

- Smith, Donald B. *Long Lance: The True Story of an Impostor*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1982.
- White Horse Eagle. *We Indians: The Passing of a Great Race*. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1931.
- Wilson, Elinor. *Jim Bechtowurt: Black Mountain Man and War Chief of the Crows*. Norman: U of Oklahoma P, 1972.
- Wong, Hertha. *Sending My Heart Back across the Years: Tradition and Innovation in Native American Autobiography*. New York: Oxford UP, 1992.

VI

Images and Icons

Section VI explores the Images and Icons through which American popular culture—television, film, radio, popular magazines, and similar forms of expression in everyday life—represents Native Americans. In film studies, for instance, analysis of plot, character, and theme is complemented by an examination of camera angle, color or black-and-white film, acting, and a host of related issues.

On this topic, we find the essay, "Tomahawkin' the Redskins: 'Indian' Images in Sports and Commerce," by Jane Frazier of East Georgia College. Frazier contends that the use of "Indian" images—as distinct from authentic representations of Native American people—in sports and business shapes our views of Native Americans. She argues that how we use these images focuses our attention on a select set of characteristics which we then associate with Native Americans. In so doing, she maintains, we reduce Native Americans to the status of mascots and shills to sell our products. "What these stereotypes do, finally," Frazier concludes, "is to lull us into believing that they truly depict the Native American." Thus, the "tomahawk chop" and war dances at sporting events and the use of Native names and icons may look innocent enough, but the rituals perpetuate simplistic "cowboys and Indians" images of Native Americans.

The image of the Indian in Hollywood film is the focus of the next two contributions. In "Reframing the Hollywood Indian: A Feminist Re-reading of *Powwow Highway* and *Thunderheart*," Ellen L. Arnold of Emory University analyzes two recent examples of Hollywood Westerns. Arnold argues that the Western is "a flawed genre . . . because its treatment of Native Americans as stereotyped 'Indians' has perpetuated long-held misconceptions and prejudices in American culture." Indeed, Arnold contends, Hollywood has given us an ethnic and gender "tradition of stereotypes" and, especially, "glorification of male roles" over female leads. In examining one film from 1988 and one from 1992, she asks us to consider what, if anything, has changed: Do we see new directions or do we uncover instead the old stereotypes of Hollywood's Native Americans?

"Native Americans have never ceased to fascinate, frighten, and attract other Americans," observes English Professor Mary Alice Money of Gordon College (Georgia) in her contribution, "Images of Native Americans in the

Popular Western." Like Arnold, Money shows how scholars analyze the symbolism developed in the film genre of the Hollywood Western. Using an analytical framework—Seven Stages in Images of Native Americans—she dissects representations of the "Indian" in the novels of James Fenimore Cooper and Owen Wister, in television series such as *The Lone Ranger*, *Gunslinger*, and *Have Gun, Will Travel*, in films such as *Broken Arrow* and *Little Big Man*, and in paperback books. She sees a "seismic shift" in images of Native Americans in popular culture with the 1990 release of *Dances with Wolves*, in which Indians were presented as people who exhibited a full range of human traits, and a greater number of Native American roles were played by Native actors. In an interpretation that diverges from those of Frazier and Arnold, Money concludes that, although the earliest films, books, and television series consistently and powerfully reinforced the familiar, tired stereotypes that have dogged Native peoples for centuries, "popular Westerns in the multicultural 1990s are depicting more realistic, individual humans instead of conventionally racist fearsome 'wild savages'...."

17

Tomahawkin' the Redskins: "Indian" Images in Sports and Commerce

Jane Frazier

The Problem of Indian Images

Americans—those of a non-Native background, at least—have long accepted and even enjoyed applying Native American images and names to many of our consumer products and athletic teams. The practice recently has opened up questions, however. The general public, mainstream media, and, especially, Native American activists have begun to question the appropriateness of such symbols. Most of the attention has been paid to sports mascots, but consumer goods and services which carry these labels also are under increased scrutiny. At its core the issue is: Is there any harm in a title such as the Washington "Redskins," or, does it matter that we drive automobiles called "Pontiacs"? Native American activists have protested these images at least since the 1960s; yet, not until the 1991 World Series (with "Braves" on the field) did the issue become broadly publicized and a topic of national debate.

The number of Native American names and terms which have been appropriated as Indian logos among our businesses is almost staggering. We are surrounded by an ocean of products such as "Cherokee" Jeeps and "Cheyenne" trucks, "Thunderbird" and "Pontiac" automobiles, "Mohawk" carpets, "Pequot" sheets, "Oneida" tableware, "Big Chief" writing tablets, "Red Man" chewing tobacco, "Land O' Lakes" Butter (with its Indian princess on the label), "Eskimo" Pies, Piper "Cherokee" and "Navaho" airplanes, and "Winnebago" motor homes. Perhaps the most ironic and tragic label is that of the state-of-the-art helicopters used by the U.S. military, the "Apache" and "Comanche." The labels are ironic and tragic because it was the United States Army that finally defeated these peoples after a series of battles during the 1880s and then confined them to the restraints and poverty of reservation life, a life far different from their customary semi-nomadic hunting-and-gathering patterns.

The examples above are, indeed, a small sample of Native American references that commercial advertisers have appropriated. Local companies as well as national ones share in the practice. It is not uncommon to see signs for businesses such as Sioux Sporting Goods, Osage Hardware, or Chickasaw Moving Company wherever one travels across the country. Furthermore, this practice exists on top of the historic appropriation of tribal names for state, county, and town labels, as well as geographic sites. Among the best known are Massachusetts, Kansas, Florida, Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, and North and South Dakota, as well as Narragansett, Ottawa, Piscataway, Pontiac, Sioux City, Roanoke, and Arapaho.

The Indian as Mascot

Sports teams, particularly, have latched onto popular images of the Indian. In fact, it seems that athletic teams have the greatest affinity for such labels. The Kansas City "Chiefs," Washington "Redskins," Atlanta "Braves," and Cleveland "Indians" are professional examples, while college teams such as the Florida State "Seminoles" or the Illinois "Fighting Illini" have reinforced the tradition. An extraordinary public exposure of such names came when the Cleveland Indians and Atlanta Braves played for baseball's 1995 World Series title. Atlanta, owing in large part to owner Ted Turner's national cable network, is famous for its fans' "tomahawk chop" and their pseudo-Indian chanting. Bumper stickers proclaim the phrase, "tomahawkin'." Fans often dress in Indian-like attire or "warpaint," and some perform mock-Indian dances.

What is the problem with this? Why do so many Native Americans object to such displays? Just as "Indian" images and names on products relegate their referents to an imaginary past, so, too, do "Indian" mascots. Mascots confine Indians into a history—in much the same way that they have been confined to reservations—and the history itself has been incorrect. Yet, activists against these stereotypes believe that their voice may help to correct the record. A social science researcher recently found that Native American activists who oppose such usages object to the misrepresentation and trivialization of important parts of their culture. One activist who was interviewed by the researcher explained the conflict by noting,

I compose memorial songs, I compose burial songs for my grandmothers and my grandfathers, my family. And, when people [imitate] that at an athletic event, like at a baseball game, it hurts me, to see that people are making a mockery of me. We don't do that, what they're doing, this chanting. (Davis 13)

Sports fans, most people probably will agree, intend no malice toward modern-day Native Americans, nor do they see any insult in their antics. To many fans, it is all a part of the sport, all a part of the role-playing that helps

them emotionally "get into the game." Even so, to many Native Americans this is game-playing with their very image and with those traditions which they hold most sacred. Dance, song, costume, and symbolic paint remain elements of deeply valued ceremonial traditions. From prayers for the sick to offerings of tokens to the earth in recognition of its gifts to humankind, they often are imbued with religious meaning.

Some commentators have asserted that Native Americans are not insulted by these usages and that some even feel honored by them. Yet, one only has to enquire casually among Native American spokespersons to learn that far too many feel dishonored. Many feel that their only place in society is as abstract images, as essentially fictional characters for the Euro-American advertising industry or athletic world. Football teams, in particular, seem to choose mascots which convey aggressive, fierce, and even belligerent meanings. Who would name a football team "the kittens," "the deer," or "the rabbits?" Aggressive or combative names pervade in the sport, sometimes borrowing from the traditions of masculine work culture: for instance, the Green Bay Packers, the Pittsburgh Steelers, the Dallas Cowboys, the San Francisco Forty-Niners. Some clearly identify their franchises with mythical warriors or heroic traditions, as with the Los Angeles Raiders, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and the New England Patriots. Occasional examples of more peaceful associations exist—the New Orleans Saints and the Miami Dolphins play on their cities' connections to a local tourist industry. However, most football franchises attempt to connote the concept of power in their labels. In this line of thought, the use of "Indian" terms—interpreted through the lens of popular culture—follows. American popular culture has stereotyped Native Americans as fierce, often brutal warriors. Teams which appropriate "Indian" names obviously wish the connection to this traditional image. In addition, the relationship carries over into discussion of sports events. Sports broadcasters, for instance, commonly speak of competitions between sports teams through "Indian" references—a solid defeat may be styled a "massacre" or a "scalping," while a team on a winning streak may be "on the warpath."

In their defense, supporters of Indian mascots point to the fact that sports teams exploit other ethnic group names, as well. Although it is true that the Minnesota professional football team is the Vikings and that this group is perceived as having been fierce warriors, "Vikings" no longer exist. Notre Dame may have its Fighting Irish and Boston its basketball Celtics, but these names were chosen by people of Irish descent, a choice Native Americans have not had. Also, with Notre Dame's "Irish," some obviously thought it necessary for the adjective "fighting" to be applied. No adjectives need to be applied to Indians, Chiefs, or Braves. The words carry with them their own heavy weight of ferocity.

In response, a few newspapers have attempted to treat Native American concerns with greater sensitivity. Some have dropped the use of team

names which Native Americans have labeled offensive. For example, Portland's *Oregonian* and Minneapolis-St. Paul's *Star Tribune* refer to groups such as the Redskins, for instance, as "the Washington team." Paul DeMain, a former president of the Native American Journalists' Association and a member of the Lac Coue Orellie band of Ojibwa, took another tack—he began his own publication in the late 1980s. Indeed, there should be ample readership for such newspapers, as the Phoenix-based *American Indian Digest* has reported that there are approximately two million self-declared Native Americans affiliated within 318 tribes in the United States (Sunoo 108).

Native-run newspapers and those few which are beginning to omit "Indian" team names have made a start at ending the practice. Even so, they have far to go. Opposition to losing the labels is strongly expressed by many fans. When Native American protestors were removed from the University of Minnesota basketball court, spectators cheered. A United States senator from Illinois was so flooded with telephone calls against his opposition to the Chief Illiniwek mascot used by the University of Illinois that his office workers were unable to handle other duties (Davis 12). It appears that fans have not only accepted such images through their familiarity, but also have come to cherish their association with favorite teams.

The Indian as Shill

Corporate marketers long have understood the psychological power of the "lifestyle" advertisement. When they create an ad, they incorporate into it subtle messages which appeal to the emotional needs and psychological drives that motivate our behavior. In Madison Avenue adpeak, they "push our hot buttons." Advertisers, as well, have found that popular stereotypes of the Native American experience have particular appeal in lifestyle ads that feature "Indian" themes. For instance, a common message which underlies automobile ads appeals to our psychological need for independence, power, individualism, and the lost notion that there are frontiers waiting to be conquered. Thus, so many of our cars and trucks carry Indian names—the "Pontiac" or the Jeep "Cherokee," for instance—in order to create an association with an "Indian" lifestyle. We use our cars to obtain a sense of freedom, to get away, and especially in the case of trucks and jeeps, to explore the "wilderness." What better way than in an "Indian" vehicle? Similarly, the outdoor sporting goods industry also has participated in this advertising opportunity. One can find Modoc and Arapaho backpacks, Aymara boots, Mohawk canoes, and Cayuga and Iroquois sleeping bags, to name just a few. Some gear is even named after Native American personalities: Red Cloud backpacks and Black Hawk and Sitting Bull sleeping bags. The problem with such images lies in the way they reinforce our popular

stereotypes of the Indian. Such icons actually interfere with a more important message that Native Americans have been trying to present for decades—that the reality of the Native American experience is quite different from the Indian icons that Hollywood and Madison Avenue have, with their corporate dollars and media domination, more successfully foisted onto the public.

The use of "Indian" terms and images on products, businesses, or sports teams creates another kind of problem for Native Americans, as well. This obstacle stems from the way in which Indian icons "historicize" Native peoples. To choose perhaps the most innocuous example, a Big Chief Writing tablet may instill in the child inscribing within its pages a certain sense of awe toward the bonneted chief on the cover, but it also tends to perpetuate a sense of Native Americans as belonging to an earlier era and having no place in contemporary society. He remains forever to the child (who later becomes an adult) the wild man of the past. Current issues, such as fishing rights, rampant reservation poverty and unemployment, or alcoholism, are obscured. Because the Indian image resonates more powerfully with the public than American Indian realities, they are easily ignored or dismissed in political discourse. As one Native American activist leader commented, "Respect the living Indian, you know. Don't memorialize us. . . . [The mascots are] almost like a monument to the vanished American Indian." According to some of the activists, recognizing and understanding the lives of present-day Native Americans both challenges the stereotypes, and in some ways provides evidence of past oppression. As an interviewed leader explained, "The Indian is evidence of the crime. . . . When the real live Indian stands up, they're reminded of the fact that we're still here. . . . It shatters the myth. It shatters the myth of history" (Davis 13).

The Hollywood Indian

The myth of the Indian—the popular belief that Native Americans were wild and violent, strangely admirable for their fighting spirit and exotic nature, yet at the same time justifiably exterminable for the threat they posed to the expanding American enterprise—has been reinforced nowhere more powerfully than in Hollywood films. Classics such as *They Died with Their Boots On* (1941), *Fort Apache* (1948), and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949), for instance, presented Native Americans as Indian savages, symbolizing a challenge to be conquered, like the frontier itself. Although the white cowboy could at times observe and respect the stoic and brave qualities of the Indian, more than likely he was placed into conflict with him, and the Indian was killed out of "necessity."

Moreover, the movie industry of the middle of the twentieth century reflects the double-edged feelings that mainstream America historically has

had about the Indian. Native Americans have been simultaneously perceived throughout our history as wild, stoic, courageous, and bloodthirsty. Especially since the closing of the West in the late nineteenth century have Indian images been able to take on more "positive" attributes, as fits the "noble" stereotype. Yet, this nobility still does not make of the Native American a human being; it still does not present him beyond the level of image, and it still does not diminish his "wildness." Even cinematic efforts to present the Native American experience in a more favorable light, as in *Soldier Blue* (1970) or *Dances with Wolves* (1990), continue the emphasis on "Indians" as merely the passive victims of white "civilization" and "progress."

Tomahawkin' Reconsidered

Roy Harvey Pearce's *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind* points out that by the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the two popular images of the Indian—noble and ignoble—had been combined into one impression in America's literature, and that was one of savagism. "Indian" vices and virtues both were admitted, but, generally, "Indian" life was viewed as morally lacking, an inferiority based upon the Native American's absence of historical progression. In short, the Indian was out of contact with civilization (199–200). The icon provided writers with a conventional "story of the tension between savagism and civilization," a conflict which would finally end with the affirmation that the conquest of "the Indian" and westward expansion were divinely sanctioned (232).

Now, we are left in the twentieth century with the luxury of looking back with pleasure upon the "Indian's" "savageness" and his "nobility." To us, the Native American is reduced to the image of a warrior of the past whom we may use to denote the qualities of bravery and wildness that we admire and that we may adopt when advantageous. Since it was Native Americans who first introduced European settlers to tobacco, marketers saw them as a logical image for "Red Man" Chewing Tobacco, a product which has been around for many years. The bonneted Sioux Indian on the package, which looks much like the Chief of the "Big Chief" Writing Tablet, conveys the sense that the product is of a world of the past and the masculine. Another tobacco product, "Natural American Spirit," an additive-free cigarette made by the Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company and launched in 1985, pictures an Indian smoking a peace pipe. The background colors of either turquoise or sand and the thunderbird icon consciously utilize images from the cultures of Southwestern Indians (Chun 31). No longer having anything to fear from Indians, and harboring our own regrets at living a modern-day life with little adventure, we relish imposing our ideas of what "the Indian" was upon our goods that seem to match the image.

Although some companies which display these logos sell products or services that apparently have nothing to do with what is historical or masculine, they still, I propose, rely upon the connotations of the Indian icon. Mutual of Omaha Insurance (with another bonneted Indian logo) and "Mohawk" Carpets are not engaged in enterprises which suggest anything of the past or of the wilderness. Yet, although the product does not outwardly relate to the stereotype, they seek to derive what are perceived by the average American customer as the "positive" associations of the stereotype. Any products bearing an Indian's face on their ads or employing an Indian name must somehow be tied with our romantic American wilderness in which the stoic and fierce Indian lived.

It is both true and important to know that Native Americans lived in the wilderness and did exist on a daily basis in intimate connection with the natural world. Of perhaps greater significance, however, is the fact that the commercialization of the Indian icon trivializes or even discounts the central fact of Native American history—the white man's settling of the continent brought great tragedy to the lives of these peoples. The "lost" Indian is also "lost" because his numbers since the Europeans' coming have dropped by untold millions. War-bonneted logos are certainly not attempting to call up massacres of Native Americans, such as those that occurred at Wounded Knee or Sand Creek. Furthermore, as one Native American critic of commercialization has observed, the logos imply nothing of present-day Indians; it is as if the connection between the two is nonexistent (Davis 13). The Native American has become a myth, and the realities of history may be ignored as they have been over the centuries.

We can recognize the consequences of the commercialization of "the Indian" through analysis of a telling example. A 1994 article in the *ABA Banking Journal* glibly carried the title, "Watch Those Stereotypes, Kemnobe." The article described the opposing arguments that the Native American Council at Dartmouth College had made against the placement of the "Indian" logo of Shawmut National Corporation, of Hartford, Connecticut, on a bank they had acquired in New Hampshire. The article implicitly argued that since researchers agree that no Shawmut tribe ever existed, the logo of the institution should not offend anyone. Supporting arguments were drawn from Indian name usages by sports teams and an Arizona bank which used a drawing of a kachina doll as its logo before having been bought out by another company. Support also was drawn from the fact that the executive director of the Massachusetts Bureau of Indian Affairs, himself a Wampanoag and Mashpee, was not offended by the bank's logo (Lunt 88). Although a Shawmut tribe may have never existed, the bank's name and logo clearly brought the "Indian" image into play. In addition, although indigenous names and images do not bother many Native Americans, the issue is not so simple as proponents of this advertising and mascot habit would have it. That there are many Native Americans

who are deeply offended by them is enough to raise serious questions about their propriety. Three thousand people are reported to have protested at the 1992 Super Bowl in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, when the Washington Redskins played there, a figure which activists felt was probably half as large as the number actually present (Davis 11). Many Native Americans would like to see these labels stopped, and since they are the subjects of them, they deserve, at least, to be listened to.

Ward Churchill, a Creek-Cherokee who has published numerous books on American Indian issues, contends that the position of team fans and owners that no harm is being done is completely wrongheaded. As evidence of the fervor of supporters of Indian mascots, Churchill cites the fact that some proponents are angered at critics who want to get in the way of "good, clean fun," and that some have even gone so far as to suggest that the Native American opposition creates barriers to communication in our multicultural society (36). In his essay, "Crimes against Humanity," he satirically suggests that if Indian mascots are acceptable, we should allow, as well, mascots bearing names from all ethnic groups, including the derogatory names that have been applied to those groups (36-37). Although it is debatable that "Chiefs," as Churchill suggests, carries the same inflammatory charge as "Kikes," "Dagos," or "Spics," nevertheless, his assertion that the long heritage of Indian stereotyping has supported a program of exile and extermination is legitimate (37-39).

An interesting example of the subtle complexity which inheres in the issue of Indian icons and mascots is Ted Turner. Pioneer of the innovative Cable News Network (CNN), husband of the erstwhile Hollywood radical Jane Fonda, and owner of the Braves (whose fans, we recall, perform the "tomahawk chop"), Turner has produced numerous films offering the Native American viewpoint to a history long seen through Euro-American eyes. Moreover, Turner's films are so out of the ordinary that some critics have faulted them for overemphasizing the Native side of things, thus distorting history, and for romanticizing the societies that mainstream America has long believed to be fundamentally savage. Turner has created several television movies which run on his cable channels—among them, *Gerónimo* (1993) and *The Broken Chain* (1993). His series, *The Native Americans* (1994), beautifully documents the history and the culture of American Indians from all regions of the United States. The narration, by Native Americans singly and in small groups, expresses a distinctly Native perspective. The aim of the speakers in *The Native Americans* clearly is to present to the rest of America (in the best way possible in one-hour programs) how they have seen their past and why the elements and ceremonies of their cultures carry for them the significance of their very lives. Curiously, then, even to Turner, ostensibly a supporter of the Native American perspective, the title, "Braves," and the resulting mimicking by fans does not appear derogatory. Again, this viewpoint, held by so many Americans, originates from the long-held dual image we have assigned to

Native peoples. Indians may be "reverentially" looked upon as stoic, brave, and embodying a fighting spirit. To name a team after them is to "honor" their courageous battles against an overwhelming migration of newcomers. Yet, the problem remains—"brave" or "bloodthirsty"—Indians still are perceived as a fighting people, not peaceful or peaceable by their nature.

What these stereotypes do, finally, is to lull us into believing that they truly depict the Native American. If we have an image before us of Native Americans that is identical to our past conceptions absorbed from a host of product images, popular opinion, literature, and the film industry, then we believe that the image must be correct. We have little reason to try to learn of the profound meaning to Native Americans of a ceremony celebrating the return of spring, the interconnection felt between them and other living things, or the symbolism permeating the hoop dance. Only by stepping back from these commercial images and reflecting upon them, can we see the sharp distinction that separates the two perspectives in comparing the subtle beauty which characterizes Native American concepts of totemism with the obvious shallowness of the commercial world's use of mascots.

In a legend of the Jicarilla Apache, a raven delivers meat to four hungry children whose parents are out searching for food during the time when "the world was new" ("Secret World" 75). One of the children, a boy, experiences being changed into a puppy and the magical appearance of buffalo after he and his village journey to the mountainous home of the ravens. Once a boy again, his descent from there into a lush land filled with buffalo leads to the arrival of herds in the "Land of People" and, subsequently, ample food for humankind ("Secret World" 79). The legend contains elements sacred to these people and to other Native Americans: the white buffalo, the eagle feather, the four directions, the ceremonial pipe, the earth, the sky, and all creatures. Sacrifice—and thankfulness—are key to the tale, and through its telling we humans will not forget what we owe to the earth and to its creatures who feed us.

Such legend is typical of American Indians. Their stories reveal a people cognizant of the interconnectedness of life, the value of community, and the results of folly. So, apart from the negative connotations and historicizing of Native Americans, stereotyping leaves us ignorant of their culture and even unaware that we are so ignorant. As with our own Euro-American history (and past culture), we can only hope to know part, but our indifference to Native American reality and our virtual exclusion of the truth about it through history is shameful. Indian mascots and Indian labels on products or companies do not help us to understand one another, but quite the opposite. If we wish to include Native Americans in our society and our history, we should dispense with the easy picture. We should make the effort to understand the needs of the modern-day Native Americans among us, as we also try to understand a world view far richer and far more complex than we ever have been able to admit.

- The Broken Chain*. Dir. Lamont Johnson. Turner Pictures, 1993.
- Chun, Rene. "New Cigarette, but Same Old Problem." *New York Times* 3 July 1994, late ed., sec. 1: 31.
- Churchill, Ward. "Crimes against Humanity." *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 17.4 (1994): 36-9.
- Dances with Wolves*. Dir. Kevin Costner. Perf. Kevin Costner, Mary McDonnell, and Graham Greene. Orion, 1990.
- Davis, Laurel R. "Protest against the Use of Native American Mascots: A Challenge to Traditional American Identity." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 17.1 (1993): 9-22.
- Fort Apache*. Dir. John Ford. Perf. John Wayne, Henry Fonda, and Shirley Temple. RKO, 1948.
- Geronimo*. Dir. Roger Young. Turner Pictures, 1993.
- Lunt, Penny. "Watch Those Stereotypes, Kemosabe." *ABA Banking Journal* Oct. 1994: 88.
- The Native Americans*. TBS Productions, 1994.
- Pearce, Roy Harvey. *Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1988.
- "The Secret World of the Ravens." *Earth Magic, Sky Magic: North American Indian Tales*. Ed. Rosalind Kerven. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991. 75-79.
- She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*. Dir. John Ford. Perf. John Wayne and Joanne Dru. RKO, 1949.
- Soldier Blue*. Dir. Ralph Nelson. Perf. Candice Bergen and Peter Strauss. Embassy, 1970.
- Sunoo, Brenda Paik. "Native American Journalists Oppose Media Stereotypes." *Personnel Journal* Nov. 1994: 108.
- They Died with Their Boots On*. Dir. Raoul Walsh. Perf. Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland. Warner, 1941.

Reframing the Hollywood Indian: A Feminist Re-reading of *Powwow Highway* and *Thunderheart*

Ellen L. Arnold

The Hollywood Western: A Tradition of Stereotypes

The "Indian" has been a staple of the Western movie since its inception with the silent newsreels of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in 1898. The Hollywood Western has been a flawed genre, however, largely because its treatment of Native Americans as stereotyped "Indians" has perpetuated long-held misconceptions and prejudices in American culture. Historian Robert Berkhofer describes these cultural stereotypes in his excellent study, *The White Man's Indian* (1978). Berkhofer observes that since Europeans first arrived in the "New World," two contradictory images have predominated in mainstream thought: on the one hand, the bloodthirsty savage, vengeful and sadistic, an obstacle to civilization and progress; on the other, the noble savage, an Edenic innocent and friend to White settlers. The history of the representation of Indians in the popular imagination is an interplay of these two stereotypes. However, the image of the bloodthirsty savage predominated until the end of the nineteenth century, primarily as justification for Euro-American expansion in the name of Manifest Destiny—the belief in the divine right of the "civilized" to tame the wilderness and subdue or destroy its "primitive" inhabitants. Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet underscore this public use of a stereotyped Indian in the introduction to their 1985 bibliography of Native Americans in film, observing, "The very experience of the westward movement, the very rationale for the subjugation of the continent depended on [the] adversary relationship between whites and Indians" (xxii). Ironically, only when Whites assumed that Indians were thoroughly defeated and assimilating to mainstream America (hence the term "vanishing American" or "vanishing Indian") did they deem Native Americans worthy of preservation and closer attention.¹

It was not until the 1950s that some Westerns, such as Delmer Daves's *Broken Arrow* (1950) or Robert Aldrich's *Apache* (1954), began to portray