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The Representation of Indians in Daves Delmer's *Broken Arrow* ,
Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man* and Kevin Costner's *Dances with*
Wolves

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Student's signature:

To the memory of my grand father

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Abstract

This research is concerned with the representation of Native Americans in three Hollywood Western films, respectively, Daves Delmer's *Broken Arrow* (1950), Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man* (1970), and Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* (1990). The purpose of this work is to demonstrate that these movies make use of the Indian figure to reflect on contemporary American problems such as race relations, counter-culture, and ecology. To achieve this aim, the school of the New Historicism serves as the epistemological basis of this dissertation. The New Historicism's emphasis on the necessity of contextualization and its perception of history are relevant in handling the issue of the representation of Indians in the three mentioned movies. Beginning with *Broken Arrow*, I discuss the film's use of the Indian to legitimize the policies of assimilation the U.S government was undertaking during the 1950s to solve the Indian problem; these policies were known as Termination policy. The film revises the history of the American West in order to prove to the conformist American society of the 1950s that the American Indian can be assimilated into the white society. In my analysis of *Little Big Man*, I argue that the counter culture movement and the Vietnam War influenced the perception of the Indians in the movie. Adhering to the Hippie Movement's distrust of the traditional American values, the film appropriates the Indian way of life to criticize the white American society. The Romantic theme of the noble savage is contrasted with the industrial life of white America. I also demonstrate that the film uses the history of the American conquest of the West as a metaphor for the Vietnam War. The film's focus on the massacres of the Indians by U.S army corresponds with the massacres the same army was perpetuating in Vietnam and substitutes the Indians for the Vietnamese. As far as *Dances with Wolves* is concerned, the theme is the same, the white/ American Indian relationship. However, in the 1990s America witnessed new issues. Ecology was both a fashion and a problem. The film deploys the notion of the Ecological Indian, the claim that the American Indian lives in perfect harmony with nature, to criticize the excesses and the dangers of pollution. Besides the issues of pollution, the film utilizes the American Indian as an instrument through which the white male hero can restore his imperialist masculinity, which coincided with the emergence of the New World Order under the leadership of the United States.

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General Introduction

Introduction

Native Americans¹ have been a subject of curiosity and discussion for centuries. With the invention of television and film, the Indian figure becomes a favourite and omnipresent subject on screens. They were represented in many ways, from a blood thirsty savage to a noble savage. Hollywood, the American film industry company, has contributed since its beginnings in the manipulation of Indian representations and the accumulation of stereotypes about them. Indeed, since the starting of film industry in Hollywood, the Indian character has been used to fulfill the process of stereotyping constructed during the long and harsh contact between the Indians and the Europeans which had begun with the “discovery” of the “New World” in 1492.

The Western as a genre of movies in Hollywood has contributed to frame the image of the Indians among white audiences. The silent film era produced a romanticized image of the Indian showing him as noble savage. With the depression years, under the historical circumstances of the era, Hollywood depicted the Indian as blood thirsty savage. For the next two decades, Westerns symbolized by the films of John Ford strengthened the image of the Indian as a terrifying aggressor. In Ford’s movies and other Westerns of the era, “the cowboy” became a new kind of hero who could kill and control the wild native tribes threatening the white western settlers. This period presented a simplistic view showing a white actor riding a horse, and killing the Indians who threatened him (Kilpatrick, 1999:17).

After the Second World War, some Western films began to question the ideals and style of the traditional Western. The notion of ‘revisionist Western’ started to emerge in Hollywood (Newby, 2004:176). The “revisionist films” are characterized by their

¹Terminology is an issue when discussing the indigenous peoples of America. In this dissertation, “Indians” and “Native Americans” are used interchangeably. “Native Americans” is term used only recently to refer to the aboriginal peoples of America. However, the Indian is coined by the Columbus who thought himself to be in India. I think that in this dissertation the word “Indian” is more relevant because its focus is on the invention of Indians by the white man.

representation of Native Americans in a balanced and sympathetic way. They challenged the way traditional Westerns perceived the history of United States. As film scholars Margo Kasdan and Susan Taverrentti put it forward in their article “Native American in a Revisionist Western”,

The classic Hollywood Western of the 1930s and 1940s reinforced those images and stereotypes that had evolved during the previous century and that relied almost on the figure of the blood thirsty warrior whose hostile actions and threatening presence impeded the great westward expansion. This conception of American history shifted slightly in the 1950 when a variation arose in the genre. Several directors made Westerns that showed the white man’s poor treatment of Native Americans.

(In Rollins, and O’Connor, 2003:124)

Since 1950s many revisionist Western movies have been released. Three movies are representative of the revisionist Westerns: Daves Delmer’s *Broken Arrow* (1950), *Little Big Man* by Arthur Penn (1970), and Kevin Costner’s *Dances with Wolves*.

Review of Literature

Since their respective releases, *Broken Arrow* (1950), *Little Big Man* (1970), and *Dances with Wolves* (1990) have been important topics for film reviews and criticism. To begin with *Broken Arrow*, Ralph and Natasha Friar, in their book *The Only Good Indian* (1972), say that despite the seeming sympathetic portrayal of Indians in *Broken Arrow*, the film is still racist. Their main argument is that Hollywood did not use Native American actors, thereby taking away the Native American identity of the film (Friar, 1972: 205). Moreover, the scholars consider that *Broken Arrow* depicted sympathetically the Indians to help the 1950s’ viewers to feel better about themselves; all of the guilt of massacring the Indians was washed away (ibid, 202).

Besides the Friars, Frank Manchel, in his article *Cultural Confusion in Broken Arrow*, argues that *Broken Arrow* claims itself to be a true account of history; but actually, the historical events in the movie are fabricated and manipulated to fulfil a certain political

agenda of the epoch in which the movie was released. Manchel denies the film's possible merits as being "well intentioned" but considers it as a justification for the disastrous termination policies that Congress followed in the 1950s. He concludes his essay by saying,

If *Broken Arrow* is remembered by many as a well-intentioned film, it may be because they are willing to say that in 1950 people did not know any better, that this was a significant step forward compared to what had come earlier.

(Manchel in Rollins, O'Connor, 2003:103)

For Manchel, then, *Broken Arrow* cannot be considered sympathetic to the Indians. According to him, beyond the movie's seeming appearance as a well-intentioned movie, it does not escape the process of stereotyping already found in the white mind.

Contrary to Manchel, Raymond William Stedman, in his book *Shadows of the Indian: Stereotypes in American Culture* (1982), presents *Broken Arrow* as the first movie which challenged the negative views the traditional Westerns constructed about the Indians. Stedman affirms that

Things were different in *Broken Arrow* (...) unlike conventional Indian films, in which a frontier hero saves Indians from exploitation by criminals; *Broken Arrow* placed the Apaches at the center of the decision making and solution seeking

(Stedman, 1982:206-207)

According to Stedman, *Broken Arrow* tries to revise the traditional view about the Indians. It aims at making the relationship between the Indians and the whites better. The movie promoted ideas of mutual understanding and equal treatment between the two communities.

Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man* is another "revisionist Western" on which critics focused. Jacquelyn Kilpatrick in her book *Celluloid Indians: Native American and Films* (1999) appreciates the efforts in *Little Big Man* to challenge the stereotyped images of the Indians on the screen. According to her, the emergence of Indian activism and its politicized criticism against the representations of native cultures broke the unchanging discourses about

the American Indian and helped to create what she calls as “the new warrior image of the native” (Kilpatrick, 1999,71). In her opinion, the movie is “the best of a new wave of films sympathetic to the American Indians” (ibid, 94).

In addition to Kilpatrick, film scholars Margo Kasdan and Susan Tavernetti commented on the film as it “inverts the common mythologies of the American frontier usually presented in the Western film genre” (in Rollins, and O’Connor, 2003:121). They argue that *Little Big Man* brought something innovative to the Western genre since it reconsiders the impact of westward expansion on the Native Americans. Unlike the traditional Westerns like those of John Ford which showed the Indians as savages threatening heroic pioneers, *Little Big Man* depicted the Indians as victims of mistreatment by the United States Army. These two scholars go further to say that whereas classic Westerns portray the whites as representatives of civilization and the Indians as barbarians; this one represents the opposite (ibid). In fact, Kasdan and Tavernetti suggest that *Little Big Man* is important not only because of its revisionist view of American frontier history and its more authentic and sensitive representation of Native Americans, but also because the film introduces a narrative structure that subsequent Westerns adopted (ibid, 134). Indeed, the narrative structure is based on the white hero who goes among the natives to discover his true self. This structure is adopted by Costner’s *Dances with Wolves*.

Kevin Costner’s *Dances with Wolves* has been the subject of several academic discussions. The film is praised for its unprecedented sympathetic treatment of Native Americans. To start with, the film critics Shohat and Stam discuss the transformation in the cinematic representation of Natives American in the movie, in particular with regards to linguistic propagation and Costner’s decision to portray the Pawnee and the Sioux in the film speaking Lakota. They believe that *Dances with Wolves* “triggers hope for a sea change” in that aspect by signaling a move away from the mono-linguistic tendencies of the earlier

portrayals of natives (Shohat and Stam, 2003:192). Indeed, one third of the movie is spoken in Lakota language with English subtitles.

In addition, Robert Baird, in his essay *Going Indian*, applies Freud's notion of family romance to examine the movie's depiction of Indians. Freud argues that all young people must break with their parents at some points and that each generation must break with the previous one. A "family romance" emerges as a response to various motivations: loss of parental love, fear of breaking the incest taboo and so on (in Rollins and O'Connor, 2003: 156). Baird suggests that this psychological mechanism can explain the success of those narratives wherein the white protagonist goes Indian. To be more explicit, the representation of Indians in *Dances with Wolves* represents a break of an American generation from the previous one. The American Indians in the film symbolizes a family romance which "would satisfy the wish for a return to the Garden, where strong and noble parents live in abundance and harmony, free of decay, pollution, and anxiety of the industrial society" (in Rollins, O'Connor, 2003:156). The representation of Indian in *Dances with Wolves*, then, for Baird, expresses the white community's mourning and desire for a pre-industrial Eden.

Finally, the scholar of the Western film Jennifer L. McMahon in her book *Philosophy of the Western* (2010) discusses *Dances with Wolves* by focusing on the cultural significance of historically specific representations of Native Americans in this film. She argues that the representation of Indians in the film is derived from the larger western literary and philosophic tradition which is concerned with how the "civilized" is to be defined with respect to the "savage" or "the barbarian". McMahon points out that unlike *Broken Arrow* or *Little Big Man* in which the white heroes marry Indian women, *Dances with Wolves* avoids the sensitive issue of miscegenation; she says "there will be no interracial romance in this version of Native America. Instead, Dunbar respectfully courts the only white female in the tribe, Stands With A Fist, a woman of an appropriate age and experience, who will become

his wife” (McMahan, 2010: 280). Thus, if the movie avoids interracial marriage, it’s because the Indian culture is considered exotic and foreign.

Hypothesis and Issue

Although the above critics have shed light on the movies’ many aspects and ideologies, they do not explore deeply the historical conditions in which the movies are made. History should be taken into accounts, or, as Fredric Jameson urges his readers in his book *The Political Unconscious* to “always historicize!”(Jameson, 1981: IX). The films selected for this dissertation are famous for openly critiquing the ethos of the mythic American West and for appropriating the genre’s conventions for social commentary. This dissertation tries to relate these movies to the social issues of the eras in which they were released, namely the idea of assimilation of minorities, the conflict of the Vietnam War, counter culture movement and the destruction of environment and different other issues that would be relevant in my analysis of the representation of Indians in the selected movies. This dissertation will reconsider their (the movies) relationship with American history and politics.

The aim of this present dissertation is to examine the representation of the Native American in Hollywood Westerns. The selected Westerns for this research are characterized by their sympathetic view about the Indians in comparison to the classic era of the genre. Nevertheless, these films are made from the white perspective, and one has to analyze them in relation to white issues. To be more explicit, the representation of Indians in Daves Delmer’s *Broken Arrow*, *Little Big Man* of Arthur Penn, and Kevin Costner’s *Dances with Wolves* will be analyzed through the cultural paradigms in which they were released. It deals extensively with question of historical and sociological realities in the representation of Native Americans in these films.

This research suggests that the Indian character is used to make political, historical

and cultural statements about the white American culture at moments of crises. The Western genre is mainly an American invention. The influence and the popularity it has achieved among the American audiences allow Hollywood filmmakers to vehicle through it discourses which were dominant in the times they were released. The context is primordial to understand how a representation acquires meaning. At some historical moments, some forms of representation rooted in the long history of contact between the Indians and whites emerge just to give meaning to the social issue of the era.

I will show that the selected movies use the images of American Indians as allegorical representations of the issues of the American society. I will demonstrate that the Indian figure is a carrier of meaning that the white society wanted to construct according to its cultural paradigms. This dissertation will deal less with the accuracy of the representation. It will show how the white society's issues converge in the movies so that the sympathetic or racist representations of the Indians are made. Whether the Indian is depicted as a blood thirsty savage or a noble hero, the aim is the same: the Indian, as a minority, is used to make opinions whether political, social, or ecological about the culture of whites. In other words, the Indian is instrumentalized to circulate discourses about other issues in American social and political life.

Method and Materials

a/- Method

How political, historical, social and cultural backgrounds contribute to making a work of art is the field of a new theory brought in the 1980s called New Historicism. This research relies on many New Historicist assumptions to explore the representation of Indians in the selected films.

To start with, one should say that “the New Historicism” is a heterogonous theory. In

other words, the New Historicist critics go in different directions and suggest various ways to understand art in general and literary works in particular. As Harold Veenser says “the New Historicism remains a word without an adequate referent” (Veenser, 2013: x). It seems hard to find out some collective traits that would gather these texts in one stream. Nevertheless, some key assumptions tend to “continually reappear and bind together the avowed practitioners of the New Historicism” (ibid, xi). Among these assumptions, one can identify the New Historicists’ rejection of the formalist tradition of approaching texts, their denial of a possibility to have access to an authentic past, and their insistence that literature and history are dialectical (ibid). Indeed, my research borrows such insights to securitize the representation of Indians in the selected films.

As said above, the New Historicism emerged in the early 1980s as a reaction to the formalist methods that tended to isolate a work of literature from the context of its production. Indeed, while the formalists like the New Critics, regarded art as an autonomous entity without any consideration of the historical elements, the New Historicism, according to one of its early practitioners, Stephen Greenblatt, does not “assume the literary as a stable ground” and does not “take for granted the existence of an autonomous aesthetic realm” (Greenblatt,1988: vii). For the New Historicists, then, there is no art for its own sake that can have some beauty or value in isolation. On the contrary, the works of literature or art are socially constructed and one cannot understand them without a close look at the “contexts” that gave birth to them.

Besides the fact that the New Historicism was born against the formalist methods, it also differs from the previously known historical approaches to literature in their way of perceiving history itself. While “the old historicism” takes history as a universal phenomenon which is based on the objective study of events, the New Historicists, influenced by Michel Foucault’s discourse theory and the Poststructuralist’s insights on language and truth, regard

history as a cultural phenomenon. Literary critic Judith Lowder Newton summarizes this point about the New Historicism by saying,

Those engaged in New Historicism, we are told, generally assume that there is no trans -historical or universal human essence and that human subjectivity is constructed by cultural codes which position and limit all of us in various and divided ways. They assume that there is no objectivity, that we experience the world in language and that all our representations of the world, our readings of texts and of the past, are informed by our own historical position, by the values and politics that are rooted in them

(Newton in Veeseer, 2013:152)

The New historicist suggests that it is difficult to reconstruct the past as it really was, and, therefore, a critic should look at the present conditions that made a given historical interpretation possible. In another sense, one should look at the ideologies which create a given version of the past.

The last point I want to discuss about the New Historicism and that would help validate the thesis statement proposed for this research is the idea that literature (art in general) and culture have a dialectical relationship. As Brook Thomas says in his book *New Historicism: And Other Old-Fashioned Topics* “Literature both produces and is produced by a period’s ideology” (Thomas, 1991: 23). Indeed, the main concern of New Historicism is to reconfigure the relationship between texts and the cultural system in which they are produced. In other words, Following Foucault, Literature is seen as having a “discursive agency” (Greenbaltt, 1988: x). Therefore, the task of the literary critic should be to recover the ideology that gave birth to the text, and which the text in turn helps to disseminate within the culture.

b/- Materials

As mentioned above, three Hollywood Western films will be the focus of this study: Daves Delmer’s *Broken Arrow* (1950), *Little Big Man* by Arthur Penn (1970), and *Dances with*

Wolves of Kevin Costner (1990). The choice of these films for historical analysis is not fortuitous. How to select a film for historical analysis caused a heated debate among scholar. The historian Pierre Sorlin identifies four criteria in selecting a film for historical analysis “the originality of the film, its relationship to current events, its favorable reception by the public and the fact of its being produced and distributed during a time of crisis” (cited in Rollins and O’Connor, 2003:92). The selected films seem to meet with these criteria.

Methodological outline

To achieve my purpose of showing that the Indian is instrumentalized to vehicle discourses about the white society’s issues, this dissertation will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter will discuss first of all the issue of representation. I will focus on Stuart Hall’s theoretical insights on representation. His notions of difference and stereotyping are relevant in dealing with Native American representation in Hollywood. Then, the chapter will discuss the history of the Indian representation by Europeans and later by Americans. I will show that the Indian is seen as the savage either ignoble or noble, and in both cases the Indian is stereotyped. My focus will be on the nineteenth- century American Indian representations in literature, painting, and Wild West shows. I will highlight that these representations are important to understand the subsequent portrayals of Indians by Hollywood. Special focus will be put upon the notions of the ‘Noble Savage’ and ‘Ecological Indian’. I will discuss their historical deployment to criticize the white society. I will conclude this chapter by trying to give some definitions of the Western Genre and how it has represented the Indian since its beginning in Hollywood, with a focus on the representations of the Indian woman.

The Second chapter will be devoted to the analysis of Daves Delmer’s *Broken Arrow*. I will argue that the movie reflects the 1950s paradigm of conformity into the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant ideals. The Indian figure is used in the movie to represent the possibility of

the Indian assimilation to the white society. The distortions of historical events, the representation of the Indians as the 'Other', and the association of the Indian woman with the American white hero will be discussed in the movie.

The third chapter will shed light on the representation of Indians in Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man*. It will follow the same argument, that the Indians are used in Hollywood to disseminate and legitimize the ideology of the white culture. It will be shown that unlike *Broken Arrow* which supports the idea of assimilation, *Little Big Man*, released in a period known for its distrust of the traditional American values, stands for the opposite. The Indian image is used to criticize the white society. The Indian culture and identity become an allegory that expresses the profound tensions the white society was enduring.

The last chapter will historicize Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves*. I will argue that the Indian in the film vehicles the environmentalist messages. The film deploys the notion of the Ecological Indian to remind 1990s' viewers about the dangers of pollution. Moreover, I will draw attention on the relevance of a story of white man going to the Indian territories in the 1990s. I will argue that the Indian in the film is used to allow the white male hero to express his imperialist potential which is an allegory for the New World Order under the leadership of the United States.

**Chapter one: The issue of representation,
the Noble Savage, the Ecological
Indian, and the Western genre.**

Introduction

Native Americans have faced stereotyping from the white culture since Europeans came to America hundreds of years ago. Literature, painting, and drawing told European settlers the dangers of being around Indians and what might happen if a white was captured: rape, torture and death. Indians were considered savages and beasts that needed to be tamed and civilised by white society. When Hollywood and cinematic production were at their beginning, one of the most popular genres was the Western or “Cowboy and Indian pictures”. It is because of these earliest films that people began to see American Indians in one of two particular ways, mostly as blood thirsty savages ready to kill as many white settlers as possible or as naïve who play around for the camera and do not understand the ways of the civilised culture.

As Hollywood matured and times changed, the image of the American Indian started to change as well, encouraged mainly by the social changes the United States witnessed after the Second World War. The image of the American Indian in film took a noble and wise tone. As the Cold War gained intensity in the 1970s, and Americans fought in the Vietnam War, the image of the American Indian became a symbol for what many thought were the lost ideals of the American people. People turned to the Indian way of life to escape the harsh realities of war and death.

In this chapter, I firstly discuss the issue of representation. Stuart Hall provides us with relevant arguments that stress the notions of difference and stereotypes as main characteristics of representation. In the next sections, I try to show that the fact that the Indians were different from the Europeans has led them to be stereotyped either as ignoble or noble savages. I argue that these two versions of the savage persisted well to the nineteenth century through literature, paintings and theatrical shows that served as a reservoir for the subsequent

Indian representations in Hollywood. Because of their deployment in the selected films for this dissertation, this chapter draws attention to the notions of the Noble Savage and Ecological Indian. The Western genre is also defined and how it represented the Indians is discussed.

1/-The issue of representation

The concept of representation is of a great importance in this work. Before starting discussion of the representation of Indians by Hollywood, the notion of representation needs to be clarified. It is relevant to give some theoretical insights that would help us to understand how representation actually functions. Of course, representation is a very common concept in cultural studies and different approaches are developed within this discipline to explain the phenomenon of representation and its relationship with culture. In this dissertation, I rely on Stuart Hall's understanding of representation to discuss the portrayal of Native Americans by the white people. His views about representation and its relationship with 'meaning' and 'culture' are significant in showing how Europeans and later Americans constructed the idea of the "Indian".

I would like to precise why Stuart Hall's conception of representation is helpful to my work. Hall's work has two implications in this dissertation. Firstly, unlike the 'conventional view' that tends to perceive representation as only a mirror of what already exists in the natural world, Stuart Hall, under the premise of what he calls the "cultural turn" in the human and social sciences, adopts a 'social constructionist' approach to representation. To put the idea in other words, Hall argues that representation is not a mere reflection of things that already exist in the natural world, but representation "is conceived as entering into the very constitution of things" (Hall, 1997:07). The implication of this idea in my work is that the representation of Indians is not a reflection of the real people that lived in America; instead,

the representation process participates in creating the idea of the 'Indian'. In other words, the "Indian" is a social construction.

Secondly, the issue of the "Other" and representation is also addressed by Stuart Hall. He discusses how representation acquires meaning through the notion of "difference" and how, under the influence of 'power relations', this difference or the "Other" is transformed into 'essentializing' through stereotyping practices (Hall, 1997:08). Using this, and in the context of the representation of the Indians, I seek to show how racial difference is represented in the white culture and how it tends to essentialize the Indian identity through stereotypes.

Let us explore further the notions proposed by Stuart Hall to understand the phenomenon of representation. As said earlier, Hall applies a social constructionist approach to representation. Social constructionist view holds that reality is socially constructed. Hall relies on two major versions of this approach to examine the process of representation: the semiotic model greatly influenced by Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure, and the discursive model, developed in the works of the French historian, Michel Foucault (Hall, 1997:15). On the one hand, the main argument for the semiotic approach is that cultural phenomena function like a language. Just like language, they convey meaning; thus they should be analysed like language using, of course, Saussure's linguistic concepts such as the signifier/ signified, his idea of underlying codes and structures, and the arbitrary nature of the sign (ibid, 36). On the other hand, Foucault's "discourse theory" concentrates on how under certain historical conditions certain forms of knowledge are possible (ibid, 51).

In the semiotic approach, cultural activities are treated like linguistic signs that carry meaning (remember that the sign, for Saussure, is the arbitrary relationship between the signifier (the acoustic image) and signified (the concept) and thus nothing is natural). The

French thinker Roland Barthes is an illustrative promoter of this approach (ibid: 36). With his analysis of different cultural phenomena, he gives us insights into how really representation functions within culture. Barthes provides us with two levels of studying representation: the denotative level and connotative level (ibid, 38).

As far as the denotative level is concerned, it is a simple operation that includes attributing concepts to things. In other words, it's about linking signifiers to signifieds to make signs. For example, from a garment, we can make jeans, dress, short and so on. These signs, on the other hand, at a broader cultural level, become signifiers that stand for different cultural meanings depending on the context. This is the connotative level. Let's us take, for instance, 'the language of fashion'; jeans may mean casualness, but wearing dress would mean going to party. It is this second level, Barthes argues, that help us to explain the cultural construction of representation (qtd. in Hall, 1997:39). Barthes' approach clarifies the relationship between representation and the cultural fields. Following these insights, one should take the Indians in movies (their representation) as signs that stand for different ideological concerns of the society. I mean that the Indian is a carrier of meaning that would help the white society to understand itself.

Foucault's discourse theory also contributes to clarifying the notion of representation. His theory of discourse turns around the idea that discourse, which is the dialectic between knowledge and power, produces different "forms of knowledge, objects, subjects and practices of knowledge, which differed radically from period to period" (qtd. in Hall, 1997:46). Foucault, then, argues that each period has its certain forms of knowledge. Knowledge should not be considered as 'objective facts'. It is only under definite 'discursive formation' could be appear as meaningful (ibid). To be more explicit, nothing meaningful exists outside discourse. The Indian we find in movies carries a meaning because it is part of the Western colonial discourse. The vision about Indians changes from one period to another

depending on the discursive formations of the Western culture. Taking into consideration Foucault's work, one would show that the Indian representation in Hollywood is a 'form of knowledge' that could only be possible under certain historical conditions. In other words, the Indian is the product of the Western discourse, a colonial discourse, to be more precise.

In his chapter *The Spectacle of the Other* (in his edited book *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*), Hall discusses the theme 'of representing difference. Relying on many theoretical arguments from linguistics to psychology, Hall shows how 'difference' is important in the representation process. For instance, in the Freudian psychoanalysis the self is constructed through 'sexual difference' (Hall, 1997:237). In other words, in his psychic life the boy in the early childhood does not recognize himself as being a boy until he sees that his sister is lacking male's genital and thus identifying with the masculine role; and the same process happens to the girl. 'Difference' then enters in the very constitution of our identity. Identities are not given by nature. We often assume a given identity in opposition to another identity.

Now, the good question to ask, especially in the context of my work, what happens when this 'difference' is racialized? In other words, what are the characteristics that stand behind the representation of the Other? Hall here argues that in the case of representing the Other, representational practices known as "stereotyping" is a common attitude (ibid, 257). Stereotypes, according to Hall, should be analysed taking into consideration "the construction of otherness and exclusion, stereotyping and power, the role of fantasy, and fetishism" (ibid). Four aspects that deserve further explanations.

Before elaborating further on these mentioned aspects, let us start first with the definition of a 'stereotype'. Hall says that stereotypes,

Get hold of the few simple, vivid, memorable, easily grasped and widely recognized characteristics about a person, reduce everything about the person to those traits,

exaggerate and simplify them, and fix them without change or development to eternity
(...) Stereotypes reduce, essentialize, naturalize and fix difference

(ibid, 258)

In other words, stereotypes are a mode of thought that naturalizes the cultural, fixes the unfixed, simplifies the complex, and normalizes the abnormal. The Other through this practice is reduced to simple qualities and categories.

Let us return back to the four aspects with which Hall characterizes stereotyping practices. To begin with, the construction of the Other “deploys a strategy of splitting” (Hall, 258). To be more explicit, the Other is constructed on rigid binary oppositions. Within the stereotypical representations, clear boundaries between the ‘familiar’ and the ‘exotic’, the ‘civilised’ and ‘the savage’, the ‘normal’ and the ‘deviant’ are clearly identified; in short, the boundaries between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ are firmly established. The “Us” is classified into what is normal. The Other is framed as being “eternally deviant”.

But how really one group achieves to impose such simplest images on another group? Let’s us ask the question differently. Why are the Indians the victims of stereotypes constructed by whites and not the vice versa? Here we come to the second aspect of stereotypes which is power relations. Jack Derrida notices that in dealing with the binary opposition ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ “we are not dealing with...peaceful coexistence...but rather with a violent hierarchy. One of the two governs the other or has the upper hand” (qtd.in Hall, 258).

Another question seems urgent. Do stereotypes hold some reality? One can argue that stereotypes express fantasies more than realities (ibid, 263). For example, Edward Said’ Orientalism maintains that what the orientalist says about the Orientals does not come necessarily from verified realities but rather from “a battery of desires, repressions, investment and projections” (qtd. in Hall, 264).

This leads us to talk about the notion of the ‘fetish’ in relation to stereotypes. Following Freud, fetishism is a strategy that includes the displacement of certain tabooed desires using objects to allow their expression (ibid, 267). The ‘Indians’ should be considered as the displacement of the white man’s desires. Most often, what is impossible for the white man to do in his society is easily projected on the Indian who supposedly lives ‘far from civilisation’.

2/- Representation of Indians: a historical overview

Present-day ways, patterns, and attitudes of thinking about Native Americans were not created yesterday or last week. The images of Indians date back to the earliest contacts between Europeans and the aboriginal peoples of America. One cannot really understand or analyse the pictures made about the Indians without looking back at the reservoirs of representations which were constructed since the white man first encountered the so called “Indian”. By doing so, and following Stuart Hall, I think the point is to check whether the representation of Indians really changed after the Second World War or do the traces of the previous representations still remain intact in contemporary American society?

Europeans were fascinated by the “exotic New World” and by the people who inhabited that world (Bataille, 2001:02). This fascination originated in the fact that the Indians, the native settlers of North American continent, were different and unexplainable by the traditional thought, and indeed, threatened the comfortable world view of the Europeans. As historian Patrick Petrone says,

The natives posed serious challenges to traditional authority; that of Aristotle and the ancients, the Bible, and the Church Fathers. These people of the New World seemed to have no definite place in the Renaissance world picture

(Petrone, 1990:01)

Clearly, since the very beginning, the contact between the Europeans and Indians has been based on misunderstanding. The misnomer 'Indian' shows to what extent the Indian and white contact started with a misconception (Stedman, 1982:06). Columbus thought himself to be in the coast of India and thus he called the people he encountered 'Indians'.

In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Franz Fanon declares explicitly that "what is often called the black soul is the white man's artefact" (Fanon, 2008:06). What Fanon says about the black can also be applied to the Indians. Both are considered as the "Other" in the white culture. Indeed, it can be argued that what is called the Indian is the invention and artefact of the white man.

Let us start with the idea of the 'savage'. This was the first word used to talk about the Indians. The word savage comes from the Latin *Silvaticus* which means "forest inhabitant, man of the woods" (Berkhofer, 1988:524). Thus the concept of the savage linked the Indian to the state of nature and dissociated him with any form of civilisation. A legitimate question to ask here is where did this idea of the savage come from? According to Ray Harvey Pearce, author of the book *Savagism and Civilisation*, the perception of the Indian as a savage was the outcome of the 'Anglo-French primitivistic thinking' which considered the savage as a "Europan manqué" (Pearce,1967:04). The savage thus was considered as a creature which did not evolve into a higher form of civilisation but remained stagnant in the state of nature.

The Europeans came to the conclusion that the Indians were savages for many reasons. Firstly, nakedness was one of those words that were used to associate the Indians with savagery (Kupperman, 2000:50). As the Canadian historian Olive Patricia Dickason points out, during the time of Renaissance, dress signified status. The more clothing one wore, the higher the status one was accorded. This was the perception of the Church doctrine which was based on the notion of shame. Not to be covered was considered shameful and

uncivilised. Shame, it was thought, separated man from animal (1984:65). To the Europeans of that time, the nakedness of the Indians was the proof of the European superiority.

I would like here to give an opinion about the supposed nakedness of the Indians. I think that the early Europeans mistook nakedness which is, in my sense, the total absence of clothes with the way Indians clothed themselves. For example, Christopher Columbus informed his readers that “the Indians all go naked as their mothers bore them, and the women also, although I saw only one very young girl” (qtd. in Dudley and Novak, 1972:43). Certainly, the Indian clothes were different from the European ones. The Indian had his own ways and codes about clothes; but the European eyes insisted that the Indian was naked and thus drawing an argument for his inferiority.

The difference in faith and religious practices is the second argument on which the Europeans constructed the idea of the savage. Indeed, the Christians considered the Indians as unaware of religion, in one word, heathens, and thus, judged culturally and religiously inferior (Snyder, 2001:48). The Indian was expected to become Christian in order to be saved from savagery. Thus, this religious judgment deprived the Indian of his spiritual world and justified the massacres committed against the Indian tribes in the name of “God”. The issue of religion goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, but one cannot deny that the religiously driven violence was responsible for dispossessing the Indians of their lands. The Europeans were holding a kind of new Crusades in America.

Thirdly, savagery was also linked to cruelty (Dickason, 1984:70). The Indians were associated with cannibalistic behaviour and other barbaric acts. For example, the Indians encountered on Martin Frobisher’s second voyage to America are described with the following words, “ they live in caves of earth, and hunt for their dinners or praye , even as the beare or other wild beasts do” and “ dare do anything that their conseites will allowe” (cited in

Pearce,1967:05). These descriptions deny any human traits for the Indians. The images of Indians as brutes will haunt the European imagination for centuries and will be reproduced in the cultural means that dealt with the Indians. Of course, the white man saw only the Indian barbarity forgetting his own barbarity. The Inquisition imposed by the Church in the Middle Ages provide good example in this sense. It is clear that the Europeans could not see the Indians as merely different from a cultural standpoint. As Dickason observes “it was not so much lack of reason or even retrogression that made them savages, but rather they were not like Europeans” (Dickason, 1984:66).

It is important to mention that the Europeans provided two contradictory versions of the notion of the savage. On the one hand, the Indians were seen as ignoble and bloodthirsty savages who represent a threat to the white existence and culture. On the other hand, the Indians, at least some of them, were considered as noble savages who live in harmony with nature far from the ‘corrupt civilisation’. As far as the bloodthirsty savage is concerned, it depicts the Indian as violent, aggressive, and demonic, attacking innocent settlers, including women and children. Concerning the noble savage, it is an idea that emerged in some writing about the Indians that praised him from maintaining pure instincts about nature (Benshoff and Griffin, 2011)

One might ask how these contradictory views about the Indians coexist in the white man’s imagination. Well, I do think that the persistence of such antagonistic perceptions reveals that the Indian is historically and culturally constructed. It means that the shift from an ignoble savage to a noble savage informs more about the cultural paradigms of Western culture than about the Indian himself. As film scholars, John O’Connor and Peter Rollins, remark “these contradictory images about Indians have reflected primarily what the white man thought of himself and how they differed from the Indians” (O’Connor and Rollins,2003:27). In other words, the white man constructed his image in contrast to that of

the Indian. While the western civilisation is seen in positive lights, the Indian is seen as bloodthirsty savage that represents a hindrance to the advancement of civilisation. However, savagery is considered noble in the times of crisis that same civilisation endures. Thus, any study of Indians is first of all a study of the white man's culture itself because the Indian images are part of the Western discourse.

Nineteenth-century literature, painting, and public spectacles transformed these contradictory versions of the so called "savage" into powerful literary, artistic, and theatrical images that eventually became the basic source of stereotypes for the Hollywood Western genre. James Fennimore Cooper was among those famous American writers who dealt with the Indian theme in his works. Cooper's popular novels incorporated images of the Indians as both bloodthirsty savages and noble ones. In *The Pioneers*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *The Prairie*, *the Pathfinders*, and *The Deerslayer* , collected in the *Leather Stocking* tales, published between 1823 and 1841, Indians "were wild, uncivilised, and ferocious, but they were also brave, dignified, proud and wise teachers" (O'Connor, and Rollins, 2003:122).

Nineteenth-century artists like George Catlin, Paul Kane, and Karl Bodmer also contributed in the reproduction and perpetuation of the stereotypical images about Indians. Indeed, the nineteenth century paintings established binary oppositions within particular images in order to serve the nationalist interests of white America. Schimmel, in his article *Inventing the Indian*, writes

Real Indians never inhabited the paintings of white artists of white America. Paintings in which Indians were represented were created to embody whites' attitude about nature, the right of conquest, and the priorities of civilisation. To Whites, Indians at odds with Anglo-Saxon culture, refusing to abandon tribal custom and become productive citizens were either primitive, savage, or doomed(...) In this image, Indian culture no longer possesses even the myth of corporal presence but has been reduced to an aesthetic arrangement

(Schimmel in Truettner ,1991:105)

Concentrating on dramatic portrayals of buffalo hunts, exotic tribal dances or ceremonies, Catlin and Kane painted romanticized scenes of the Indians with landscapes reminiscent of the Garden of Eden (Francis, 1992:17). Swiss painter Karl Bodmer painted striking panoramic views of the frontier and remarkable scenes of wild native in hunting buffalo and scalp dances, picture that illustrated his conception of the New World savage (Rollins and O'Connor, 2003:123). As said before , this dual conception of the Indians as either ignoble savage or noble savage echoed the nineteenth century struggle between the advent of industrial civilisation and the romantic and nostalgic sentiment of living in harmony with nature again. Presented as an object of difference, “Indians” were turned into sites where the different white culture’s discourses fight against each other (ibid).

In the late nineteenth century, another mode of representing the Indians appeared in the United States called Wild West shows. The shows were theatrical public staged performances. With its emphasis on the popularized, exploited image of the Indian, the Wild West show easily became intertwined with the flourishing film industry. The shows were incredibly successful, both in the United States and Europe, and employed many Native Americans, including Sitting Bull. The Wild West shows such as Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show affirmed images of Native Americans as “aggressive, blood-thirsty attackers of wagon trains and torturers of innocent captives”. Such representations were accompanied by a constantly increasing public zeal to civilize the savage, or at least the popular conception of the savage (Churchill, 1998:34).

As a conclusion to this section, one can say that from the very beginning the Indian was both a source of fear and fascination to the Europeans. The fact that the Indians were different from whites produced different modes of representation in which the European tried to understand himself through his difference with the Native American. Codified by the early explorers, the Indian as an ignoble savage or noble savage dominated the representations of

Indians in American literature, paintings, and public performances during the nineteenth century which provided aesthetic, political, and historical context to what Hollywood subsequently produced and what images it preferred for Native Americans.

3/- The Noble Savage and the Ecological Indian

The Noble Savage and the Ecological Indian concepts are central to my analysis of the movies selected for this dissertation. These concepts were reintroduced in Hollywood to provide apparently more balanced and sympathetic portrayals of the Indians. However, the concepts were ideologically constructed; it is not as positive as they seem to be. I try here to shed light on the historical conditions of the emergence of the Noble Savage myth and Ecological one and their deployment in the time of crisis inside the white culture.

a/- The Noble Savage

Historically, writers in both North America and Europe have depicted the Indian as a primitive living in harmony with nature, a depiction often referred as the Noble Savage (McNaughton, 2010:10). In the beginning, the concept suggested a utopian ideal of paradise, with “dreams of a paradise on earth that does or did prove that an alternative to the present age could exist” (qtd. in McNaughton, 10:2010).

Actually a lot of debate is going among scholars and historians about the real origins of the idea of the Noble Savage. Many of them associate the idea with the works of French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. However, according to Ter Ellingson, in his book *The Noble Savage Myth* (2001), the Noble Savage concept was introduced by French traveller Marc Lascarbot in his 1609 travel narrative (Ellingson: 13). As a Renaissance humanist engaging in criticising his own society and civilization, Lascarbot wrote,

Let us return to our New France, where the Men there are more humane, and live but with that which God hath given to Man, not devouring their like. Also we must say of

them that they are truly noble, not having any action but is generous, whether we consider their hunting, or their employment in the wars (...). But here one must consider that the most part of the world have lived so from the beginning, and by degrees men have been civilised, when that they have assembled themselves, and have formed commonwealths for to live under certain laws, rule, and policy

(In Ellingson: 21-22)

Here Lascarbot contrasts the Indian's primitive lifestyle with the European civilisation where men live in "commonwealth" under certain restrictions. He associates the Indian with moral qualities that were inherited from nature like generosity and good behaviour at wars. The comparison, Lascarbot made in this passage, between the noble life of the Indian and the European civilisation chained by rules and conventions is aimed at criticizing the corruptions and injustices in his own society (Ellingson, 17). Lascarbot's writings influenced later European thinkers and philosophers to use the concept of the Noble Savage as a means to criticise their cultures and call for social change. Jean Jacque Rousseau is a good example.

Though the Noble Savage concept appeared first in France, the notion also made its entry into the English Enlightenment philosophies (McNaughton, 2010:11). The figure of the "savage" was employed to understand the modern civilisation. English thinkers made the analogy between the "primitive Indians" of America and their ancestors that lived in the state of nature before the advancement of civilisation. For example, John Locke, one of the most prominent philosophers of English Enlightenment, wrote "in the beginning, all the world was America" (qtd. in Harvey, 2012: 92). Locke suggests that America with its supposed "primitives" stands as the past of the modern civilisation. So, going to America was seen as a voyage to the remote past of Europe. Perceived as living close to nature and enjoying his freedom far from the shackles of civilisation, "the noble savage served to indict the artificial, alienating culture of contemporary Western civilisation" (Harvey, 92).

English writers, like Alexander Pope, associated the Native Americans with a state of pure nature, and thus, using them to inspire civilised peoples to reconsider the place of nature and to show them the decadence of their civilisation and the corruption of their institutions and customs. In his well-known poem *An Essay on Man* (1734), Pope glorifies the Indian way of life. He writes,

Lo, the poor Indian! whoseuntutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud Science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or Milky Way;
Yet simple Nature to his hope has giv'n
Behind the cloud-topp'd hill, a humbler heav'n;
Some safer world in depth of woods embrac'd,
Some happier island in the wat'ry waste
Where slaves once more their native land behold
No fiends torment, No Christians thirst for gold.

(Pope, 2010: 17)

The Indian, according to Pope, sees and hears God everywhere in nature “in clouds, in the wind”. Published during the Enlightenment, the description of Indians in this poem is aimed at criticizing the Christian institutions such as the Church. These institutions were criticized for being corrupt and greedy. The Indian also, for Pope, finds happiness far from science and civilization. Despite the seeming admiration for the Indian’s way of life and despite how critical the writers were to their society, “they merely wanted to reform their society, not abandon it for the actual life of savagery they so often praised” (Berkhofer in McNaughton, 2010:13).

Now, let us move to discuss the idea of the Noble Savage in the American context. After gaining political independence from their mother country Great Britain, the great issue for Americans was how to gain cultural independence from Europe. Unlike their European

ancestors who have great monuments, arts, and civilizations with a long history, the American had nothing similar; all what they had got is a vast 'wilderness' with its supposedly savage inhabitants 'the Indians'. American artists, authors, philosophers, and literary men adopted Native American themes as a way to construct a newly and exclusively American identity without referring back to the traditions of Europe (McNaughton, 2010:14).

Of course, the Indian exercised a double effect on the American nationalist discourse (ibid). On the one hand, the supposed racial inferiority of the Indian was deployed to remove him from the advancement of the white civilization. In other words, the Indian was seen as physical obstacles in the progress of the civilization. Thus in the nineteenth century, many policies and wars were led against the Indians to take their lands and make them disappear once and for all. The Indian Removal Act of the 1830 is a good example of these policies that aimed at exterminating the Indian from the American soil.

On the other hand, at the cultural level, the Indian was still present as a way to define the American civilization and ideals. One cannot discuss the Indian themes and their relationship with American civilization and history without referring to James Fennimore Cooper. He is recognized as one of the first truly American writers. He took the theme of wilderness with its Indian inhabitants to construct a literature exclusively American, and thus, constructing the newly American identity. In his collection of novels *The Leather Stocking Tales*, Cooper explored the relationship between the Indian and civilized men.

In Cooper's work the dichotomy of the Indian either as ignoble savage or noble one still found its ways. Cooper summarizes his vision about the Indians in his novel *The Last of the Mohicans*

Few men exhibit greater diversity, or...greater antithesis of character than the native warrior of North America. In war, he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying, and self-devoted; in peace, just generous, hospitable, revengeful, superstitious, modest, and commonly chaste. These are qualities, it is true, which do

not distinguish all alike; but they are so far the predominating traits of these remarkable people as to be characteristic.

(qtd. in Pearce, 1967:203)

As we can see in this passage, Cooper's describes the Indian as a complex savage creature that can demonstrate a shift between a bad nature and a good one. However, despite the fact that Indians could be noble in his novels, they are condemned to disappear because of their savagery. Cooper says "in short, he was a noble shoot from the stock of human nature, which never could attain its proper elevation and importance, for no other reason, than because it grew in the forest" (in Pearce,1967:204). The Indian, good or bad, is only associated with the idea of savagism, nothing less nothing more. He represents the antithesis of civilization. His noble savage character can only be deployed temporarily to seek a possible cure to civilization at the time of crisis.

Writers like Cooper helped to construct a new American culture using the Indian. In other words, the Indian is defined according to what the civilized man is not. So, one should say that it's about the white man's self-understanding not about the Indians themselves. The noble Indian offered for Copper the possibility to explore the nature of what would be the truly American culture. The noble savage offered new horizons for America to think seriously about what can distinguish it from Europe.

To sum up, one can say that the noble savage concept is a myth. It is a myth because it has no relationship with reality. It is an invention of Europeans and later Americans; this invention helped them to reconsider the principles of their civilization and their relationship to nature. To be more explicit, the noble savage serves the interests of the colonial imagination. The concept maintains the Indians in his state of nature. It is the white man's fantasies that are projected on the Indians through the noble savage depiction; The Indian identity and culture are manipulated by the white thinkers, artists, and philosophers who used them to promote the white man's self-understanding.

b/- The Ecological Indian

Besides the notion of the Noble Savage, the depiction of the Indian as an ecological being also characterized the Western movies especially after the rise of ecological awareness among the people in the United States. Hollywood utilized the Indian's way of life to deal with the growing issues of pollution and global warming. Everything has a history, as Michel Foucault would say; the Ecological Indian is not an intrinsic quality given to the Indians from the sky. This concept emerged at given historical conditions in the white imagination. What's then the Ecological Indian? Does it hold any truth to reality?

Like the Noble Savage concept, the Ecological Indian is also descended from the idea of the 'primitive'. The notion of the Ecological Indian holds the belief that the Native American lives in harmony with nature to the point that he never dares to destroy it. If the Noble Savage focuses on natural goodness of Indians, the Ecological Indian implies that "the Indian understands the systematic consequences of his actions, feels deep sympathy with all living forms, and takes steps to conserve so that earth's harmonies are never imbalanced and resources never in doubt" (Krech, 1999:21). This conception idealizes the Indians. It imposes on them what they don't actually possess. Is there really a human being on earth who does not harm nature to this point? As noted earlier, the white man identified himself in opposition to the Indians. Thus the Ecological Indian should also be understood as the white man's attempt to self-understanding and criticism. The Industrial expansion left a huge impact on the environment; the white people turned to the Indian way of life to seek a possible answer for their problem. So an imagination of the Indian as an ecologist was born.

In the American context, the Ecological Indian concept made its appearance during the second half of the nineteenth century (McNaughton, 2010:18). At that time, America saw its first wave of industrial expansion in the West. This industrial expansion led to the transformation of the landscape, the Indian territories included. Thus, the concept of the

Ecological Indian is deployed as a way to remind the white culture about the consequences of the industrial activities. What's the origin of such depiction of the Indians as perfectly ecological? An interesting notion that would help understand such representation of Indians comes from cultural anthropologist Renato Rosaldo. The notion is the 'imperialist nostalgia'. Rosaldo defines it in these words,

Imperialist nostalgia revolves around a paradox: a person kills somebody, and then mourns the victim. In more attenuated form, someone deliberately alters a form of life, and then regrets that things have not remained as they were prior to the intervention. At one more remove, people destroy their environment, and then they worship nature.

(Roslado, 1989:69-70)

Then, the Ecological Indian is another colonial rhetoric invented to express white society's desires and fantasies. This rhetoric simply distorts the Indian culture. Like the Noble Savage, the Ecological Indian is only deployed to criticize or reform the white society.

Many scholars have pointed out that the ecological Indian representation is untrue. For example, Shapard Krech III, in his book *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History*, refutes the ecological Indian hypothesis citing examples of indigenous peoples' destruction of their environment. He says: "natural systems are not inherently balanced or harmonious; and that left alone, biological communities do not automatically undergo predictable succession toward some steady-state climax community, which is an illusion" (Krech, 1999:23). Linking a static nature to the Indians distorts their cultures and perpetuates many of the stereotypes already found in the ignoble and noble savage representations. However, what is interesting is not to determine whether or not the ecological Indian depiction is true or not, but, the point here is to explore how the ecological Indian has been strategically and ideologically used by the non-indigenous peoples i.e. the whites (the analysis of *Dances with Wolves* will reveal this).

4/- The Western genre : a scholarly review

Westerns make an important part in the history of film production in Hollywood. Their audiences go beyond the borders of United States to reach the different parts of the globe. How many Westerns we watched with excitement and admiration? The Westerns' language, setting, and characters have left impacts worldwide. Such a cultural phenomenon really deserves attention. What's then the Western as a genre? What kind of characteristics that make it such a coherent genre? One can be confused in classifying a film as romance, horror, or science fiction. But one can never be confused with Westerns. A Western film is easily recognized.

When it comes to a definition of the Western, things become complicated. Hollywood produced over 2000 Westerns (Churchill, 1998). Throughout its long history, the genre itself passed through different stages and transformations like: horse operas, epics, classics, B westerns, and so on. So how can we find a definition that would gather all these movies and transformations into one single stream? Just like other cultural artefacts, the Western attracted many scholars. Starting from different standpoints, they tried to identify some basic principles that all Western movies share. I would like here to mention at least the most sophisticated attempts which were done in the effort to define the Western genre.

The Western is a genre of movies in Hollywood. What's then a genre in cinema? In spite of the complex nature of the notion of the genre itself in film studies, I would like to provide a simple definition that would help us understand the nature of the Western genre. We can define a genre as a grouping of movies that tend to share the same iconography, characters, and themes. To understand the Western, one has to look at its visual images, how its characters behave, and what kind of ideas it transmits to its audiences.

Let us begin with the iconography. In film studies, iconography refers to the setting and objects that are always repeated in one genre (Bordwell and Thomson, 2008:320). Robert Warshaw in his well-known essay *The Westerner* identifies three elements that characterize the iconography of the Western genre: land, horses, and guns (Warshaw in Talbot, 1975:151). These three elements constitute what Edward Buncombe calls “outer forms” (Grant, 2007:12).

As far as the land is concerned, it is one of the key elements in Western films. Since Westerns deal with a period of time of American history in the Frontier, all the movies have nearly the same landscape (ibid). If it happens that this element would be absent in a movie, the audience will presumably notice it. Even if Westerns are made in Europe, the American setting should be respected. Barry Keith Grant in his book *Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology* shows the importance of landscape in the Western by saying “the relative fixity of the western setting allows the landscape in the genre to assume thematic weight. It may function as an objective correlative to the spiritual state of individual characters” (ibid, 15). In other words, the landscape in Westerns shows the Darwinian theme of struggle of men with nature. The wide panoramic shots on the ‘wilderness’ may also suggest freedom, individualism, and adventure. However, one should be careful about the depiction of landscape in the Western movies. The construction of landscape is based on fantasies and myths rather than on authentic places. Lee Clark Mitchell notes that “actual landscapes are everywhere recast in the Western, which conceives of a setting not as an authentic locale but as escapist fantasy” (cited in Ritznehoff and Kazecki, 2014:215).

In addition to land, the horse as an iconographic element also plays an important part in defining the genre. As Edward Buscombe remarks “a horse in a western is not just an animal, but a symbol of dignity, grace and power” (cited in Grant, 2007:13). All the success of the main hero is linked to the horse. It is through his horse that the hero assures his

mobility. The white male hero riding his horse becomes a symbol for the apogee of civilisation over savagery.

The last point that concerns iconography is the gun. All the Western movies I saw contain guns. Warshow clarifies the point by saying, “guns constitute the visible moral center of the Western movie, suggesting continually the possibility of violence” (Warshow in Talbot, 1975:151). Violence forms the action of the Western movie. Indeed, guns are a form of communication in Westerns. Gunshots can replace the conversations. Following Freud, we can say that guns symbolize a kind of “phallic power”. To put the idea in other words, guns reinforce the masculine role of the white hero. It’s once in the West and with the power of guns than men become ‘real men’. As Robert Warshow asserts, “it comes as shock, when the hero is made to operate without a gun” (Warshow in Talbot, 1975:157).

These elements, indeed, converge to make Westerns a coherent genre. Now, the good question to ask: what about characters? Do the movies share some principles in depicting the characters? We can say that the male hero makes a consensus in the Western movies. He is at the center of the story. No Western could be released if this man does not exist. This man riding his horse becomes a symbol for all the Western movies. It is through his eyes that story is narrated, through his judgements and appreciations that we come to understand the story. His potential is beyond compare to other characters.

The last point I want to discuss about Westerns is the messages they transmit to their audiences. In other words, Westerns as a genre surely have some themes in common. What are they? After being established as an academic discipline, scholars in film studies tried to identify common themes for the Western genre. Kim Kitses is one of those scholars who were interested in a thematic study of Westerns (Lusted, 2014:29). Kitses suggests that the major theme in Western movies is the “ideological tension between the garden and desert” (Kites in

Lusted, 2014: 29). In other words, Western movies deal with the struggle between civilisation and savagery. So viewers of Westerns are supposed to see two worlds which are in antagonism. This main theme, for Kitses, is expressed in the movies through a set of binary oppositions. The following table can summarize his idea:

The Wilderness	Civilisation
<i>The individual</i>	<i>The community</i>
-freedom	-restriction
-honour	-institutions
- self-knowledge	-illusion
<i>Nature</i>	<i>Culture</i>
-purity	-corruption
-experience	-knowledge
<i>The West</i>	<i>The East</i>
-agrarianism	-industrialism
-tradition	-change

(Kitses in Lusted: 2014:21)

The main theme of Westerns is the struggle between civilisation and Wilderness, and three kinds of binary oppositions appear in the Western movies to reinforce this theme: the Individual vs. the community, nature vs. culture, and the West vs. the East. We can say that these binary oppositions do not coexist peacefully. One part of the opposition is privileged over the other. Of course, most often, community, culture, and “civilised East” is put hierarchically over the individual, nature, and the West. However, one can argue that, in moment of crises in the white culture, these hierarchies are destabilised. Under certain cultural conditions, these hierarchies are simply reversed as a way to find alternatives for the culture in crisis. This will be the mood of this dissertation.

5/- Native Americans in movies: a pattern of stereotypes

The Indian figure surely makes part in the binary oppositions I spoke about in the previous section. To some degree our vision of the Native American is determined by Hollywood Westerns. In my village where I grew up, for instance, we used to call those members of the village who challenged the social order ‘les Apaches’ referring to the Indian tribe depicted in the Hollywood Western. It shows that Hollywood Westerns have great influence on the way we had seen Indians and we carry on seeing them. In the previous section I tried to highlight the characteristics that converge to make Westerns a coherent genre. What about the Indian then? Do Western movies share some basic principles in depicting the Indians? Indeed, in this section I focus on the general patterns through which the Indian can be approached whenever we speak about his representation in Hollywood Westerns.

I do not want to rush myself into easy judgments; but following Ward Churchill, one of the well-known Indian scholars in the United States today, one can say that “ the cinematic depiction of indigenous peoples in America is objectively racist at all levels” (Churchill, 1998:167). As we have seen with Stuart Hall, when it comes to representing the ‘racial Other’, stereotypes seems to be a recurrent practice. So in the case of Indians what Kind of stereotypes that repeat themselves in a systematic genre such as the Western?

I rely here on Ward Churchill’s book *Fantasies of the Master Race: literature, Cinema, and the colonization of American Indians* (1998) to try to identify some of the common attitudes with which Hollywood Westerns dealt with the Indians. To start with, one of the defining characteristic of Indians in the Western movie genre is that they are only framed in one period of time (one episode of the American history that the Westerns cover

from 1860 to the 1890). “There is no before to the story, and there is no after” Churchill says. Thus the Indian in cinema has no history before the arrival of the white man (Churchill, 1998: 168). No Western depicts the Indian before the European invasion. Even the movies chosen for this dissertation, which critics praised for their sympathy, they still contain the Indian in one period of time. Why this depiction is dangerous? “This temporal stereotype” simply makes the Indian stagnated in the past. How the Indian lives in modern times is never the preoccupation of the Western. In these movies, the Indian is part of the past.

Besides time, the Indian in Hollywood is also confined geographically (ibid, 170). In spite of the natural diversity that exists in the Indian lands, Hollywood Westerns show the Indian landscapes in the same ways. To express the idea differently, there are hundreds of tribe in America; each tribe had its way developing and exploiting the land. The landscape appearances may differ from one tribe to another. However, the landscape in Western movies is either shown as an empty desert or a beautiful wilderness. Hollywood does not really pay attention to the accuracies of depicting the land.

This time/space compression had led the homogenization of the Indian tribes (ibid). As noted earlier, hundreds of tribes exist in North America; nevertheless, Hollywood tends to reduce these cultural diversities to simple traits through which all Indians are grouped. Most often, details of cultural difference between the Indians are not taken into consideration. Sometimes, an Indian from the Sioux tribe is shown wearing an Apache cloths or the vice versa. In other words, Hollywood created its own style of clothing for Native Americans. Different elements from various tribes were used to create a ‘homogenized’ Indian. As Indian scholar Jacqueline Kilpatrick clarifies the point by saying,

They lived in a tepee, and he hunted buffalo – or settlers – and carved totem poles while she picked berries, slaved away at the buffalo hides, or fashioned potter. A man described as Sioux might have been found wearing a Navajo blanket over his chest

plate, carrying weapons from a northeastern tribe, wearing an Apache bandanna, and standing in front of a northwestern tribe's totem pole.

(Kilpatrick, 1999:51)

These contradictions are often unnoticed by the audiences. The Native Americans could do nothing about these amalgamations done against their cultures.

So if the Indians were homogenized, it was easy for Hollywood to deprive them of any culture (Churchill, 1998:175). Hollywood Westerns reproduced the idea that the Indians before the arrival of the white man were 'savages'. How Hollywood perpetuate this idea? Is there any Indian shown in the Western as engaging in agricultural activities? Many Western movies I saw do not incline to represent the Indians this way. All what the Indians do in those movies is hunting. They are deprived of all "that might be called culture" (ibid). Why then the Indians are not shown as engaging in agriculture? Because agriculture is an indication of "civilization, not savagery", and thus not the characteristic of the Indians. By the way the word 'culture' originated from the French word 'cultiver' which means work the land. However, this Hollywood claim does not have a relationship with authenticity. As Churchill says "two thirds of the vegetal foodstuffs now commonly consumed by humanity were undeniably under cultivation in the Americas and nowhere else at the time of the "Colombian landfall" (ibid, 176).

Another sort of stereotype that can never go unperceived in Hollywood is the idea that some Indians can be good companions to white men. Inherited from literary traditions of Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* or Daniel Defoe's Friday in *Robinson Crusoe*, the good Indian helps the white man in his civilizing mission. As Canadian author Daniel Francis notes "the good Indian is one who stands shoulder to shoulder with whites in their settlement of the continent, serving as loyal friends and allies to the invaders who were committing genocide to fulfill their self-assigned Manifest destiny of possessing all native land and resources" (cited

in Churchill,1998: 180). In other words, what makes the Indians good in some movies is the acceptance of their fate and their “inherent” inferiority to the white man. These images of the Indian as a good friend become the favorite image after 1950s in the so called ‘revisionist Westerns’.

To sum up this section, one can say that the Indian in Hollywood, to use Jean Beaudrillard’s phrase, is ‘hyper real’ (1994:108). It means that Hollywood created an Indian that is totally independent from the real Indian that we can encounter face to face. The simulation of the Indian replaced the real Native Americans who live in North America. The Western codified the existence of the Indians through a pattern of stereotypes. The Indians in Westerns are jailed in one period and time. Hundreds of tribes with complex cultural characteristic are reduced to simple traits. They are almost denied to have any cultural activities. And the one of positive stereotypes is that an Indian can befriend a white man to help him against the bad Indians.

6/- The representation of the Indian woman

After trying to identify a general pattern through which Hollywood Westerns dealt with the Indians, my focus in this section is on the depiction of the Indian woman. One can say that this figure, as a cultural production, played an important role in the United States’ ongoing nationalist, colonialist, and imperialist history. The portrayal of the Native American woman reveals the existence of particular structures of power and racial hierarchies in a continuing articulation of Americanness or national identity based on a white, heterosexual male norm. As Benedict Anderson puts it, nations are “imagined communities, social constructions which are fixed on stereotypes to legitimize particular types of nationalism” (qtd. in Marubbio, 2003:11). The Representation of the Indian woman in Hollywood does not have a natural link with the actual Indian woman; however, this representation is “an imagination” which

functions as a “colonial strategy” to construct a national American “defined against a raced and “savage” Other” (ibid).

The film scholar Miriam Elise Marubbio, in her book *Death of the Celluloid Maiden: Images of Native American Women in Film* (2003) identifies two different, but related representations of the Indian woman in Hollywood films: the Celluloid Princess and Sexualized Maiden (Marubbio, 2003:11). Each type of representation is a product of a certain cultural atmosphere and it is deployed at a convenient moment to express the ideological concerns of the American society.

As far as the first trope is concerned, the Celluloid Princess, Marubbio asserts that it symbolizes “best” Native America and the possibility of assimilation of the racial Other into the European cultural ideology (ibid). The main characteristics of the Princess figure consist of her connection to Nature and the American landscape, her innocence and purity, her link to nobility, her exotic culture and beauty, her attraction to the white hero, and her tragic death. The maiden’s death liberates “the hero to fulfil his destiny as the American Adam, the symbol of American progress, exceptionalism” (Marubbio, 11:2003).

Within the myth of the American Adam in particular and the myth of the West in general, the “Celluloid Princess” legitimizes the assimilation of Indians into the white society. In other words, her “voluntary consent”, as Antonio Gramsci would say (Gramsci, 1992:155), is presented as the Indian’s acceptance of the white hegemony. Nevertheless, it is important to say that the Celluloid Princess trope presents a cultural paradox. On one hand, the Indian Princess encapsulates a possibility of Indian assimilation into the white America through her romance with the white hero. On other hand, her death reflects the racial tensions that characterize the American nation. To be more explicit, her death discloses “symptoms of the power struggles inherent in the colonizing process, frontier conflict, and assimilation” (ibid).

In contrast to the Princess, the Sexualized Maiden figure, according to Marubbio, represents the division of the American society into racial categories. She symbolizes the danger of crossing racial taboos. A more erotic figure than the celluloid Princess, Hollywood films focus on the figure's sexuality and her potential for physically harming white male characters, using it as an indication of her "deviancy from the norms" and innate savagery, and her potential to put in danger the cohesion of the white American society (ibid,14).

The combination of these two representations formed the Celluloid Maiden of the 1970s films. Unlike the princess figures and in direct contrast to the idea of assimilation, this figure seduces the white hero away from white American culture and civilisation. Exhibiting popular counter-cultural and anti-establishment sentiments in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Westerns in which the celluloid Maiden appears presents the figure as a beautiful and sexually uninhibited woman who "woos her white husband further into "savagery" and the wilderness either during their relationship or after her death" (Marubbio, 2006, 229).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided us with the necessary notions and ideas that would help us analyse and understand the representation of Indians in the movies selected for this dissertation. We learnt with Stuart Hall that far from being a reflection of reality, representation is socially and culturally constructed. Hall emphasizes the importance of 'difference' in the process of representation. It can be understood that in this world (cultural world), identities, things, people, and everything have meaning because they are constructed in contrast to something else. What would be then the meaning of the white civilisation without the 'Indian'? The white people come to the conclusion that they are civilised by considering the Other (in this case the Indians) as uncivilised. This is what is harmful about the representation of the racial difference. The Other is always stereotyped. In other words, difference becomes something fixed with the power of stereotyping practices. So whether ignoble or noble, the Indian is

fixed, unchanged, and reduced to simple characteristics that first serve the white culture. Cultural artefacts like the Hollywood Westerns powerfully framed the Indian to their audiences. Relying on a set of stereotypes, these movies created the Indian that would fit the white society than the real Indian himself. And that's my concern in the next chapters.

**Chapter Two: The Communist Peril,
WASP culture, and the assimilation of
Indians in Daves Delmer's Broken Arrow.**

Introduction

After decades of classic Westerns which characterized the Indians as enemies of civilization, in the 1950, the release of Daves Delmer's *Broken Arrow* "marked a major shift in the way Hollywood represented Native Americans" (Hearne in Rollins and O'Connor,2005:126). The film is based on a 1947 "historical novel" *Blood Brother* by Elliot Arnold. Daves's film, whose screenplay was secretly written by blacklisted screenwriter Albert Maltz, a former Communist Party member, innovated (in comparison to the previous periods) concerning the Native American depiction in Hollywood. It presented an assimilationist view. Edward Buscombe writes,

The liberal position of the film depends on viewing at least some of the Apaches as reasonable human beings, but this extends only to those who accept the process of assimilation, which was the policy of the U.S. government at the time in which the film was set and for much of the twentieth century

(Buscombe, 2006:17).

This chapter will examine *Broken Arrow* from a historical perspective. It explores the relationship between the representations of Indians in the movie and the American society of the 1950s. I argue that the Indians are used to express larger ideological concerns which the white society was confronting at that time such as the Cold War anxieties and the racial tensions. The white Anglo-Saxon Protestant ideals were considered to be the only secure way to protect the American nation from the threatening spread of Communism. I try to show that in *Broken Arrow*, the Indians are used to present the possibility of Indian assimilation into the white society. In order to achieve this, the chapter proceeds in two sections. The first section focuses on the movie's plot. Following the New Historicist's insights that the past or history is not directly accessible but is rather a human construction influenced by the present's cultural conditions, this section discusses how the interpretation of the history of Indian/white

relationship in the movie is the product of the 1950s' cultural paradigm. The second section is devoted to the discussion of the ideal of assimilation in the movie. I highlight the movie's process of 'Othering' the Indian, representing those who accept assimilation as noble savages.

1/- The film's Historical background

Daves Delmer's *Broken Arrow* was released during the 1950s. This period is remembered for its national paranoia and repressed anxiety about anyone who did not fit the national ideal- the white Anglo- Saxon, Protestant norm- and the issue was about how to contain those who were different from this norm. Cold War policy and the resulting fear of communism, right wing polices, the beginning of the civil rights era, and the federal government's Termination and Relocation Program for Native Americans are the defining characteristics of the early 1950s in America. World War II pushed America to abandon its isolationist policy; by the end of that war, it found itself in a position of political and economic dominance (Marubbio, 2003: 93).

The post-war period in America witnessed a series of political, economic and social shifts. Indeed, tremendous changes characterized the American lifestyles of that time including "the advent of television, the movement of people from cities to suburbs, and increased economic productivity. Equally important was the extension of civil rights to minorities, especially black Americans" (Lindop, 2010:05). All these internal shifts were shaped by the growing issue of the Cold War. . America at that time found it necessary to have common ideals to fight the Communist threat known as the "Red Scare"; and thus the advent of television contributed to homogenizing the public opinion through the promotion of the traditional values. The economic boom illustrated the success of capitalism over communism. The Civil Right Movement was seen as a threat and efforts to assimilate the minorities had been made. The Native American minority was an illustrative group that showed this tendency of assimilation.

Indeed, The Native Americans were affected by the shifting attitudes of the social mood in the beginning of 1950s. Several political, economic, and social conditions converged to promote legislation to withdraw federal services from Native Americans and to cancel the reservation system. The political argument for this new attitude went back to the assimilationist policies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that proposed that the only way to deal effectively with the Indian “problem” was to force or convince Native Americans to become like whites. That doctrine had been put aside during the New Deal years when John Collier as commissioner of Indian Affairs promoted policies designed to protect native cultures (Weston, 1996:21. Prucha, 1984: 1011).

During the post war period, the debate over the Indian problem enhanced by the participation of Native Americans in the war. According to historian Alison Bernstein, the Second World War, “represented the first large-scale exodus of Indian men from the reservations since the defeat of their ancestors” (Bernstein, 1991:40). Approximately twenty-five thousand Native Americans served in the armed forces during the Second World War, and another forty thousand native men and women left their homelands and reservations for war-related wage work in cities and towns (Bernstein, 68). After the war, however, native people faced conflicting public reactions to their presence outside of reservations. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the military, and Congress advocated assimilation of Native Americans into white communities (Prucha: 1013).

Of course this policy was based on certain rhetoric in order to be justified. Indeed, advocates of assimilation spoke of “emancipation” and “setting the Indian free” of any special relationship with the federal government. Or, as some historians put it, the new policies sought “termination” of federal policies. In Cold War America, words such as “freedom” and “liberty” took extra meanings that implied individualism and, eventually, anticommunism. These words were positioned against anything that showed collectivism or socialism, words

gradually associated in the public mind with Soviet communism. Thus some native communal practices and institutions were condemned as being somehow not fitting the individualistic capitalist norms (Weston, 1996:100). While, popular rhetoric supported individualism against collectivism, there was also in the 1950s a promotion of the “American way of life,” a unified view of a society that dictated common values, beliefs, aspirations, and lifestyles, in other words, conformity. Under this view, the idea of Indians preserving a distinct character was perplexing and challenging to the mainstream society. It was extensively sustained that Native Americans had to give up their cultures and assimilate into the white world (Weston, 1996:100).

The economic justification for the assimilation and termination policies was the outcome of the post-war experience of economic boom. Local governments and businesses saw the potential for the economic exploitation of the Indian lands, in addition “to putting them on the tax rolls” (ibid). Moreover, social and economic degradation of the Indian reservations such as unemployment and poverty converged to stop the financial support of the federal government. This situation accelerated the policies to encourage the Indians leave their reservations and go to cities (Prucha, 1984:1024). By the early 1950s, relocation policy was associated with termination as a way of finishing reservation system and making an end to the federal government aids to Native Americans. The aim of the Relocation policy was to attract Indians to cities and to push them to live, work, and go to school with non-Indians and thus accelerating their assimilation into the white society. However, unequal treatment of the Indians such as discriminating wages, restraining voting laws, and stereotyped representations in the media revealed that “the mainstream American culture would not welcome full participation of native peoples as citizens” (Hearne in Rollins, and O’Connor,2005:137).

Relocation policy (a policy which had as a principle to bring out the Indians from their lands known as reservations) was launched by Dillon Myer, designated to take the charge of

the BIA (the Bureau of Indian Affairs) in May 1950, and who had been head of the War Relocation Authority which had for mission the containment of Japanese American population in the west coast (Hearne in Rollins, and O'Connor, 2005:137). Meyer vigorously promoted a view of reservations as impermanent centers for detainment rather than considering them as permanent Indian lands. The 'Relocation' programs legislated during his term in the office of the BIA called for abandoning the reservation system by encouraging the Indian to move to cities. The programs offered the Indians assistance in finding jobs and accommodations if they would accept to leave their homeland (reservations). One should see these Relocation programs not as working for the Indian interests, but as policies that represent one of the colonial strategies that aimed to disintegrate the Indian identity and to control the native tribes. After all, those policies advocated assimilation of Indians, and let us say that assimilation represents the worst cases of imperialism that a minority can endure.

2/- Summary of the film

Broken Arrow is based on the novel "*Blood Brother*" written by Elliot Arnold. The film is set in 1870 in the Arizona Territory, which at that time was home to the Apache Indians. James Stewart plays the role of Tom Jeffords, a former military man and currently in charge of the mail service, while Jeff Chandler plays the role of Cochise, the Apache leader. The Apache have been fighting the United States government for over 10 years.

The film begins with Tom Jeffords encountering a wounded Indian, a 14 year old Apache boy. Jeffords help the boy by healing his wounds. Because he helped the boy, the latter's tribesmen let him (Jeffords) go free. At that very moment, a group of gold prospectors pass through the Indian Territory. The Indians tie Jeffords to a tree and attack the prospectors. After the ambush, the Indian warriors let him go but warn him not to come back to the Apache territory again. Once in Tuscon (a white town), Jeffords encounters a prospector who

escaped the ambush. He corrects the man's exaggerated account of the attack. He argued with the other whites that the Indians are not bad as they would think . Jeffords is later asked to scout for the army but he refuses. He rather decides to meet Cochise, the Apache leader, to discuss with him a possible truce between the white and the Indians.

Jeffords learns the Apache culture and meets Cochise. The former convinces the latter to allow the white mail service to pass through the Indian land. Jeffords meets a young Apache girl, Sonseearhray (Debra Paget) and falls in love. However, a few of Cochise's warriors attack an army wagon train and kill the survivors. The town's citizens treated Jeffords as a traitor and nearly lynched. General Howard saves him, and recruits him to negotiate a peace treaty with Cochise.

Jeffords makes a peace treaty with Cochise, though a group of Indians led by Geronimo (Jay Silverheels) oppose it. Jeffords and Sonseehray get married in an Apache ceremony. Later on, a group of white men make an ambush to Cochise, Jeffords, and Sonseeahray Jeffords is wounded, and Sosseahray died protecting her husband. The film ends with Jeffords's conviction that Sonseeahray's death "had put a seal upon the peace".

3/- Broken Arrow and the ideal of a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant America

Haunted by the Shadow of Communism, as Karl Marx says in the Communist Manifesto, the Post-War American society saw the need to be attached to its traditional values to secure itself from the threat of the Soviet Union. Scholarly opinions agree that in America the traditional values were set by one dominant group that is most often referred as WASP (an acronym formed from the initial letters of the phrase: White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Throughout the history of the United States, this group defined the standard of "the American way of life". Released in this period and taking the Indian as its central theme, *Broken Arrow* revises the history of the Indian /white relationship from the non-Indian perspective. The movie uses the

Indian theme to promote a discourse of assimilation to the WASP ideals. Jeffords, the American white hero in the movie, represents the best of these WASP ideals and plays his role as a negotiator of the Indian assimilation into the white society.

a/- The plot:

The western genre, as I said in the previous chapter, depicts one episode of the American history, that of the conquest of the West or how that “West was won”. However, one can argue that the Western is more part of history than a representation of history. To put the idea in other words, Westerns inform more about the period of their development and production than they do about the period they portray. The Western should be taken neither as objective accounts of history nor as mere reflections of past events. In a Foucauldian sense, I would say that Westerns are part of the discursive practices of their epoch (2002:83).

In this section, my task is to link *Broken Arrow*'s plot (the sequence of events) to the cultural paradigm of the 1950s which was mainly characterized by a tendency to assimilate the Indian into the white society. I suggest here that the vision of history in *Broken Arrow* was dictated by the cultural atmosphere of the 1950s. The movie constructs a version of history favorable to the 1950s' policies of Indian assimilation. In one sentence, my argument here is that history is distorted and manipulated in *Broken Arrow*.

The New Historicists, like Greenblatt or Montrose, point out that history is constructed according to the present conditions of the historian, author or artist. This means that the way an artist sees the past is determined by his/ her present living conditions. According to the new historicists, no authentic past is possible, but artists construct history in order to explain the present issues and also to suggest new understanding of the future. As Jerome McGann, a new historicist critic, explains “to the new historicist imagination, history is the past, or perhaps the past seen in and through the present, and the historical task is to attempt a

reconstruction of the past, including, perhaps, the present of that past” (McGann,1985:105). Our understanding of history depends on our present conditions. For example, our perception of the Algerian Revolution in 2015 is not the same as it was in 1965.

Let us apply these insights to *Broken Arrow*. The movie begins with a wide shot, “establishing the harsh, vast landscape of the Arizona, with a saguaro cactus prominent in the frame” (Manchel in Rollins, and O’Conner, 2003:94). Tom Jeffords’s voice over narration begins the tale,

This is the story of the land, of the people who lived on it in the year 1870, and of a man whose name is Cochise. He was an Indian, leader of the Chiricahua 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. What took place is part of the history of Arizona. And it began for me here, where you see me riding. Since getting out of the Union Army; I have been prospecting for gold off and on. One day I got a message that a new colonel had come to Tucson and wanted to see me.

Tom Jeffords claims authenticity. Actually very little is true, and the parts that are based on real events are ‘distorted, manipulated, re-temporalized’ in order to make the federal government look good. Though the film pretends that its historical narrative will be transmitted to viewers as it exactly took place, it can be argued that the movie’s interpretation of history works for the service of the dominant ideology which is the white ideology (Manchel in Rollins and O’Connor, 2003:94).

From the very beginning, the movie focuses on the land ‘this is the story of the land’. Well, the fact that the movie starts with the land is a very crucial issue. Indeed, throughout the history of the United States, land ownership was the main reason that drove the Indians and whites into countless clashes, wars, and slaughters en masse; and of course, because the white were technologically advanced concerning weapons, it’s the Indians who were killed in great numbers. For the white people the land is unused, uncultivated and therefore available for the taking. The concept of *terra nullius* (vacant land) originated in Roman law and was later

refined by English philosopher John Locke: the land, if not “improved” by cultivation, is effectively unclaimed (Young, 2008:20). Millions of Native Americans were slaughtered because of the land. But one interesting omission results from the choice of the date, 1870. It allows the filmmakers to skip the disturbing fact that the “Chiricahua Apaches had been fighting for more than sixty years with Spaniards, Mexicans and Euro- Americans” (Manchel in Rollins, and O’Connor, 2003:94). By not mentioning this, and all the episodes of violence, the film wants to promote a state of peace and tolerance during the 1950s, a period of turmoil and turbulence in the United States because of the Cold War. “If the Indians have to be assimilated why have we to remind them of the massacres we did against them?” thus works the ideology of the film in my view.



Snapshot 1.1: Tom Jeffords travelling alone in an empty land.

In addition, this introduction depicts Tom Jeffords as travelling alone in the Indian territories (see Snapshot 1.1). This introduction can be considered as somehow a misleading. Indeed, in the 1870s, the setting of the film, the U.S westward expansion was at its edge. White settlers were encouraged by the government to travel by mass in the Indian territories (Manchel in Rollins and O’Connor:2003:94). When gold was found in California in 1848, white settlers

moved across the Indian lands. Soldiers were sent to Apache land to keep the settlers safe. However, the movie's depiction of Jeffords as going alone in the Indian land is aimed to omit the historical facts that were the origins of white/Indian hostilities, and thus, promoting a better climate of peace to the American society of the 1950s.

Moreover, in the introduction, Cochise, is mentioned as being the "the leader" of the Chiricahua Apaches. Here *Broken Arrow* tells its audience that the Indian tribal government operates in the same way as the U.S government functions (ibid). The movie assimilates the Indian way of making government into the white conception of government which is based on leadership. In fact, the Indian government structure, as many scholars advance it (like Angella Aleiss), does not function as the Euro-American government does.. While Cochise's role in his tribe cannot be understood with white notion of leadership, *Broken Arrow* imposes a U.S government schema on the Indian governmental system. In other words, the movie's suggests that the two races are not so distant from one another in terms of values and political codes.

In mentioning the reason Jeffords has come to Arizona "prospecting for gold", we are given very important information of the motivation of the whites. But the movie does not indicate that Jeffords is searching for gold in the Indian territories. In fact, a treaty had been signed between the federal government and the Apaches that set the rules about an equal exploitation of land. However, the treaty was only a mischievous tactic that led the Apaches to give up important buffalo grassland to come under the ownership of U.S. government (Manchel in Rollins, O'Connor:2003:95). Each time the U.S. government signed a treaty with the Indians, it precipitated to break it whenever there was a necessity to take the land from the Indian tribes. In fact, the movie avoids mentioning that Jeffords himself was prospecting gold in the Indian territories because of his role in the movie as peace negotiator with the Indians. For the sake of assimilating the Indian into the white society, the movie simply presents the white hero as a good person with a good past and good intention towards the Indians.

The idea that the Americans and the Indians share the same responsibility of the American Indian warfare is another distortion in the film. The movie proposes that the cause of the wars is due to the fact that Euro- Americans and the Indians did not try to understand each other. In the opening of the movie, Jeffords's voice over narration tells us,

The story started when I saw some buzzards circling in the sky. Buzzard is a smart bird. Something or somebody was getting ready to die. I figured it was a hurt deer, or a rabbit, or a snake. He was an Apache. For ten years we'd been in a savage war with his people, a bloody no –give no-take war.

This statement suggests that the hostilities are only a decade old, and that both sides were wrong. Jeffords reminds us “This was a war, with terrible cruelty on both sides”. According to Frank Manchel “this narrative confuses and obscures the major issues between the two cultures” (Manchel in Rollins, O'Connor: 2003:95). Let us say that the one responsible for warfare is the whites; and the only victims are the Indians.

As the story of the film advances, we are informed that the Indian is a fourteen- year old Apache boy who is on his “novice time”, the period when adolescents go on treks alone to learn how to survive and how to become men. This idea establishes the Apache as a warrior based nation (ibid: 96). Jeffords gives the boy some water, and though the boy tries to kill him, the white man helps him to recover from his wounds. The boy tells Jeffords that his family must be worried about him because he is their only surviving child, his brother and sister have been killed by whites. A voice- over narration tells us that Jeffords is surprised by the news that Indian mothers cry for their children. “Whites”, he tells us, “had always been considered like wild animals”. The film suggests that the Apache stereotyped the whites the same way the latter did. When a band of five apache warriors have found the missing boy, they want to kill Jeffords. The boy intervenes to protect him. The Indians are curious that Jeffords did not kill the boy. They say that killing Indians “is the way of all whites”. Jeffords replies that it is not his way. He explains that he is not like other white men. Thus, the movie

shows the parallel misconceptions that whites and Indians have about each other.

Moreover, Jeffords explains to the Apaches that he is looking for gold and silver. The Indians do not seem to understand the white man's words. They do not know what is gold and silver. Again the movie distorts the truth and creates confusion. How can the movie deny that the Indians do not know silver and gold? If we take in consideration the movie's plot which takes place in 1870, the U.S. government had been making treaties with the Native Americans to clear the way for further westward migration and protecting gold and silver prospectors who had illegally established claims on Indian lands. Thus, *Broken Arrow* tries to obscure this truth for the purpose of promoting the discourse of tolerance which was necessary during the 1950s America. Frank Manchel thinks that Daves's movie "fails to establish that the war between whites and Indians is a war in which the former are concerned with material acquisitions and the latter are fighting for their very survival" (Manchel in Rollins and O'Connor, 2003: 97). In fact, the movie gives simplistic explanations each time the reasons for the hatred and distrust between the Indians and the whites are raised.

Another point which shows *Broken Arrow*'s distortion of history is the way it depicts the Apaches people, a depiction far from the actual Apaches who lived in 1870. Instead of showing a weak, hungry, and ravaged tribe by long years of bloody wars against the whites, the movie shows an idyllic setting, where many strong, healthy Native Americans live peacefully and comfortably with their families. In addition, Cochise, the Indian leader, is described by most historians as being 65 years old around 1870, and dying from cancer. However, the movie shows a healthy young man who is "a noble savage, all wise and all knowing" (Manchel in Rollins and O'Connor, 2003: 99).

Besides this, Jeffords persuades Cochise that there is a difference between The U.S. civil mails and military communications. He argues that the U.S. Mail, unlike the military

one, is not used for fighting against the Indians (Manchel in Rollins and O'Connor:2003:99). Actually, the genocide and other atrocities committed against Native Americans was not exclusively a military enterprise. The non-military white settlers' westward expansion was accompanied by propaganda against the Indians. Those settlers sent letters to East depicting the Indians as savages that hinder the advance of civilization and inviting the military to intervene to put an end to the 'barbarity of the Indians'.

These historical distortions and cultural confusions reveal that the film portrays Indian/ white relations in the old West not as they were, but as Euro-Americans wanted them to be. The film's treatment of the Chiricahua Apache culture minimizes the importance of land to their lives; ignores the diseases, devastation, and disruption brought by Euro-Americans to Native American society. Mary Alice Money wrote that, thanks to *Broken Arrow*, viewers "can continue to ignore genocidal practices if they are told that these were isolated events practiced by a few bigots and madmen, that the system or the government really had good intentions" (Money in Morrison, 1997:371). As said earlier, the movie was released in a period of time characterized by its complex race issues and Cold War anxieties, thus viewing public wanted comforting images, reliable authority figures, and easy answers. Viewers did not want to deal with complex controversies.

Broken Arrow narrates history from the Anglo-Saxon perspective. It's about power relationships, history is written by the winners. Indeed, new historicists argue that no authentic past is possible. History is only an interpretation of past events, an interpretation that is, first of all, a product of the present moment's cultural conditions; as Alexandra Keller, a film scholar, comments, "History, then, is not separate from or, in its alleged objectivity, opposed to cultural production; it is a cultural production" (Keller in Rollins'O'Connor, 2005:241). My argument here is that in *Broken Arrow* the plot was built on many historical distortions. And these inaccuracies are the product of 1950s' cultural climate and serve an

ideological purpose. Because the movie aimed at making the Indian assimilated into the white society, episodes of violence were avoided; the U.S government is depicted as being good, and the Indians are shown as living an idyllic place.

b/- Jeffords: the American Adam

America was seen as endowed with a vast “wilderness”. Of course, words can be real traps. I use here and throughout this dissertation the word ‘wilderness’ to refer to an American state of mind. Wilderness is an American imagination that contributed to the formation of the mythology of the American nation. Because what America called ‘wilderness’ was not actually as such, wilderness, after all, was the Indian land. However, Americans insisted that the land was empty and wild. The contact with this supposed wilderness produced a whole American mythology which reflected the American experience on the continent. As part of that mythology, one cannot fail to see the American Adam myth.

The American Adam, according to R.W.B Lewis’ significant work of the same title, is an exclusively American hero formed from the American soil who possesses “heroic innocence and vast potentialities” (Lewis, 1955:01). The figure emerged between 1820-1860 in the work of such writers as Thoreau, Cooper, and Whitman as an archetype within an American mythology focused on American individualism and rooted in the American experience on the continent. The American Adam, Lewis, explains, stands for

The hero of a new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources

(Lewis, 05)

The American Adam is a character ready to fulfill the American myth, the new beginning for the human race. In such a myth, the American land is represented as an empty garden (Eden) in which the American Adam represents American exceptionalism and uniqueness. As

Americans moved further westward across the continent, the American Adam appeared more and more clearly in the Western heroes such as Buffalo Bill Cody.

The film begins with an extreme long shot of the open land. These “establishing shots” had long been a standard characteristic identifying the western genre. This gaze at the land is more than just an appreciation for its natural beauty. It is an ideological tool that reinforces American imperialism with its white hero,

The western’s predilection for grandiose views of scenic panoramas and expansive vistas, the one open spaces associated with the cowboy protagonist (...) suggest the more hierarchical, dominating dimension of American imperialist aspirations.

(Wexman in Fitzgerald, 2003:09)

A huge, empty sky comprises about three quarters of the screen. A long figure in the distance rides slowly towards the camera (Tom Jeffords); as the tale advances, he appears larger. The emphasis on the sky suggests that the character receives a message from the heavens. He (Tom Jeffords) emerges from behind a tall cactus that resembles a crucifix: like Jesus, he is sent by God (Fitzgerald, 2003:09). The Christian ideals and the Manifest Destiny are reinforced in the movie through Tom Jeffords’s character. (See Snapshot 1.1).

Moreover, in the film, Jeffords decides to learn the Apache language and culture, which he does quickly, illustrating his extraordinary intelligence and motivation. And of course, this reinforces the character’s emancipation from history. Contrary to the town people advocating the killing of Indian people, Jeffords learn the Apache culture in order to meet Cochise, the Apache leader, to convince him to sign a peace treaty with the U.S. Government. This probably reflects the debate that was going on in government circles in the 1950s. Jeffords’s position echoes the government attitudes of assimilation of Indians into the white society. His association with Sonseeahray, who is established as the American Eve, confirms this.

Furthermore, the main theme of *Broken Arrow* is the reconciliation between the white people and the Indian people. The movie relies on Tom Jeffords to achieve this aim. His bravery, lucidity, and character make the peace treaty between the two communities possible. His individual arguments with both his community and Cochise help reducing the gap between the two adversaries. In other words, he creates the possibility for the dialogue between them. For example, after the ambush the Apaches laid to a group of white settlers, Jeffords stands at the defense of the Indians. He argues with Slade, saying,

Jeffords: Hold on, let's just get the fact here. Cochise did not 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 other and the flag.

Slade: oh you hear all sorts of stories...

Jeffords: You wanna know why I did not 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?

From this dialogue, it can be argued that Jeffords, as an emancipated man from history, is aware that the Indian cannot be held responsible for the violence that characterizes the white Indian/ white relationships. With his comments, Jeffords tries to reduce the hostility of the whites toward the Apaches.

On the other hand, once Jeffords arrives at Cochise's stronghold, he immediately makes a case to let the mail to pass through the Indian land. Cochise says "This mail carries war signals against us." Jeffords assures him that the mail is not used for war signals. Cochise asks Jeffords if he has fought against the Apache. Jeffords admits he has. Later, He confesses to Jeffords "you are a brave man". If Cochise, the Indian leader, admits the bravery of Jeffords from the very beginning of their meeting, it shows that the white hero in the movie is of unique character, an exception, even for this long enemy, the Indian.

To sum up, one can say that the role of Tom Jeffords in *Broken Arrow* is of a great importance. He represents what is unique about America. He is self-reliant, brave, and

innocent. Unlike his fellow citizens, the enlightened Jeffords makes an effort to make the white/ Indian relationship better. His potential as a good negotiator makes him respectable in both communities. Instead of collective negotiation between the Indians and the whites, it is Jeffords who leads the negotiation. His individual arguments with both parties help to reduce the tensions between the adversaries. His union with the Indian lady codifies them as Adam and Eve in an Eden -like land. *Broken Arrow* promotes the idea of assimilation; and Jeffords, as an American Adam, make the effort to make this idea possible and to solve the Indian problem for once and all.

4/- The Assimilation of the Indians

a- Indians as the others:

Broken Arrow may have sympathy towards the Indians, but it can still be argued that the Apache people are designated as “the other” right from the start. *Broken Arrow* deals with the relationship between the white man and the Indian in which the former is the colonizer and the latter is the colonized. *Broken Arrow* should be analysed as a colonial discourse that has its own agenda. Homi Bhabaha explains that the colonial discourse depends on the notion of “fixity”, or the rigid and unchanging, in order to maintain the “ideological construction of otherness” that is fundamental to the stereotype (Bhabaha, 1983:18). I argue here that the Indians in *Broken Arrow* are considered as the ‘Other’ treated either as noble savage for those who accept assimilation to the white culture or as brutes for those who resist the assimilation.

Indeed, the film begins by Jeffords’s voice over narration announcing that the Apache characters will speak in “our language”. The word “our” emphasises the film’s implicit tendency to consider the Indians as the ‘Other’. It indirectly suggests the existence of “their language”, a binary opposition which contributes to the formation of the “Other” notion.

Jeffords further explains that the whites and Apaches had been engaged in a bitter war

for ten years, when he finds an Apache boy wounded in the desert. He gives him some water. The boy immediately tries to stab him with a knife, but Jeffords easily disarms him. This scene reproduces the traditional view of the Indian as a savage threatening the white man.

Later, Jeffords heals the Indian boy. The boy 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. Apache are wild animals, we all said.

Here, Jeffords discovers that the Indian women cry over their children. This idea astonishes him. Because before he encounters the Indians, he thought that these women were savages deprived of humanity. In fact, the film took a major step in the breakdown of conventional stereotype of the bloodthirsty savage Indian which was prominent in John Ford's movies released in the previous decades (1930s and 1940s). *Broken Arrow* adopts a noble savage depiction (a notion I explained in the previous chapter), and thus showing the possibility of Indian assimilation into the white society.

In the next scene, the other Indians attack Jeffords, but the boy saves him. The boy says to his fellow men (the Indians) "This white man is my friend! This white man is my friend". This boy is loyal to his white man friend. In the 1950s, in an age of conformity in the United States which was the result of the communist fears, the Anglo Saxon ideals were the only standards that defined the American nation. As Raymond William Stedman observes in his book *Shadows of the Indian* : " Revised (*the noble savage depiction*) in the early 1950s was the idea that the best Indian was one who tried to be just like a white man" (italics mine) (Stedman,1982:214). Thus, in *Broken Arrow*, the Indian boy quickly accepts the white man as his friend though his people and the whites were at war for ten years.



Snapshot 1.2: the contrast between Cochise and Geronimo in Broken Arrow.

Moreover, unlike Cochise who accepted the peace agreement with the whites, Geronimo² rejects reconciliation. He is still shown as the enemy to the white man, “It is not the Apache way to be grandmothers to cattle” he says rejecting Cochise’s choice of “white way”. The film draws a distinction between the two Apaches; Cochise is the good Indian that can cooperate with the whites while Geronimo is “consistently portrayed as implacably hostile, one who refuses to see the logic of assimilation” (Buscombe, 2006:112). The choice of both actors sharpens this contrast. A white actor, Jeff Chandler, plays Cochise while Native American Jay Silverheels plays Geronimo. Cochise was “handsome and charming” while Geronimo was “thicket, with coarse, fleshy features and a guttural voice”. Hence, as Buscombe recognizes “it’s not hard to guess whom the white audience is supposed to identify with” (ibid, 111) (See Snapshot 1.2). In *Broken Arrow*, Geronimo remains the principal hindrance to civilised progress. As S Elizabeth Bird has framed the matter, whenever plot lines focuses on noble savage figures like *Broken Arrow*’s fictionalized Cochise:

²Geronimo was the code name of the U.S. Special Forces in their mission to assassinate Osama Bin Laden in 2011. This, of course, created controversy among the Native American activists, and shows how the dominant discourse still considers this historical Indian figure.

The brutal savage is still present in the recurring image of the renegade...these Indians have not accepted white control, refuse to stay on the reservation, and use violent means to combat white people, raiding farms and destroying white property. Although occasional lip service is paid to the justness of their anger, the message is clear that these warriors are misguided. Enlightened whites are frequently seen trying to persuade the friendly Indians to curb the hostiles' excess. The renegades are clearly defined as deviant, out of control, and a challenge to the good Indian who suffers all indignities with a stoic smile and acknowledgment that really there are many good, kind white people who wish this had never happened.

(Cited in Churchill, 1998:181)

Indeed, the 1950s were a decade of conformity and *Broken Arrow* encouraged the Apache to work with and accept whites in their territory. Where Cochise's virtue is manifested in his decision to accept the white man in his territory and making peace with him, Geronimo's badness is embodied in his persistent refusal to do the same. In essence, submission to the white man is defined as good, resistance as evil.

Though some Indians in *Broken Arrow* are depicted as noble savages like Cochise, the Indian leader, they are still considered as less capable and intelligent in comparison to the white man. For example, the Indian characters' use of English language reveals how it is hard for them to assimilate into the white society. Here, the movie stands for an ambiguous position. On one hand, the Indian Leader is wise and all knowing. On the other hand, he uses English which contains a broken syntax and rather simple choice of vocabulary. So, in *Broken Arrow* one can hear the Apache leader Cochise saying: "My mind must work on it". He could have easily said "I have to think about it". However saying this sentence in the way it has appeared in the movie gives it a notion of something odd, something distant and foreign as if the Indian would not belong among the white settlers who speak perfect English. The scholar of Indian studies Jacquelyn Kilpatrick comments on the movie's attribution of this type of speech to the Indian leader by saying,

It could be delivered by a very dignified and obviously powerful chief, but his language was a clue that he was a part of the past, not a part of the audience's world. Since a number of lawmakers, educators, and even Hollywood producers placed as the

test of cultural survival the ability to assimilate, many in the audiences presumed that the chief was an anachronism at best, linguistically and perhaps mentally deficient, and bound to vanish

(Kilpatrick, 1999: 38)

This statement implies that not being able to speak white men's language was understood as not being able to fit in the white society, thus the Native American was condemned to death. The federal government's tendency to assimilate Native Americans to American society continued during the 1950s. Nevertheless, in the 1960s, the movements fighting for Native Americans independence and sovereignty emerged and the government finally changed its policy by the recognition of some Native American tribes (Rollins and O'Connor, 2003:79).

b/- Sonseeahray: the assimilated Indian Princess

Broken Arrow's use of the woman figure (the Indian princess) symbolizes the possibility of the Indian assimilation into Western European culture. I try to shed light on the 1950s paradigm of the "Celluloid Indian princess who enables, helps, loves and aligns herself with a European-American colonizer and dies for that choice" (Marubbio,2003:98). The Indian princess figure emerges within the pro-Indian Westerns of the time as an index of liberalism, cultural pluralism, and racial assimilation during a moment in history characterized by an atmosphere of racial and political paranoia linked to Cold-War policy, rising anti-Communist activity, and the Civil Rights movement. As Joanna Hearn says " Indian westerns are sites where traces of public discourses about African Americans, Japanese Americans ,Jewish Americans, and others mingled with and influenced the way films addressed Native American identities and reinterpreted tribal treaty relationships with the United States" (Rollins, O'Connor,2005:127-128). The movie echoes the tensions of its time by showing the Indian princess's symbolic possibility to assimilate into the white culture which often clashes with deeply racist attitudes and results in violence enacted on her body. This physical violence which led to her death underlines the racial and ideological tensions of the 1950s America.

Indeed, the movie uses Sonseeahray as a possible candidate for Indian assimilation into the white society through two techniques. Firstly, *Broken Arrow* draws connection between her spiritual status and Christianity. And secondly, it highlights her social standing and “innate whiteness”- her desire to assimilate into the white society-The movie uses these techniques to avoid shocking audiences because at that period of time miscegenation was still a taboo. As Miriam Elise Marubbio, an Indian scholar, explains in her book *Death of the Celluloid Maiden: Images of Native American Women in Film*,

These decisions (the *techniques I mention*) may have been vital to audiences’ acceptance of miscegenation and cultural similarity, especially given the period’s anti-communist tenors, which deemed any ideological difference from the conservative mainstream Christian perspective. (italics mine)

(Marubbio, 2003:98)

Sonseeahray should lose some of her native traits to be accepted in the white society. The movie injects a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant values to be accepted as the bride of Tom Jeffords, the white American hero.



Snapshot 1.3: Unlike the other Indian women, Sonseeahray is shown alone throughout the movie.

The very first thing to mention is that Sonseeahray is not the first Native American woman presented in the film; however, the other Indian women depicted in the preceding scene of the sunrise ceremony appear as a homogenous group of dancers (see Figure1.3). In contrast, Sonseeahray is shown alone. This technique of isolating her or having her accompanied only by a matronly figure , in contrast to other women who appear as background figures and in groups , works throughout the film to elevate her within the narrative and within the visual composition of the film. This technique of isolation suggests that this woman is not like other Indian women.



Snapshot 1.4: Sonseeahray in Broken Arrow.

When Jeffords first encounters Sonseeahray through the rounded doorframe of the wickiup, she “is in the holiest time of her life”, and her beauty and healing powers enchant him. Marubbio comments this scene by saying, “a warm orange back-light contrasts to the darkness outside giving her headdress a halo-effect and illuminating the interior space. This light seems to emanate from within her, suggesting that she is radiant with holiness and the ritual power of the moment” (Marubbio, 2003:99) (see Snapshot 1.4). Her motionless, the

lighting, and the rounded doorframe “recall iconic images of Mary and other Christian saints” (ibid).

Moreover, Soonseeahray’s spiritual status allows her to give prophecies. When Jeffords kneels before her, she says: “Give me your hand. Does it hurt you? ... It will never hurt again. Your life will be long. The good things will be yours. The sun will shine for you.” Her prophecy foreshadows his fame as a peace maker between the Apache and the white citizens of Tuscon, which is the basic story of the film.

Throughout the movie, Sonseeahray is called by various names. She symbolizes a mixture between Native American beliefs and Western mythology. She is White-Painted Lady/ Mother of life, a name that confirms her connection to the earth, reproduction, and fertility. And this refers to Apache cosmology. She is also called “Morning Star” which links her to the heavens and specifically to planet Venus, also called the Morning Star. According to Grant and Hazel, Senseeahray’s names entwine classical wetern mythology, Apache cosmology; Morning Star unites her Italian goddess Venus, protector of gardens and fields, who is also identified with Aphrodite the Greek goddess of love, and it is linked to the Apache’s tradition of White Painted Lady (changing woman in Apache tradition from childhood to puberty) (qtd.in Marrubio, 2003:100). In addition, Sonseeahray’s purity and innocence, and, through her connection to Tom Jeffords, the white American hero, who is considered as the American Adam (as I explained in the previous section), she becomes the American Eve (ibid). This unification between white mythology and Native American beliefs represents the possibility of assimilation of Indians into white culture.



Snapshot 1.5: Jeffords and Sonseeahray in Broken Arrow.

According to Robert Baird, Sonseeahray is clearly connected, as an American Eve, to Jeffords the American Adam during a pastoral ‘honeymoon scene (cited in Marrubio, 2003: 101). This scene efficiently links together Jeffords and Sonseeahray, coding them as Adam and Eve and places them in American Eden (see Figure 1.5). In fact, throughout the film, Sonseeahray and Jeffords meet near water and among the trees promoting the idea that she lives in a garden, a place of refuge that Jeffords visits and misses when he returns to the desert and Tucson. Their honeymoon scene is also a green and lush, in short, an oasis devoid of intruders and signs of civilization, where they discuss about their future children (ibid). All these Christian values are injected to the movie to make the white audiences accept the theme of miscegenation. The 1950s were an age when the protestant ideals were put forward to confront the communist threat. To be accepted to the white audiences, Sonseeahray is Christianized by establishing her as the American Eve.

However, her potential to be assimilated into the white society is destroyed in the next scene when she, Jeffords, Cochise, and a few other Apache men are attacked by a group of white men. When Jeffords falls injured during the fight, she grabs a knife to stab the man who shot him, and she is shot. Sonseeahray’s high social status, purity, and desire to assimilate into Jeffords’s culture make her an ideal candidate for assimilation. However, her death

reflects the racial tensions of the 1950s America and the inability of the white people to accept the assimilation of Indians.

Conclusion

As the analysis above has shown, the assimilationist impulses of the 1950s influenced *Broken Arrow*. Based on historical events that took place in the American West, the movie distorts, alters, and manipulates those events to fit the cultural paradigm of assimilation of Indians into the white society. Through its main character, Tom Jeffords, the film negotiates a peace treaty between the Apaches and white settlers, and this alludes to the possibility of both assimilation and cultural tolerance. Thus, the film echoes the government's Termination policy of the Indian problem.

Though at the surface the Indians seem to be treated as human beings, one can admit that the assimilation policy the movie is defending is the worst cases of imperialism. *Broken Arrow* represents in a good way only those Indians who accept negotiation with the white man. The loss of their Indian identity is presented as an alternative and a solution. The movie excludes those Indians who resist the white culture. The American viewers of the 1950s were supposed to consider them as deviant.

One also can say that the movie reflects the 1950s's need on the part of white America to control the internal disruption in the nation and to define the specific notion of Americanness based on WASP. The depiction of the Indian woman as a possible candidate for assimilation illustrates this claim. It is only her innate whiteness, social position within her tribe, and holiness that make her association and marriage with the white man possible. However, her transgression of social taboos through miscegenation, her potential disruption of the social order, and her pollution of the national white body through her mixed-race children, justify her death. Allowing her to fully assimilate as the Other (on which whiteness is based),

would represent the end of the colonial process, and the end of the conquest and “civilizing” mission that define the American uniqueness.

**Chapter three: The Hippie Movement, the
Vietnam War Syndrome and the
representation of Indians in Arthur Penn's
Little Big Man.**

Introduction

Arthur Penn's *Little Big Man* was released in 1970, twenty years after *Broken Arrow*'s release. It was adapted from Thomas Berger's novel of the same title. The film was praised by many critics for its sympathetic portrayal of the Indians. It follows the story of a white man who becomes disillusioned with his culture and finds peace among the Native Americans. If the white hero in *Broken Arrow* goes to the Native Americans to negotiate a possible assimilation into the white society, *Little Big Man*'s white hero embraces the wilderness and prefers to live with the Indians.

Certainly this inversion of the Western narratives did not come from a vacuum. New cultural paradigms in the United States were emerged. Hollywood as a myth maker and a public opinion shaper was influenced by; then disseminated those paradigms in the public. Following a New Historicist's urge to contextualize, in this chapter, *Little Big Man* will be discussed in relationship with the American society of the 1970s. American People, especially the young generation, expressed their discontents with their culture. The U.S. government could not be trusted anymore because of the brutalities of the Vietnam War. Thus, I explore the movie's appropriation of the Indian culture to comment these mentioned issues. Though America seemed to be a democratic nation, censorship was still in practice. I will try to argue that the Indian, in the movie, is used as critical metaphor of the white society. Using the Indian theme to criticize white America would prevent the movie from censorship.

In my discussion of the plot, it will be shown that through the white man's shifts between the Indian culture and the white one, the white life is contrasted with the noble savage life of the Indians; and this expresses the disillusionment of the 1970s. Moreover, I aim to demonstrate that the film uses the Indian woman to vehicle the message of the Hippie Movement, a message often summarized as 'make love not war'. In the last section of this

chapter, I will analyse *Little Big Man* in relationship with the sensitive issue of the Vietnam War. Though the book from which it is inspired depicts violence as a characteristic of both whites and Indians, the film portrays the Indians as victims of brutal massacres by the U.S army which is a subtle way to criticize the military intervention in Vietnam.

1/- The film's historical background

The Vietnam War represents a crucial moment in U.S contemporary history and has given rise to the conflict which has so intensively motivated the American film industry. The Vietnam War subject was one of Hollywood's best sellers. But before beginning to discuss Hollywood relation with the Vietnam War, it is necessary to give a general overview of the conflict and its repercussions not only on the soldiers but on the civilians and American public opinion in general.

Historically, Indochina was part of the French colonized territories in South –East of Asia. After the well-known battle of Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam gained independence from France in 1954. This paved the way for the American intervention under the politics of 'Containment of Communism'. The involvement of the American nation grew year by year, with a general agreement of the politicians and the public opinion. However, that consensus turned little by little into a highly controversial issue in the American life. American soldiers died by tens every day. The massacres the U.S army committed in Vietnam such as the infamous My Lai Massacre shocked the American public. How can a country pretending to be an icon and defender of democratic and humanist values could do such atrocities? People were more and more disillusioned by what was happening in Vietnam.

In the late sixties, the issue of Vietnam War engendered profound national tension and malaise. The war challenged all the myths on which America was built such as "powerful narrative of patriotism, technological supremacy, democratic legitimacy, freedom, good

versus evil and masculine capability” (Westwell, 2006:58). Students for a Democratic Society, founded in the early sixties, was the organization that most passionately took on the task of protesting, provided that they had the time and the energy to devote to it; nonetheless, women, the blacks and the poor were the social groups in strongest opposition. On the battle front desertions began to reach significant numbers in 1967.

Hollywood, as a main actor in making public opinion in the United States, found itself in the obligation to deal with the polemic issue of Vietnam War. In the words of Leonard Quart and Albert Auster:

The films of the early seventies provide a good illustration of how long it takes for major cultural changes to register with some degree of subtlety in Hollywood films. Whether or not their critiques were inspired by the right or the left, these films were a spill over from the ideological conflicts and social tensions of the sixties.

(Quart, Auster, 1984:116)

Hollywood did not deal directly, for political reasons I think, with the Vietnam War until the conflict totally ended. So, the company film industry preferred to tackle the issue indirectly, using subtle manners that would not make it in direct confrontation with the different actors of the Vietnam War. Using the Indian character was among those subtle manners that Hollywood used to deliver its opinions about the conflict.

In addition to the Vietnam War issue, during the 1960s, the American society had seen the rise of radical movement which challenged the traditional and conservative values of the American society. That movement was called the Hippie Movement. The young generation living in the 1960s and early 1970s wanted to break away from the conservative beliefs and attitudes of their parents. The hippies rejected traditional White Anglo-Saxon Protestant Values and attempted to create an alternative culture. They wanted to become freer. The hippies advocated free love. They challenged the idea that sex was only for marriage. Sex was no longer taboo as it was in the previous times. Sexual identities were no longer a secret.

Homosexuals assumed their identity publically. Indeed, the Hippie movement broke away from many traditional American values and Hollywood could not let this social change as unperceived.

2/- Summary of the film

Little Big Man is based on Thomas Berger's novel of the same name. The story is narrated by 121 year old Jack Crabb (Dustin Hoffman) claiming that he is the only white survivor of the battle of little Big Horn. Crabb and his sister Caroline are taken to a Cheyenne village after the Pawnee attacked their wagon. When Caroline runs away, Jack is adopted by Old Lodge Skins (Chief Dan George). Jack proves his bravery to the tribe and is renamed Little Big Man. He is kidnapped by U.S cavalry and given to a supposed Christian husband and wife. Jack does not stay there so long, after discovering the wife (Mrs.Pendrake) having an affair with another man.

He, then, works with a snake-oil salesman, and decides to become a gangster after reuniting with his sister. Understanding that he cannot be a gunslinger, he decides to have a store; and marries a Swedish woman called Olga. After finding out that he is cheated by his business partner, he takes his wife Olga with him and attends General Custer's stagecoach to try their chance in the West. But the stagecoach is attacked by the Cheyenne on the road and Olga is captured by the tribe. After the attack, he decides to attend 7th cavalry in order to search for Olga. During his stay with Custer's army he witnesses several violent deeds by the soldiers. In one of the army's attacks on Indian villages, he saves an Indian woman called Sunshine and then marries her only to see her and their baby being killed by U.S. soldiers.

Only Little Big Man and chief Old Lodge Skins survived the attack of U.S soldiers. His losing of his family in this assault drives him into General Custer's army again only to take revenge from the white leader and his soldiers. At the end of the film, Little Big Man

leads Custer and his army into Little Bighorn where armed troops of Cheyenne are hiding. General Custer and his 7th cavalry are defeated in which is known to be the Battle of the Little Bighorn or Custer's Last Stand in 1876.

3/- The plot: the Indian culture as a critical metaphor of the white society

The central argument for this section turns around the idea that *Little Big Man's* plot reflects the mood of late sixties and early seventies in America which was characterized by the rejection of the traditional American values. Indeed, the young American generation had different aspirations, dreams, and attitudes from those of their fathers. To put it shortly, American culture was in crisis. Cinema, like other forms of art, needed a new vocabulary, or at least a metaphor, to comment on these new emerging issues in the American society. Like in the previous episodes of the American history, the appropriation of the Indian culture re-emerged to provide the white producers and viewers with powerful images that would help them to explain what was going on in their society and to construct a new American identity.

Cultural appropriation is an important notion that deserves some explanation here. As noted earlier in this research, the American culture has defined itself in opposition to the Indian culture. Thus, the American white civilisation perceives the Indian according to its needs. When whites admire the achievements of their civilisation, the Indian as an "ignoble savage" is used to validate the greatness of their civilisation. The Indian becomes a good savage whenever the Euro- Americans feel discontents with their culture. To be more explicit, cultural appropriation is to use one culture without permission to express other issues rather than the issues of that culture itself. One Indian brilliantly expressed the point about cultural appropriation by saying,

They came for our land, for what grew or could be grown on it, for the resources in it, and for our clean air and pure water. They stole these things from us, and in the taking they also stole our free ways and the best of our leaders, killed in the battle or assassinated. And now, after all that, they've come for the very last of our

possessions: now they want our pride, our history, our spiritual traditions. They want to rewrite and remake these things, to claim them for themselves. The lies and thefts just never end.

(Cited in Churchill, 1996:99)

It's a horrifying fact; the Indian did not only lose their lands. In the process of colonialism, the Indian are also not the owners of their identity anymore. For many Indian scholars, like Ward Churchill, cultural appropriation is a form of cultural genocide.

I'm going to approach *Little Big Man* with these insights. The white crisis of the sixties and seventies is given shape in the movie by using the Indian identity. According to film scholars Margo Kasdan and Susan Tavernetti, the film through a series of reminiscences narrated by 121 year old Jack Crabb(Dustin Hoffman) “ 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 cultures, he develops is able to choose between them” (in Rollins , O'Connor,2003:121-122). Born as a white and raised by Indians from the age of ten, Jack Crabb's shifts between the two communities allows him to choose which side is good. Set in the period of disillusionment with the Caucasian values, the Indian culture is praised by Jack Crabb and makes the viewers of the late 1960s to find an alternative in the Indian way of life.

In the movie, Jack Crabb claims to be the only white survivor of the battle of Little Big Horn. Of course Jack's insistence on the fact he is white has an ideological implication. Unlike the Indians who vanished, Jack is 121 and he is still alive making interviews. Jack as a white assures the continuity of the white civilisation. The scholar to whom he narrates the story disbelieves him, and he tries to get him change the subject. Crabb tells him

Now you just sit there and you'll learn something. I knew General George Armstrong Custer for what he was, and I also knew the Indian for what they were.

From the very beginning, Crabb informs us that he knew the two sides, the whites and the Indians. Just like *Broken Arrow*, *Little Big Man* also builds the story on supposed historical facts. One should notice that, As André Bazin would say about the Western genre, *Little Big man* has only a tenuous relation to historical fact (Bazin, 2005:143). It is primarily a work of imagination. Of course, again, this imagination is framed by the cultural and social conditions.

Crabb' story with the Indians begins when a group of Indians called the Pawnee attacked the wagon of his family. Only Jack and his sister Caroline survived in the attack. An Indian from another tribe called the Cheyenne found them among the debris and takes them to the camp of the Cheyenne, where Old Lodge Skins is chief. Caroline is convinced that this is the beginning of her own captivity narrative as the sexually abused victim. Caroline says "it's plain as day what they want Jack. Me." But ironically, the chief gives a pipe to Caroline to smoke mistaking her for a boy. The depiction of the white woman as sexually ambiguous reflects the 1960s' struggle with sexual and gender norms. As the part of the Civil Right Movement, women demanded equality to men. They advocated more access to education, work, and public services. This tendency for equality was perceived by some people in the United States as being an attempt to 'masculinize women'. And, of course, the ambiguity of the gender roles was accelerated by the Hippie Movement's arguments over gender and appearances. Men and women began to wear the same clothes. By the early 1960s, "trousers, jeans, capris, shorts, and pyjamas" which were once exclusively men's property "were acceptable leisure styles for women" (Paoletti, 2012:140). So to mistake a woman for a man would be possible at that time.

As the story of the film carries on, we learn that Caroline's expectations to be raped by the Indians did not come true. So, she steals a horse and flees, leaving Jack alone in the tribe (here it is interesting that the woman plays an active role in escaping from the Indians). Well, with the fact that the Indians did not rape Caroline, *Little Big Man* destroys one of the myths

inherited in the captivity narrative literature which was famous in the nineteenth century. Those narratives informed their readers about the danger of being taken hostage by the Indians. Sexual abuse was on the menu in those stories. *Little Big Man* reinterprets the captivity narrative from the Indian point of view. Seen by many hippies as an alternative to the white's cultural crisis, the Indian in the movie dare not rape a white woman. He is so good for that the movie proclaims. Further than this, Caroline seems to be disappointed that no Indian comes and takes her body for pleasure. In the film, it's the whites' obscure and hypocritical desires that are stigmatized.

Even in the next scene, Jack Crabb affirms that the next day that followed Caroline's escape, the Cheyenne treated him well. He says

Next morning I found myself in that Indian camp all alone. But the Cheyenne who call themselves the Human Beings had no idea to hurt me. I was an honoured guest and they gave me a real treat for breakfast: boil dog. Dog ain't bad neither. A beat greasy I'll admit, but you'd be surprised how downright delicate the flavour is, especially when you're starving. You see the Human Beings adopted me as one of their own.

What is remarkable is that in the movie the Cheyenne people are called "human beings", as if the white people are not human beings. It is another argument that the movie uses the Indian culture to criticize the white society. Indeed, Jack is so enlightened. He says "For a boy it was kind of a paradise. I wasn't just playing Indian I was living Indian."

The movie also allows Old Lodge Skins (the Cheyenne chief) to give comments and analysis about the white culture. It is another important feature that characterizes *Little Big Man* and shows its willingness to criticize the white society's values. When Jack asks Old Lodge Skins about the reason that stand behind the whites' killing of the Indian women and children, he replies "it's because they are strange. They don't seem to know where the centre of the earth is. We must have a war on these cowards and teach them a lesson". Though, for example, in *Broken Arrow*, the Indians are portrayed somehow sympathetically, but it never

allows the Indians to give comments about the white culture. Released in counter culture climate, *Little Big Man* does not hesitate to give the Indian the voice to speak about the whites.

Although Jack is white, he identifies himself with the Cheyenne. Despite the fact that his connection to the tribe is the result of an Indian raid that killed his family, Jack is with Old Lodge Skins when he wants to teach the whites a lesson for their massacre of Indians. Old Lodge Skins declares,

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 worst

Jack replies "Grandfather, I think it is a good day to die". He becomes native. He is ready to die to defend the Cheyenne against the whites. I think that this quick identification with the Indian culture reflects the general mood of the 1960s and 1970s disillusionment with the white culture. The traditional white Anglo- Saxon Ideals were in a bankruptcy.

The scene that depicts the Indian attack on the white soldiers is important to understand the film's contrast between the two cultures. Crabb's voice-over explains that the two ways of fighting are in total opposition (Kilpatrick, 1999: 86). Unlike the white soldiers who kill as many enemies as possible, the Indian's aim in the fight is just to humiliate the enemy. This depiction idealizes the Indian culture. It is an unrealistic representation. Since people in the 1960s and 1970s were tired of war, they projected their wishes on the Indian culture. The Indians, after all, just like all races on earth, make war to kill and to win. In other words, the Indians in *Little Big Man* are not real but are, as Ward Churchill would say, fantasies of the white man (Churchill, 1998).

During that battle, Jack is about to be killed by white men but he screams “God bless George Washington. I’m a white man!” to persuade the white soldiers he is white. This leads him to be back in the white world again and thus begins a series of shifts between the two cultures which carry on throughout the movie. By this technique, the movie makes a comparison between the white culture and the Indian culture, considering the first one as hypocrite and the last one as a good culture living in harmony with nature. *Little Big Man* is a vehicle for the Hippie movement discourse, par excellence.

Jack is a white man again. He is adopted by a preacher called Silas Pendrake, who wants to make him a Christian and beat the devil out of him, and his wife Louise (Faye Dunaway). Jack adapts to his new environment, becoming a hymn singer. He fights temptation, even though he has fallen in love with Mrs Pendrake. However, Jack will soon discover that hypocrisy and cynicism stand behind that religious climate. One day, he accompanies Mrs Pendrake to do shopping. While in the shop, she lets Jack alone. He hears a noise inside. He goes to investigate the source of that noise; he finds Mrs Pendrake making love with the shop owner. Jack’s voice over narration tells that this incident ended his religious period. The film suggests that the Christian ideals in the white society do not function anymore. Of course, this is the claim of the Hippie movement of 1970s. The hippies looked for an alternative morality.

In the next scenes, Jack meets with amoral oil salesman Alardyce Merriwather. The latter gives Jack his version of the Human condition: “Your problem is that the Indian gave you a vision of moral order in the universe and there isn’t any”. It reflects the white world’s lack of moral sense. Jack, then, meets with his sister Caroline. She goes about teaching him how to use a gun. Jack learns quickly. He enters his brief gunfighter period. All what Jack learns in the white society is hypocrisy, lack of moral order, and how to use a gun. Thus, the movie depicts the white society as a corrupt and violent one.

Later, Jack becomes a store keeper 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 advises the couple to go West for a better business. In the next scene, Olga and Jack are on a stagecoach that is attacked by Indians. Olga is captured by the Indians. Jack looks for months for Olga, and then decides to go deep into Cheyenne country to find her. He is also captured by the Indians who are ready to kill him, until he says he is little Big Man. He is back to the Indian culture again.

He is taken to Old Lodge Skins who welcomes him back and questions him about his time among the whites. The Chief simply welcomes Jack without blame for betraying them. He is particularly interested in Jack's marriage. He asks if she enjoys sex. Again, if Old Lodge Skins focuses on sex, it is because in the late 1960s, under the influence of Freudian legacy, there was a focus on sexuality and how to liberate it.

Till the end of the story, Jack Crabb lives in two 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. He shifts back and forth between cultures trying to find out who he is" (Kilpatrick, 85). Hypocrisy, amorality, and senseless violence plague Jack when he is introduced to the white world (Marubbio, 2003:179). The only good thing he finds is his wife Olga, who because of her limited English is not corrupt as the other white people are.

One can say that the film undertakes an inversion through its depictions of white and Cheyenne as extreme opposites. The cultural context of the 1970, mainly the counter culture movement, had a big influence on *Little Big Man's* narrative. As Edward Buscombe puts it "...the Cheyenne function as surrogate hippies, tolerant of homosexuality, kind to children, engaging in free love and conversations about the meaning of life" (Buscombe,2006: 135).

Little Big Man reintroduced the notion of the noble savage in the depiction of Native Americans in order to vehicle the counter-culture's discourse which is characterized by its rejection of traditional white values.

4/- Sunshine as a surrogate hippie

Women are often used by Hollywood to legitimize certain forms of power. Since the American society is based on 'white male heterosexual narrative', the analysis of the images of the Indian woman and her relationship with the white male hero would allow us to discover how the shifts in the representation of the woman's figure depends on the socio-cultural climate of the society (to be more precise of the males). As we have seen with Sonseeohray in *Broken Arrow*, the Indian woman is used to legitimize the assimilation of Native Americans into the white society. In the atmosphere of "civilization and its discontents" of the 1960s, as Freud would say, the Indian woman in *Little Big Man* is no more a device of assimilation, but rather, an instrument that allows the white male hero (or anti-hero as he is called because of his disillusionment) to flee 'the malaise of his culture' to find freedom in the 'wilderness'.

Profoundly rooted in the Euro-American imagination of America as a virgin continent and unspoiled wilderness that waits for the white male hero; the Indian woman in *Little Big Man* seduces the white male hero to live in the wilderness and strengthen his denial of the white civilisation (Marrubio, 2003:230). In this sense, embracing wilderness in the American imagination does not mean the apogee of savagery over civilisation. It should be considered as a temporary escape from restrictions imposed by civilisation. Wilderness, in other words, is a place where the male hero can regenerate after moments of crisis. As cultural critic Richard Slotkin observes in his book *Regeneration through violence* "American gesture in the face of adversity is seen to be that of immersion in the native element, the wilderness, as the solution to all problems, the balm to all wounds of the soul, the restoration for failing fortunes"

(Slotkin,1973: 267). As I said earlier, *Little Big Man*'s period of release was characterized by the national distrust of traditional values mainly of WASP and the Hippie movement's urgent call to find new ways to experience living. In that moment of crisis, the Indian woman, Sunshine, seduces the white hero to wilderness to experience that new mode of living based essentially on practicing freer sexuality.

So through the representation of racial difference, the movie, firstly, appropriates the Indian culture and then vehicle through it its hippie message to the audiences. Indeed, *Little Big Man* depicts Sunshine, the Indian woman, as "a hippie like figure" (Marrubio, 2003:246). Sunshine, her name, reveals her attachment to nature. And concerning names, the hippies really preferred nature names over traditional Christian names. As Lesley Bolton clarifies the point in her book *The Complete Book of Baby Names* "Men and women were rebelling against the traditional ways and names were no exception (...) speaking of free love, we must give kudos to the hippies who brought nature names back to the spotlight" (Bolton, 2009:20). Even Jack Crabb is renamed Little Big Man.

Sunshine is framed by natural surroundings. She exists only in nature, far from civilisation. In the first appearance of her in the movie, she is shown lying along a river giving birth to a child in the middle of a massacre. This first scene incorporates her with the land itself: the film establishes shots (close-ups and high angels) to frame

her within the underbrush, against the rocks, or isolated within the frame holding her new-born. These tightly composed shots full of leaves, grass, dirt, and water (...); in addition, her new-born baby, their mingled blood, and surrounding warfare underscores the primal qualities inherent in her and the wilderness.

(Marrubio, 2003:246)

For the hippies, the real values were within nature. A return to nature was seen as a remedy to the failures of civilisation. The movie makes the viewers to associate Sunshine with earth and nature (see figure2.1). Of course, most hippies at that time saw in the Indian culture a real

incarnation of their ideals. However, this association of Indian culture with hippie claims was not based on Indian realities. As Jane Hafen writes “in a multi-layered inversion, hippies represent a mainstream culture that appropriates images, not realities, of Indians. Rather than being a subversive gesture, hippie Indian imitations are merely another extension of colonialism” (Hafen in Jeff Berglund, Jane Roush, 2010:64).



Snapshot 2.1: Sunshine giving birth to a child in a middle of a massacre.

Sunshine is present on the screen only 28 minutes which represents one year moment in Jack Crabb’ story. Despite this short appearance, Sunshine perfectly replaces his missing wife Olga (Marrubio, 2003: 246). More than that, her presence gives a new insight to Jack’s life that of going totally native. Crabb comment his first encounter with Sunshine by saying,

I sat and watched that baby come into this world. I crept for her breathing that woman never made a sound, if woman she was. She didn’t look more than a girl. I couldn’t take my eyes off the girl and her baby.

Jack admires the experience he sees of Sunshine giving birth to a baby. This experience links him more to the natural world. The act of seeing this Indian woman giving birth makes him to be born again with her. In the wilderness, the movie suggests, the white hero will always have a new beginning.

The Hippies called for sexual liberation. In the movie, Sunshine is characterized as having a strong sexual desire and activity with no apparent shame or embarrassment in what she does. This encourages Jack to engage with her and to take her for a wife, abandoning his Swedish wife Olga, and thus accelerating his process of 'going Indian'. In an entertaining scene when Jack and his Indian wife are camped with other members of the tribe on the borders of the Washita River, Sunshine convinces Little Big Man into sexually satisfying her three single sisters while she goes to give birth to another child in the snow. Isn't that a hippie morality and fantasy that are projected on the Indian culture? Indeed, the hippie engaged in new sexual practices, among them the performance of 'polygamous sex'. As Rob Craig, a film critic writes "the hippie movement readily embraced many activities of new sex, including group sex, polyfidelity and group marriage" (Craig, 2013:95). To be more explicit, in this scene, the movie depicts a hippie village where sex is performed in many possible ways using Indian figures. Moreover, Any Indian man would do that. But, after all, the movie is about the satisfaction about the white man's desires.

One also can say that this act of sexual polygamy the Indian woman performs places her in a sexually deviant situation and stigmatizes her and her sisters as overtly libidinal. Her request reinforces her exotic nature. The Indians, men or women, were always seen as exotic by Anglo-Americans. So, to retake Stuart Hall's insights, the Indian woman is stereotyped. As Ellise Marrubio clarifies the point about this scene by saying "while titillating and perhaps sexually arousing to some viewers, it would seem abhorrent or perhaps curious in an ethnographic sense, to the colonial imagination and the monogamous American mainstream"

(Marrubio, 2003: 248). In responding to the wishes of the Indian woman, the white man lets himself to be seduced by such force of nature. By doing this, he is not fulfilling the desires of the real Indian woman; but, obviously, this scene is culturally significant to the counter culture of the 1960s and 1970s. It simply reflects the white society's libidinal drives.

The Indian woman in *Little Big Man* is sexualized to fit the hippie movement's discourse. If *Broken Arrow* presents the Indian woman as a possible case for assimilation into the white culture, *Little Big Man* presents Sunshine as a possible alternative for the white hero's disillusionment with the white society. Exhibiting popular counter-cultural and anti-establishment sentiments from the late 1960s and early 1970s, *Little Big Man*, in which the Indian woman is used, presents the figure as beautiful and sexually charged woman who draws the white hero further into wilderness. It seemed a good solution in a period of time when the white American civilisation did not convince its young generation anymore.

5- The Vietnam War syndrome and the Indians as Vietnamese

In the late sixties after the details of the Vietnam War were exposed, popular opinion strongly opposed the idealisation of former American heroes, governmental abuses of citizens and dissidents, and racist policies designed to control specific groups of the population. Filmmakers who wanted to treat the war added messages in their movies. In fact, some historians argued that at that time American audiences were not ready for actual portrayals of the Vietnam War while it was still taking place. According to Alexander Bloom, no movies representing the actual war were made until the event was officially over (Bloom, 2001). For this reason, the films that were produced in the 1970s took a more indirect approach to criticize and represent the Vietnam War. They did so by presenting ancient periods of the American history that could still connect with the current issues of the time.

Little Big Man is an example of a Vietnam Western which is a western that uses the Indian figure to criticize the American involvement in Vietnam. The film shows the U.S. army's abuses against the Indians (as substitutes for the Vietnamese) that draws audiences' sympathy for them. The movie also works to humanize the Indians by trying to portray an 'authentic' native culture before it is negatively affected by the white raiders. Penn's film fits with the Vietnam Western because it portrays the U.S army in a very negative light and focuses on the genocide of the Indians.

In fact, the movie represents the white and the Indians with a binary opposition but with an inversion. On the one hand, Jack and his Indian friends are shown as good and respectable. On the other hand, General Custer and his men are depicted as villains. General Custer in the film is selfish, unemotional, and heartless leader. He is seemingly unaffected when he first meets Jack and learns that economic misfortunes have led Jack's family into bankruptcy. In another scene, when Jack encounters the General, the latter is ready to have him hanged as a traitor and cares little for the loss of human life. He seems to be the most racist soldier of all when he designates the Indian women as breeding like rats and orders his soldiers to kill any Indian woman who resist the troop's assault.

The differences between Berger's book, written in 1964, and the film's script illustrate the shifts in social attitudes that had occurred during those years. The chief concern of this section is the way Penn's modifies the novel to fit the political climate of the Vietnam War. To start with, in the novel, Berger consecrates a whole chapter to depict the Indian barbarity and their altercations with the white people. He specifically describes the Cheyenne and white fight around the wagon. After the Indian got drunk, they started to attack white men and rape white women in front of children with the presence of the Cheyenne chief himself, Old Lodge Skin, who is praised throughout the movie. In the novel, we have Jack Crabb saying,

This event touched off a general movement by the Cheyenne towards our women, and since there was more of the former than the latter, again the strife began which had so lately ended over the whisky, and again Indian felled Indian, but enough was left to mount of Troy and Clairmont, and the Jackson sisters- and if you think there was outcry on the part of the victims, you are wrong; while those who were not raped stood watching those who were as if waiting their own turn, their children clustered around them

(Berger, 2011)

This passage explicitly informs us about the violence committed by the Cheyenne against the white settlers. The film, in contrast, it begins by showing that several wagons have been destroyed by the Indians. Two bodies lay in the ground. Jack and his sister are the only survivors (in the novel it is also said that their father is killed by the Cheyenne). So, in the film the camera arrives in the scene after the fight has ended and the aggressors are gone. The movie avoids representing the actual moment when the wagons were attacked. In other words, the movie does not represent violence that took place as the novel does it. I think that, by doing so , the movie does not want to shock viewers with scenes of rape and death of white settlers by the Cheyenne Indians since the movie aimed at criticizing the U.S military intervention in Vietnam using the Cheyenne Indians as metaphors for the Vietnamese and thus showing them innocent in all possible ways. The Cheyenne in the novel are aggressive towards the whites. However, in the movie, Crabb's voice over narration tells us that only the Pawnee (not the Cheyenne) who are responsible for the wagon attack.

Another point that shows the discrepancy between the film and the novel is the representation of the events at the Washita River. While in the novel's account of the events Jack is depicted as a traitor aligning himself with the Indians and not with the Americans, the movie shows the U.S army committing a massacre against innocent Cheyenne Indians with Jack watching helplessly General Custer's men killing his Cheyenne wife and child (the novel does not mention that Sunshine and her child are killed. Maybe they have survived). Through

the depiction of the Washita River massacre, the film makes allusion to the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam in 1968.

Indeed, the My Lai massacre in Vietnam shocked the American sensibilities and reinforced the anti-war sentiments. According to Richard Slotkin, the My Lai massacre was a turning point in American self-understanding regarding the morality of the war. America was built on the myth that its army brings peace and progress everywhere it lands. The Frontier was once seen as a place where civilized white army won against the villain Indians. But after the My Lai massacre, this myth is debunked. In his Book *Gunfighter Nation*, Slotkin writes,

The inversion of the normal war-movie/ Western scenario is now complete. Instead of rescuing the woman/ child from rape and slaughter, the Americans commit rape- in fact child rape- and murder amid the burning building of the “settlement”. We are back in the symbolic terrain of the captivity myth- the terrain of Mary Rowlandson and Ethan Edwards- only now we are the savages

(Slotkin, 1992:586)

films, like *Little Big Man*, echoed Slotkin’s remark. The cynicism, brutality, and mediocrity of the former American military men, Like George Custer, who once were considered true heroes and praised for winning the West from ‘savage Indians, are put forward to criticize metaphorically the actual events taking place in Vietnam.

Indeed, Arthur Penn’s version of the Washita River massacre manipulates the story to send a much different message concerning Vietnam War. In other words, the Washita River scene in the movie is neither a faithful adaptation of the novel nor an objective account of the past; it is rather a ‘resonance’, as Stephen Greenblatt would say, with the Vietnam War. In the Washita River sequence, the main camera is situated inside the Indian village so viewers can experience the brutality of the massacre from the Indian side. Jack Crabb watches desperately the killing of Indian men, women, and children.

As said earlier, unlike the novel, in the film, the fate of Sunshine, her babies, and her three sisters is revealed. As the attack begins, we can see two of the women severely wounded and apparently dying on the ground (see figure2.2). The Third sister flees out of their burning camp naked. Though she runs quickly to escape, she is shot mercilessly massacred by the white soldiers. After that moment, Sunshine appears with a new born in her arms and her older baby on her back. She tries to find a safe place, but a gunman shoots her falling on her knees. She is still able to moves and continues to run. Unfortunately, there is a second gun shot that kills the new born in her arms and a third that kills Sunshine.



Snapshot 2.2: the Washita River massacre in Little Big Man.

The scene ends with a wide shot of the massacred campsite with close-ups of the dead Indian bodies with the age and sex varieties of the victims. These close-ups suggest that U.S troops slaughtered the Indians without distinctions between men, women, and children.

The scene, indeed, aims at making the audiences disgusted with the government and soldiers who kill such innocent people like Sunshine and her sisters. Because *Little Big Man* aimed at showing to the Americans the violence that takes place in Vietnam, the battle of Washita scene depicts violence in a very severe and disturbing ways. Penn unrealistically presents Jack Crabb and all of the Cheyenne inhabitants as non-combatants, therefore, as helpless victims. Contrary to historical records, and Berger's novel, there is never one

occasion in Penn's film where an Indian tries to fight back against the whites. The movie also does not show any dead or wounded soldiers that were part of the historical accounts. How can the Indians be so motionless against what is happening to them? Penn's desire to create a climate of sympathy towards the Indians who are the substitute for the Vietnamese makes him avoid showing any violence perpetrated against the whites.

One should be more explicit here. After all, this is non-Indian representation of Indians. I do think that this representation serves the ideological concerns of the white society. In other words, the representation of Indians in the movie is politically driven to contest the intervention of the United States in Vietnam. So it should not be considered as an admission of the white society that in the past atrocities were committed against the Indian. In this context (the context of *Little Big Man*), the Indian stands for something else. Under this condition, the 'Indian' as such has no intrinsic content. His content is determined by the actual conditions of the American society of the late 1960s. In other words, what makes him a victim in the movie is the absence of morality in U.S government and army concerning Vietnam.

Conclusion

Although *Little Big Man* offers many details of Indian life not usually included in Hollywood Western, the Cheyenne in the film do not fully represent an authentic Indian culture. Rather, they reflect the fashions and mores of the Hippie movement, whose practices included a return to the land, communal living, sexual freedom, and a search for peace and harmony. These practices contrasted markedly with the violence and greed of the dominant society. Through the journeys the white man makes between the white society and the Indian one, the movie 'appropriates the Indian culture to highlight the moral desolation of white American society.

Moreover, in the film, the native woman is used as a surrogate hippie. Her sexual and exotic appeal confirms this. She is connected to the white hero's acts of embracing the wilderness and going native; going native means abandoning white civilisation and adopting the customs, and worldview of the Indian. She symbolizes the white hero's moment of rebirth and self-awakening. Deeply rooted in the tradition of the Western's discourse of conquest, the representation of the Indian woman continues to link her with the notion of a virgin continent and an untamed wilderness that awaits the white American hero.

Furthermore, released during the dividing issue of the Vietnam War, the movie used the historical U.S. military actions against Native Americans as a metaphor to critique current U.S. activities in Vietnam. Indeed, because the issue was very sensible among the Americans, Hollywood did not deal with the Vietnam War directly till the conflict had finished. Using the Indian as victims of the white soldiers allowed *Little Big man* to express its opinions about the war without being polemical in a period of time when the Vietnam War was nearly a taboo.

Chapter Four: The Ecological Indian, the white male hero , and the representation of Indians in Kevin Costner's Dances with Wolves.

Introduction

In 1990, the United States of America was almost the winner of the Cold War. The Soviet Union was living its last moments. ‘The American empire is now everywhere in the world. New issues, hopes, and ideals emerged. The new Westerns of the 1990s certainly were not indifferent to these new shifts in the American society. After a decline in the 1980s, the Western genre made its new entry with the release of Kevin Costner’s *Dances with Wolves*. The disappearance of the Westerns during the 1980s can be explained by the fact that Ronald Reagan was considered as a ‘cowboy president’. American society did not need Westerns since Reagan in the White House incarnated the rhetoric of the Frontier which is based on the apogee of civilisation over savagery. As pop culture scholars Jane and Michael Stern observe “the new popularity of Western can be quite easily explained by the fact that Reagan is no longer president. As long as that one-time sagebrush star was in the White House, Americans did not need Westerns so much because we had a cowboy hero leading the country” (cited in Keller in Rollins and O’Connor,2005:240). Thus if this proves something, it proves that Westerns are produced according to cultural and historical necessities.

What are then the necessities of *Dances with Wolves*? How does the movie tackle the issues of its time? Are there any changes in the movie concerning the portrayal of the Native Americans? Or are they still instruments used to express a ‘larger ideological concerns’ of the white society? Following a New Historicists’ insistence to historicize, this chapter tries to answer these questions by contextualizing *Dances with Wolves*. This chapter discusses three main ideas. The first idea concerns the representation of Indians themselves. I suggest that though only 10 years left to enter the 21st century, the Indian in the movie is still seen through the traditional and stereotypical binary of the ignoble savage and the noble one. How the emerging issues of pollution and global warming transformed those noble savages into ecological beings is the second idea of this chapter. The last idea makes a link between the

white male hero of the movie to the American nation's emergence as the dominant country in the world, 'le gendarme du monde' as the French would say. I propose that through going to the Indian territories, Dunbar, the white American hero, tries to solve the crisis in masculinity inherited from the defeat in Vietnam War through reinforcing the idea of the superiority of the white man and thus American imperialism.

1/- The film's historical background

Costner's *Dances with Wolves* was released in 1990. It might be asked in which historical and cultural conditions the movie was produced. One of the defining characteristic of this period is the emergence of the issue of pollution and the destruction of nature by the excess of industrialization. Indeed, the late 1980s and early 1990s witnessed growing interests and debates about how to protect environment from the destruction by human activities. People began seriously to consider "complex global environmental issues such as ozone depletion, climate change, and the destruction of major fisheries" (Furr, 2009:04). People wanted to live in harmony with nature again, at least, psychologically. I do believe that the issue of environment creates a kind of hypocrisy. On the one hand, people enjoy the comfort industry is bringing to them. On the other hand, people mourn the destruction of nature and dream of an environment full of beautiful trees, unpolluted water, delicious fruits and so on. This is maybe what Zizek calls the "fetish of liberal position" (in Trinder, 2012: 46).

The Indian culture and identity was at the center again. Many environmentalist activists saw the similarities about their ideals and the Indian way of life. The concept of the 'Ecological Indian' re-emerged in popular rhetoric as good example of people living in harmony with nature. That perspective on the Indian suggested that people could learn how to protect environment by appropriating the Indian ceremonies. Hollywood, again, was there to express the desires and fantasies of its audiences. It was certainly the task of the Westerns, as

exclusively the specialist of the Indian themes, to construct an ecologist model using Native American identity.

Besides the issue of environment, I think that the defeat in Vietnam caused another major problem which concerned the decline of the masculine traditional role. In other words, America's defeat in Vietnam caused a 'trauma' in the American masculine identity. How can such a superpower like United States be defeated by a small country like Vietnam? As professor of communication studies Marita Sterken comments "the Vietnam veteran has thus become an emblem of the American's male crisis of masculinity" (cited in Schwenkel, 2009:27). The point then was how to make America confident with its military and imperialist capacities again. To put the idea in other words, in the post- Vietnam War, the issue in America was to rectify that crisis "and restore a morally pure, authoritative American manhood that had been lost in the theater of War in Vietnam" (ibid).

In Hollywood the issue was not ignored. Many movies were made to contribute to solving the crisis. Films like 'Rambo' tried to give another dimension to the Vietnam War. They presented white male hero making great individual achievements in Vietnam. They reinforced the idea that the American men would still win wars with their capacities and moral superiority.

I think that the Western genre had taken this issue into consideration too. After all, it is in the American Frontier that Americans constructed most of their manhood. As Rollins and O'Connor put the idea forward "whether it was in the forest or thirst in the American desert, or the threat of wild animals or still wild Indians, the West was a training ground for national character' (2005, 05). Dunbar, the American white hero in *Dances with Wolves* is an interesting case which could illustrate another form of Rambo but this time in the Indian territories and with more sensitive approach.

2/- Summary of the film

Dances with Wolves is an adaptation of Michael Blake's novel of the same title. It is directed by Kevin Costner who also plays the role of the main character, Lt John Dunbar. The film begins with Dunbar ready to have his leg amputated during the American Civil War; instead, he decides to ride a horse through the fighting troops, aiming to make suicide. Ironically, it doesn't work as it is planned but rather he is considered as a hero by the Union troops. Thus, he is given the choice to choose the military post of his assignment. Dunbar directly chooses a post in the Frontier because he wishes 'to see it before it's gone'.

Thus Dunbar heads West to the post and begins to write a journal of his travels. When he arrives to the military post, he discovers that the fort is abandoned by its soldiers. They left it in a degraded state. Believing that other soldiers will be sent, Dunbar begins to take care of the post. He stays alone in the fort for months. He is approached by a wolf he names 'Two Socks'. Then, his solitude is interrupted when a group of Indians from the Sioux tribe come closer to the fort. He shows a curiosity to know more about them.

One day he meets a white woman, that Sioux tribe adopted, trying to make suicide. Dunbar saves her and brings her back to her tribe. After that moment, the relationship between Dunbar and the Sioux, as well as with the white woman, grows positively. From hunting buffalo together to marrying the white woman, passing through renaming him *Dances with Wolves*, Dunbar really enjoys his new life among the Indians.

Unfortunately, the idyllic life that Dunbar has been living with the Sioux comes to an end. When Dunbar comes back to the fort to take his personal belongings to live with the Indians, he finds that a group of American soldiers are already there. Discovering that he has abandoned the post to live with the Indians, the soldiers quickly arrest him to be judged as a traitor. Meanwhile, a group of Sioux come to save him and fight with the army officers. The

Sioux successfully free Dunbar .Once back with the Sioux, Dunbar explains that the U.S. army will be looking for him, so he must move on by himself with his new bride in order not to make the tribe in danger. Dunbar and his white wife ride off together leaving the Sioux to their fate. A graphic at the end of the film explains that a few years later the Sioux were taken over by the U.S. government and the conquest for the western frontier ended.

3/- The Colonial “Other” in *Dances with Wolves*

How can one apply the notion of the “Other” on a movie that most critics admired for its sympatric portrayal of the Indians? Unlike most Westerns, the Indians in *Dances with Wolves* speak their language not the English language. However, if things on surface seem to be good, a deep analysis of the movie would reveal that the Indians are still considered as the colonial “Others” stereotyped either as ignoble savages or noble ones. A colonial dichotomy that is inherited, as when have seen, from the long centuries of representation of Indians by whites. Certainly, *Dances with Wolves* is “revisionist” in content. In other sense, it tries to show the negative impact of white expansion on the Indian territories and culture. Meanwhile, the movie, as Alexandra Keller says “never problematizes traditional historiophotic method” (Keller in Rollins and O’Connor:2005:243). It means that the traditional colonial dichotomy of “Us” versus “Them” is still working in the movie.

Edward Said, one of the leading postcolonial intellectuals, defines Otherness as “a political vision of reality whose structure promotes a binary opposition between the familiar ‘us’ and the strange ‘them’ (...) *which* limits the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies” (cited in Loomba, 1998:45) (italics mine). Thus, one can argue that the white/Indian encounter in *Dances with Wolves* is not an objective narration of events. The contact can only perceived through the colonial history that characterized the relationship of white and Indians in which the former is the colonizer and the latter is the colonized.

In *Dances with Wolves*, it is through John Dunbar's blue eyes and through his voice over narration that the audience gets information and explanations about the Indians. Just like the previous movies analysed in this dissertation, the Indian in *Dances with Wolves* does not speak for himself but the white hero does. In other words, the Indians are distanced from the audience and are established as the colonial "Other". Through the 'colonial gaze', as Louise Pratt would say, the Indians are seen either as noble savages or ignoble ones. Dunbar, for many reasons, of course (in the next sections of this chapter those reasons would become obvious), the Sioux Indians in the movie are represented as noble savages. Indeed, throughout the movie, Dunbar makes the effort to correct the negative stereotypes the white society has about the Indians. It should be noticed that changing negative stereotypes by positive ones does solve the problem of 'essentialization' of Indians. As Marxist thinker Slavoj Žižek notices about movies with more sympathetic portrayals of Indians like *Dances with Wolves* "they represent a liberal tolerant racism at its purest: this kind of 'respect' for the Other is the very form of the appearance of its opposite, of patronizing disrespect" (cited in Forest, 2012:204) (italics mine). In other words, while this kind of movies promotes a seeming tolerant discourse about the Indians (what Žižek calls the liberal position), they still maintain the inherent superiority of the white male protagonist and thus the white race in general.

The supposed inferiority of the Sioux leads automatically to their "disappearance". In other words, the Sioux could never resist against "the advancement of white civilisation". The "Other" has no place in the progress of civilization. Despite *Dances with Wolves*' 'liberal message' about the Sioux, their ultimate fate is delivered at the end of the movie with a graphic that says,

Thirteen years later, their homelands destroyed, their buffalo gone, the last band of free Sioux submitted to white authority at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. The great horse culture of the plains was gone and the American Frontier was soon to pass into history

The Indians are in the past (they are framed in time and space as we have seen with Churchill in the first chapter). They don't exist anymore. The modern audiences now enjoy seeing the Indians in a nostalgic way. And, Of course, their disappearance reinforces their role as noble savages.

The Sioux play their role as the "Other" in the form of the noble savages. For example, when Dunbar asks his apparently mad companion Timmons about the Indians, Timmons replies "Indians? God damn Indians! They are nothing but thieves and beggars". This is an interesting scene for two reasons. Firstly, by making this mad white man to pronounce such a racist statement, the movie suggests that racism is not the characteristic of all the whites but only a handful of mad white people. The audience would not believe his claims. Secondly, he is opposed to the 'enlightened' Dunbar who seeks the truth about the Indians. Indeed, later in the movie, after spending time with the Sioux Indians, Dunbar's voice over narration tells us "Nothing I had been told about these people is correct. They are not beggars and thieves. They're not the bogeymen they have been made out to be. On the contrary, they are polite guests and have a familiar humor I enjoy". Through Dunbar, the audience can deduce that 'these people' are not bad. The use of 'these people' in Dunbar's words reveals that the Indian is seen as a racial Other. In other words, the Indian as the Other is reconfigured according the white man's appreciations and judgments. Personally, I wished really to hear the Indian's point view not Dunbar's comments about them.

In another scene, After the Sioux's victory in the battle against the Pawnee, they dance and continually fire shots into the air acknowledging the great role guns played in that victory. As a viewer, I thought that in this scene that the Indians are not considered as the 'Other' any more since they embrace the Western technology. However, Dunbar's voice over narration intervenes again and affirms the Sioux's unchanging position as the 'Other',

I'd never been in a battle like this one; there was no dark political objective, not a fight for riches or to make men free. It had been to preserve the food stores that would see us through the winter, to protect the lives of women and loved ones only a few feet away

Again Dunbar establishes the Sioux as noble savages. They are depicted as spiritual fighters that struggle for their own survival not as bloody warriors that would kill people for obscure and malicious objectives. Somehow in the quotation there is a binary opposition between the Indians and whites concerning wars. If in *Little Big Man*, the Cheyenne fight to humiliate their enemy, the Sioux fight to preserve their food. As I have said before, the Indian as a noble savage only exist to criticize the white society. So, if we take into consideration the movie's context, we can understand why Dunbar mentions the 'dark objective' and 'riches'. Indeed, around 1990, a growing debate characterized the United States concerning the intervention in Iraq to overthrow Saddam's regime after he invaded Kuwait. The USA intervened in the region to apparently defend the helpless Kuwaitis against the powerful and satanic Saddam. But this was only a justification that Bush administration provided to the American national opinion and to the world. Behind this, the target of the U.S government was the vast oil reserves Kuwait and Iraq have. Thus, Costner's Sioux are used to criticize the American intervention in the Arab Gulf (Trinder, 2012:42).

Indeed, throughout the movie, Dunbar's voice over narration always reminds us of the Sioux's Otherness. In another scene, Dunbar says

I'd never known a people so eager to laugh, so devoted to family, so dedicated to each other. And the only word that came to my mind was harmony. It seems every day ends with a miracle here

Dunbar here simply idealizes the Indian culture reproducing the myth of noble savage about Indians living in harmony with nature. Of course, such perfect Indian never exists in reality. Nobody is perfect. This Indian inhabits only the white imagination. Terry Ellingson notices that the noble savage myth expresses a "dream of something better than what we are forced to be" (Ellingson, 2001:332). We don't have to forget that the 1980s in America Reagan, a

conservative president, was in the white house. And when we speak about conservative values in America the notions of attachment and devotion to family can't be ignored. Those values were promoted in conservative media and Republican Party discourse. Surely, such social dynamic and desire were reflected in *Dances with Wolves* through their projection on the Indian identity.

Unlike the Sioux who are treated somehow positively, the Pawnee, their rivals, reflect the traditional colonial view of the ignoble savage. In one illustrative scene a flash back the childhood memories of the white woman, Stands with a Fist, we are informed that the Pawnee ferociously attack and murder her family. The audience can hear the cry of her mother to her and she flees to the wilderness looking for a refuge. The aim of this scene is to reveal the savagery of the Pawnee. Indeed, as opposed to the human characteristic given to the Sioux like family life, cultural traditions, and friendship, the Pawnees are depicted as cowardly savages. For the movie, the Pawnee Indian has no culture. How it's still possible that 1990 Hollywood still conceives some of the Indians as mere animals? Nothing is said about Pawnee family life, their houses, how they hunt or get married. In other words, the Pawnee people are reduced to a few physical features that incarnate the idea of the blood thirsty savage.

Heather Norris Nicholson, author of the book *Screening Culture: Constructing Image and Identity*, thinks that the negative misconception of the Pawnee people is emphasized through their lack of linguistic communication. They are depicted as animals: they are aggressors who do not speak. This interpretation of Indians as beasts, of course, legitimizes their conquest (2003:43). The Pawnees only exist to prove the good character of the Sioux. In what I find so outrageous, Dunbar informs us that the "Pawnee have been very bad" to the Sioux. It is outrageous because Dunbar never heard the Pawnee's version of the story.

4/- The Ecological Indian in Dances with Wolves

Now, if the Indian is the Other, their way of life is explicitly opposed to the white way of life. As we have seen with Stuart Hall, representation gets its meaning through difference. The Sioux Indians as living in harmony with nature is put in binary opposition to the white civilization. Why this binary opposition? Well, *Dances with Wolves* uses these Indians to promote a message of environmentalism. The movie suggests that the Indian way of life fits the environmentalist discourse. Is that true? Are the Indians really the ecologists the movie pretends them to be? I would say, unfortunately, it's not about the real depiction of Indians. Again, it's about the white man and his fantasies.

Dances with Wolves perpetuates the idea the Indian is 'ecological' in his way of life. To begin with, in one scene when John Dunbar finds a herd of buffalo 'massacred' by white hunters, his voice over narration comments , as the camera shows the deceived face of the Sioux,

Who would do such a thing? The field was proof that it was a people without value or soul, with no regard to the Sioux rites. The wagon tracks leading away left no doubt and my heart sank as I knew it could only be white hunters. Voices that had been joyous were now as silent as the dead buffalo left to rot in this valley, killed only for their tongues and the price of their hides

Costner here and throughout the film, though he hunts with the Sioux and kills buffalo himself, conveniently excludes the Sioux from any cruel motive in their hunting of the buffalo and attributes the darker motivation of avid monetary gain to the white hunters who apparently have no consciousness in their slaughter of the animals. To make the audience sympathize with the Indians and hate more the white settlers, Costner includes a shot of an orphaned small buffalo hopelessly looking for its dead mother. Moreover, the empty whisky bottles shown in the scene also further criminalize 'white society' for its decadence and

disrespect for the environment. The scene is without a doubt an allegory of contemporary environmental damage caused by industrial excess (see figure 4.1).



Snapshot 3.1: The buffalo killings scene in Dances with Wolves.

Unlike this scene in which the white hunters are explicitly condemned, the following scene shows Dunbar hunting Buffalo with the Indians but with a positive light. Indeed this scene is represented as “a primal ritual, heroic and proud” (Ingram, 2000:78). The images deployed for this scene suggests that the Sioux hunt is different from the white hunt. While the “greedy” whites kill animals for profits, the Indians only hunt to feed themselves. The Indians are presented as rational in their exploitation of natural resources. Thus Dunbar says, after eating with the tribe the buffalo meat, describing admirably the Indians “the only word that come to my mind was harmony”

Following this depiction, one can imagine that Indians are real angels on earth! Is that true? As I said in the first chapter, many scholars and historians have questioned the validity

of the claim that the Indians are ‘ecological beings’. Historian Dan Flores, for instance, reconsiders the role played by the Indians in the near extinction of buffalo in North America. In his book *The Natural West: Environmental History in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountains*, Dan Flores notices that “historic Indians (like Indians today) were human beings, motivated by the same impulses as people everywhere”(2003:52). Very important to the myth of the ‘Ecological Indian’, he argues that tribal hunting practices contributed also to the mass slaughter of this animal. Moreover, even their traditions such as religious belief encouraged those hunting practices (Dan Flores, 2003:55-65). Of course, such insights, or if we can say facts, are ignored by the movie because simply they do not fit its interests. As the Indian is used to criticize modernity and its industrial excess it brought, everything that would idealize them is possible. In other words, the Indian identity in *Dances with Wolves* is like a garment that is suitable not to the Indian himself; it is a garment made to suit the white society.

The depiction of the ‘land’ also has its significance to construct an ecologist discourse in the movie. Unlike the Indians who are appreciated and judged through Dunbar’s eyes and voice over, their land (or what Americans call wilderness) is depicted with wide shot on the camera to allow viewers to judge for themselves (see figure 3.2 and 3.3). Indeed, the vast and empty land is repeatedly presented in wide panoramic shots to highlight the difference between present day America, clearly dominated by industrial cities, and the untouched, untamed natural environments of the American Frontier.



Snapshots 3.2 and 3.3: the long wide shots on the land

One can argue that the focus on the land in the movie through these wide shots on the Indian landscape is deployed as a way to remind the 1990s viewers about the importance of preserving nature, a nature that is already polluted by the industry. Early in the movie, Dunbar says “I’ve always wanted to see the Frontier before it’s gone”. The ‘frontier’ for Dunbar, then, is a location that risks disappearing with the industrial expansion. The movie expresses fear

and anxieties about the eminent danger of the destruction of nature. If we take into consideration the context in which the movie was released, Dunbar's statement is an alarm on the destruction of nature by industrial activities. In fact, *Dances with wolves* was released only six years after the discovery of major ozone layer depletion over Antarctica and the southern hemisphere.

Thus, one can say that the Indian landscape is an imagined space in *Dances with Wolves*. It represents an anxiety with regards to the negative potential of global capitalism in which pollution is a major issue. The movie manipulates the depiction of the land and the peoples who live on it to draw the people's attention of the dangers of pollution. In the film, even the Indians hunting buffalo are presented as obeying an ecological necessity, in that few animals are actually killed.

Indeed, in American discourse, the wilderness stands for what nature is before it was despoiled by human beings. It is according to the historian William Cronon, "a place of freedom in which we can recover the true self we have lost to the corrupting influences of our artificial lives. Most of all, it is the ultimate landscape of authenticity" (Cronon, 1995:80). Thus, in *Dances with Wolves*, the wide shots of the Frontier evoke this sentiment of freedom and authenticity. The audiences experience this through Dunbar. In fact, despite his physical pain and earlier suffering, he becomes assimilated by the American Frontier and gains jouissance from his vision of wilderness.

It is important to highlight that Dunbar goes native in *Dances with Wolves*. It can be argued that the fact of going native in the movie explain its tendency to use the Indian landscape and way of life to promote the discourse of environmentalism. In fact, Dunbar embraces a new life and leaves his English subjectivity. In this way, the title *Dances with Wolves*, reveals the ecological tendency of the movie. The new name of John Dunbar does not

come from a patriarchal Christian culture based on the name of the Father, but from a native culture based on ecology and the harmonic relationship with the Mother (nature). (Maurizia, 2001: 112).

Moreover, “dances” is a verb of an omitted third person subject (ibid). The English subject he or she has become an invisible, ghostly and unnecessary subject of the action. The invisible subject is substituted by the entire expression “dances with wolves”: a true ecological name. John Dunbar, by leaving his original country loses the condition and the name of an English speaking “subject” and is reborn as the Native American Dances with Wolves. Indeed, Dunbar’s renaming as Dances with Wolves allows him to abandon the polluted white civilisation to embrace a supposed ecological Indian way of life. The renaming fuses the hero with his new environment (ibid, 113).

5/- John Dunbar: the white male American hero

Kevin Costner is a famous Hollywood star. It can be argued that his major role in the movie as John Dunbar attracted larger audiences to see the movie. My argument here is that the white male hero in *Dances with Wolves* which is released in Post-Vietnam war era goes to the Indian territories to affirm his traditional role as a white male hero capable of civilising the savage. After the defeat in Vietnam, America lost confidence in its imperialist capacities. Movies like *Dances with Wolves* were released in Hollywood to give meaning to this potential again. America really needed to forget about Vietnam and look for the future as it was becoming soon the world leader.

It’s obvious that the story of *Dances of Wolves* follows, first and foremost, the adventures of John Dunbar and his encounter with the Indian people. For example, the movie does not begin by showing an Indian making a heroic act. No, it’s the white man that should

be the hero. That's what makes *Dances with Wolves* an imperialist narrative, par excellence. A white hero making friendship with the savage Other gives us the impression of 'déjà vu'.

What's the role of this imperialist narrative in the late 20th century America? The Post-Vietnam context demanded such narratives. America should solve its trauma of defeat in Vietnam and has to prepare to be the only world leader as the Soviet Union will be soon a part of the past. So let us see the manifestation of such impulses in *Dances with Wolves*.

No one can deny that Dunbar the white male hero has an exceptional role in the film. He heads West after performing a supposed heroic act in the Civil War. Viewers are first introduced to the white hero as being wounded in the battle field losing hope for life. Isn't that an allegory to the American soldiers who fought in Vietnam? Instead of having his leg amputated, he rides a horse and goes through the dividing line of the fighting troops. What's the relevance of this scene then? In fact, this scene helps to turn this ordinary man who is badly injured and soon becoming handicapped into a hero. He attempts to make suicide but his act helps the United States army to win the battle against the Confederates. In this sense, the movie suggests that this individual and heroic act on the part of an ordinary soldier can be decisive for the course of a war. Dunbar thus through this heroic performance is established as a superior member of his community; his voice over narration tells us, "the strangeness of this life cannot be measured. In trying to produce my own death, I was elevated to the status of living hero". Throughout the movie, he goes to the Indian territories to experiment and affirm his superiority and potential.

One of the most noticeable scenes or moments that reveal the tendency of *Dances with Wolves* to portray John Dunbar as a traditional white colonialist male hero is his encounter and subsequent friendship with a wolf he calls "Two Sock". Indeed, Dunbar domesticates the wolf to the point where the wolf will accept food from his hand. The good question to ask:

why Dunbar makes as his friend a wolf? This scene certainly makes allusion to the colonialist claim of the cultivation of the Other's land by the white man. In other words, through taming the wolf, John Dunbar performs his traditional role of civilizing the Other. As Louis Owens author of the book *Mixedblood Messages: Literature, Film, Family, Place* says "In this role, Two Socks effectively foreshadows the submission of the Lakotas to the white man, and together wolf and Indian serve to authorize the rightful role of the European invader in asserting his dominion over the continents and its continents" (Owens,2001: 114). I would say that released in a period of a New World Order under the United States, this scene not only confirms the dominance of America over the continent but goes beyond this to confirm its dominance over the world. In a sense, movies like *Dances with Wolves* 'legitimize' the colonial conquest. Of course, it does this in the most subtle ways.

Now let us see with scepticism this relationship between this unusual hero and Sioux tribe. I said earlier that the movie still considered the Indians as the colonial Other. So the presence of a white hero among them would confirm the superiority of the latter and validates the inferiority of the formers. Dunbar chooses the Frontier aiming to encounter the Indians. Once the contact is established with the Sioux, Dunbar's cultural and technological privilege is launched. How? Firstly, by introducing to the tribe the more advanced tools that he has brought with him from the white society like the 'coffee grinder' or 'tin cups' that Sioux take back to their village with them. To be more explicit, the white man here justifies to the audience his dominance over the Indians through the discourse of his own technological superiority. Such scene speaks to the American viewers of the 1990s telling them "be proud! We are still the superior guys".

Moreover, in a scene that I personally found outrageous, Dunbar informs the Sioux about the presence of the buffalo. How can a nation which was living for centuries from the buffalo hunt wait the white man to show them where the buffalo is? An unrealistic depiction

that aims to make the Indians dependant to the white man. In this sense, Edward Castillo, an Indian scholar comments on this scene in *Dances with Wolves* by saying, “we are asked to believe that a highly skilled hungry and presumably alert band of Indians would need Dunbar to inform them that a thunderously noisy herd of buffalo was in their neighbourhood” (cited in Trinder, 2012:25).

After Dunbar alerts the Indians about the buffalo’s presence, he goes together with them to hunt the buffalo where the power of the riffle as an icon of colonizer’s superiority and technological advancement further affirms his superior status among them (Trinder,2012:25). And as I said in the first chapter concerning the Western genre, the gun symbolizes a kind of ‘phallic power’ that reinforces the white hero masculine role. With this gun, Dunbar achieves to kill more animals than the Indians do. More than that, thanks to the gun, he saves an Indian boy from a buffalo attack. What can we understand from this? This scene suggests that the Indians cannot exploit the natural resources properly. The white man is the one who deserves this land.

The Indians as the inferior Other always need a white man to solve their problems. In the battle that takes place between the Pawnee and the Sioux, the good Indians win over the bad ones due to the weapons furnished by Dunbar. After the battle, Dunbar feels himself to be a new man. He narrates to the audiences,

I felt a pride I had never felt before; I’d never really known who John Dunbar was. Perhaps the name itself had no meaning. But as I heard my Sioux name being called over and over, I knew for the first time who I really was.

Thanks to the Indians, Dunbar finds his true self. The Indian here is only a tool used for the regeneration of the white male hero. The Indian identity and territories are utilized to redefine Dunbar’s manhood.

Conclusion

To sum up, one can say that *Dances with Wolves* instrumentalizes the Indian identity to express the white issues. The Indian becomes a white fantasy used in times when white people do not feel at ease with themselves. The excess of industrialization and the issue of pollution have led the eco-western *Dances with Wolves* to depict the Indians not only as living in harmony with nature, but also following an ecologist way of life to protect it. Dunbar chooses to abandon his English identity to go native and to adopt this ecological perspective.

Moreover, the Indian as the 'Other' is used to allow Dunbar to restore his masculinity and to show his white superiority. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States emerged as the superpower nation. This has led to the reemergence of the imperialist discourse in America especially under Bush (sen) Administration. So, in *Dances with Wolves*, Dunbar goes to the frontier to confirm the superiority of American imperialism.

General Conclusion

This dissertation has focused on the representation of Native Americans in Hollywood Westerns since 1950s. My aim was to show that despite the seeming sympathetic portrayal of Indians in the Western movies which were called “revisionist”, the Indian identity, culture, and face were appropriated by Hollywood to express the white American society’s political, social, and cultural issues.

The 1950s America was characterized by its national paranoia because of the Cold War and the Communist threat. To fight against the spread of Communism, the American nation encouraged conformity to the ideals of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant values. Any difference from these values was banned. Daves Delmer’s *Broken Arrow* echoed this atmosphere. As the analysis of *Broken Arrow* has shown, the film promoted the idea of Indian assimilation into the white society.

It does so through the historical distortions of the historical events. The white/Indian conflict is seen through the white eyes. The movie avoids discussing the real issues that stand behind the white /Indian troubles. Instead, it focuses on the peaceful relationship between a white hero and noble and wise Indian leader. The film through this relationship negotiates the Indian assimilation to the white society. Moreover, the analysis shows that the Indian is contained as the ‘Other’ who is seen either as noble if he accepts assimilation or ignoble savage if he resists the assimilationist policies. Thirdly, the movie also presents a possibility of Indian assimilation through the use of the Indian woman figure. It represents the Indian Princess as respectable and elevated in comparison to other Indian women. Her marriage with the white hero symbolizes a possibility of assimilation, but her death echoes the 1950s racial tensions and the anxieties of the Cold War.

Twenty years later, Arthur Penn’s *Little Big Man* was released. The figure is the same, the Indian, but the epoch changed. American society was confronting new issues. The young

generation did not want to live like their parents anymore. The hippie movement expressed their opinions. The war in Vietnam divided the national opinion of the American people. Images of atrocities committed against the Vietnamese civilians by the U.S. army shocked American sensibilities. Released in this period, *Little Big Man* was not indifferent to these issues. The movie expressed its opinions through the Indian representation and the reconsideration of the myth of the frontier.

Little Big Man criticized the white society's hypocrisy through the reversal of roles between the Indians and whites. Indeed, while, the white society is shown as corrupt, hypocrite and nihilist, the Indian one is idealized and romanticized. The noble savage depiction is deployed as an efficient tool to express the disillusionment of the late 1960s and the early 1970s with the white society. Representation, as it is illustrated Stuart Hall, should be based on difference to acquire meaning. In *Little Big Man*, the Indian is idealized not because is he so intrinsically, but because the movie wanted to criticize the "corrupted" American society; and the Indian way of life is a good tool with which the movie could do that.

The film also vehicles the Hippies movement discourse though representing the Indians as surrogate hippies. The Indian woman is used again as a signifier of hippie values. Her sexuality is put forward. The white hero goes native with her and enjoys sexual freedom with her and her sisters. This focus on sexualized Indian Maiden meets with the hippie ideal of making love not war. The use of the Indian also allowed the movie to criticize indirectly the sensitive issue of the Vietnam War. The Indian is victimized and shown as being massacred by the U.S. army, and this stand as a critic of the Vietnam War.

Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* was not much different from its predecessors in appropriating the Indian figure and culture. The ecological issues were dominant in the late

1980s. The film deployed the Ecological Indian depiction to draw people's attention to the dangers of pollution and the necessity of the following an environmental perspective to save nature. Though most historians agree that the Indian as a human being does not necessarily follow an ecological path by nature and can destroy nature as all other races, *Dances with Wolves* represented the Indian as living in harmony with nature; and this motivated the white hero to go to the Indian territory to adopt their way of life and even renaming himself Dances with Wolves which is an ecological name *par excellence*. Of course this is a fabricated representation that fits more the environmentalist utopia rather than the actual Indians who live in the American land. It is also obvious that the Indian is still the inferior 'Other to whom the white hero goes to restore his lost masculinity and confirm his white superiority.

Finally, this dissertation has dealt with representations of Native American in non-Indigenous movies. This leads us to ask a question of how it would be the answer of Native Americans to the appropriation of their culture by the white people. To further this study, I think it would be relevant to study the Indian representation of themselves in comparison to white representations of them. How can they resist these non-Indigenous representations? Gayatri Spivak, a post-colonial theorist, once asked "can the subaltern speak?" (in Ashcroft et al, 2003:24) It would be useful to ask the same question about the Indians. Can they speak? In other words, it should be asked if the Indians as minority in the United States could represent themselves by having their own Hollywood.

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Résumé

Cette dissertation est consacrée à l'étude de la représentation des Indiens dans trois films hollywoodiens à savoir *la Flèche Brisée* (1950) de Daves Delmer, *Little Big Man* (1970) d'Arthur Penn et *Danse avec les Loups* (1990) de Kevin Costner. L'objectif de ce travail est de démontrer que ces film instrumentalisent l'Indien afin de commenter les problèmes de la société américaines tels que : les relations raciales, le mouvement de la contre-culture et l'écologie. Pour atteindre cet objectif, cette dissertation repose sur les apports théoriques avancés par l'école de New Historicism. Sa focalisation sur la nécessité du contexte et sa perception nouvelle de l'histoire sont d'une pertinente utilité pour l'analyse de la représentation des indiens dans ces films. Avec *la Flèche Brisée*, je discute l'utilisation du film de l'Indien afin de légitimer les politiques d'assimilation du gouvernement américain qui ont été entreprises dans les années 1950 pour résoudre le problème indiens. Le film révisé l'histoire de l'Ouest américain afin de prouver à la société américaine conformiste des années 1950 que l'Indien put être assimilé à la société blanche. Dans mon analyse de *Little Big Man*, je soutiens que le mouvement de contre-culture et de la guerre de Vietnam ont influencé la perception des Indiens dans le film. Adhérant à la méfiance du Mouvement hippie des valeurs traditionnelles américaines, le film s'approprie le mode de vie Indien pour critiquer la société blanche américaine. Le thème romantique du bon sauvage est en contraste avec la vie cynique de l'Amérique industrialisée. Il est également démontré que le film utilise l'histoire de la conquête américaine de l'Ouest comme une métaphore de la guerre de Vietnam. En ce qui concerne *Danse avec les Loups*, de nouveau, le visage est le même, l'Indien, mais l'Amérique des années 1990 a vu différentes questions. L'écologie était à la fois une mode et un problème. Le film déploie la notion de l'Indiens écologique, l'affirmation selon laquelle l'Indien vit en parfaite harmonie avec la nature, pour critiquer l'excès et les dangers de la pollution. Le film utilise aussi l'Indien comme un instrument par lequel le héros blanc peut restaurer sa masculinité impérialiste qui était pertinente après que les Etats-Unis sont devenus la seule force majeure dans le nouvel ordre mondial.