involvement in Viet Nam, and resonated specifically with audiences aware of the My Lai massacre of 1969, which occurred one year before the film was released (Kilpatrick 93; Kasdan, and Tavernetti 130).

Jack, bent on revenge, shows up in the soldier's camp but avoids execution by claiming he was held prisoner by the Cheyenne. Jack enters Custer's tent as Custer preens in front a mirror. He has a knife in hand, but can't bring himself to do the deed. Jack thanks Custer for saving his life when Jack claimed he was a prisoner. Custer knows Jack came into the tent to kill him.

CUSTER: Do I hang you? I think not. Get out of here. Your miserable life isn't worth the reversal of a Custer decision.

Jack goes back among the whites and becomes a hopeless drunk. Wild Bill Hickok recognizes him wallowing in a gutter and gives him money to get cleaned up. Wild Bill is gunned down by a boy in a saloon, just as Jack comes in clean, and in a new suit of clothes. In fulfilling Wild Bill's last request, he again encounters Louise Pendrake, who is now a prostitute. Back groveling in a gutter, he sees Merriweather who has lost even more body parts. Jack has hit bottom. He takes off into the wilderness and becomes a

hermit. Just as he is about to end it all, he hears the sound of *Garry Owen* playing in the distance.

JACK: The time had come to look the devil in the eye and send him to hell where he belonged. The only question was how to get him there.

Jack reenters Custer's service.

CUSTER: Sergeant, take this man and give him some clothes. This man will be invaluable to me... His game is very obvious. Anything that man tells me will be a lie. Therefore he will be a perfect reverse barometer. Isn't that correct?

Custer needs a spectacular victory over the Indians to be nominated by the Democrats for President of the United States. He wants to attack. Jack advises him to go into a coulee.

CUSTER: There are no Indians there I suppose?

JACK: I didn't say that. There are thousands of Indians down there. And when they get done with you there won't be nothin' left but a greasy spot. This ain't the Washita River General. And them ain't helpless women and children waiting for you. They're Cheyenne brave and Sioux. You go down there if you got the nerve.

CUSTER: Still trying to outsmart me aren't you mule skinner? You want me to think that you don't want me to go down there, but the subtle truth is you don't really want me to go down there. Well, are you reassured now Major? Men of the Seventh. The hour of victory is at hand. Onward to Little Big Horn and Glory!!

Custer, delusional till the end, shouts inane orders to his men as they are slaughtered. As

Custer is making a fanciful speech to President Grant, he is shot in the back with two arrows. Jack is spared when Younger Bear finds him, and spares his life to pay back the life debt he owes Jack.

Jack reconnects with Old Lodge Skins who is ready to die.

JACK: Why do you want to die Grandfather?

OLD LODGE SKINS: Because there's no other way to deal with the white man my son. Whatever else you can say about them it must be admitted, you cannot get rid of them.

JACK: No, I suppose not Grandfather.

OLD LODGE SKINS: There is an endless supply of white men. But there always has been a limited number of Human Beings. We won today. We won't win tomorrow.

With that Jack and Old Lodge Skins go off to a hilltop where Old Lodge Skins asks that he be given his old power to make things happen so he can die. It doesn't work. He and Jack go back down the hill in conversation.

JACK: Well that's the story of this old Indian Fighter. That's the story of the Human Beings, who was promised land where they could live in peace. Land that would be theirs... as long as grass grow, wind blow, and the sky is blue.

*Little Big Man* represents a sea change in the cinematic depiction of Native Americans. For the first time a Native American has a major speaking part in a Hollywood film. Chief Dan George's measured delivery of his character's wry observations of the white's behavior ring true, this is clearly no white man in redface. To

Old Lodge Skins the whites are strange, they don't know where the center of the earth is. Their behavior is crazy. Old Lodge Skins point of view is the point of view of the movie.

Jack Crabb lives in both worlds, the Indian and the white. Jacqueline Kilpatrick notes that Jack "experiences what today might most closely be described as the confusion of mixed-blood identity. "God knows I thought enough about it and kept telling myself I was basically an Indian, just as when among Indians I kept seeing how I was really white to the core" He shifts back and forth between cultures trying to find out who he is" (85). He is happiest when he lives with the Cheyenne. Their world makes sense. The white world is a disaster for Jack every time he plunges in. Hypocrisy, amorality, senseless violence, and duplicity plague Jack when he is reintroduced to the white world (Marubbio 179). The only good thing he finds is his wife Olga, who because of her limited English is unable to understand all that is going on around her. The loss of Olga, motivates his search for her, and eventual return to the Cheyenne. For Jack, the white world comes to mean death and destruction for the Human Beings, culminating in Custer's horrific attack on the Washita River settlement. Finally, the cultural context of 1970 had a big influence on *Little Big Man*. As Edward Buscombe put it, in *Little Big Man*, "...the Cheyenne function as surrogate hippies, tolerant of homosexuality, kind to children, engaging in free love and conversations about the meaning of life" (135). *Little Big Man's* new approach to the depiction of Native Americans was tuned into the 1960s-1970s counter-culture's rejection of traditional values, and helped the film connect with its audience. It was the sixth highest grossing film of 1970, and the only Western including *A Man Called Horse*, in the top twenty films of the year ("TMe: Box Office Tops from 1970-1979").

## Chapter 5

### *Conclusion*

The cinematic image of the Native American during the period 1913 to 1970 clearly underwent a significant evolution. The image of the screaming savage of 1913's *The Battle of Elderbush Gulch* or that of 1936's *The Plainsman* is clearly not the same Indian seen in *Broken Arrow*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Little Big Man*. However, a version of it persists into 1970 in *A Man Called Horse*. The postwar zeitgeist of the 1950s and 1960s, with the movement toward civil rights for members of all races increased the sensitivity of the filmmakers studied toward a view of Native Americans that emphasized their humanity. The Native's otherness was not charged with a negative value in *Broken Arrow*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Little Big Man* as it was in the earlier films examined in this thesis. Both *Broken Arrow* and *Cheyenne Autumn* present much more nuanced versions of Native Americans than do any of the earlier films. All the films examined in this study, however persist in presenting their stories from a white point of view. Even the "pro Indian" films, *Broken Arrow* and *Cheyenne Autumn*, have their stories told through the eyes of a white man. In *Broken Arrow*, at least Tom Jeffords is there as a witness to most of the events. In *Cheyenne Autumn*, Captain Archer's narration is imposed on the story presumably to keep white star Richard Widmark's voice on the soundtrack, as he has little involvement in the trek of the Cheyenne. *A Man Called Horse* is, of course, John Morgan's story, and the Sioux become more human the better he understands their culture. However, his condescension toward them persists until the last frame of film flickers off the screen. *Little Big Man* holds a unique place in the mix as a result of the bifurcated upbringing and life of its protagonist, Jack Crabb. Crabb is white

by birth but oscillates between the Cheyenne and the whites. In the movie the whites are the savages. The Human Beings come across as imperfect but are far more admirable than the whites.

The Indian Princess narratives in *The Squaw Man*, *Broken Arrow*, *A Man Called Horse*, and *Little Big Man* all have common elements that are handled differently in each film. Nat-u-ritch in classic form falls in love with Jim, makes herself available to him sexually, marries him, gives birth to a son, and then must give him up to an Englishwoman who can bring him up properly. The loss of her son, which is a result of her wild behavior, uncivilized sexuality, and inability to fit into white society, drives her to suicide. Sonseeahray is a pure virgin-earth goddess, who after marrying the white hero is sacrificed to seal a peace treaty between white and Indian. Running Deer marries John Morgan, which legitimizes him with the Sioux, but is killed in a Shoshone raid soon after, freeing him to leave the tribe. Sunshine marries Jack/Little Big Man and is slaughtered by Custer because she is in the way of the forces of Manifest Destiny. All four of the women particulars aside, marry a white man and then die in the course of the film's story.

African Americans have not been portrayed cinematically by whites in blackface since 1915, yet in the years encompassed by this thesis, only one of the films analyzed cast a Native actor in a major speaking part. The casting of Chief Dan George in *Little Big Man*, brought a feeling of authenticity to his role of tribal leader that was lacking in Jeff Chandler's portrayal of Cochise in *Broken Arrow*, and in the portrayals of Native leaders in *Cheyenne Autumn* and *A Man Called Horse*. None of the parts portraying tribal leaders in those films were played by Native actors. The notable exception to the practice of casting non-native actors in significant roles was DeMille's casting of Lillian

St. Cyr in *The Squaw Man*. Like Chief Dan George, she brought an authenticity to her role that made an enormous difference in the film.

In closing, all the films studied in this thesis, have been made by whites, and reflect a white agenda and point of view. As white ideas about Indians changed over time, and societies attitudes regarding the history of the Westward Expansion became less rigid, so did depiction of Native Americans change. Beginning in the post WWII era and coinciding with the Civil Rights Movement, filmmakers expanded the dimensionality and humanity of portrayals of American Indians in film. Unlike the films that explored contemporary black/white relations in the same period, most movies that depict Native Americans are set in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The creators of the movies studied in this thesis, interpreted the encounters between the forces of white Western Expansion and the Native peoples who were in its way.

Contemporary Native American characters were seldom seen in films made in the period examined in this study. In the years subsequent to 1970, in addition to the traditional 19<sup>th</sup> Century setting of films that depict Native Americans, such as *Dances With Wolves* (1990), films with contemporary Native characters became more frequent. Movies such as *Billy Jack* (1971) and its sequels, *Powwow Highway* (1989), and *Smoke Signals* (1998), which was produced, written and directed by Native American filmmakers, have brought depictions of present-day Native Americans to the screen. These films, which expand depiction of Native Americans into a world recognizable by the contemporary audience, are a worthy subject for further research and analysis.

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