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An Act of Redemption: Conflicting Images of American Indians in *Broken Arrow* and *The Searchers*

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Abstract

The golden age of Hollywood westerns produced a series of iconic images, from carriage caravans migrating westward to the blossoming romances between young American men and women trying to survive an unfamiliar landscape. The Hollywood western also functioned as a space for reproducing racialized stereotypes of Native Americans, in particular the Noble Savage or the Bloodthirsty Savage. The figure of Tonto, the Lone Ranger's sidekick in the ABC television series, is just one of many stereotypical depictions of Native Americans from the 1950s. Each of these components in the 1950s western offered American audiences a visual dichotomy: although some directors still relied upon the pejorative images mentioned above, others like Delmer Daves and John Ford attempted to present a more positive representation of the American Indian. These directors' efforts created a confused ideological system, one that both accepted and rejected stereotypical depictions of Native Americans. While Daves and Ford rely on stereotypes, they also disrupt these images by condoning an interracial marriage in *Broken Arrow* (1950) and by presenting a white anti-hero, Ethan Edwards, in *The Searchers* (1956).

As a result of the political atmosphere of the Cold War in which everyday Americans and policymakers alike struggled to define who was American and who was not, Daves and Ford attempt to provide answers to these questions through the depiction of Native Americans in their films. Both directors adhere to and disrupt stereotypical images of Natives in an attempt to atone for the treatment of Indians in the

past and, at the same time, make sense of race relations in the present international climate of the Cold War. Although scholars have examined stereotypes of Indians and Native subversion in western film, scholars have not compared the two films using the directors' reinforcement and subversion of stereotypical images as a racially-based redemptive act. By reading the convoluted representations of Native Americans in Delmer Daves's *Broken Arrow* and John Ford's *The Searchers* together, the search for a cohesive American national identity in the Cold War era emerges outside of the films.

Keywords

The Cold War, *The Searchers*, *Broken Arrow*, Racism in the Western

Bir Telafi Girişimi: *Broken Arrow* ve *The Searchers*'da Birbirine Ters Düşen Kızılderili İmgeleri

Öz

Hollywood kovboy filmleri, altın çağında, batıya göç eden karavanlardan Amerikalı genç kadın ve erkeklerin kendilerine yabancı topraklarda hayatta kalmaya çalışırken filizlenen aşk hikayelerine uzanan bir dizi ikonik imge ortaya koymuştur. Bu tür, aynı zamanda, başta soylu vahşi ve kana susamış vahşi olmak üzere, Kızılderilileri betimleyen birçok ırkçı tiplemenin yeniden üretilmesi için zemin oluşturmuştur. ABC'nin televizyon dizisinde Lone Ranger'ın sağ kolu olan Tonto figürü 1950'lerdeki stereotipik Kızılderili betimlemelerinden yalnızca biridir. 1950'lerin kovboy filmlerindeki bu imgeler Amerikan izleyicilerine görsel bir ikilik sunar. Bazı yönetmenler halen yukarıda değinilen aşağılayıcı imgelere bel bağlasalar da, Delmer Daves ve John Ford gibi yönetmenler Kızılderilileri daha olumlu bir şekilde tasvir etmeye çalışmışlardır. Adı geçen yönetmenlerin çabaları Kızılderili stereotiplerini hem kabul eden hem reddeden karmaşık bir ideolojik sistem yaratmıştır. Bu yönetmenler, yarattıkları Kızılderili karakterler stereotiplere dayandığı halde, *Broken Arrow*'da (1950) ırklararası evliliğe göz yumarak ve *The Searchers*'da (1956) beyaz bir anti-kahraman olan Ethan Edwards'a yer vererek aynı zamanda bu stereotipleri yıkarlar.

Politikacılar kadar Amerikalıların da her gün kimin Amerikalı olup olmadığını tayin etmeye çalıştığı Soğuk Savaş politik ortamında, Daves ve Ford bu sorulara filmlerindeki Kızılderili tasvirleriyle cevap vermeye çalışır. Her iki yönetmen de stereotipik Kızılderili imgelerine bağlı kalırken, aynı zamanda, geçmişte Kızılderililere yapılan muameleyi affettirmek ve Soğuk Savaş'ın uluslararası ikliminde ırklararası ilişkilerin anlaşılmasını sağlamak için, onları yıkmaya çalışır. Eleştirmenler bugüne kadar kovboy filmlerinde görülen Kızılderili stereotiplerini ve onları yıkmaya yönelik girişimleri incelemiş olmalarına rağmen, bahsi geçen iki filmi yönetmenlerinin güçlendirdiği ve baltaladığı stereotipik imgeleri Kızılderililerin hatalı temsilini telafi etmeye yönelik birer eylem olarak değerlendirerek karşılaştırmamışlardır. Soğuk Savaş döneminde birleştirici bir Amerikan milli kimliği oluşturma çabası Delmer Daves'in *Broken Arrow*'u ve John Ford'un *The Searchers*'ında görülen karmaşık Kızılderili temsillerinin birlikte okunmasıyla anlaşılabilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Soğuk Savaş, *The Searchers*, *Broken Arrow*, Kovboy Filmlerinde Irkçılık

The golden age of Hollywood Westerns produced a series of iconic images, from carriage caravans migrating westward to the blossoming romances between young American men and women trying to survive an unfamiliar landscape. The Hollywood Western also functioned as a space for reproducing racialized stereotypes of Native Americans, in particular the Noble Savage or the Bloodthirsty Savage. The figure of Tonto, the Lone Ranger's sidekick in the ABC television series, is just one of many stereotypical depictions of Native Americans from the 1950s. Each of these components in the 1950s Western offered American audiences a visual dichotomy: although some directors still relied upon the pejorative images mentioned above, others like Delmer Daves and John Ford attempted to present a more positive representation of Native Americans. These directors' efforts created a confused ideological system, one that both accepted and rejected stereotypical depictions of Native Americans. While Daves and Ford rely on stereotypes, they also disrupt these images by condoning an interracial marriage in *Broken Arrow* (1950) and by presenting a white anti-hero, Ethan Edwards, in *The Searchers* (1956).

However, what caused these conflicting portrayals of Native Americans in 1950s Westerns? In *Cold War Orientalism*, Christina Klein posits that policy and popular culture are intertwined: "I believe [representations of popular culture] are most fully understood not as free-standing aesthetic objects, but as component pieces of larger cultural formations" (6). If policy and popular culture are a part of the same social organism, as Klein suggests, then directors like Daves and Ford were developing projects of their time, especially given the enormous popularity of the Western in the 1950s.

Klein's perspective seems particularly apt considering that these shifting depictions of Native American identity in film mimic the same confusion present in American society outside of the cinema. The social problem at work here revolves around what to do with underprivileged groups in the paranoid atmosphere of the Cold War. While Americans certainly feared the spread of Communism to newly independent nations in Africa and Asia, they also struggled with social changes within marginalized communities at home, such as desegregation. Both communism and desegregation espoused a sense of social equality that radically differed from the lifestyle mainstream Americans associated with cultural normalcy in the 1950s.

While the American federal government seemingly encouraged racial integration by emphasizing progress in race relations between African Americans and whites, its termination policy forced some Native American tribes into deeper poverty and further social marginalization. The termination era was meant to grant Natives full citizenship by eliminating their sovereign status through House Concurrent Resolution 108 in 1953. This resolution affected about 12,000 Native people from the Menominee to the Klamath. Terminated tribes lost over 2.5 million acres because the protected status of this land ended.

Although many Americans might not have been aware of the termination policy, at the same time, desegregation was a heavily discussed topic in the public sphere. Both tribal termination and desegregation emphasized racial integration into mainstream American society. These laws functioned as the first stage towards change in Cold War race relations. Many Americans resisted accepting or acknowledging the federal government's mandates. Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus, for example, refused to admit nine African-

American students to a white school despite the passage of *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Politicians like Faubus justified their actions by arguing that social change needed to happen gradually, rather than through the passing of one law "overnight" ("Speech on Social Integration"). Clearly the government desired improvement, but the passing of a law did not always guarantee it.

The termination era, whose life-span lasted nearly twenty years and which overlapped with the desegregation era, was a policy that might have pleased mainstream Americans who resisted immediate racial integration. However, even with the gradual detribalization of 109 tribes, Native Americans immediately realized the inadequacies of the process. In *The Native American Almanac* (1993), Arlene Hirschfelder and Martha Kreipe de Montano argue that many governmental policies directed towards Native Americans like detribalization were meant to eradicate the "Indian problem" by eliminating any identifiable Native Americans (23). As a result, like African Americans, who still encountered social and political exclusion despite desegregation, Native Americans from terminated tribes experienced higher dropout rates in school, a poorer economy because of the burden of states taxes, and the loss of federally funded healthcare. African Americans remained visible to mainstream Americans because of desegregation, while Native Americans, as Hirschfelder and de Montano suggest, encountered political and social invisibility after termination (23).

The social response to desegregation and the inadequacies of the termination project affected American identity construction. In *Killing the Indian Maiden*, M. Elise Marubbio states that the 1950s is a period remembered for its paranoia and anxiety regarding who did not fit the national ideal—white, democratic, and Christian (64). After desegregation, American policymakers and everyday citizens alike worried about how racial integration would affect their sense of national identity because African Americans had always been presented as the Other. This "othering" of African Americans centralizes the white dominant culture and marginalizes the ethnic minority along a wide spectrum. As a result, the flaws in the detribalization policy demonstrate that government officials confused sovereignty with dependence. Sovereignty for Native Americans did not suggest dependence, but rather a means towards constructing tribal identity and self-representation. Yet, the federal government did not consult

Natives before the passing of tribal termination because politicians assumed that tribal members wanted to identify solely as American citizens. Policies like termination demonstrate that the 1950s embodied an attempt at social change through racial integration; however, these laws interpreted marginalized identities through notions of American identity formation, thus replicating a rigid dichotomy between dominant and marginalized cultures.

Directors like Daves and Ford address this social and political confusion by presenting questions concerning the perceived threat to changes in American identity formation at a safe distance. Daniel J. Lead suggests that during the Cold War, "Even Westerns were not immune to the cultural politics of the day" (65). In *The Invention of the Western Film* (2003), Scott Simmon argues that the Western is by far the most comfortable genre in Hollywood with commenting on American historical and political life (103). As a consequence, the 1950s Western grapples with American identity issues through its nostalgic and celebratory depiction of key moments in U.S. history: the Civil War Reconstruction, the pursuit of Manifest Destiny, and the possibilities presented by the Western frontier. The films *Broken Arrow* and *The Searchers* thus disguise the concern for American identity and security in the racially-tense 1950s by depicting the same concerns within a nineteenth-century context. Through the strategy of temporal displacement, the films' directors and movie-goers alike could explore their anxieties in a previous time-space with a known historical outcome.

By inscribing their films with identity and security concerns, Daves and Ford depart from the generic conventions of 1950s Westerns. In *Broken Arrow*, Daves centralizes an interracial love and marriage plot despite the slow transition to desegregation in the public sphere. In *The Searchers*, Ford's protagonist, Ethan Edwards, is an antagonistic, racist anti-hero with sexual neuroses, a clear departure from heroic characters like Vance Shaw in *Western Union* (1941) and "Brazos" Kane in *Gunfighters* (1947). The concern for security and the plot narratives that privilege "un-American" identities in these films illustrate what Mary L. Dudziak calls an act of redemption (6-17). In her analysis of Cold War race relations, Dudziak argues that American fear of Soviet communism was an international affair because the world watched in order to see if independent nations would

choose democracy or communism (6-17). While the Soviets pushed forth radio and print propaganda suggesting that the U.S would not welcome people of color into the democratic world because of their race, politicians like Eisenhower fervently promoted desegregation (6-17). In addition to this, as the Cold War "was being waged fiercely at home and abroad on behalf of the United States […] Hollywood […] enlisted for the duration" (Leab 59).

As a result of this political atmosphere, Daves and Ford both adhere to and disrupt stereotypical images of Natives in an attempt to atone for the treatment of Indians in the past and, at the same time, make sense of race relations in the present international climate of the Cold War. Although scholars have examined stereotypes of Native Americans and Native subversion in Western film, scholars have not compared the two films using the directors' reinforcement and subversion of stereotypical images as a racially-based redemptive act. By reading the convoluted representations of Native Americans in Delmer Daves's *Broken Arrow* and John Ford's *The Searchers* together, the search for a cohesive American national identity in the Cold War era emerges outside of the films.

Portrayals of Native Americans in *Broken Arrow*

Images of Native Americans in Westerns are often problematic because they are defined through non-native experience and culture, usually backed by a white supremacy rhetoric. In *Fantasies of the Master Race*, Ward Churchill, for example, explains that Hollywood film defines indigenous people "exclusively in terms of certain (conflict and demise) interactions with Euro-Americans. There is no cinematic recognition whatsoever of a white-free and autonomous native past" (233). Conversely, in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (1994), Ella Shohat and Robert Stam suggest that the depiction of certain tribes as an intrinsic part of the landscape masks the reality of Indian Removal and American greed for more land (116). Delmer Daves's *Broken Arrow* dramatizes Churchill's, Shohat's, and Stam's claims. The film begins in the middle of a ten-year conflict over land possession between the American military and the Arizona Apaches. While Daves does not acknowledge an Apache past free from whites, Michael Hilger suggests that *Broken Arrow* "is the first of the major Westerns to portray a historical Native American leader [Cochise] as a heroic central character" (98). Daves solicited Native American advice for his film's construction, illustrating

that it at least "*attempted* to acknowledge and accurately depict Apache culture" even if white actors played major Native roles (Benschoff 110).

At the same time, *Broken Arrow*'s content relies primarily on stereotypical representations of Native identity. Cochise (Jeff Chandler), for example, typifies the Noble Savage or Wise Elder figure in the film. Lucy A. Ganje suggests that the Noble Savage portrays "America's indigenous population as not only the friend of the 'white man,' but part of a once-great but now dying culture" (qtd. in Lester 42). The Noble Savage—relegated safely to America's past—intersects with Captain Tom Jeffords's (James Stewart) narration of all the film's action. Cochise becomes Jeffords's friend, or the friend of the "white man," in order to save his tribe. In addition to the problematic depiction of Cochise, Jeffords's narrative mediation simultaneously denotes the triumph of the military over indigenous narratives. While Daves may have wanted to avoid another racist melodrama through his research on Apache cultural tradition, he routinely relies on stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans throughout his film. In order to reach a society obsessed with racial integration, who was an American and who was not, and the Communist threat, Daves established familiar images (the Noble Savage and white authority), thus building upon the iconography of pervious Westerns.

Daves's use of familiar racialized tropes indicates that he expected his audience to largely consist of mainstream Americans, especially given the fact that the ultimate take-away message of the film revolves around Tom Jeffords's transformation from an ethnocentric to an open-minded American. The film begins with Jeffords, a former Union soldier, wandering through Arizona in search of gold and frontier adventurism in 1870. He discovers a fourteen-year-old Apache boy wounded by military buckshot. Rather than harm the boy, Jeffords helps care for his wounds until he recovers. When the boy wants to return home, he explains that his mother is crying because of his absence and that his people need him. Jeffords states he "learned something that day. Apache women cried over their sons and Apache men had a sense of fair play" (*Broken Arrow*). Like Harriet Beecher Stowe's plea for abolition on the grounds that African-American women experienced motherhood in the same ways that white women did, Jeffords grants the Apache human emotions. Daves thus suggests that the trope of

the Bloodthirsty Savage is a result of dehumanizing and ethnocentric attitudes, while he simultaneously uses the same attitudes to found Jeffords's realizations.

Later in the film, Daves purposefully invokes the image of Native Americans as bloodthirsty savages in order to complicate it. The Bloodthirsty Savage trope generally appears in film as a horde of Native Americans with painted faces descending upon a group of innocent white settlers (Lester 42). When Jeffords says goodbye to the young boy, for example, a group of adult Apache men, including Cochise, arrives and threatens Jeffords's life. The boy defends Jeffords by encouraging his release before a group of white miners passes through the area. The Apache men quickly start shooting arrows at the men, killing a few and wounding the others. They tie Jeffords to a tree and force him to watch the impending deaths of the wounded: "They found a pouch on one of the wounded men, and in the pouch were three Apache scalps. So they dug a pit in the ground and they rubbed his face with the juice of the mescal plant. And they made me watch the ants come" (*Broken Arrow*). In contrast to many westerns in which Natives attack white settlers seemingly without cause, Daves contextualizes the attack, giving the Apaches reason to harm the Americans; the Americans carry scalps of Native tribesmen which can later be exchanged for money. The offering of money for scalps, on the federal government's part, undercuts the heroism of the military as it disrupts the savage/civilized binary. By exploiting the landscape and the indigenous people in it, the white men cause their own demise. More importantly, Daves demonstrates the one-sided nature of American historical narratives that typically dismiss marginalized perspectives when he portrays whites profiting off of Native American scalps. Although the scene begins with the image of the Bloodthirsty Savage in association with the Apache, the plot's evolving content illustrates that barbaric acts can be committed by those deemed to be civilized.

Daves further relies upon and then dismisses the Bloodthirsty Savage trope throughout the film. The initial conflict between Jeffords and Cochise resolves itself when the Apaches finally decide to release him. Jeffords returns to his boarding house where a group of men exaggerate the scalpers' deaths and blame the Indians. Jeffords immediately defends the Apaches by explaining what really happened. The other men repudiate Jeffords's defense of "the enemy" as well as

his perceived indifference towards the Americans' murders. Because Jeffords understands the context of the fight, he comes to identify more with the Apache instead of his own culture. As Michael Hilger explains, "The friendship of Jeffords and Cochise grows because they are both men of courage, intelligence and honor" (99).

Once the plot focuses on this friendship, however, Daves makes use of another stereotype—the Wise Elder—as Cochise's character takes central focus in the film. The Wise Elder figure involves the desexualization of a Native American leader which allows him to focus solely on his commitment to the tribe. This symbolic castration leaves him unformed and incomplete. S. Elizabeth Bird explains that, "the Indian Elder is uniformly desexualized, in that he appears not to have a family or an identity himself. His culture is only relevant in so far as it serves the white hunger for spirituality" (qtd in Meyer and Royer 78). Cochise's singular focus on his tribe's welfare takes up the dual images of the Wise Elder and Noble Savage familiar to the film's audience. As Cochise moves stoically through the film, desexualized and only concerned with the preservation of his people, Jeffords has a compensatory love affair with Sonseeahray (Debra Paget). The Jeffords-Sonseeahray relationship provides a direct contrast between the lovers' passion and Cochise's desexualized persona.

The Wise Elder also presents a mysticism that sets him apart from most men and thus guarantees the heroic characteristics that Jeffords comes to respect. Indeed, Jeffords's friend Juan advises him to, "Remember this: if you see him [Cochise], do not lie to him…not in the smallest thing. His eyes will see into your heart. He is greater than other men" (*Broken Arrow*). Similarly, in a conversation between Jeffords and General Oliver, Jeffords tells him that:

> Cochise can't even read a map, but he and his men know every gulley, every foot of every mountain, every waterhole in Arizona…He can't write his name, but his intelligence service knows when you got to Fort Grant and how many men you got. He stopped the Butterfield Stage from running. He stopped the U.S. Mail from going through. And for the first time in Indian history, he has all the Apaches from all the tribes fighting under one command. (*Broken Arrow*)

Cochise's stoicism and wisdom have paid off; he relentlessly

defends Apache territory and manages to do so successfully, despite his refusal of Western print culture. More importantly, Cochise's efforts demonstrate what tribal unification can achieve, thus permitting at least temporarily, the possibility that Americans will not triumph.

While Daves employs familiar stereotyping to characterize Cochise, at the same time, his protagonist's mission involves encouraging fellow Americans to view Apache culture on its own terms. Because of this blend of both ethnocentrism and egalitarianism, Daves departs from white supremacist attitudes that denounce racial equality seen in previous Westerns such as *The Battle of Elderbrush Gulch* (1914) and *The Vanishing American* (1925). Yet the initial subversion of stereotypical images of Native Americans loses its power because Daves relies upon a white intermediary to explain the "truth" to other Americans about Apache culture. However, Daves was both a product of his time and a prisoner of it. On one hand, Jeffords's transformation and subsequent advocacy deviate from traditional Westerns that gloss over Native American cultural loss and land usurpation. On the other hand, given the attitudes expressed outside of the film towards terminated tribes and African-American equality, without the voice-over and verbal defense Jeffords provides, the audience would comfortably continue perpetuating racial stereotypes. Jeffords's defense, then, can be viewed as a challenge to audience expectations, even as it simultaneously reconstructs stereotypical racial identities to make this challenge. Daves's film does not attempt to eradicate racist attitudes. Rather, he offers a conciliatory solution reminiscent of Eisenhower's press statements about the prioritization of racial integration. Through Jeffords's relationship with both Cochise and Sonseeahray, Daves advocates for bringing two disparate cultures together through love and peace.

Daves's Western suggests that racial mixing should be a sign of progress, rather than something to fear because mixed-race unions can bring two groups together. As a result, the interracial relationship begins to take priority in the film as both whites and Native Americans grapple with its implications. When Jeffords and Sonseeahray fall in love, for example, they meet in secret, knowing that they will face ostracism from their respective communities. Cochise exposes their relationship when he surprises the couple in the woods during one of their "accidental" meetings. Jeffords wants to marry Sonseeahray, but

Cochise, the practical giver of wisdom, explains that there will not be a place for them in either the Apache or American communities. The couple decide to take their chances by marrying, thus providing the film with several romantic scenes of bliss. Jeffords also arranges for General Oliver, the Christian general, who states that God does not acknowledge color, to meet with Cochise and the Apache elders. The men draw up a treaty giving the Apaches 50,000 miles of Arizona land to inhabit without fear of American encroachment. Peace lasts briefly, until a group of greedy Americans tries to ambush and assassinate Cochise in defiance of the treaty's rules: no violence on either side for ninety days as a means of instilling Apache trust of American treaties. The combination of religious indoctrination, cultural indoctrination (through marriage) and political indoctrination (through white treaties) speaks to the social and political management of populations in colonial regimes. Once more, the source of contention between the Apaches and the Americans occurs because of imperial conquest and its ramifications for the Other.

While Daves champions the interracial relationship between his characters, at the same time, he withdraws from fully committing to its implications. Directly after the couple speaks of the products of their interracial relationship, their children, tragedy befalls them with Sonseeahray's death. Even in speech, the act of consummating their relationship is truncated. Although a truce exists between the Americans and the Apaches in the area, a small group of white men decide to seek revenge for their comrades' deaths. While trying to defend a wounded Jeffords, Sonseeahray is shot and killed by the Americans. Cochise and a group of men kill most of the Americans, but General Oliver assures them later that the rest will be caught and hanged. Even though Cochise recognizes the ambush as an act of a few evil men, rather than the whole American community, Jeffords wants to avenge his wife's death. Cochise explains that, "As I bear the murder of my people, so you will bear the murder of your wife" (*Broken Arrow*). Jeffords finds little solace in this advice, until the end of the film when he rides off "into the sunset." Jeffords states that, "His words meant very little to me then, but as time passed, I came to know that the death of Sonseeahray had put a seal upon the peace" (*Broken Arrow*). Sonseeahray becomes a symbolic figure for the Apache and the "good" Americans in Arizona, honored by the upholding of the peace treaty.

Daves's exploration of and then retreat from the theme of miscegenation illustrates Hollywood's subscription to Cold War politics. After a series of films highlighting social issues like alcoholism and bigotry (*Smash-Up* and *Crossfire*), "problem films" were quickly funneled into venues of propaganda, largely the result of the Committee of Un-American Activities in the House of Representatives (HUAC) (Leab 62). Fearing possible blacklisting by HUAC, directors like Daves could explore but ultimately had to return to the political visions of the time—eradicating both a Communist and marginalized community threat. Removing Sonseeahray from Jeffords's future established *Broken Arrow* as a film that avoided liberal leanings to Socialist doctrine, despite Daves's engagement with themes of racial equality.

As a result of political pressure in Hollywood, Sonseeahray's death ultimately becomes a metaphor for the virgin land offering itself up to white settlement. She relinquishes her sense of belonging by choosing to marry Jeffords and she surrenders her life to first protect and then avenge her husband's injuries. Robert Tilton describes the Indian Princess as an "important, nonthreatening symbol of white Americans' right to be here, because she was always willing to sacrifice her happiness, cultural identity, and even her life for the good of the new nation" (qtd in Meyer and Royer 79). By killing off Sonseeahray, the film avoids further investigation into miscegenation because she dies before children can be born. Her death also symbolically represents a change in race relations between the Apache and non-natives. Although in the film Sonseeahray's demise guarantees the success of the peace treaty, a contemporary audience would know that this treaty was not honored indefinitely because the Apache no longer inhabit 50,000 miles of Arizona.

Sonseeahray's death, then, is a call for a new nation that does not include the Other. Rather, it is a nation seemingly united by its ideological war with the Soviets. M. Elise Marubbio suggests that, "The particular elements that create the Celluloid [Indian] Princess as an acceptable icon for racial integration also confine her as a racial Other and fix her within a cultural, historical, and racial framework" (62). According to Marubbio, one of these elements includes a noble or high social standing in tribal society. In Sonseeahray's case, as the White-Painted Lady, a spiritual figure of great importance, she

connects metonymically to deities, holiness, and goodness (62). Thus, Sonseeahray's "Indianness" functions as a conflicted image in the film. On the surface, Daves attempts to portray Apache culture as it truly exists. Reading these images much more deeply becomes problematic. Images like the Indian Princess demonstrate that Sonseeahray's characteristics uphold a non-native ideology of civilization and primitivity. Marubbio explains this later point further:

> Within the Western's colonial discourse of American nation building, the combination of these elements [stated above] equates the Celluloid Princess with the notion of a virgin continent and an untamed wilderness that desires the white male colonizer and the progressive march of civilization. Thus the Celluloid Princess stereotype underscores an interpretation of the American national space as legitimized by conquest and regulated by a color line. (62)

Both Sonseeahray's life and death contribute to the march of American civilization. On an individual level, however, Jeffords embodies racial progress within the film. Despite the negative connotations attached to Sonseeahray as a metaphorical symbol of colonization, one cannot negate the passion with which Jeffords fights for the right to marry her and to defend her honor in death. Progress, in this case, is not indicated by a full paradigm shift, but by the power of one individual to change himself and to attempt to change the society around him. Jeffords attempts to mediate race relations between non-natives and the Apaches through his defense of Native American culture and his marriage to Sonseeahray.

The stereotypical images Daves uses in his film have deeper connotations for mainstream 1950s American national identity. In *America on Film*, Harry M. Benschoff claims that ahistorical representations of Native Americans reinforce "stereotypes and ideological assumptions that [have been] circulating for generations" (Benschoff and Griffin 103). The ideological assumptions Benschoff mentions position Native Americans as the conduit for Americans to learn about themselves, hence the representation of Natives as "types." The purpose of typecasting is not accuracy, but rather self-reflection or self-discovery on the part of what Edward Said would call the Orientalist. Said explains that, "the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: he

does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Orient" (67). Daves's film encompasses all three aspects of Said's Orientalist "doctrine of thought." Jeffords learns about himself and his culture through his experiences with the Other. He reiterates many times throughout the film that peace between the Apaches and Americans will provide stability for the white dominant culture to march towards progress. And finally, the Americans will be able to run their stagecoaches, carry their mail, and cultivate their land. In contrast, the Apaches are used as motivation for Jeffords to complete the above-mentioned tasks. Through his justification of imperialism as evidenced in these scenes, Daves returns to Cold War didacticism in 1950s popular culture. Thus the conflict between Americans and Native Americans in the film works as a surrogate for the relationship between Americans and Soviets outside of the film.

At the same time that Daves wavers between an attempt at racial inclusion and full commitment to it, he does extend progress beyond the modern/primitive binary. In *Candor and Perversion*, Roger Shattuck states that, "A film, no matter how closely it may record the quotidian, leans toward revelation, the marvelous, neologism" (63). In the case of *Broken Arrow*, Daves presents a past time period haunted by racial strife and American expansion to a contemporary audience who feared a similar threat to American national identity both at home and abroad. With the end of segregation and the participation of many African Americans in the Socialist movement, mainstream Americans worried about impending changes to their society.

Although the film's take-away message aligns with propaganda messages issued by Hollywood at the time, it also strays away from it by offering elements of liberal notions of progress. Daves's version of progress is a redemptive act executed when racial inequalities are denounced in action and speech. For this reason, many of his film's white characters exhibit primitive or barbaric behavior, whereas Native Americans like Cochise function as the voice of reason. Daves's film thus suggests that blindly following racial ideologies forces a culture to commit barbaric acts, while acknowledging the fallacies of these ideologies permits a culture to embrace change. Many politicians, like Eisenhower and Kennedy, initially paid lip service to the idea of racial progress before finally recognizing the validity of their own speeches. They, like Daves, argue that racial progress can only occur when present actions change and atone for past actions.

Portrayals of Native Americans in *The Searchers*

In *The Searchers*, John Ford further utilizes a surrogate for the relationship between Americans and Soviets like Daves. Yet, Ford further complicates Daves's positive portrayal of interracial relationships by using racist characters to denounce them. To this end, Ford utilizes the Bloodthirsty Savage trope which he adopts from captivity narratives and other literary genres. In the seventeenth-century captivity narratives by authors like Mary Rowlandson, Native Americans appear as "bloodthirsty Indian[s] who dashed children's brains out against tree trunks, raped and scalped white colonists, [and] tortured captives" (Vickers 36). *The Searchers* captures the same image of the Bloodthirsty Savage in the film's opening when Ethan Edwards's brother, sister-in-law, and nephew are killed during an Indian raid on their home. The Comanches whisk away Edwards's two nieces, Debbie and Lucy. The Comanches later rape and murder Lucy, leaving her naked corpse in the canyon, while Debbie becomes Chief Scar's wife. Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) and his adopted nephew, Marty (Jeffrey Hunter) begin a several year search for Debbie (Natalie Wood) that becomes an obsession for Edwards.

In contrast to *Broken Arrow*, Edwards views miscegenation as a fate worse than death, thus motivating his obsession in finding Debbie. His fixation stems from the intersection between his unrequited love for Debbie's mother, Martha, and his racism. Edwards's racism appears at the film's beginning when Marty returns home as a grown man. Aaron, Edwards's brother, explains that Edwards found Marty as a young baby after his mixed-blood parents died in a massacre. The Edwards family adopts the young man as one of their own, clearly to Edwards's disdain. Edwards tells Marty, "Oh…Mistook you for a half-breed" (*The Searchers*).

In the historical setting of 1868, Edwards, a former Confederate soldier, refuses to relinquish his racism. Yet, why Edwards stays away after the war's end is never explained. He simply returns home alone with Mexican coins and newly-minted American money in his pockets, which suggests the type of nefarious acts mentioned in *Broken Arrow*. Edwards's character appears troubled before his family dies in the Comanche raid, a subplot that never gets resolved even after Debbie returns home. Because Edwards's racism contrasts sharply with Marty's good-willed intentions, he becomes an isolated anti-hero. By

creating an isolated protagonist who alienates other characters through racially motivated speeches, Ford permits the possibility for anti-racist perspectives to emerge.

Edwards's racism reflects a perceived threat to one's security and identity posed by the presence of the racial Other. The theme of racial massacres commonly appears in film and discourse in order to portray the Other as barbaric and to justify imperialist control and defeat of minority peoples. Michael Rogin suggests that, "Imaginary racial massacres make people of color not simply disposable but indispensable as well, for […] the fantasy of savage violence defines the imperial imagination" (qtd in Kaplan and Pease 200). Ford's film juxtaposes Edwards's organized home with the darkening Comanche plains as a familiar, visual component of the civilized/primitive binary of the imperial imagination. In "Manifest Landscape/Latent Ideology," Diane M. Borden and Eric P. Essman comment that, "The classic Hollywood Western contributed to the romantic discourse of empire as frontier, celebrating the loner cowboy and the sublime landscape as signifiers of American individualism and expansionism" (35). The frontier encapsulates American individualism, while it simultaneously provides Americans with a domestic space, the Edwards's home, despite the presence of the frontier's "primitive" elements. Indeed, the massacre occurs directly after the family prepares for dinner, unable to see trouble on the horizon except for the flash of mirrors, a silent signal between the Comanche waiting for nightfall. The film's entire plot centers upon the after-effects of the Comanche-led massacre, with the Comanche portrayed as bloodthirsty savages bent on destroying the peacefulness of the American domestic space. After the Comanche raid the Edwards home, they burn it to the ground and leave the dead bodies of Martha, Aaron, and the young boy Ben in a hovel meant for the dog. Because the massacre threatens the private sphere, it resonates with audience-goers' fears that racial integration will ultimately destroy the American family in the world outside of the film's narrative. By exploring Americans' fear of the threat to their cultural and political values, Ford provides, at least at the beginning of his film, an "affirmation of Americanism" (qtd. in Leab 64).

Ford relies upon the Bloodthirsty Savage image with an added dimension: an overly sexualized exotic, evident in Chief Scar's "harem" of three wives. At first, the Native Americans seem to have

little justification for the massacre except to rape and use white women for Native pleasure. Brian Henderson explains that, "Scar's crimes-rape, murder, dismemberment, burning- eminently violate the law that dictates postponement of pleasure. His acts stand in for the terrifying libido that must be repressed and, if unrepressed, must be punished drastically" (qtd in Eckstein and Lehman 54). Scar, as an overly sexualized exotic has not been defeated prior to and after the raid, yet Ford carefully inserts Edwards's violent behavior as a counterpoint to the stereotypical image portrayed by Chief Scar as a means of complicating the monolithic image of the Bloodthirsty Savage. By repeatedly turning to the familiar world of stereotypical portrayals of Native Americans like Daves does in *Broken Arrow*, Ford replicates the fears perpetuated by the tension between the U.S. and the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Aside from Edwards's racist commentary towards Marty, Edwards also commits two extremely violent acts in the film: the first occurs directly after the massacre and the second, when he finds Debbie. At the beginning of the film, when the townspeople assist Edwards and Marty in the search, they stumble upon a Comanche man buried beneath a slab of canyon rock. Brad, Lucy's boyfriend, stares grimly at the grave before Edwards shoots out the dead Comanche's eyes. When Clayton asks the purpose of this action, Edwards comments that, "by what the Comanche believe—now he can't enter the spirit land, but has got to wander forever between the winds" (*The Searchers*). Edwards's violent actions violate the sanctity of the Comanche's grave, thus degrading Edwards from the perspectives of the other searchers. More importantly, Ford indicates the fallacy of the civilized/primitive binary because it is a white man, in this case, who performs an act of primitivism.

The second incident of violence brings up the topic of scalping; however, rather than ascribing this act solely to Native Americans, Ford reflects the practice back onto its culture of origin—Euro-Americans. After Scar has Debbie show Edwards and Marty his collection of white scalps, a skirmish ensues in which Marty shoots Scar in Debbie's defense. While the military raids the village in order to help Edwards and Marty, Edwards stumbles upon Scar's body in his teepee. He sets about scalping the dead Comanche. Arthur M. Eckstein explains that, "It is simply unheard of in Westerns for a white heroic

figure to engage in scalping, because mutilations like this completely contradict the heroic code of behavior. Instead, scalping in Westerns is associated with the most primitive and brutal savagery—white or Indian" (13). Unlike Jeffords and Cochise who share similar ideologies regarding heroism, Edwards works brutally and frighteningly alone and in opposition to the Native leader rather than in collaboration. Edwards justifies the abuse of a corpse because he believes that the scalps in Scar's possession originated from Edwards's murdered family. When Scar initially shows the scalps to Edwards, he explains that he took them in retaliation for the murder of his sons by white men. In a subtle way, the topic of scalping reverses the historical myth that Native Americans initiated the practice, while calling attention to both American and Native acts of violence in the past. Edwards's character thus functions as a warning to audience-goers who fear what they do not understand; that race hysteria can lead to antagonistic relations and violence, rather than the discarding of ethnocentric attitudes.

Ford complicates racial stereotypes by presenting ambiguity surrounding Scar's character and intent. Ford encapsulates all of Scar's actions in the film, for example, with ominous music, thus suggesting the inherent evil of Scar's character. In contrast, initially Edwards's behavior functions as the irrational acts of a grief-stricken man. The difference in intent illustrates Shohat's and Stam's argument that "the Hollywood Western turn[s] history on its head by making Native Americans appear intruders on their own land" (119). By reversing Natives from original inhabitants to intruders, imperialistic discourse situates American land possession as a right and Native intrusion as a threat. Edwards's intent works to eradicate the threat of Native American intrusion on American soil, while Scar tries to preserve his Native heritage. When viewing Scar through Edwards's eyes, Scar's preservation of "savage desires" constitutes a threat to democratic values and security. However, Ford meticulously works to undercut the power of Edwards's perspective by including violence and irrational hatred towards Natives in Edwards's every action. If Scar's motives in preserving his culture have merit, whereas Edwards's appear convoluted, then Ford suggests that the threat to identity originates from the fear of breaking with racialized ideologies. Like Daves, Ford both embraces and turns away from Cold War ideologies in his attempt to create a redemptive act regarding mixed-race relations.

Ford repeatedly casts interracial sexual desire as perverse to symbolize the fear of the Other's violation of dominant cultural norms regarding racialized sexual barriers. In "The Affect of the Market," Jonathan Freedman suggests that *The Searchers* "represents, then, a remarkable portrayal, from within, of white racism in all of its dimensions—political, social, and psychosexual. And it achieves its most powerful effects by complicating the dominant paradigms of white-native relations" (588). Edwards characterizes Scar's sexuality as deviant because Edwards himself fears sexual expression. From the beginning of the film, Edwards clearly feels a romantic attachment to Martha. Because Debbie resembles her, Edwards transfers his feelings of unrequited love from Martha to Debbie. Saving Debbie from the shame of a life "worse than death," rape by a Native man, racializes Scar's sexuality, while masking Edwards's sexual inadequacies. The neurotic nature of Edwards's sexuality complicates the psychosexual relations between Americans and Natives because Edwards's fear of the Other reveals his fear of himself.

The fear of miscegenation evidences a deeper racialized ideology: that Americans can be "contaminated" through sexual relations with Natives. When Debbie tells Marty that Americans murdered her family in order to kill cattle and that all white men lie, Edwards blames her assimilation into Comanche culture through misinformation because "she's been with the bucks! She's nothin' now but a…" (*The Searchers*). Laurie, Marty's girlfriend, takes up where Edwards leaves off. When Marty leaves for the last time to save Debbie, this time from Edwards's mercy killing, Laurie shouts: "Fetch what home?...The leavin's of Comanche bucks—sold time an' again to the highest bidder?...With savage brats of her own, most like" (*The Searchers*). Both Edwards and Laurie consider Debbie racially contaminated. The fear of miscegenation propels the plot for Edwards, while characters like Laurie believe the search to be pointless because of Debbie's lack of racial purity. Despite the fact that Debbie is a kidnapping victim, her lack of racial purity becomes centralized, thus dehumanizing her from Edwards's and Laurie's perspective. Yet, the entirety of Debbie's experiences cannot be ignored which call into question the validity of racial ideologies that privilege miscegenation over victimization.

Ford not only presents miscegenation in the relationship

between Debbie and Chief Scar, but also in the love plot between Marty and Laurie. Edwards finally gives in to Marty's demands and spares Debbie's life. The sexual connotations continue as Edwards rides home with Debbie on the back of his horse, only to carry her over the threshold of Laurie's house, as a groom would his bride. This particular scene echoes Edwards's love for Martha, alluded to earlier through the long, dark hair he sees on Scar's scalp pole, as well as his calling out her name after a poisonous arrow causes a delirium. Ford always defers Edwards's sexual desires for Martha onto other characters' relationships. By depositing Debbie into Laurie's home, Laurie's sexuality takes the forefront of the film's narrative. As a highly sexualized woman who says she is not "cut out to be an old maid" (*The Searchers*), Laurie functions as a counter to Edwards's sexual inadequacies, while she simultaneously undercuts the idea of the overly sexualized exotic. Although Marty is a quarter Cherokee, Laurie's dominant attitude, consistent from the beginning of the film when she walks in on Marty taking a bath, wins out over miscegenation fears. This triumph safely occurs because Marty, as a mostly white character, embraces American culture in the Edwards's household. At the same time, Marty's purity cannot be questioned in quite the same way as Laurie's because of the double standard imposed by nineteenth-century gender norms. In fact, when Marty finds himself "married" to a Comanche woman, Look, the whole episode becomes a joke mediated by violence and directed towards Native American women. A white man accidentally marrying a Native woman provides comic relief, rather than the intense, repressed sexuality of Laurie's interactions with Marty. Scar's marriage to Debbie functions as a revenge plot, while Edwards's repressed sexuality and Laurie's open expression of it are ultimately desexualized. Although Ford uses Look as comic relief, he oftentimes casts his white characters as repressed or overly sexualized neurotics, thus complicating the double standards imposed by racial ideologies.

The difference in attitudes towards miscegenation in *Broken Arrow* and *The Searchers* correlates with changes in the film industry during the 1950s. In between the release of *Broken Arrow* and *The Searchers*, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision had passed, causing many Americans to fear the consequences of complete racial integration. This anxiety, combined with the growing intensity of the Red Scare, limited how directors like Ford could portray miscegenation. In 1956, the year

The Searchers was filmed, for example, the Motion Picture Production Code issued a strict anti-miscegenation stance (Eckstein 4). For this reason, Ford distances himself from miscegenation, first by making it a non-consensual relationship and second by portraying it from the perspective of a racist anti-hero. Five years earlier, when *Broken Arrow* was produced, mixed-race relationships could be represented according to the director's discretion. Although Daves employs Native stereotypes in order to make Jeffords's transformation possible, Ford links violence with these images in order to avoid breaking production codes. Revisions to the Motion Picture Production Code illustrate the influence of the HUAC as well as Hollywood's subscription to Cold War anxiety.

Because these production codes mimic societal fears outside of the film industry, Ford challenges them by complicating his use of violence in *The Searchers*. On the surface, violent characters like Scar work to justify continued racial segregation; however, the intent behind Scar's behavior contains valid reasons, whereas other characters like Edwards and Laurie seem purely motivated by racist attitudes and ethnocentrism. Spurred by racist images of Natives as overly sexualized exotics, Edwards and Laurie reveal more about their own identities than they do about the reality of Native life. Ford provides the reasons for this characterization: Edwards fails to self-reflect on the motivations behind his own behavior. Unlike Jeffords, who learns to respect Apache culture, Edwards completes his task of saving Debbie before leaving behind the family he has just reunited. Ford's film suggests that progress in race relations cannot occur until a redemptive realization is made regarding the Other. While Ford Orientalizes Chief Scar, he also provides motivation for his violent behavior that demonstrate the effects of imperialism. If Scar desires revenge, he feels this way because his culture and his progeny have slowly been stolen from him by Americans.

Ford's film illuminates the realities of living under imperialism. If Scar had not been affected by imperialist practices, he would not have kidnapped Debbie or killed her family as revenge for the loss of his own children. Without his need for revenge, Edwards would not have begun his quest to save his niece. Ford thus personalizes race relations on an individual level, much like Daves does with Jeffords's realizations. This inclusion of a Native American living under American

imperialism is a topic little discussed in films that present Natives as monolithic groups without motives for violence. For American audiences living in the Cold War atmosphere, the neurotic motivations of Edwards could have been ignored or misconstrued; however, Ford made sure to link Edwards with violence, particularly in the scenes where Edwards attempts to murder Debbie because of her sexual relationship with Scar. While Scar's character serves as evidence of the stereotypical violence many Americans associated with Natives, both Edwards and Scar exemplify what happens when racial inequalities persist: hatred, distrust, and retributive violence continue. In a climate full of impending violence (the threat of nuclear war associated with the incursion of Communism), Americans might have resisted the notion of racial equality; however, Ford challenges audience-goers to reconsider their investment in racial ideologies. Because Ford provides the consequences for believing in opposing racial ideologies (Edwards's continued isolation at the film's end juxtaposed against Marty's mixed-race marriage), audiences have the choice to redeem themselves, rather than blindly following antiquated theories regarding race.

Conclusion

Because Daves and Ford complicate both their American and Native characters, a parallel emerges between their films and American society. In "Geographies of Desire," Patricia R. Zimmermann suggests that films "operate as sites where a whole range of specific historical and political practices are coordinated, dispersed, disrupted and merged" (85-6). The 1950s Western thus reflects the ideological thought of the society that created it, rather than eschewing any connection to this society. The act of redemption that Daves and Ford create involves reconsidering how Americans act out their beliefs concerning race relations. Daves positions interracial harmony, mutual love and understanding as the answer, while Ford illuminates the negative outcome of racist attitudes in the figure of Edwards. In both films, the directors denote the powerful repercussions of Orientalizing the Other: continued violence and social unrest. In an era of international scrutiny, many Americans wanted change and, most importantly, a sense of national stability. The mixed messages of both films indicate the problem that many Americans faced in the 1950s: how to make democracy a practice, rather than an empty promise.

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