Sheffield Hallam University

A Sheffield Hallam University thesis

Sheffield Hallam University

Author: TAN, Y.L.L.

Title: GUNFIGHTER GAPS: DISCOURSES OF THE FRONTIER IN HOLLYWOOD MOVIES OF THE 1930's AND 1970's

Degree: Ph.D.

Year: 1997

Copyright Declaration

Date	Name and address (in block letters)	Signature

GUNFIGHTER GAPS:
Discourses of The Frontier in Hollywood Movies of the 1930s and 1970s

Lynette Tan Yuen Ling

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 1997
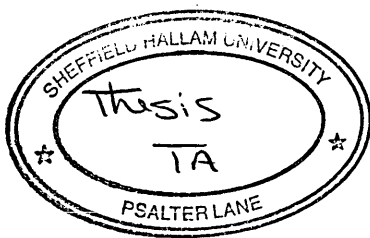
Abstract

In 1990 and 1992, the Academy Award for the Best Motion Picture of the year was won by movies belonging to the Western genre: *Dances With Wolves*, and *Unforgiven*. Recent work on the Western claims that these achievements and the flood of new Westerns dating from the late 1980s up to the present signal a renaissance of the genre within the film industry, and among critics and the public. The notion of a revival has attached to it the idea of a preceding lapse, when a movie genre is "out of fashion". The lapse experienced by the Western beginning in the mid-1970s has a clear parallel in the late 1920s, when the trade press announced the demise of the genre. The aim of this thesis is to argue that these periods of lull in the popularity of the Western are tied to historical events that directly undermined the ideological base of American thought and culture. A principal aspect of that ideological base is the American Myth of the Frontier. In the 1930s the myth was challenged by the Great Depression, and in the 1960s and 1970s, the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Liberation and Vietnam. In the latter era, an entire generation of young men, raised in the 'Golden era' of the Western when the frontier myth gained its widest currency, were inspired to charge into battle 9,000 miles from America's shores for a victory that was sanctioned by the past. The tragic consequences of that war exacerbated the failure of that national narrative of triumph, and as the most dominant vehicle of frontier mythology, the Western correspondingly encountered an obstacle to its popular reception. This present volume locates expressions of popular culture as barometers of the performance of myth. It has, as its subject, an account of the route via which the Myth of the Frontier was repaired, by focusing primarily on the gaps prior to the myth's re-emergence. The gaps identified are episodes when myth loses its dehistoricizing function, when the frontier becomes a moment in the past that has no relevance for the present. An examination of how historical memory is disabled through the movies reveals the pervasiveness and continued significance of the frontier myth to America's self-image.

Prior histories of the Western observe moments of the genre's resurgence, but this thesis adds to the field of criticism in its exploration of the possible reasons underlying the restoration of its popularity. This is achieved through an analysis of the various genres to which the frontier myth migrates after the 'A' Western ceases to be an outlet for its discourse. The Gangster film, 'B' Western and Vietnam War movie are such surfaces of emergence. Part of the originality of this work, for example, is the research on the 'B' Westerns directed by Joseph Kane and starring Gene Autry. The gaps in the history of the Western are thus viewed positively as having the utility for comprehending the relationship between the Western genre and the frontier myth. After the introductory chapters which discuss the concepts of genre, myth and the Western, this thesis analyses the centrality of the historical events that challenged expressions of frontier mythology in the two periods identified and the process through which that history is mediated, reconstructed and finally replaced.

Preface

Kansas. The late 1880s. A time when lawmen were killers, outlaws were heroes and a bad reputation was good as gold. It is eleven years since outlaw William Munny (Clint Eastwood) laid down his gun and retired. But times are hard. His wife is dead, his young children hungry and his farm stock dwindling with fever. At this low point he is visited by The Schofield Kid who is looking for a partner to help him gun down a couple of cowboys and collect a bounty.

Who better than celebrated gunfighter William Munny?

1993 Warner Home Video gloss for *Unforgiven*

The 1990 Academy Award for the Best Motion Picture of the year went to *Dances With Wolves,* with Kevin Costner obtaining the award for Best Director of the same film. The movie garnered 12 Oscar nominations, winning seven. Two years later in the 1992 Award ceremony, the same two Oscars were to go to *Unforgiven,* with the award for the category of 'Best Director' going to Clint Eastwood. *Unforgiven* won a total of four Oscars. What is both apparent and unusual about the above is that *Dances With Wolves* and *Unforgiven* are Westerns. Prior to these two movies, other nominated and Oscar winning Westerns of note include: *Stagecoach,* nominated for seven awards in 1939, including Best Picture, winning two; *The Ox-Bow Incident* nominated for Best Picture in 1943; in 1952 *High Noon* acquired seven nominations including Best Picture, winning four of the awards; *Shane* nominated for Best Picture in 1953 with four other nominations; in 1963 *How The West was Won* got seven nominations including Best Picture, winning three awards; John Wayne won the Best Actor Oscar for *True Grit* in 1969, the film gaining one other nomination.[1] One observation that can be made from this list is the absence of

Westerns meeting the Oscar standard after the late sixties. The winning of Oscars by Westerns again in the nineties is unusual for a variety of reasons, the most significant of which being the dwindling popularity experienced by the Western genre after 1972. This phenomenon, recorded by Phil Hardy in his *Encyclopedia of The Western,* has traditionally been aligned with contemporaneous events associated with Vietnam.

The Hollywood Western reached a peak of popularity and preeminence from 1969 to 1972, with an average release by American producers of 24 Westerns a year. This number was drastically reduced from 1977 to 1982, with an average of only 4 releases.[2] The approximate ten-year silence that ensued from the mid-1970's to the mid-1980's relates closely to the political, social, economic and historical contexts in which the Westerns are situated. These contexts significantly influenced the popular reception of the genre. Changes and movements wrought by the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Agenda, the rise of Feminism, and the Vietnam War initiated an unprecedented questioning and de-stabilizing of the assumptions that constitute the ideological base of the movie Western. The persecution of 'Otherness', a fundamental requisite of the Frontier Myth, and the Western's image of the American Hero as a solitary white male became the focus of much condemnation in the light of the revision of America's history as a union of ethnic groups.

In the early 1990s, however, the movie Western showed positive signs of revival, marked by the successes of such Westerns as the two *Young Guns* (1988, 1990), *Lonesome Dove, Dances with Wolves* (1990), *The Last of the Mohicans, Unforgiven* (1992), *Tombstone* (1993), *Bad Girls, Maverick, The Cowboy Way* (1994), and *The Quick and the Dead* (1995). This repair of the Western had previously been attempted three times since 1970; the initial efforts at revival, however, failed to generate the sustained investment or continuous production in the form that would constitute an active movie genre.[3] The more substantial achievement of this fourth attempt suggests a

corresponding restitution of frontier mythology in the American imagination; the Western is, without question, the dominant surface in which discourses of the myth emerge.

In 1893 Frederick Jackson Turner delivered in Chicago an address that was to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America. This paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History", would have a great impact in academic circles, and is widely acknowledged as a key source in understanding America's frontier myth. Turner's concerns revolved around the wilderness, with Indians existing at the periphery of his notion of progress.[4] The Turner thesis is essentially one of an advance into an uninhabited continent. However, in popular culture, the confrontation with the figure of the Indian savage gained precedence: Richard White exemplifies this argument in considering the influence of "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West shows, where narratives of Indian conflict and conquest were presented to much broader audiences. White's contention is that the West of the imagination is one more rooted in Buffalo Bill than in Turner.[5] Such an endeavour is also demonstrated in the work of Richard Slotkin, whose seminal volume *Regeneration Through Violence* argued unequivocally that the American character was ineluctably linked to the extermination of a savage Other.

This thesis is greatly indebted to Slotkin's examination of American history and definition of myth. Nonetheless, it departs to some exent from his interpretation of the dynamic that exists between myth and popular culture. Slotkin's perception of the Western as a genre of mythic expression assumes a direct translation of the myth into cinematic terms.[6] He equates the frontier myth and the Western via an emphasis on their narrative forms. A more complex ideological framework may be acquired in utilizing Michel Foucault's concept of discourse and Marxist conceptions of base and superstructure. In this instance, the Myth of the Frontier appears in surfaces of emergence; the superstructure of the myth is constituted by a variety of discourses that articulate its central tenets. The Western, for example, is a surface of emergence in which the discourse is in a narrative form. The discourse also occurs in surfaces that are less

based on narrative: Turner's Thesis, Thomas Jefferson's writings, the rhetoric of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and other American presidents and politicians are examples of this. Discourses of the myth can also migrate to narrative expressions other than the Western. This process can be seen as evidence of a diachronic change in the myth when responding to moments of social crisis. The mythic discourse is no longer possible through the vehicle of the Western genre when it is in opposition to the provision of cultural verisimilitude. Steve Neale's provocative distinction between verisimilitude and reality supplies the theoretical foundation of this argument.

The thesis is divided into three parts, and organized around two major lapses in the popular reception of movie Westerns: the "gunfighter gaps". Part I consists of the introductory section and establishes the main concerns of the project: illustrating the dominant terms and assumptions of the study as a whole. Chapter 1 discusses the notion of genre, chapter 2 the Myth of the Frontier, an essential component of any study of the Western, and chapter 3 looks at the Western in the context of the Classical Hollywood Cinema. Following the introductory chapters, the book takes up the interaction between significant movements in the reception of the Western and the shifting socio-economic backgroundsin which they are situated. Part II focuses on the 1930s and analyses the centrality of the Depression in the 'A' Western's temporary demise. The three chapters discuss the migration of frontier discourse to the Gangster formula and the 'B' Western, with particular emphasis on the role of censorship, the documentary motive, and the assimilation of the white ethnic. The section ends with a consideration of the 'B' Westerns made by Republic Studios, directed by Joseph Kane, and starring Gene Autry. It attempts to correct the traditional bias towards the 'A' budget products of the major studios, and suggests the possibility that the 'B' movie offers legitimate spaces for ideological negotiation.

The last section begins by looking at the social upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s and the instrumentality of the Vietnam War in this second undermining of the frontier

myth, where the Western virtually disappears from the genre map. The repair of the myth is witnessed in stages, from an incomplete enunciation in the first wave of Vietnam War movies to Oliver Stone's trilogy where the narrative of victory emerges intact; mythic and cultural verisimilitude co-exist. The cowboy persona of Kevin Costner is explored, along with the notion that he fulfills the capacity of a post-revisionist Westerner. Though Eastwood is mentioned in this preface his movies tend to transcend generic notions of the Western. Paul Smith, in his exhaustive study *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production*, is at pains to certify that *Unforgiven* is endowed with the status of art.[7] The predilection that this thesis has towards the generic over the artistic is explained in the first chapter. The Eastwood Westerns are not discussed primarily because of their detachment from the Hollywood Western genre, a quality that can initially be attributed to the direction of Sergio Leone. The influence of Leone leads to a representation of the genre that exists outside of the moral universe of the traditional Western. The Italian Westerns occupy a space that is at one remove away from discourses of frontier mythology: they are, in a literal sense, discourses about these discourses. Thus Christopher Frayling's critical study *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone* productively examines the relationship between the European Western and the American version, while this thesis gives special emphasis to the relationship between the American Western and American history and myth. The Westerns I subject to close analyses reflect the differing concerns and arguments of each section.

In "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century", Patricia Nelson Limerick cites a "colorful" definition of the closing of the Turnerian frontier: historian Paula Petrik reported that when the frontier phase passed, the prostitutes in Helena, Montana lost their independence to men who took control of their earnings. Limerick is led to the conclusion that "the frontier ends when the pimps come to town."[8] Though on a more sombre note, the closing of the movie Western frontier is also susceptible to Turnerian dimensions -- the gaps identified conform to episodes when myth loses its

dehistoricizing function, when the frontier becomes a moment in the past. The tools of its incapacitation are historical events that challenge and ultimately replace the frontier myth's version of the past, such that the myth forfeits its relevance for the present time. An examination of the ideological spaces that inhere before the re-opening of the movie Western frontier is thus vital in understanding the persistence of myth, and its ability to substitute historical memory with a new past in which it is always germane.

Acknowledgments

The research and writing of this thesis have greatly benefited from the advice and suggestions of Peter Stanfield, who not only played a major part in providing a flow of material pertaining to 'B' Westerns and access to the films, but also read and criticized the chapters on the 1930s.

I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Steve Neale, for his support in the last six months. I am also grateful to John Kirby and his staff at the Psalter Lane Campus Library, who have at all times rendered helpful and efficient service.

Prof. John Rogerson contributed to this project with his careful reading of the original manuscript. I have profited from his comments and guidance in the final stages of this thesis. My deepest gratitude goes to Rosalind Rogerson, a remarkable friend who has offered emotional support, generosity, kindness and unfailing patience through transitions and traumas.

Finally, I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Richard Maltby. Richard has engaged with this research on all levels with an intellectual rigour and a keen sense of clarity. His enthusiasm for my work in these last four years has been a constant source of inspiration and encouragement.

And I thank my parents, for all of the above.

Contents

1 The Western and Hollywood's Classic Era
"An Art Form for Connoisseurs"[1]

> Genre space is also *mythic space*: a pseudo-historical (or pseudo-real) setting that is powerfully associated with stories and concerns rooted in a culture's myth/ideological tradition. It is also a setting in which the concrete work of contemporary myth-making is done. This is particularly true of the Western, whose roots go deeper into the American cultural past than those of any other movie genre.[2]
>
> Richard Slotkin

In *Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction*, Richard Maltby describes Hollywood as a generic cinema.[3] Contemporary genre criticism postulates that genres consist not only of films, but "also, and equally, of specific systems of expectation and hypothesis which spectators bring with them to the cinema, and which interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing process".[4] Steve Neale writes of genres as having a "process-like nature" evident as an interaction between three levels: "the level of expectation, the level of the generic corpus, and the level of the 'rules' or norms' that govern both."[5] The activity of the spectator is a notion that is rejected in Dwight Macdonald's denunciation of the mass culture spectator as a "passive consumer" but present in the first clause of this definition of genre.[6] Acknowledging the link between the audience and the genre movie facilitates a comprehension of Slotkin's claim that

generic space can be "powerfully associated with stories and concerns rooted in a culture's myth/ideological tradition". As the film viewer is an intrinsic part of the process by which a genre movie may achieve any degree of popularity, and also how that popularity may be sustained, it follows that a prevailing genre can have associations with the fundamental beliefs collectively held by audiences.

Richard Dyer's article on "Entertainment and Utopia" perceives entertainment as a temporary answer to the inadequacies of society.[7] The table of categories that he provides relates to the more superficial and immediate desires of the audience: energy, abundance, intensity, transparency and community. Dyer does make the qualification that class, race, and sexual caste are omitted in his paradigm as they are "denied validity as problems by the dominant (bourgeois, white, male) ideology of society." These gaps in Dyer's 'utopian sensibility' are particularly significant in their relation to the American mythological tradition. The ideals of entertainment can only fulfil the wants that capitalism itself promises to meet -- "entertainment provides alternatives *to* capitalism which will be provided *by* capitalism."[8] However, when the problems of class, race and sexual caste gain a dominance that overpowers the alternatives that capitalism can provide, then the alternatives offered become inadequate. The issues of race and sexual caste, for example, were highlighted by the Civil Rights and Feminist movements in the 1960s. It is arguable that after that decade entertainment was forced, at least momentarily, to address these issues as constituting the legitimate inadequacies of people in society. Thus the utopian solution of "community" cannot meet the social tension caused by "fragmentation" when the communal interests offered only avail to those who are white, and the solution of "intensity" is overwhelmed by that of "dreariness" when activity is reserved only for those who are male. This partially

explains the appearance of movie Westerns in the early 1970s that compensate to some extent for the increased recognition of these needs by alterations in the genre -- the Vietnam Westerns, for example, are notably more critical of the notion of white supremacy than their predecessors. The social aspects of class, race and sexual caste are fundamental to American frontier mythology: the Western hero breaking the democratic code in being more equal than his fellow Americans, the requisite of a racial Other, and the prominence of a central figure who is male. The instability of these three notions creates fissures in the myth that signal its irrelevance, and the myth undergoes changes in response to the contemporaneous fissures it attempts to mend. As described in the opening quote from Slotkin, the genre film as a receptacle for myth functions as "a setting in which the concrete work of contemporary myth-making is done." The generic space that has retained its relevance as entertainment would thus appear to have a mythic agenda of seeking to seal the gaps of class, sex and race. In doing so the changes in myth are registered and negotiated.

Formula, as opposed to genre, is more directly linked to the discrete elements associated with the composition of the genre movie. John G. Cawelti's *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* begins with the study of literary formulas. The literary formula is a useful base from which one may ascertain the components of a film formula, though these latter components would include certain aspects not available in the former, sound and visual effects being obvious examples. Cawelti defines formula as "a structure of narrative or dramatic conventions employed in a great number of individual works."[9] Formula is a combination of two separate entities: narrative and convention. Patterns of convention are usually specific to a particular culture and period, and may be interpreted differently

outside this specific context.[10]   The nineteenth-century formulaic relation between

blondness and sexual purity, for example, would not be pertinent in the twentieth-

century, which has a different formula for blondes; Richard Dyer's documentation of

The Dumb Blonde Stereotype serves to illustrate the ascent of this more recent formula

using the film personas of Jean Harlow, Alice Faye, Betty Grable and Marilyn Monroe.[11]

The second aspect of formula, that of narrative, refers to patterns of plot. Plot patterns,

distinct from patterns of convention, are not necessarily limited to a specific culture or

period. They seem to represent story-types whose popularity transcends the boundaries

of culture and time, almost Jungian in their universal appeal. A popular story-type such

as the Western employs both components of the formula. The creation of a Western

entails the usage of conventional images and symbols of cowboys, pioneers, outlaws,

saloons and frontier towns, along with cultural archetypes or themes such as law and

order versus outlawry, and nature versus civilization. Formula and genre, however, are

for Cawelti not two distinct properties as I have made them out to be but two phases of

an evolutionary process. In his opinion, "a formulaic pattern will be in existence for a

considerable period of time before it is conceived of by its creators and audience as a

genre."[12] He exemplifies this observation by looking at the Western, stating that though

the Western formula was already clearly defined in the nineteenth century, it was not

until the twentieth century that the Western was consciously conceived of as a distinct

literary and cinematic genre. Cawelti's evolutionary linkage of genre and formula

actually illuminates the basic difference I have discussed. Unlike formula, genre includes

the activity of the spectator; it is a conception by both "its creators and audience" of the

"specific systems of expectation and hypothesis which spectators bring with them to the

cinema, and which interact with films themselves during the course of the viewing

4

process". This conception does not form a necessary part of the formulaic pattern: "a formulaic pattern" can be in existence for "a considerable period of time before it is conceived of by its creators and audience as a genre".

A central tenet of Hollywood film production was to standardize formulas whose appeal had already been verified by positive audience response -- as the business of movie production developed, experimentation steadily gave way to standardization as a matter of fundamental economics, with the goal of reaching as massive an audience as possible.[13] The move towards standardization was also influenced by the arrival of sound: despite the American cinema's great silent era success, the arrival of sound was responsible for an unprecedented peak in narrative and commercial efficiency. Hollywood movies became more "American", suggests Robert Ray, with localized accents drawing from the aural resources of the United States: "Cagney's New Yorkese complementing Cooper's Western laconism, Hepburn's high-toned Connecticut broad a's matching Jean Arthur's Texas Drawl."[14] The universalized mime of the silent era was replaced by a new indigenous acting style that encouraged a reformulation of the American Cinema around more traditionally American preoccupations. More significantly, movies became a site for American mythology: the myths of American culture found a setting in the standard narratives that generated audience appeal. Cawelti's definition of literary formulas here consolidates an understanding of the mythmaking function Slotkin attributes to genre. The patterns of convention and narrative in the Western genre, for example, are determined by the mythology of the frontier: the convention of associating the Indian Other with evil and the narrative requisite of an extermination of the Other are factors deeply entrenched in the Myth. Movies were also produced not in creative or cultural isolation but by a collective

system which relied upon certain narrative traditions (or conventions) in designing for a mass market. The goal of maximizing profit dictated that formulas which have proved successful are recycled and systematically delivered to the audience. These formulas contain similar elements with variations which differentiate one from the other. The formulas themselves are subject to change and adaptation, in accordance with the needs raised by the social climate and thus in order to be financially viable. One such formula is embodied by the Western genre.

Before focusing specifically on the Western, however, it is necessary to investigate the shared social function of genres and the ideological import they possess. Two instrumental factors serving as guiding principles in the generic inception are the economic motive and the political agenda. It follows that the mass audience viewing the movies would have a significant part to play in the shaping of these two motives -- its role being integral in the development of genres that resonate with the myths of American culture.

The Economic Motive: Standardization and Innovation during the Studio Era

There is no question that the American film industry was an instance of the economic system of capitalism. The producers of film were, and still are, united in the single aim of manufacturing films to make a profit. Between 1915 and 1930 the Hollywood studios had standardized, and hence economized virtually every aspect of film production.[15] This mode of production, roughly lasting from 1930 through to 1960 (Hollywood's "classic era") has been characterized as a factory system, with the studios operating to mass produce and mass distribute movies. The employment of a mass-

production system, as the most efficient and economical work arrangement possible, facilitates profit maximization. A requisite of mass production is that of standardization. In comparing commercial filmmaking with concurrent US business practices, Janet Staiger traces the move towards full standardization after the Civil War:

> The advantages of standardization -- facilitation of economies of production, research and design; minimization of engineering problems; reduction of costs of patterns, retooling, carrying large stocks, labor retraining, and accounting -- eventually began to outweigh its disadvantages. . .Prime movers in the trend were engineers and efficiency experts who created an institutional discourse about standardization in their technical journals, societies, textbooks, and handbooks. . .The federal bureau gave the State's blessing to standardization and supplied national rather than state guidelines.[16]

Hollywood production practices mirrored the capitalist mode of production for the same advantages acquired via standardization -- the movement toward uniformity not only allowed for economies of scale but also created a level of excellence that, once established, became a goal to be attained.[17] Thomas Schatz estimates that as approximately 400 to 700 movies were released per year during Hollywood's classic era, the process of filmic conventionalization was being continuously refined with time pressures stimulating a return to standard American narratives. The established story formulas were the result of a systematic honing of cinematic enunciation into narrative conventions with a proven record of appeal. In support of his conclusions Schatz refers to the Motion Picture Association of America's classification of subject matter in 1950, where it was indicated that over 60% of all Hollywood productions were either Westerns (27%), crime/ detective films (20%), romantic comedies (11%) or musicals (4%), and that roughly 90% fell into some pre-established classification (mystery/ spy,

war, etc.).[18] The conventionalization of these narratives has origins that extend to an earlier period.

By the mid-twenties all the major studios had close relations with finance capital. Though it has not yet been established either that the major finance capital houses exerted any direct influence over production policies, or that production policies changed significantly because of the involvement of finance capital, it has been argued that the commerciality of the American Cinema was intensified when by 1936, Hollywood's major studios came under the financial control of either Morgan or Rockerfeller interest, with this concentration encouraging a homogenized product and the repetition of a few basic patterns.[19] However, finance capital could only exert this influence indirectly, as it was mostly involved with the real estate of exhibition. In 1939, Lewis Jacob's *The Rise of the American Film* popularised the idea formulated by F.D. Klingender and Stuart Legg, that the Morgan and Rockerfeller banking interests had virtual control over the major film companies with the introduction of sound. However though the Morgan and Rockerfeller banking groups financed the wiring of the nation's theatres and the construction of sound studios in Hollywood to a large extent, their "virtual control" over the film companies was illusory. Tino Balio cites Robert Sklar's summary of the revisionist accounts that focus on corporate hegemony: it is not so important "who owns the movie companies but who manages them".[20]

The economic motive did, however, determine trends of studio production, and correspondingly, the trends of cinematic expression. The classical film can be subdivided into genres: narrative cinematic expressions that became standard narrative traditions through their repeated usage and corresponding audience recognition. Genres developed by the Hollywood studio system comprised the vast majority of the most

popular and profitable productions for the length of the studio era, with this trend continuing even after its dissolution. This narrative economy and subsequent standardization did not result in dull or mediocre products. The desirable aspects of the films were repeated and audiences found pleasure in their repetition, an example of which are the conflicts that are continuously addressed and resolved. This aspect is probably the most basic determining feature of all genres. Schatz describes the oppositional narrative strategy of genre films in the following:

> *establishment* (via various narrative and iconographic cues) of the generic community with its inherent dramatic conflicts;
>
> *animation* of these conflicts through the actions and attitudes of the genre's constellation of characters;
>
> *intensification* of the conflict by means of conventional situations and dramatic confrontations until the conflict reaches crisis proportions;
>
> *resolution* of the crisis in a fashion which eliminates the physical and/or ideological threat and thereby celebrates the (temporarily) well-ordered community.[21]

The genre film's plot thus traces the intensification of some cultural opposition which is eventually resolved in a predictable fashion. Through this narrative context, the cultural function of genre films are evident: they appear to portray society in a stable and invariable ideological position. Although the resolution of conflict is a reason for the sustained popularity of genres, that continuing popularity is also an indication of the essentially unresolvable and irreconcilable nature of those oppositions. The resolution provided by genre films does not solve the basic cultural conflict; the conflict is often recast into another context where it no longer presents an immediate problem. A basic conflict of the Western, Detective and Gangster genres, for example, is that of individualism versus the common good. This conflict dissipates temporarily in the

Western hero's fading into the sunset, the detective's return to his office to await another case, and the gangster's violent death. The individual hero is safe from the compromising of his individuality, while at the same time, values of social integration are kept intact. The opposing values are both deemed significant -- neither is morally elevated in comparison with the other -- and the fundamental (American) ideological precepts of conflict, contradiction and ambiguity are celebrated.[22] The genre film retains its popularity as long as the conflicts it addresses remain pertinent to society. Tino Balio provides the rationale that Hollywood should not be condemned for concentrating on the production of escapist fare: any proposal actually to solve a social problem would not only carry a political liability and fragment the audience, it would also open the industry to the charge of manufacturing propaganda.[23] The preservation from such a charge through the concentration on escapist fare does, however, enable a communication of ideology that is more difficult to detect.

The emphasis on standardization did not make for entirely uniform products. Innovation, within restricted bounds, was also part of the economic principle. A competitive method relied upon to encourage repeated consumption was the promotion of difference between products. Neale stresses the financial advantages of an aesthetic regime based on regulated difference, where films are aesthetic commodities that demand a degree of novelty and difference from one another.[24] Maltby lists eighteen types of genre as enumerated by one 1942 survey by the Motion Picture Research Bureau[25]:

     Comedies: sophisticated comedies
           slapstick comedies
           family life comedies
           musical comedies
           "just" comedies

War pictures
Mystery, horror pictures
Historicals, biographies
Fantasies
Western pictures
Gangster and G-Men pictures
Serious dramas
Love stories, romantic pictures
Socially significant pictures
Adventure, action pictures
Musicals (serious)
Child star pictures
(Wild) animal pictures

The overlapping nature of this classification suggests that genres are not mutually exclusive categories: they possess shared features and are discernible from one another in the differing ways those features are combined.[26] This product differentiation is also closely linked to variations in public taste, with the aim of accommodating the interests of the largest possible audience.

Innovation and differentiation also occurred amongst films within the same genre. A widely-quoted classification of the Western, for example, may be found in the writings of Frank Gruber -- he observes seven basic types of Westerns: the railway story, the ranch story, the cattle empire story, the revenge story, the cavalry versus the Indians story, the outlaw story, and the marshal or 'law and order' story. Philip French provides a different typology: the 'Epic Western', 'Sur-Western[27]', 'Adult Western', 'Satirical Western', 'Comedy Western', 'Chamber Western', 'Liberal Western', 'Sociological Western', 'Realistic Western', 'Anti-Western', 'Psychological Western', 'Allegorical Western', 'Spaghetti Western' and 'Paella Western'.[28] As the 'Anti-Western' and 'Satirical Western' might suggest, though genre films appear to be bound by systems of rules, an individual genre movie could very well transgress those rules when differentiating itself from the other films within the same genre. Though recent film

criticism has tended to elevate the value of works that transgress norms, this transgression of the generic norm does not in any way diminish the importance of the formula constituting the genre.

Genre and the Constitution of Pleasure

In *The Fantastic*, Tzvetan Todorov disputes the claim that it is possible to reject the notion of literary genres from the point of aesthetics, for "the work of art is unique, valuable because of what is original about it that distinguishes it from all other works, and not because of whatever in it may resemble them."[29] Critical approaches that treat films as isolated texts reject film genres for the same reason. Laura Mulvey's *Visual and Other Pleasures* attempts to "make way for a total negation of the ease and plenitude of the narrative fiction film" with an alternative "thrill that comes from leaving the past behind without simply rejecting it, transcending oppressive forms, and daring to break with normal pleasurable expectations."[30] However, her notion of pleasure as a composite of scopophilia and narcissisim -- the first a function of "sexual instincts" and the second of "ego libido" -- is morally dubious and overemphasizes the sexual. With this definition of pleasure the cinematic experience is paramount to an act of sexual transgression. Kristin Thompson's explanation of the Neoformalist method of film analysis with "defamiliarization" being the "general neoformalist term for the basic purpose of art in our lives" is less Freudian but seems to reach the same conclusion about film genres, for she goes on to elaborate that:

> Defamiliarization must be present for an object to function for the spectator as
> art. . .Automization may nearly wipe out the defamiliarizing capacities of

ordinary, unoriginal artworks, such as B westerns. Such ordinary works tend not to defamiliarize the conventions of their genre of classical Hollywood filmmaking.[31]

She does qualify this statement. Thompson contends that "even an unoriginal genre film is, in its subject matter, minimally different from other, similar films. . .it is slightly defamiliarizing in its use of nature and history".

The function of a genre film, however, is not primarily one of defamiliarization, or as Mulvey would have it, the "pleasure in using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight".[32] Any single Western movie must be set against the collective 'universe of Westerns' in order that its full significance may be appreciated. In *Men, Women and Chainsaws*, Carol Clover observes that genre is a field in which there is in some sense no original, no "real or right" texts, but only variants. Therefore, "the meaning of the individual example lies outside itself". Though Clover applies this observation mainly to the horror film, it is also equally relevant to the Western. A particular Western may have original features, but its status as a member of a genre lies in the way it delivers the cliché: what Clover terms "the art of rendition or performance" that is "understood as such by a competent audience".[33] Robert Warshow's comment that the Western is an "art form for connoisseurs" echoes this emphasis on the delivery or rendition of the cliché, and the understanding of an audience that is competent to notice and derive pleasure from minor variations on the same theme. The cliché is always present; for example the conflict between civilization and the wilderness in the Western. The differing ways that the cliché is delivered are the variations that audiences notice, and add to their existing genre baggage.

James B. Twitchell recommends an "ethnological approach" to generic films, in which "the various stories are analyzed as if no one individual telling really mattered. . . You search for what is stable and repeated; you neglect what is "artistic" and "original", tracing the migration of images to the audience, and understanding why these images have been "crucial enough to pass along."[34] Richard Slotkin sees this "passing along" of images being carried out through a set of "mnemonic cues", images which invite the viewer to associate with other images of a similar kind previously acquired from the same genre. The images arise from what Robin Wood has called "the personal dreams of their makers and the collective dreams of their audiences", "the fusion made possible by the shared structures of a common ideology."[35] These mnemonic cues raise movie-images from being mere documents of action, endowing visual narrative with the metaphoric resonance achieved in printed literature.[36] *Unforgiven*, for example, depends on its heritage of scenes from past Westerns for a sense of nostalgia and an understanding of its ironies, in the same way that Milton's *Paradise Lost* gains depth and resonance from the King James Bible. Quoting a description by Andrew Britton on the topic of the horror movie, Clover sees this process of generic association as the source of pleasure provided by the genre film:

> It became obvious at a very early stage that every spectator knew exactly what the film was going to do at every point, even down to the order in which it would dispose of its various characters, and the screening was accompanied by something in the nature of a running commentary in which each dramatic move was excitedly broadcast some minutes before it was actually made. The film's total predictablility did not create boredom or disappointment. *On the contrary, the predictability was clearly the main source of pleasure, and the only occasion for disappointment would have been a modulation of the formula, not a repetition of it.* Everyone had parted with his or her four

bucks in the complete confidence that *Hell Night* was a known quantity, and that it would do nothing essentially different from any of its predecessors. Everyone could guess what would happen, and it did happen.[37]

<div align="right">My Emphasis</div>

Britton's conclusion is that the highly ritualised and formulaic characteristic is "the most striking feature of the contemporary entertainment film". Neale's "Questions of Genre" looks into the "generically verisimilitudinous" elements of film, and pits these elements against what is considered as cultural verisimilitude to discover how films attract audiences. He derives these two broad types of verisimilitude from the writing of Tzvetan Todorov, where neither type equates directly to 'reality':

> If we study the discussions bequeathed us by the past, we realize that a work is said to have verisimilitude in relation to two chief kinds of norms. The first is what we call *rules of genre*: for a work to be said to have verisimilitude, it must conform to these rules. In certain periods, a comedy is judged 'probable' only if, in the last act, the characters are discovered to be near relations. A sentimental novel will be probable if its outcome consists in the marriage of hero and heroine, if virtue is rewarded and vice punished. Verisimilitude, taken in this sense, designates the work's relation to literary discourse: more exactly, to certain of the latter's subdivisions, which form a genre.
>
> But there exists another verisimilitude, which has been taken even more frequently for a relation with reality. Aristotle, however, has already perceived that the verisimilar is not a relation between discourse and its referent (the relation of truth), but between discourse and what its readers believe is true. The relation is here established between the work and a scattered discourse that in part belongs to each of the individuals of a society but of which none may claim ownership; in other words, to *public opinion*. The latter is of course not 'reality' but merely a further discourse, independent of the work.[38]

Neale reaches the conclusion that it is often the generically verisimilitudinous ingredients of a film, those which are often least compatible with regimes of cultural verisimilitude that attract audiences to the film in the first place, and that constitute the film's pleasure. The fact that these generic regimes of verisimilitude can transgress and ignore social and cultural regimes is important in ascertaining the function of genres as a site of ideological negotiation.

In the context of the generic inception, the variations that existed were a technological development aimed at fulfilling Hollywood's central tenet of producing efficient entertainment. Audience participation was encouraged and essential in the economic exchange with filmmakers at the box-office, and the minimization of audience effort (or lack of defamiliarization) was more economically effective precisely because it was, at the time, what audiences demanded. The artistic or aesthetic value of the movie was not as economically influential as the reaffirmation of individual and collective beliefs provided by genre films during the studio era. Maltby puts it succinctly in the following:

> Hollywood sought to minimize its audience's effort both because it was
> economically more effective for it to do so, and because that was what it
> presumed its audience wanted. . .The development of Hollywood's fictional
> conventions were a gradual process, conducted progressively in film after
> film, and took the form of an economic dialogue between filmmakers and
> audience at the box-office. Innovations in form and content were negotiated
> by their financial success or lack of it; a crude mechanism of consultation, but
> a mechanism nevertheless.[39]

Though the Supreme Court's decision on the "Paramount Case" of 1948 had the effect of liberating filmmakers from formulaic productions, the movie genres were by that time firmly established, and served as norms which retained their importance even if the bulk of films that came later sought to defamiliarize the conventions that bound them. Ray claims that the movies of Hollywood's Classic Period, which were mostly generic in style, are "the single most important body of films in the history of cinema, the one that set the terms by which all movies, made before or after, would be seen". He uses the following statistics to support this claim:

> (From 1930-1945) the movies *averaged* 80 million in weekly attendance, a
> sum representing more than half of the U.S. population of the time. . .the
> movies attracted 83 cents of every U.S. dollar spent on recreation.
> . . .By also dominating the international market, the American Cinema insured
> that for the vast majority of the audience, both here and abroad, Hollywood's
> Classic Period films would establish the definition of the medium itself. [40]

For Schatz, the defamiliarization of conventions that followed constituted the end of a cycle of the generic evolution, when audiences were saturated with the genre's straightforward messages. Schatz's model of evolutionary development has already raised many objections, notably by Alan Williams[41] and, at greater length, Tag Gallagher, who takes exception to Schatz's "specious argument" that "'classic' Westerns are simple and naive"[42]. The theoretical aspect of Williams' disapproval is pertinent here:

> Note that Schatz locates this shift of opacity *within individual genres*, such that
> a 'new' genre in the 1980s would have to go through a 'classical' stage before
> evolving into a self-conscious formalism. It is not the filmmaking system or the

social context that has changed, but the genres that have evolved. (In my opinion, this is clearly wrong.)[43]

The self-conscious formalism of Westerns in the style of Sam Peckinpah has been seen to herald the end of the Western[44], however, this saturation needs to be seen in the socio-historical context of changing ideological beliefs, with movements such as the rise of feminism and the Vietnam War questioning the Western's ideological foundations. Thus a re-instatement of or reversal to the previous ideology in the original social context, as this thesis will later elaborate, could also correspondingly alter the cycle with a movement towards transparency.

Schatz's generic progression from straightforward narration to a more self-conscious formalism and a final loss of popularity does not undermine the value of the initial generic norm.[45] Todorov asserts that even in the case of works that transgress generic norms, genre remains important:

> For there to be a transgression, the norm must be apparent. Moreover, it is doubtful that contemporary literature is entirely exempt from generic distinctions; it is only that these distinctions no longer correspond to the notions bequeathed by the literary theories of the past. . .failing to recognize the existence of genres is equivalent to claiming that a literary work does not bear any relationship to already existing works. Genres are precisely those relay points by which the work assumes a relation with the universe of literature.[46]

The close relationship of genres and social ideology that is overlooked in Schatz's approach to genres, in how deviations from the norm are an economic response to shifting ideological beliefs, will be developed in subsequent chapters.

<u>The Political Agenda : Myth and Conservatism</u>

The commerciality of American cinema dictated a filmmaking that would consistently deploy the basic ideologies and myths of American culture for the sake of a regular audience.[47] Hollywood's movies had communicated myths and ideologies before the 1930s, but it was after the thirties that the potential of this mythmaking function was more fully realized. The influences fostering an emphasis on a mythological/ ideological product can be traced to events taking place during Hollywood's Classic Period, principally the Depression and World War II. Robert Sklar explains how these two factors facilitated a re-assertion of fundamental American beliefs:

> . . .moviemakers (in the 1930's) were aware in a more sophisticated way of (the cinema's) mythmaking powers, responsibilities and opportunities. Among intellectuals and in centers of political power, the importance of cultural myths to social stability was a seriously debated topic. The Depression had shaken some of the oldest and strongest American Cultural myths, particularly the middle-class homilies about the virtues of deferred gratification and assurance that hard work and perseverance would bring success. . . .The widespread doubt about traditional American myths threatened to become a dangerous political weakness. In politics, industry and the media there were men and women. . . who saw the necessity, almost as a patriotic duty, to revitalize and refashion a cultural mythology.[48]

From the outset, that mythology was deliberately traditional and hence politically conservative: Hollywood film legitimated dominant institutions and traditional values, obliquely responding to challenges against American ideals with either repression or

displacement. The strategy of repression is discussed by Maltby in "The Production Code and the Hays Office."[49] In the article Maltby argues persuasively for the importance of the Code as a force for ideological conservatism, where the criticism of moral viciousness in the early 1930s is accommodated by "a system of representation acceptable both to the industry and to the cultural authorities it deferred."[50] According to Maltby this system was enabled by codes of representation that allowed for both "innocence" and "sophistication" to be derived from the film text, without violating the limits of public acceptability. In "Anatomy of a Proletarian Film: Warner's *Marked Woman*", Charles Eckert investigates the American cinema's tactic of displacement. Though the sources of *Marked Woman* (a topical proletariat-oriented gangster film) are in class conflict, the expression of conflict in the film is displaced by conversion into conflicts of a surrogate nature: ethical, regional, and life-style.[51] The tactic of displacement is basic in the American cinema's conservative response to challenges to the status quo. This form of cultural responsiveness lasted until the 1960s, when dominant myths and values were questioned and more critical stylistic and thematic modes were adopted by the moviemakers.

Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner list the traditional American institutions and values legitimized by Hollywood cinema prior to the sixties. These included: "individualism (with its emphasis on self-reliance and its distrust of government), capitalism (with its values of competition, upward mobility, and the survival of the fittest), patriarchy (with its privileging of men and its positioning of women in a secondary social role)," and "racism (with its unequal partitioning of social power)".[52] Ideological legitimization was achieved through Hollywood's representational conventions, formally and thematically. They mention narrative closure, image

continuity, character identification, sequential editing, dramatic motivation and shot centering as some of the formal conventions employed in presenting an objective view of events while actually projecting a subjective point of view.[53] The formal conventions of genre films provide what seems to be a neutral recording of events in automizing the signs of cinematic artificiality. This automization is achieved with repeated viewings of films within the same genre. In a musical where a character bursts into a song and dance routine on roller skates while being chased by the police (Gene Kelly in *It's Always Fair Weather*) for example, the audience would not find this surprising or outside of reality; the reality constructed by the musical formula encompasses and naturalizes such events. This singing is a component of Neale's generic verisimilitude. The thematic conventions of Hollywood films legitimize social values and institutions in linking them to its apparent presentation of what is probable in reality. These values and institutions become seemingly natural and self-evident attributes of an unchanging world; the status quo is preserved and perpetuated. The thematic conventions include heroic male adventure, romantic quest, female melodrama, redemptive violence, and racial stereotyping.[54] Ryan and Kellner's analysis is, however, too simplistic in its endorsement of a model of film reception that renders the spectator a mere victim of ideological manipulation. The problem, as discussed in the following section, lies in their conception of verisimilitude.

Marxist and Constructivist Theories of Audience Participation

Aligning the Hollywood production mode to that of a factory system does not account for more specific individual deviations from the norm, but a broad perspective is initially

necessary in observing what was common and pervasive during the studio era, and in ascertaining the elements constituting a genre. A criterion that the neoformalist approach adopts in singling out the most valuable work is that it defamiliarizes the conventions established by previous art works, and this underscores the value of the norm. It is also through a consideration of the general nature of Hollywood's production system that we might determine its social significance. The factory analogy with film as commodity and the importance accrued to the economic motive echoes the Marxist view that Hollywood is a slave to the profit system, blindly reproducing the dominant ideology of bourgeois capitalism.[55] The following is an oft-cited passage in support of this notion:

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, *i.e.*, the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.[56]

Ray posits that the determinedly commercial nature of the American movie business and its financial servitude to the powerful eastern banks insured that Hollywood's elaborations of American mythology would proceed according to the Marxist ideologically censoring standards above. While I would accept an essentially Marxist analysis of the relationship between the ownership of means of production and ideology in relation to the Hollywood cinema, I would hesitate in identifying with Marxist-influenced analyses that view the audience as necessarily passive, blindly absorbing the ideology of the bourgeois film producers.

A paradigm that places greater emphasis on active audience engagement and thus complements this model of communication is David Bordwell's assumption of a Constructivist theory of psychological activity. According to Constructivist theory, perceiving and thinking are active, goal-oriented processes: "the organism *constructs* a perceptual judgement on the basis of nonconscious *inferences*."[57] Inference making is dependent upon two sources, conclusions drawn on the basis of perceptual input, and sensory data primarily determined by expectation, background knowledge, problem-solving processes, and other cognitive operations. Perception becomes a process of active hypothesis making -- these perceptual hypotheses are confirmed or disconfirmed at different stages, with the cycle of perceptual-cognitive activity explaining the ongoing, revisionist nature of perception. The spectator comes to the film "already tuned, prepared to focus energies towards story construction and to apply sets of schemata derived from context and prior experience"[58] -- in essence, Neale's "level of expectation". This paradigm envisions a relationship between viewer and film medium whereby the former is no longer a victim or dupe of narrational illusion-making, but an active participant in that process.

A Constructivist theory of audience participation appears to be at odds with Ryan and Kellner's understanding of genre film reception, which more closely fits the Marxist perspective of cinema:

> Genres depend on receptive audiences who are willing to grant credibility to
> the conventions of the genre to the extent that those conventions become
> invisible. Once that is accomplished the generic illusion can assume the
> character of verisimilitude. It no longer seems to be constituted through the
> manipulation of coded formulae. A certain occlusion of rhetoric and
> convention, therefore, is crucial to the transmission of ideological beliefs to the
> audience.[59]

The nature of the genre film as an effective tool of ideological manipulation, arising from an "occlusion of rhetoric and convention" would imply that the audience exists as mere victims of ideology. Much of the conflict lies in the definition of verisimilitude, which Neale has (as mentioned previously) not aligned with 'reality'. In the example quoted above, the distinct concepts of generic and cultural verisimilitude have been condensed to mean simply cultural verisimilitude, and this narrowed interpretation of verisimilitude is then equated with realism. Thus Ryan and Kellner propose a model of communication whereby the audience's enjoyment of what is generically verisimilitudinous becomes evidence that they are duped into believing that the "generic illusion" is "verisimilitude/ (reality)". This is obviously a mistake. Referring back to a previous example, this would mean that Gene Kelly's bursting into song, a generically verisimilitudinous element found in musicals, would lead to audiences deluding themselves into thinking that this is a natural occurrence in reality, and that the bourgeois film producers enforced this delusion upon them. It would be difficult to ascertain how the bourgeois film producers would benefit from this instance of ideological manipulation.

Though ideological beliefs are transmitted, they are not indifferently produced or consumed. To minimize the commercial risk, Hollywood filmmakers could pose issues only in terms that did not overtly contravene the bounds set by the prevailing ideology, while audiences participated in collectively responding to and isolating formulas it found satisfying and entertaining. These formulas were granted credibility, and their conventions attained both generic and cultural verisimilitude with the willing cooperation of the viewers. The character of generic verisimilitude is also not static but dynamic. In fact, the pleasures of what Warshow has called "connoisseurship" is an active

recognition of variation among generic conventions. The variation that occurs is in this instance synchronic, while changes in cultural verisimilitude tend to be more diachronic -- this distinction will be made more apparent in the third chapter.

The Constructivist approach to audience involvement would gel with the idea of capitalistic procedures influencing the generic inception, for the spectator makes inferences from the background data he or she has accumulated from past viewings and applies them in forming hypotheses about the new film. Cawelti's research on generic transformations in movies of the 1960s exemplifies this point. The production of laughter in the famous campfire scene in Mel Brook's *Blazing Saddles* is based on background data which stipulates that when cowboys sit around a blazing campfire at night, mournful and lyrical cowboy ballads will be performed. However, in Brook's Western, the audience is treated with "an escalating barrage of flatulence."[60] The variation in the formula results from an assumption that audiences are familiar enough with this particular element of the Western formula to appreciate a greater complexity in its treatment -- in this case the hypothesis would involve the recognition that the sequence is a burlesque of the traditional Western campfire scene, and the result is laughter. This example has a basically humourous thrust, but as Cawelti has noted, the most powerful generic variations of the 1960s and 1970s (such as in *Bonnie and Clyde* [1967], *The Wild Bunch* [1968], and *The Godfather* [1972]) tend more toward tragedy in their overall structures.[61]

Innovations in the generic formula were negotiated by their financial performance, and audiences formed an integral part of that contract. It might be more feasible to move from a theory of Marxist domination as expounded by Ryan and Kellner to a Gramscian notion of hegemony. While one strand of Marxism posits the

dominant culture as perpetrators of ideological mystification in a closed system of ruling class manipulation, or false consciousness, the Gramscian model allows for the creation of counterhegemonies: hegemonic cultures, depending on the historical context, exist in an open system where the capability for resistance flourishes and may lead to the creation of counterhegemonic alternatives. According to Gramsci, "the consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group is achieved through legitimation, and caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production."[62] In examining the relationship between Hollywood and the ideology of the consensus, Maltby makes the initial proposition that:

> . . .while American cinema of the consensus may have established itself as a hegemonic and unilateral system of communication, it did so not out of a conscious or unconscious desire to impose a dominant ideology on its audience, but with the active participation of that audience, which was also maintained through its products. If Hollywood governed the perception of their audiences, they did so with "the consent of the governed".[63]

When dissent does arise -- and this is clearly shown by the performance (or lack of it) at the box office -- then the problem is often located in the region of cultural verisimilitude. For example, it would be difficult to convince the audience that America is a frontier where riches can be regenerated in the light of a severely failing economy. This would seem highly improbable. However it is important to note that even when the ideology of the bourgeois film producers is accepted, it is achieved with the active consent of the audience, rather than through a passive absorption.

Will Wright and the Western's legitimization of America's Contemporary Economic Institutions

The Western is an essentially conservative genre. A major component of the American cultural ethos that it legitimized was that of capitalism. In *Sixguns and Society*, Will Wright links the classical and professional plots of the movie Western to two significant periods of economic organization: the competitive, market society existing prior to World War II and the planned corporate economy that came later. His approach is a synthesis of two main currents in the structuralist tradition: Lévi-Strauss's structural study of myth, and Vladmir Propp's analysis of the Russian folktale.[64] Christopher Frayling notes that this is a "(very) uneasy synthesis", for the former is a synchronic, ahistorical account, while the latter is an implicitly diachronic, historical account.[65] Thus, as suggested by Maltby, "Wright's structuralist version of myth is based on an anthropological analysis expecting to decipher fixed and static narratives, and therefore arguably not very well attuned to the nuances of frequent change". Moreover, the links that Wright develops between the Westerns and changes in American society are historically inaccurate. However, it is this last inherent weakness -- the historical inaccuracies -- in Wright's model that furnishes its utility for this thesis.

The emergence of a market economy freed economic relations from the control of social goals and values. According to Karl Polanyi, "a market economy is an economic system controlled, regulated, and directed by markets alone; order in the production and distribution of goods is entrusted to this self-regulating mechanism."[66] This self-regulating mechanism was a historically new concept -- in previous societies,

social relationships were governed by political and religious institutions, which responded to social values and directed the economy in accordance with those values. Conversely, in the market-oriented society, the exchange of land, labour and money is now determined by the needs of the autonomous market, so that the market comes to regulate the ordinary social relationships of the people.[67] With this new economic development the individual is no longer primarily a social being whose values were derived from social interaction, but an autonomous being motivated by rampant self-interest. Under capitalism, the legitimacy of traditional authority is lost and the dominance of economic needs supersedes political goals. A conceptual conflict arises between the values of bourgeois society and the institution of the market. The institutions of capitalism were concerned with profit and production and directly opposed the goals of bourgeois ideology which were founded on consensual norms that stress freedom, equality, peace, and the theoretical availability of meaningful human relationships.[68] Wright observes that as the American economy became market oriented, classic Westerns promoted capitalism in addressing the dilemma of bourgeois values and the values required by a self-regulating market and providing a resolution.

In the classical Western, Will Wright ascertains that the division between social experience and the theories of a market economy corresponds to the moral distinction between good and bad.[69] The opposition of market and society is displaced onto another plane, that of a decent social market versus an individual exploitative market. The villains represent unbridled market self-interest, the individualistic aspect of the opposition. The settlers represent the social aspect. The hero is separate from society but in his relationship with the settlers, the individual and group come to constitute the morally positive social market. This is achieved in society's final acceptance of the hero

when he defeats the villains and saves the society. When the hero is outside of society, he, like the villain, is not approved of. However, in his acceptance he does not lose his individuality: it is his independence and self-reliance that form an essential part of his ability to aid society. The conflict between individualism (market economy) and society is resolved in the stressing of individuality and its benefit to society.

The professional Westerns corresponded to the economic period of corporate capitalism and legitimate its technocratic-elitist ideology. Corporate capitalism replaced the individualistic self-reliant entrepreneur with a group of men each of whom contributes information and skills to fulfil the requirements of special planning and complex organization. Just as the idea of the autonomous, self-reliant individual was the key image in the ideology of the free market, the image of a specialized man who works in an elite group that possesses great power and seeks relatively arbitrary, technical, goals is central to the ideology of corporate capitalism. The professional Westerns corresponded to this change in ideology, as opposed to the single hero of classic Westerns: "The professional group can accurately be called an elite body -- a group that wields power, is restricted by status and is socially independent and self-contained, yet utilizes and depends on social institutions."[70] The technocratic-elitist ideology was not without its contradictions:

> The dilemma of modern liberal-democratic theory is now apparent: it must
> continue to use the assumptions of possessive individualism, at a time when
> the structure of the market society no longer provides the necessary conditions
> for deducing a valid theory of political obligation from those assumptions.
> Liberal theory must continue to use the assumptions of possessive
> individualism because they are factually accurate for our possessive market
> societies.[71]

The system of corporate capitalism insisted on the suppression of individuality -- the individual in the corporate capitalist system identifies his goals with those of the corporation, he is committed to the technical group even though its activities may not agree with his values. The dilemma results from the conceptual need for an autonomous individual in this context. As in the classical Westerns, this dilemma was addressed and resolved in the process of legitimization found in the professional Westerns.

In the professional plot, the individuality of the hero is denied. Though the individual exists, his individuality is redundant for it is no longer needed to protect society from the villains. In fact, the individual versus society opposition is eroded as society is bereft of values -- the individual has to establish a set of values to distinguish himself from society and he does so by joining an elite group which acts according to group values (loyalty, respect and friendship). What establishes the hero's individuality and separation from society is his membership in a group and this prevents us from defining him as a true individual. It is thus the group that is separated from society. By joining the group and accepting the values of technical proficiency, the individual is shown to be superior to the dull and weak members of ordinary society.[72] His individuality is suppressed by his membership to a group, while he is shown to be autonomous in his independence from society. Society recognizes each member of the group as a specific individual, and each member's unique contribution is also recognized by the group.[73]

From Will Wright's analysis, we have witnessed how the function of the classical and professional plots of Westerns was to legitimize the contemporary economic institution in addressing the dilemmas that arose from the new economic development in

its variation from the past, and providing a resolution. At this point it is necessary to make a slight amendment to Wright's paradigm; the classic and professional Westerns that legitimized the respective market oriented and corporate capitalist economies emerged after a significant time-lag, and not simultaneously. In his history of the United States, Hugh Brogan notes that the change from a rural to market-oriented society began after the Civil War -- with the dramatic transformation occurring between Appomattox and the First World War.[74] Thus the classic Westerns were legitimizing in the twentieth century that which had begun in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, Frayling, in his thorough critique of the Will Wright model, also points out that the change in American society from a market economy to a corporate economy did not take place in the forty-year period (1930-1970) with which Wright is concerned. Frayling suggests a substitution of changes within Hollywood for the shifting values of society that Wright offers.[75] Instead of a simple substitution, it might be worthwhile to consider that a dynamic exists between the changes within Hollywood and those that occur outside of the institution -- the significance of the time-lag is thus in its suggestion of a period of ideological negotiation before dilemmas could be effectively resolved in the films. Taking into account this modification to Wright's analysis, this thesis will extend Wright's paradigm to elucidate on how a time-lag between periods of a sharp drop in popularity of Westerns and a later rise in popularity are also suggestive of arbitration. The notion of generic space as a site of ideological negotiation is a structuring principle that will be applied in the subsequent chapters. The next chapter will discuss the Western genre in relation to the frontier myth: arguably the most pervasive and dominant myth arising from America's cultural past and confronting America today.

2 The Western and Frontier Mythology
Ideology Expressed in a Narrative

> Myth expresses ideology in a narrative rather than a discursive or argumentative structure. Its language is metaphorical and suggestive rather than logical and analytical. The movement of a mythic narrative, like that of any story, implies a theory of cause-and-effect and therefore a theory of history (or even of cosmology); but these ideas are offered in a form that disarms critical analysis by its appeal to the structures and traditions of story-telling and the clichés of historical memory.[1]
>
> Richard Slotkin

The Myth of the American Frontier, describing the pull of a vacant continent drawing population westward through the passes of the Alleghenies, across the Mississippi Valley, over the high plains and mountains of the Far West to the Pacific Coast, was given its classic statement by Frederick Jackson Turner, in a paper on "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" at the Chicago World's Colombian Exposition in 1893.[2] Earlier historians had emphasized European influences and colonial origins; Turner's essay was a polemic directed against two dominant schools of historians -- the group headed by Hermann Edouard von Holst who interpreted American History in terms of the slavery controversy and the group led by Herbert B. Adams of Johns Hopkins (Turner's former teacher) who explained American institutions as the

outgrowth of English germs planted in the New World. The genesis of the frontier myth can be traced back to Benjamin Rush around 1786, and it was grasped at least in part by Crèvecoeur, before him by Benjamin Franklin, subsequently by Emerson, Lincoln, Whitman and a hundred others.[3]

The Myth of the Frontier may be placed in an intellectual tradition that sought to explain Americanism. The significance of that explanation lies in its role in the forging of national identity. The ideology expounded in the frontier myth grew to be an integral part of national self-consciousness, with symbolism that became intelligible to a wide section of the American public. The thrust of contradictions involving "the isolation of a vast unexplored continent, the slow growth of social forms, the impact of unremitting New England Puritanism obsessed with the cosmic struggle of good and evil, of the elect and the damned, the clash of allegiances to Mother Country and New World" is clear in the literary heritage of the romantic novel that springs from Fenimore Cooper, moving through Hawthorne and Melville, Mark Twain and Henry James, Fitzgerald and Faulkner, Hemingway and Mailer.[4] However, for Americans raised in the middle decades of the twentieth century, the most memorable images of the historical frontier are not drawn from the pages of Turner, Francis Parkman, Owen Wister, or even these literary successors. The images and ideas that the American public associated with the West were drawn from the mythic landscape of the Western movie.

Unlike other genre films, such as the gangster or detective movie, the musical and suburban domestic comedy, and the combat film, the characteristic iconography, material settings and historical references of the Western movie have pre-cinematic roots that gain density, currency and ideological presence through their direct association with the Myth of the Frontier.[5] Before exploring the extent of this association, it would be

appropriate to consider first the intellectual tradition underlying the myth and how that has shaped the conception of the West from which the Western movie draws its referents. The notion of myth must initially be explicated, and its function investigated in order to understand its role in the prevailing attraction of the Western genre.

A working definition of myth may be found in Slotkin's *Gunfighter Nation*, the last of three volumes that follow the historical development of the Myth of the Frontier in American literary, popular, and political culture from the colonial period to the present:

> Myths are stories drawn from a society's history that have acquired through persistent usage the power of symbolizing that society's ideology and of dramatizing its moral consciousness -- with all the complexities and contradictions that consciousness may contain. Over time, through frequent retellings and deployments as a source of interpretive metaphors, the original mythic story is increasingly conventionalized and abstracted until it is reduced to a deeply encoded and resonant set of symbols. . .myth becomes (in this form) a basic constituent of linguistic meaning and of the processes of both personal and social "remembering."[6]

The decoding of a symbol would evoke an implicit understanding of the entire historical scenario that belongs to it: for example, an allusion to "the Frontier" for an American would involve the movement westwards and the conquest of the wilderness with its Native American inhabitants. Revisionist histories explaining the settling of the West later exposed the treachery and exploitation related to the scenario and undermined conceptions of heroism attached to the myth. However, this historical invalidation needs to be separated from the functional validity of myth -- Theodor H. Gaster, a modern myth-ritualist and specialist in folklore of the Near East articulates the view that a

mythic story might "be valid functionally. . .yet be invalid historically, or it might be valid historically, yet be futile and inefficacious as a cultic recitation. Again, it might be a genuine tradition, yet in itself fictitious, or conversely, it might relate an actual, historical fact, yet be a modern product and no genuine traditional composition."[7] The events that shaped the genesis of frontier mythology are partially based on historical fact.

The Myth of the Frontier underwent changes in the course of historical experience that resulted in the acquisition of a new mythology which blended old formulas with contemporary ideas and concerns. A predominant concern of that mythology was of an economic nature. This quality of myth -- its flexibility -- has been noted by Th. P. Van Baaren in his work on myth as a relatively unchanging charter for belief as opposed to a vehicle for the expression of cultural change. Baaren cites an example from Borneo, where among the Dayaks a human sacrifice was required when buildings were erected. When the Dutch government prohibited such sacrifices, the myth of the foundation sacrifice altered such that the slave in the narrative was transformed into a water buffalo. This change enabled the Dayaks to sacrifice a water buffalo instead of a human being.[8] This plasticity is limited; the need for some form of a sacrifice is still present. This limited flexibility is also a feature of the frontier myth and will be explicated in subsequent chapters, where various substitutes take the place of the Indian. The initial production of a set of cognate features on which a national mythology could be built can be witnessed through a chronological observation of the distinct phases of frontier expansion, and the shifting rhetoric of America's politicians. A distinction needs to be made at this point between the Myth of the Frontier and discourses arising from, or about the myth. Eric Dardel, an ethnographer researching the work of Maurice Leenhardt, was led to conclude that "myth projects far beyond the

domain of narrative and even that of language" because narration, written or oral, "does not cover the whole extent of the mythic."[9] The narrative/ literary influences guiding the formation of the frontier myth is the subject of Slotkin's monumental book *Regeneration Through Violence*. His account, as quoted on the back cover, has been hailed by Ray Allen Billington of *The American Historical Review* as definitive. The original influences demonstrated by Slotkin are thus not the focus of this chapter. After outlining the historical frontiers and events involved in the settling of America, the rest of this chapter will devote itself to tracing the features of the Myth as they surface in the political discourses of the time.

The first frontier was the transoceanic. It lasted through to the seventeenth century and ended with the establishment of colonial settlements along the seaboard. The second phase was the increase in population and extension of the rim of settlement from the seaboard to the Alleghenies, in the process overcoming French and Indian opposition and lasting until 1765. Between 1780 and 1800 Americans opened the trans-Allegheny Frontier, and it was succeeded by the Mississippi Valley Frontier which was initiated by Jefferson's purchase of Louisiana. The Mexican Frontier was opened in the 1820s by American settlers in Texas, and the last "internal" Frontier (the area marked off by the former Frontiers of the Mississippi and California) lasted from 1854 to the 1880s, after which much of the land was settled or in productive use for mining and grazing.[10] Differences separated each phase of frontier development but there remained the recurrent phenomenon of sudden leaps forward of the frontier line. This reflected dramatic new acquisitions of land or the sudden spread of settlement to undeveloped regions. The special psychology of Frontier economics emerged out of the succession of speculative booms and cyclical recessions (slow phases of apparent stagnation).

The psychology of Frontier economics is apparent: the vital dynamic of the frontier process prescribes that for the continuance of a good economic performance, the frontier must always be extended. This extension of the frontier became a fundamental requisite of the myth. W.A. Williams enunciates the logic behind this feature when he writes : "given the marketplace-expansionist conception of reality, the end of one frontier implied the need for a new frontier."[11] Williams cites the earliest explicit statement of the same argument from J.A. Kasson of Iowa:

> We are rapidly utilizing the whole of our continental territory. . .We must turn
> our eyes abroad, or they will soon look inward upon discontent.[12]

As recessions would be directly associated with a stationary frontier, effort would be applied to rectify the poor economic performance by new land acquisitions. This land would be acquired from the Indians who occupied it.

The Indian Wars of the 1850s and 1860s were instrumental in contributing to what Richard Drinnon has called "Indian-hating", an essential component of the Myth. Richard White divides the wars into three categories, those that raged on the Great Plains and centred on American attempts to control Indian territory, those that attempted to suppress Indian raiding, and the final group of wars with Indians who tried to maintain their independence from American interference.[13] The first category of wars were the most bitterly fought, and spawned the Sand Creek and Washita massacres. It is important to note that the violence pervading the history of the American West was not solely against the Indians. Conflict in the West also thrived among the WASP Americans and those who were different from them in terms of race, ethnicity, class, religion and other sectional loyalties, with the most significant battles mobilizing large

groups of westerners (white, Chinese, Mexican and Indian) against each other. However the violence is translated in the myth from social conflict to conflict of a personal nature. Richard White provides a convincing explanation for this substitution:

> Myth makes all conflict personal and resolves all conflict with violence. . . Explaining the bloody conflict in the West in terms of personal violence is perhaps appealing to Americans because it allows them to escape asking uncomfortable questions about social conflict. Despite the bloodletting of the Civil War, nineteenth-century Americans took great pride in the ability of their political rule of law, not in the rule of force or violence. Western myth, in effect, validated the larger belief in a society of social peace. Violence existed, the myth said, but the violence was personal, and it largely vanished as society imposed law and order. But if, contrary to the myth, the social order itself sometimes encouraged violence, then the easy reading of western history as the imposition of peace and the rule of law upon a lawless and violent land loses its meaning.[14]

From the historical events of the Indian wars and the hostility between whites and other immigrant groups developed a myth in which a lone frontier hero would confront a single Indian enemy in a climactic and individual battle.

The myth became a dominant influence in America's political ideology, though the most immediate concerns of the literary, ideological and political spokesmen of the "American nation" were not directly given to the frontier. Instead, their most urgent concerns were given to the political economy of the Metropolis. However, statesmen and settlers alike drew on the mythology of the Frontier as a platform on which future Metropolitan centres would be erected.[15]

Qualities of the frontier myth tend to be revealed in the political discourse of the American presidents, as they dealt with the most gripping issues of their time. In

American political and historiographical debates since the 1890s, two strains of the Frontier are identifiable: an "agrarian" Frontier and an "industrial" Frontier. An investigation of the exchange of an old, domestic, agrarian frontier for a new frontier of world power and industrial development would be useful in ascertaining how the frontier myth grew to become a part of nascent national ideology and mythology, and how the Myth adapts to contemporary needs.[16]

The Agrarian Frontier: Hector St. John Crèvecoeur and Thomas Jefferson

The mythic conception of the West implanted in the imagination of nineteenth century America was that of an agrarian utopia. In addition to charting elements of frontier mythology, the significance of a discussion about the agrarian frontier lies also with the changing image of the yeoman farmer. The idealized version of the yeoman as described by Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur was overtaken by the observations of Thomas Jefferson, which were deemed closer to actuality. Jefferson's yeoman exhibits qualities that inexorably link him to the American frontier hero.

Henry Nash Smith provides an illuminating study of the rise and decline of the conception of the West as an agrarian utopia. He ascertains that the myth of the garden was already implicit in the iridescent eighteenth-century vision of continental American Empire. Lewis Evans's prediction of 1775 was that "Wealth and Power. . will naturally arise from the Culture of so great an extent of good land, in a happy climate."[17] Other visions of the future at this stage tended towards the establishment of an urban commercial society. This vision of the future empire in the West is the subject of a

poem written by Philip Freneau and Hugh Henry Brackenridge for their Princeton commencement of 1771:

> and a line of kings,
> High rais'd in glory, cities, palaces,
> Fair domes on each long bay, sea, shore or stream. . .
> . . .
> Hoarse Niagara's stream now roaring on
> Thro' woods and rocks and broken mountains torn,
> In days remote far from their antient beds,
> By some great monarch taught a better course,
> Or cleared of cataracts shall flow beneath
> Unnumbr'd boats and merchandize and men. . . .[18]

Their vision of the future was reasonably accurate concerning the remote future of the Middle West. There was, however, a long period of development to intervene during which the West was devoted to agriculture, a fact on the plane of rational and imaginative interpretation to emerge as an agrarian social theory. The materials for such a theory were present from the 1750s in the writings of Benjamin Franklin. In the late 1780s, Franklin declared that "the great Business of the Continent. . . is Agriculture. For one Artisan, or Merchant, I suppose, we have at least 100 Farmers, by far the greatest part Cultivators of their own fertile lands. . .". He saw the body of the nation consisting of "industrious frugal farmers, inhabiting the interior Part of these states. . .".[19] The best known expositors of the agrarian philosophy in the generation after Franklin were Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur and Thomas Jefferson.

During the 1780s and 1790s, Crèvecoeur's *Letters From an American Farmer* were published and achieved great popularity. He took it for granted that American society would expand indefinitely westward:

> Many ages [he exclaimed] will not see the shores of our great lakes replenished with inland nations, nor the unknown bounds of North America entirely peopled. Who can tell how far it extends? Who can tell the millions of men whom it will feed and contain? For no European foot has yet traveled half the extent of this mighty continent![20]

The nature of this society, a majority of farmers (as with Franklin), was also explicit -- it was a society sustained by the soil:

> What would we American farmers be without the distinct possession of that soil? It feeds, it clothes. . .it has established all our rights; on it is founded our rank, our freedom, our power as citizens, our inhabitants of such a district.[21]

Generally, society would be divided into three main sections: a fringe of backwoods settlements, a central region of comfortable farms, and a region of growing wealth, cities and social stratification to the East. Undesirable social conditions would persist in the first and last sections, but the middle condition would offer opportunity for human virtue and happiness. This literary discourse places further emphasis on the requisite for westward expansion -- to maintain the integrity of the central area and accommodate the expansion of the city, then the frontiers must continually be extended. The inhabitants of the backwoods settlements are described in the following:

When dischord, want of unity and friendship, when either drunkenness or idleness prevail in such remote districts, contention, inactivity, and wretchedness must ensue. There are not the same remedies to these evils as in a long-established community. . .

There men appear to be no better than carnivorous animals of a superior rank, living on the flesh of wild animals when they can catch them, and when they are not able, they subsist on grain. . .

There, remote from the power of example and check of shame, many families exhibit the most hideous parts of our society.[22]

The equation of men at the frontier with bestial qualities and thus a corresponding acculturation to the Indian was also to become intrinsic to the Myth. Crèvecoeur believed that in the simple agricultural communities comprising the bulk of the American colonies equality of station, combined with a security that arose from the ownership of property and the hope of increasing that property fosters a general sentiment of benevolence.[23] The middle section is given this positive description:

Here everything would inspire the reflecting traveler with the most philanthropic ideas; his imagination, instead of submitting to the painful and useless retrospect of revolutions, desolations, and plagues, would, on the contrary, widely spring forward to the anticipated fields of cultivation and improvement, to the future extent of those generations which are to replenish and embellish this boundless continent.[24]

The realm of the American farmer is a utopian district, freed from the Indian menace (the "dreadful enemy") of the remote backwoods settlements and the corruption of the city.[25] In Crèvecoeur's paradigm, the significance of the cultivated land outweighs that of the frontier, where confrontation with the Indian takes place. This confrontation is, however, incipient in the agrarian myth of the frontier.

The centrality of agriculture in the American economy and its status as a "growth sector" in the 1790's provided the rationale for Jefferson to identify agrarian enterprise as the characteristic form that economic growth would take in the republic. The Frontier, comprised of newly acquired lands, promises complete felicity, the satisfaction of all demands and the reconciliation of all contradictions. Like Crèvecoeur, in Jefferson's mythic terminology, the "city" is the symbolic place in which class conflicts tend to become irreconcilable, and lead to despotism. The processes of commerce that generate urban prosperity produce the very conditions of collapse, in creating separate and antagonistic classes of the very rich and the very poor. The dependence of poor upon rich, degrading in the best of times, may be converted by hard times into a basis for extreme revolutionary behaviour.

Jefferson differed from Crèvecoeur in his opposition to the character and the ideology of the "yeoman farmer" -- a free individual, living on his own land, independent of others for the necessaries of life yet depending on his fellow citizens (and society in general) for protection, law, and civilized amenities. Jefferson saw that the yeoman in actuality did not live up to this ideal: because the yeoman possesses a share of property (and therefore of political power) he is a sturdy defender of property as an institution, and of the social system that authorizes and sustains property holding. Because he is not dependent on the rich for his subsistence, he is politically free; but because he acquiesces in the social arrangement, he does not wish to challenge the wealth, standing or authority of his "betters".[26] Jefferson's observations stemmed from his pre-occupation with Republicanism and democracy. His fears were voiced by David Ramsay, who put his finger on the discrepancy between American governments and the society they were supposed to embody; despite the general commitment by the constitution-makers to "the

propriety of a compound legislature" (the establishment of different houses of legislation to introduce the influence of different interests and principles), "the mode of creating two branches" in the American social environment proved to be "a matter of difficulty". Since in America "none were entitled to any rights, but such as were common to all," the framers of the constitutions could not "erect different orders of men" at the same time as ensuring that "all government be ultimately in the hands of the people, whose right it is."[27]

This problem regarding the unity of interests was exacerbated in the 1780s when property was isolated as a distinct ingredient of the society that must be separately embodied in the government. The emphasis now lay on "the different and discordant interests existing in all societies", the various groups and parties -- creditors, debtors, farmers, manufacturers, merchants, professionals -- who would 'for convenience' all be subsumed under "names, invented long ago, the democratic and aristocratic factions," or better, those who possess "the rights of persons" and those who possess "the rights of property."[28] This rigid division between persons and property failed to distribute the rights of the people justly and violated the homogeneity of interests on which republicanism was based.

Consequently, instead of a national character composed of a community of placid yeomen (as celebrated in Crèvecoeur's *Letters*) the society appeared to be filled with inveterate grumblers. Among Americans, "the idea of inferiority, as of pursuing a mean employment or occupation. . .mortifies the feelings, and joins the minds of those who feel themselves inferior". The people were "the offspring of envy and disappointed ambition" possessed by "a general uneasiness". "Every man wants to be a judge, a justice, a sheriff, a deputy, or something else which will bring him a little money, or what

is better, a little authority".[29] Conversely, the point of "Andrew the Hebridean", Crèvecoeur's famous fable of the archetypal immigrant boy who finds success in the New World[30], is that prosperity may be found within the boundaries of civilization, and that opportunity may be seized without excessive individualism and with a natural and enlightened self-interest observed by all parties.[31] Crèvecoeur writes:

> All I wish to delineate is the progressive steps of a poor man, advancing from
> indigence to ease, from oppression to freedom, from obscurity to contumely to
> some degree of consequence -- not by virtue of any freaks of fortune, but by
> the gradual operation of sobriety, honesty and emigration.[32]

Andrew's journey culminates when he is "independent and easy. . .unencumbered with debts, services, rents, or any other dues; the successes of a campaign" for "the laurels of war, must be purchased at the dearest rate" "makes every cool, reflecting citizen to tremble and shudder". Crèvecoeur concludes the tale on an advisory note: "By the literal account hereunto annexed, you will easily be made acquainted with the happy effects which constantly flow, in this country, from sobriety and industry, when united with good land and freedom".[33]

Jefferson opposed this notion of the farmer because he saw that the men who responded to agrarian expansion were different from Crèvecoeur's Andrew. These men included ambitious cotton planters, land speculators and artisan-entrepreneurs who aggressively exploited the opportunity of frontier windfall, motivated by self-interest and calculated mostly for the short term. They were unlikely to be complaisant with the established leaders of society (the representatives of civilization), or to adapt the manners and morality of high culture. Thus in territorial expansions they proceeded with

the dispossession of Indians without waiting for the justification by operations of Indian policy, and risked interest-group conflict in their acquisition of financial success.[34] Jefferson's reaction to this new class became a blueprint for the character of the national frontier hero and shifted the focus towards the relations between the border and the wilderness. Crèvecoeur, on the other hand, emphasised the internal relations that centre on the world of the farmer. Jefferson placed greater attention on the population inhabiting the borders and drew from the language of race to call them half-breeds, with the implication that their character was savage or Indian-like, that they were white men who had deserted civilization for Indian ways.[35] With this development, the white-Indian opposition and the idea of acculturation was strengthened in the myth.

The opposition appeared to express historical conflict in simple and agreeable terms, thus whatever the class, religious, or political differences within colonial or Revolutionary society, the appearance of the Indian challenge evoked instant appreciation of the fundamental common ground.[36] Though Jefferson opposed the yeoman ideal, the agrarian myth and the ideal of yeoman society continued to flourish well into the 1850s. This ideology of the yeoman farmer is evident in the 1851 speech made by Representative George W. Julian, an intellectual heir of Thomas Jefferson:

> The life of a farmer is peculiarly favorable to virtue; and both individuals and communities are generally happy in proportion as they are virtuous. His manners are simple, and his nature unsophisticated. If not oppressed by other interests, he generally possesses an abundance without the drawback of luxury. His life does not impose excessive toil, and yet discourages idleness. The farmer lives in rustic plenty, remote from the contagion of popular vices, and enjoys, in their greatest fruition, the blessings of health and contentment. . . . The pleasures and virtues of rural life have been the theme of poets and philosophers in all ages. The tillage of the soil was the primeval employment

of man. Of all arts, it is the most useful and necessary. It has justly been styled the nursing father of the State; for in civilized countries all are equally dependent upon it for the means of subsistence.[37]

This symbol of the yeoman farmer was later seized by the Republican orators in the campaign of 1860 for the Homestead Bill. The results of that bill, conversely, would work against the notion of an agrarian utopia.

The Agrarian Frontier provided a rationalization of economic patterns. With Jefferson, the ideal of the contented yeoman so celebrated in the agrarian frontier was found lacking because of its inability to articulate the more contemporaneous view of the farming community, and this image was corrected as the myth adapted to the new understanding. A new dimension was also added in the emphasis on a fundamental racial conflict that would carry on into Turner's Frontier Thesis. The notion of an agrarian frontier itself would not persist -- with the forces of industrialization that descended upon the American States, there was a need to adapt the idea of the Frontier to incorporate the socio-economic transformations.

The Industrial Frontier: William Gilpin's "*Untransacted* Destiny"

Between 1815 and 1870 the United States experienced a time of uninterrupted and swift economic expansion. During that period the country grew from an agrarian adjunct of the European economic system to a leading industrial and financial world power, superseding the industrial nations in railroad mileage and in other key areas of heavy industrial production. The solid foundation of the economy was such that even the destruction wrought by the Civil War did not alter the economic growth curve of the

nation as a whole. This cycle of economic expansion coincided with a period of dramatic geographical expansion. By conquest and purchase, the American government acquired land that was sufficient to double the size of the nation. Successive waves of settlers from the flourishing populations of the States as well as from Europe populated the undeveloped land. Slotkin concludes that it was perhaps an inevitability for these two dramatic expansions to be linked in American historical mythology and that the westward movement of population be read as a cause -- even as *the* cause -- of American economic development.

In the period of agrarian expansion, the economic language of profit-and-loss employed by prospective investors, statesmen, and settlers drew on the Myth of the Garden (the West as Agrarian utopia) in support of their colonizing enterprises. From the initial transoceanic phases of Frontier development to the 1880s, the new territory was advertised as a Garden of Eden endowed with wealth and fertility to be settled by men forewarned of serpents.[38] The restorative and regenerative power of the land was emphasized: it contained the ability to redeem the fortunes of those fallen from high estate, and provided an arena for moral heroism. However, in the passage of time, the Myth of the Garden became an increasingly inaccurate description of a society transformed by commerce and industry -- signalled by the arrival of new economic and technological forces, especially the power of steam working through river boats and locomotives. The greatest blow to belief in the Myth arose from the failure of the homestead system, itself an incongruity within the period of Industrial revolution.

The dream of an agrarian utopia became ready for realization at the end of the Civil War on the basis of the Homestead Act.[39] Following the Civil War, the impetus of the Westward movement and the implied pledge of the victorious Republican party to

develop the West were powerful forces urging the onward progress of the Agricultural Frontier. The intellectual framework of the Republican homestead programme was the National Reform doctrine propounded by George Henry Evans and his followers. National Reform influenced Republican theory through leaders such as Greely and Galusha A. Grow.[40] The contention of this doctrine was that free land in the West would attract unemployed or underpaid laborers from industrial cities, thus preventing a labor surplus of workmen in factories. Republicans had thus joined with Democrats in supporting the measure with two goals in mind: to provide an agricultural "safety valve" for surplus or discontented workers, and a Western population base for an enlarged domestic market for manufactured goods.[41] The greatest appeal of the homestead system to the West, however, lay in the belief that it would enact the agrarian utopia of hardy and virtuous yeomen which had pervaded the imaginations of writers about the West since the time of Crèvecoeur.[42]

The Homestead Act passed the Senate in May 1862. With the predictions accompanying the Act, the image of the garden in the West became an article of national faith. Horace Greely predicted that the new system would greatly lessen the number of paupers and idlers in favor of "working, independent, self-subsisting farmers in the land evermore".[43] He was confident that ultimately millions of dwellers in city slums would go West to establish homes for their children, erasing the possibility of future serious unemployment for the United States.[44] In 1867 Greely was still trying to convince the unemployed city laborer:

> if you strike off into the broad, free West, and make yourself a farm from
> Uncle Sam's generous domain, you will crowd nobody, starve nobody, and. . .
> neither you nor your children need evermore beg for Something to Do.[45]

Thirty years following the passage of the Homestead Act, it became evident that the Act wholly failed to live up to its predictions.

Henry Nash Smith calculates that between the passing of the Homestead Act in 1862 and 1890, only 372,659 entries were perfected:

> Vast land grants to railways, failure to repeal the existing laws that played into the hands of speculators by allowing purchase of government lands, and cynical evasion of the law determined the actual working of the public land system. . .At most, two millions of persons comprising the families of actual settlers could have benefited from the system, during a period when the population of the nation increased by thirty-two millions, and that of the Western States within which most of the homesteading took place, by more than ten millions.[46]

Fred Shannon, a historian, also saw that perhaps only a tenth of the new farms settled between 1860 and 1900 were acquired under the Act; the rest were bought either directly from land or railroad companies (beneficiaries of huge land grants) or from the states. With the failure of the Homestead Act, the Myth of the agrarian utopia was destroyed. The Homestead Act would, however, prove instrumental in furthering the incorporation of Western lands into the Eastern Industrial system.[47] The Myth of the Frontier persisted in its translation into another form -- that of an Industrial Frontier.

As part of the agrarian programme, the exploitation of western resources by individuals or groups of settlers, artisans and entrepreneurs were seen to be responsible for the growth of the American economy. However, even during the period of agrarian expansion, the growth of the economy owed as much to developments occurring within the city: entrepreneurial and technological innovation, industrialization, changes in public

education and the growth of the workforce, as well as high rates of productivity.[48] The vision of an industrial Frontier was most elaborately developed by William Gilpin, an advisor to government and business on western and railroad matters, and the governor of the Colorado territory (appointed in 1861).[49]

Gilpin's insistence that the West contained an infinite supply of resources and his acknowledgment that the agrarian Frontier was restricted by the outer limits of productivity pushed him to locate another resource reservoir: this resource reservoir took the form of precious minerals. He asserted that an infinite supply of gold, in addition to the energies represented by the enterprise of the railroad, would make the industrial system a substitute for the agrarian Frontier, offering to an unlimited population of free men the same future promise of infinite opportunity to fulfill their rising expectations.[50] The crucial requisite of expansion in the myth (and the contradictory expression of its democratic nature) was thus retained in this translation. In Gilpinian rhetoric, the American race is possessed of a mission to expand the boundaries of civilization, and to "regenerate" the moral and political character of civilization in that process:

> The *untransacted* destiny of the American people is to subdue the continent --
> to rush over this vast field to the Pacific Ocean -- to animate the many
> hundred millions of people, and to cheer them upward. . . -- to agitate these
> herculean masses -- to establish a new order in human affairs. . . -- to
> regenerate superannuated nations -- . . . to stir up the sleep of a hundred
> centuries -- to teach the old nations a new civilization -- to confirm the destiny
> of the human race -- to carry the career of mankind to its culminating point--
> to cause a stagnant people to be reborn -- to perfect science -- to emblazon
> history with the conquest of peace -- to shed a new and resplendent glory upon
> mankind -- to unite the world in one social family -- to dissolve the spell of

tyranny and exalt charity -- to absolve the curse that weighs down humanity, and to shed blessings around the world.[51]

In the above, the mythology of racial struggle incipient in the agrarian Frontier of Jefferson is invoked, gaining greater emphasis for the purposes of advancing the industrial Frontier. The "*untransacted* destiny of the American people" is to "subdue" the "herculean masses" and "stagnant people" (of Latin America, Europe and Asia), and so "shed blessings around the world". The material means for bringing about this shower of blessings was a Pacific railway built along a central route passing through Missouri and the Rocky Mountains.[52] This railway would bridge the American continent and serve as the line of communication between Europe and Asia.

On its surface, the exchange of an agrarian Frontier for an industrial Frontier would produce a geographically antithetical society: a society created by great urban centres and divided by classes of capitalists and workers. The values of agrarian ideology proved, however, to be similar to those of industrial entrepreneurship. The fantasy of the yeoman as politically passive and deferential was not borne out in actuality -- though the ideal yeoman farmer was envisioned as "contented" in all practical contexts, this image was in contradiction with the Jeffersonian yeoman who emerged as "an expectant capitalist, a hardworking, ambitious person for whom enterprise was a kind of religion, [who] everywhere. . . found conditions that encouraged him to extend himself".[53] Farmers found accuracy in Adam Smith's *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of* Nations, first published in 1776. Man was defined primarily in terms of his unique and inherent "propensity to truck, barter and exchange one thing for another" in the marketplace.[54] Basing his system upon the individual's self-love rather than upon any urge or propensity to realize the ideals of benevolence or freedom, Smith

saw that "the consideration of his own profit is the sole motive which determines the owner of any capital to employ it."[55] Farmers would be limited "by the extent of the market", and thus "the surplus must be sent abroad."[56] Economic expansion rather than contentment with what one already has, was the dynamic factor in the proper functioning of Smith's system that American agricultural businessmen were attracted to. Expansion was essential. The other common factor which follows and draws from both agrarian and industrial Frontiers was the conquering of the natural wilderness. This conquest gained a more sinister tone with the industrial Frontier, as an "untransacted destiny" the advancing of the frontier was more intimately linked to the necessity and historical sanctioning of violence. With the agricultural frontier, the ideology of placid yeomen would not advance notions of violence in the extension of property; however, the discourse surrounding the Jeffersonian yeoman and the conversion to an industrial frontier focusses on the moral justification of violence. This justification was needed as the new understanding of Crèvecoeur's yeoman revealed that he was individualistic in his pursuits, and that the outcome of these pursuits to "subdue the continent" was the initial subjugation of another race -- the Indian.

A corollary of the "*untransacted* destiny" of Gilpin's vision is not the integration of different races into "one social family." The Indian title and cultural existence were not preserved. They were obstacles to progress, legitimate targets of extermination, and their rights were not to be recognized by civilized society. Gilpin wrote, "war has been to our progressive nation the fruitful season of generating new offspring", and applied this without differentiation to the native Americans, as well as to Europe and Asia. The violence exerted against the Indians exemplifies American interaction with "superannuated" races and will be dealt with in the following section. Progress was

increasingly seen to be dependent on the extermination/ exclusion of a regressive, "stagnant" type of humanity and on the aggrandizement of a privileged race or people.

The Myth of the Frontier was thus in process of reformulation as Frontier symbolism was adapted to emergent industrialization. The ideological response of America's intellectual spokesmen and its public to the Frontier led to the substitution of an agrarian Frontier for an industrial Frontier. The Myth conformed to the concerns of the industrial era and survived historical change to continue as a document of American national character. The fact of the agrarian and industrial Frontiers, on the other hand, retained their mythic appeal as clichés in historical memory.

With the translation of the Frontier from agrarian to industrial the centrality of violence to the American character was manifest. The propensity of frontier mythology to assimilate new economic developments (the change from an agrarian economic system to an industrial one) merely illustrates the superficial reflections of a deeper agenda: the moral justification of violence that is the basis of economic progress.

Regeneration through Violence: Slotkin and Turner's Frontier

The definition of myth given in the first part of this chapter describes the process of mythic formulation: "stories drawn from a society's history" are frequently retold and deployed as a source of interpretative metaphors, until the original mythic story (associated with the Westward expansion of the American nation) is "conventionalized", "abstracted" and "reduced to a deeply encoded and resonant set of symbols". The frontiers envisaged by Crèvecoeur, Jefferson and Gilpin are "stories" that contribute to this mythic process, and provide the material sources for the Frontier Thesis that Turner

would later systematize. The common element in all their visions is the conquest of the wilderness, and the drive for expansion that necessitated the crossing of borders. With the application of Slotkin's version of the frontier myth to Turner's thesis this conquest of the wilderness and its subsequent regeneration of American spirit (and achievement of national identity) would be more intimately related to violence.

The ideology embodied by the frontier myth is expressed in a narrative that plays through a scenario of separation, temporary regression to a more "natural state", and regeneration through violence.[57] This journey would be carried out by a frontier hero -- when history is translated into myth, the complexities of social and historical experiences are simplified and compressed into the action of representative individuals or "heroes".[58] In essence, the journey through the moral landscape of the frontier myth involves the crossing of boundaries, the frontier hero must abstract or "separate" himself from his metropolitan culture, cross the Indian/White border, into "Indian country", and experience a "regression" to a more primitive and natural condition of life. This notion of the wilderness mastering the colonist and being the catalyst of his regression to a more primitive state is evident in the following passage from the Turner thesis:

> The frontier is the line of most rapid and effective Americanization. The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in a birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. It puts him in a log cabin of the Cherokee and Iroquois and runs an Indian palisade around him. Before long he has gone planting Indian corn and plowing with a sharp stick; he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion. In short, at the frontier the environment is at first too strong for the man. He must accept the conditions which it furnishes, or perish, and so he fits himself into the Indian

clearings and follows the Indian trails. Little by little he transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe. . .here is a new product that is American.[59]

In this regression to a more primitive condition of life, the frontier hero is purged of the false values of the metropolis (the old Europe) and finds himself a new, purified social contract. In this more natural state, the hero undergoes a spiritual or psychological struggle where he learns to defeat savagery in two senses: the physical wilderness and the wilderness of the human soul. This conquest leads to a purification or regeneration, and the means to that regeneration is violence.

The myth of "regeneration through violence" did not only arise out of the historical and political circumstances previously discussed; though pervading these later circumstances it finds its source in the personal narratives developed during the initial experiences of colonial experience, particularly the colonialist's accounts of the Indian Wars. The first of these was the "captivity narrative" which had the Christian theme of redemption through suffering, the second the Indian-war story which celebrated the conquests of Indian fighters. The captive (usually a white woman) of the first narrative symbolizes the values of Christianity and civilization that are put at stake in the wilderness war. The state of captivity is likened to a spiritual darkness akin to "madness"; though this scenario of historical action emphasizes the weakness of colonial power, the captive does vindicate her moral character and the values she symbolizes.[60] The Indian-war story enacts a triumphalist historical scenario in which a white male uses his intimate knowledge of Indians and skill in adapting their tactics to overcome the enemy. The outcome of this second narrative is a victorious conquest. The integration of the formulas and ideological themes of these two narratives produced a single unified

Myth of the Frontier, in which "the triumph of civilization over savagery is symbolized by the hunter/warrior's rescue of the White woman held captive by savages."[61] This Myth of the Frontier may be understood with greater clarity when viewed as a diagrammatic construct charting the progress of the Frontier Hero:

CYCLE OF "REGENERATION THROUGH VIOLENCE"

(1) SEPARATION: From False Values of Metropolis
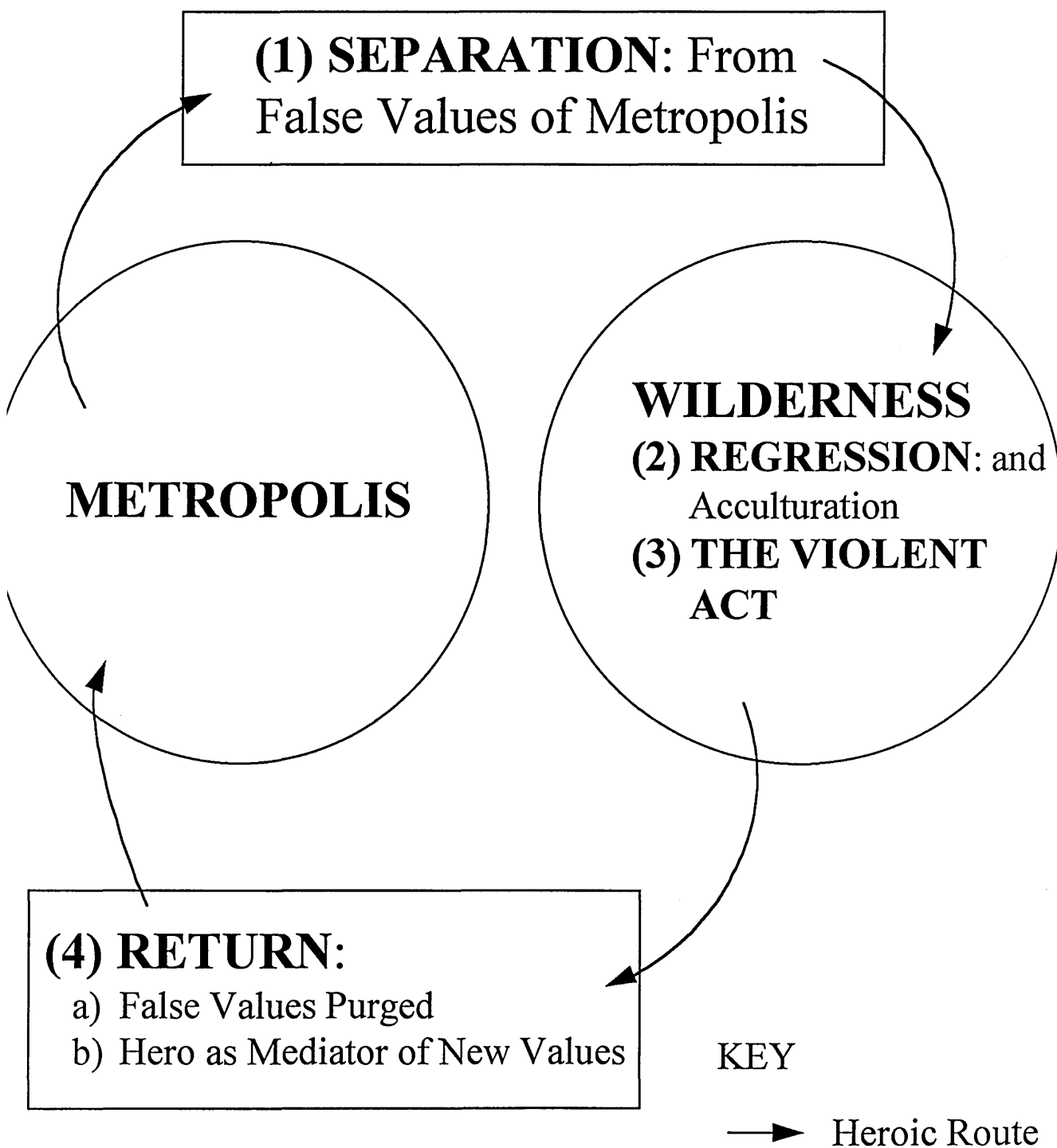
METROPOLIS

WILDERNESS
(2) REGRESSION: and Acculturation
(3) THE VIOLENT ACT

(4) RETURN:
a) False Values Purged
b) Hero as Mediator of New Values

KEY

⟶ Heroic Route

The functions of canvassing the world of events, the spectrum of public concerns, the recalling of historical precedents and of translating these into various story-genres (or narratives) that constitute a public mythology, has in modern society been provided by the mass media.[62] The mythologies of the mass media are most clearly seen in the productions of its cultural industries; the mythology produced by the mass media is the form of cultural production that addresses most directly the concerns of Americans as citizens of a nation state of which Hollywood cinema is a prime example.[63] In *Imagined Communities,* Benedict Anderson notes the function of the newspaper, and this provides a useful parallel to the movie as a form of cultural production. Anderson turns to the newspaper as cultural product, noting that the establishment of print-languages laid the bases for national consciousness in creating unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars:

> In a rather special sense, the book was the first modern-style mass-produced industrial commodity. . .the newspaper is merely an 'extreme' form of the book, a book sold on a colossal scale, but of ephemeral popularity. Might we say: one-day best-sellers? The obsolescence of the newspaper on the morrow of its printing- curious that one of the earlier mass-produced commodities should so prefigure the inbuilt obsolescence of modern durables- nonetheless, for this reason, creates this extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption ('imagining') of the newspaper-as-fiction. . .The significance of this mass ceremony -- Hegel observed that newspapers serve modern man as a substitute for modern prayers -- is paradoxical. It is performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull. Yet each communicant is aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by

thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion.[64]

This "extraordinary mass ceremony" that Anderson observes in the consumption of the daily newspaper is also a characteristic of movie-watching. Movie viewers congregate in the same place, simultaneously consuming a mass-produced commodity: when we extend this mass viewing not only to the movies but to videos, the ceremony performed by "each communicant" is replicated by even more people "of whose existence he is confident", but of whose identity he may not have "the slightest notion". When we relate Anderson's observation to the Western, the Myth of the Frontier encapsulated by and emanating from this movie genre is the mythology that survives through this mass ceremony as long as it addresses the concerns of Americans as citizens of a nation state, and the extensive popularity of the Western testifies that the myth has remained pertinent in this function.

The Myth of the Frontier has pervaded expressions of American culture in its varied forms; some examples are the pamphlet, the dime novel, the nineteenth-century historical romance, the stage melodrama, the Wild West show, and the modern paperback. Evidence of references to frontier mythology, however, are more observably direct in the movie Western, with its associated film narratives, images and characterizations. Contemporary transmissions of the myth and modifications to it are centrally located in Hollywood's Westerns, where the American public may experience the mythic landscape of the frontier, rather than from the work of Frederick Jackson Turner and other writers involved in the genesis of the myth. In this process of translation from its literary successors onto a new film medium, the myth acquired different nuances as its images and ideas were adapted to suit the needs, preferences,

and ultimately the commercial requirements of the filmmakers. In his introduction to *Gunfighter Nation* Slotkin writes:

> Within the structured marketplace of myths, the continuity and persistence of particular genres may be seen as keys to identifying a culture's deepest and most persistent concerns. Likewise, major breaks in the development of important genres may signal the presence of a significant crisis of cultural values within the structured marketplace of myths, the continuity and persistence of particular and organization. *The development of new genres, or the substantial modification of existing ones, can be read as a signal of active ideological concern in which both the producers and consumers of mass media participate -- producers as exploitative promulgators and "proprietors" of their mythic formulations, consumers as respondents capable of dismissing a given mythic formulation or of affiliating with it.*[65]
>
> <div align="right">My Emphasis</div>

The history of the Western (film or literary) genre as a form of mass popular culture is thus directly related to the development of a popular ideology of American nationality and to the creation of nationwide networks of production and distribution. Between the Civil War and the Great War, new technologies were utilized to meet the demands of an expanding and increasingly polyglot culture with varied and complex needs and tastes; the nature of cultural production became fully industrialized by the 1920s and grew to be the clearest expression of the American national identity. Mechanization made possible the mass production of culture in the form of consumable objects. Alan Tractenberg writes:

> The same process which fragmented labor into minute mechanical tasks, which brought into cities new masses of people experiencing wage labor for

the first time, thus destroyed old forms of labor and community, old cultures of work and shared pleasures. . .As old cultures dissolved, a new culture of mechanically produced goods and values arose in their place; the same process which produced insecurities at the same time pandered new images of security in home and consumption, in goods inscribed with culture.[66]

The mythologies of the popular culture industry are intimately linked to the expressions of American identity through these goods (for example, movies) which are "inscribed with culture".[67]

The emphasis that this thesis places on the Western movie may be justified by the centrality of moving pictures in modern culture and the pervasive influence of moving picture images on the language of literature and politics, a centrality witnessed by Roger Schank in *Dynamic Memory*.[68] The aim of the following chapters is to investigate the significance of movie Westerns as a site for negotiating adaptations to the frontier myth, and the transmission of its ideology. The immediate chapter following focuses on the formula of the Western, and the expression of the frontier myth in film narrative.

3 The Western Formula and Film Narrative
Playing the Game

> . . .the world of a formula can be described as an archetypal story pattern embodied in the images, symbols, themes, and myths of a particular culture. As shaped by the imperatives of the experience of escape, these formulaic worlds are constructions that can be described as moral fantasies constituting an imaginary world in which the audience can encounter a maximum of excitement without being confronted with an overpowering sense of the insecurity and danger that accompany such forms of excitement in reality. Much of the artistry of formulaic literature involves the creator's ability to plunge us into a believable kind of excitement while, at the same time, confirming our confidence that in the formulaic world things always work out the way we want them to.[1]
>
> John G. Cawelti

In chapter one, formula, an entity distinct from but a part of genre, was defined as the synthesis of a particular set of cultural conventions with a more universal narrative or archetype. These various conventions are temporal, specific to certain cultures and subject to change, while archetypes appeal to many cultures at different time periods. Patterns of convention may thus be seen to belong to the surface structure of formula, while the story form or archetype is a part of its deep structure. The second chapter discusses myth in much the same fashion, as composed of a surface structure (the historical clichés of agrarianism and industrialism) and the deeper structure of regeneration through violence. The relationship between formula and myth is

problematic, for they seem almost interchangeable. There exists a link at the level of their deep structures: the narrative or archetype played out by the formula relates to the deep structure of myth. At this level the myth underlies the historical discourse that makes it explicit (at different time periods) and persists after the events have become clichés.

Both surface structures of myth and formula are temporal, where changes in convention relate to the historical transfigurations of the mythic veneer. Changes in the formula can be charted synchronically and diachronically, to use terms introduced in F. de Saussure's posthumous *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916). For Saussure the 'synchronic' is a study of form or content independent of historical setting, authorship or literary origins, while a 'diachronic' study considers sources and redactions[2]; a 'diachronic' study of the Western formula would thus take the frontier myth into account. Schatz's model of generic evolution leans towards the former. In this sense conventions are diachronic, subject to the meanings assigned to them at different time periods, while archetypes are synchronic, being ahistorical and mostly inert. Synchronic variations in the formula are independent of the historical context and do not arise from developments in the myth. Diachronic permutations in the formula's representation of the myth accommodate cultural change, and appear to signal that the myth undergoes change as well. However the diachronic changes in formula do not always extend beyond the surface structure of the myth. The pro-Indian perspective in *Dances with Wolves* (1990) for example, has been hailed by Jane Tompkins as the "one movie" that "represents Native Americans in a serious, sympathetic way".[3] It would be convenient to situate this alteration in the Western formula's conventional representation of the Indian as savage in a post-Civil Rights Movement context, and to suggest an

accompanying revision of the core element of white supremacy in the Myth of the Frontier. The attempts at faithful representations of race associated with the cultural awareness of America in the 1980s up to the present do relate to diachronic changes in formula that are a response to challenges raised against the Frontier Myth. These changes modify the surface of the myth, altering the vessels of its discourse. However, at the level of its deep structure, the myth remains static. The following diagram illustrates these structural components of the frontier myth in relation to the Western:

STRUCTURE AND VARIATION OF
FRONTIER MYTH AND WESTERN

SURFACE

SYNCHRONIC ← → DIACRHONIC

A   B

C

DEEP
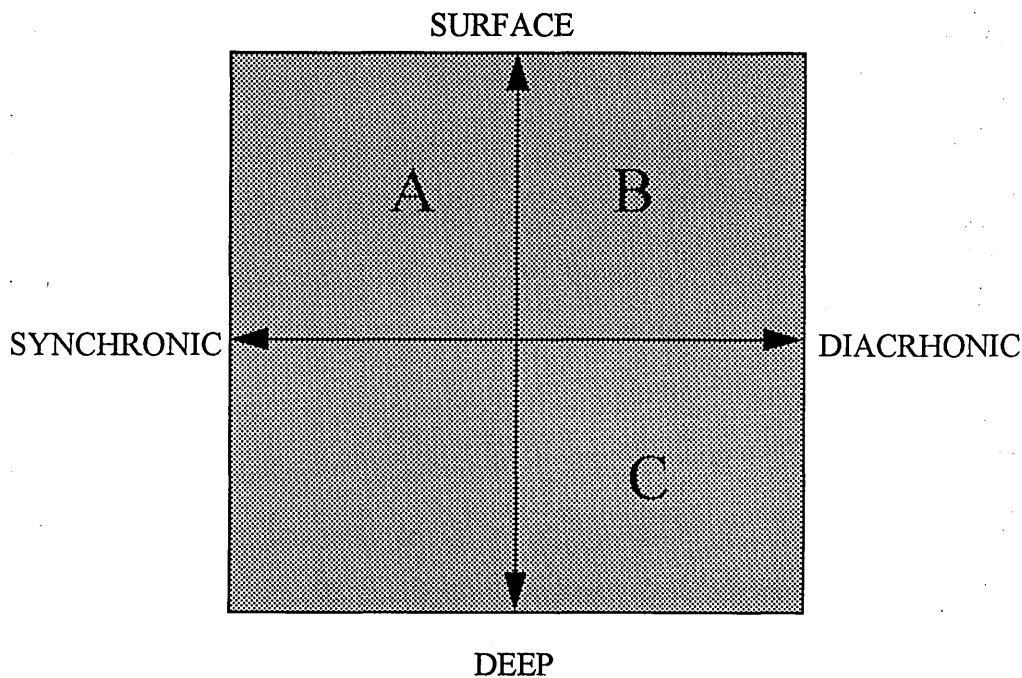
A: Synchronic variation of Western formula
   e.g. novels, films, television dramas and comic books.

B: Diachronic changes as response to historical change affecting
   surface level of myth, i.e. conventions and symbols
   e.g. Indian representation in *Dances With Wolves* responding
   to events of 1960s and 1970s.

C: Diachronic changes as response to historical change affecting
   deep level of myth, i.e. narrative and archetype
   e.g. migration of frontier discourse from Western to Gangster
   formula responding to events of 1920s and 1930s.

This quality of inertia is facilitated by the diachronic changes in formula which fulfil two functions -- firstly the cultural contexts that undermine the myth are accommodated while, secondly, ideological negotiations that aim to re-secure the status quo simultaneously take place. At certain times cultural changes may subvert the myth to such an extent that these functions cannot be performed within the same formula. The reasons for this are a severe loss of faith in the myth and the active role of the spectator in rejecting genres that explicitly manifest the myth's core elements. In the instance of the early part of the Great Depression, for example, the Western formula was substantially abandoned, and the discourse of the frontier myth emerged in another formula -- the Gangster film. This implicit communication of the discourse of frontier mythology in other formulas than the Western as a route to re-securing ideological validity is mirrored in the 1970s, when the Vietnam War led to a questioning that undermined the very foundations of the frontier myth. The frontier discourse that emerges in the 1930s, however, does signal a temporary revision to the myth at its deep structure, an argument that will be developed in the following chapters. The instrumentality of genres is evident in the processes of ideological negotiation that seek to restore credibility to the frontier myth in the 1930s and the 1970s.

This third chapter discusses the relationship between myth and formula and considers the various components of the Western formula by demonstrating the ideological import they possess. The latter consideration will have an emphasis on charting synchronic and diachronic variations in the formula's representation of myth.

The Frontier Myth and the Western Formula

Cawelti contests the argument that the concept of formula he is developing in *The Six-Gun Mystique* is merely a variation on the idea of myth.[4] In *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance*, from which the opening quotation is derived, Cawelti goes a step further. He argues that distinguishing formula has two "great advantages" over the notion of myth: firstly, formula requires a more encompassing concentration on the whole story while myth grants attention to "any given element that is arbitrarily selected". Thus,

> A myth can be almost anything -- a particular type of character, one among
> many ideas, a certain kind of action -- but a formula is essentially a set of
> generalizations about the way in which all the elements of a story have been
> put together. . .This feature of the concept leads us to its second advantage: to
> connect a mythical pattern with the rest of human behaviour requires tenuous
> and debatable assumptions, while the relation between formulas and other
> aspects of life can be explored more directly and empirically as a question of
> why certain groups of people enjoy certain stories.[5]

Cawelti's defence of a formula approach over a myth approach to the study of literature is persuasive, but it does not necessarily hold in relation to the subject of this thesis. Myths can be almost anything, in the same way that formulas can be composed by many different elements, but as its name suggests, the American Myth of the Frontier is specific to a particular nation of people -- it is a specific cultural myth, as distinct from other myths as the Western formula is distinct from the detective formula. The American Frontier Myth is also one of the modes via which American society expresses its complex of feelings, values and ideas; myth has the power of symbolizing the ideology of a society. It is this cultural expression of ideology that ultimately shapes the

Western formula. The Western formula is thus a literary and cultural expression of the frontier myth. The connection between myth and "the rest of human behaviour" may require "tenuous and debatable assumptions", but the direct link between the frontier myth and the Western formula cannot be denied. The basic distinction then, is not so much that formula allows for a more holistic assessment of literary products, but that they are discrete with different functions in society.

The social function of myth lies in its power of explaining problems that arise in the course of historical experience (and justifying the actions employed in overcoming these problems) through its ability to influence our perception of contemporary reality: new phenomena are interpreted according to their resemblance to a remembered happening. Myths are the symbolic models against which the states and processes of the material world are tested.[6] In the course of experience, these models are either confirmed or subjected to revision. With the frontier myth, indications of the balance of change and continuity are reflected in developments within the Western genre. The Western formula embodies the ideology of the frontier myth and is its external manifestation: changes in the myth's credibility are reflected, and are made tangible through the outward performance of the formula, which can be equated to the popularity of the genre.

Since film genre is a contemporary vehicle through which myth is expressed and in which myth resides, and formula is the means via which the basic qualities of a specific genre are categorised and observed, it follows that changes in belief in the myth would lead to changes in the popularity of the formula and genre. As it is "tenuous" to link human behaviour directly with myth, it would instead be logical to relate the Western formula which can be "explored more directly and empirically" with patterns of human

behaviour to the American frontier myth. The dual cultural functions of formula that are escape and entertainment help explain this role of formula as the public indicator of myth.

Escape and Entertainment: The Rules of the Game

The quality of escape provided for by formula is derived from its essential characteristic of standardization. As discussed in the first chapter, the tendency towards standardization is implicit in the economy of Hollywood filmmaking, but there exists another important motive: the pleasure derived from the formulaic work is intrinsically tied to its intensification of a familiar experience through which the formula creates its own world and with which the audience becomes familiar by repetition. The imaginary world (the world of formula) is experienced without continual comparisons with actual experience: an alternative world is constructed into which the audience may temporarily retreat. This perspective consolidates Neale's notions of generic and cultural verisimilitude and their non-equation with actuality. The alternative world "reflects the construction of an ideal world without the disorder, the ambiguity, the uncertainty, and the limitations of the world of our experience".[7] Warshow explains this in the following:

> . . .the relationship between the conventions which go to make up such a type
> and the real experience of its audience of the real facts of whatever situation it
> pretends to describe is only of secondary importance and does not determine
> its aesthetic force. It is only in the ultimate sense that the type appeals to its
> audience's experience of reality; much more immediately, it appeals to
> previous experience of the type itself; it creates its own field of reference.[8]

The formulaic element is a fundamental characteristic of the genre film: not only does the formulaic movie create its own field of reference, these films also work towards the representation of universal characters and situations, and are differentiated from movies which aspire to create something that is unique. The equation of singularity with success (and an aversion to the formulaic) by critics who value defamiliarization overlooks the complex rationale underlying the genre film's provision of pleasure.

The experience of escape arising from the formulaic movie sustains itself over a considerable period of time and arrives at a sense of completion and fulfilment within itself. This experience fulfils two psychological needs: firstly, the need for intense excitement and interest to transcend the boredom and ennui of secure, routine and organized lives (arguably led by the great majority of the contemporary American movie audience) and a second conflicting impulse to escape from the ultimate insecurities and ambiguities: sickness, death, the inability to realize our hopes, and failed relationships. In "Naive Consciousness and Culture Change: An Essay in Historical Structuralism", Harry Berger describes the nature of this conflict:

> Man has two primal needs. First is a need for order, peace, and security, for protection against the terror and confusion of life, for a familiar and predictable world, and for a life which is happily more of the same. . . .But the second primal impulse is contrary to the first: man positively needs tension, jeopardy, novelty, mystery, would be lost without enemies, is sometimes happiest when most miserable. Human spontaneity is eaten away by sameness: man is the animal most expert at being bored.[9]

The essence of the experience of escape is that these two needs are temporarily synthesized and the tension between them resolved. This accounts for the paradox

inherent in the Western formula -- it is at once highly ordered and conventional, yet centrally incorporated with the symbol of violence. Jane Tompkins's analysis of the centrality of death in the Western illustrates this paradox:

> The ritualization of the moment of death that climaxes most Western novels and films hovers over the whole story and gives its typical scenes a faintly sacramental aura. The narrative's stylization is a way of controlling its violence. It is because the Western depicts life lived at the edge of death that the plot, the characters, the setting, the language, the gestures, and even the incidental episodes -- a bath, a shave, a game of cards -- are so predictable. The repetitive character of the elements produces the same impression of novelty within a rigid structure of sameness as the thousand ways a sonneteer finds to describe his mistresses's eyes. . .Half the pleasure of Westerns comes from this sense of familiarity, spliced with danger.[10]

The excitement of violence and death in the Western intensifies the viewer's basic sense of security because the extent of uncertainty is controlled by the familiar (and imaginary as opposed to the actual) world of the formulaic structure.

The quality of entertainment as provided by the formulaic movie is more difficult to define: such movies are clearly standardized commercial products sold by the Hollywood film companies; yet there is more to enjoying these films than escapism and the fulfilment of certain basic needs. Being entertained by such a movie elicits active participation in a game, a game which requires the observation of a set of rules. The rules consist of familiar characters and familiar actions which celebrate familiar values. Together these rules constitute a system of conventions which are subject to slight variations ("the thousand ways a sonneteer finds to describe his mistresses's eyes") such that a type of play emerges, with the audience and filmmakers as participants of this

game. Audiences signal their approval and enjoyment of the game to the filmmakers through the film's box office receipts. This aspect of the formula movie, Neale argues, allows for an understanding of genre as a process. Neale supports his argument with a passage from Hans Robert Jauss:

> . . .the relationship between the individual text and the series of texts formative of a genre presents itself as a process of the continual founding and altering of horizons. The new text evokes for the reader (or listener) the horizon of expectations and 'rules of the game' familiar to him from earlier texts, which as such can then be varied, extended, corrected, but also transformed, crossed out, or simply reproduced.[11]

Variations take place on two levels. The first kind of variation is discussed in the first chapter, where the viewer is like a "connoisseur", recognizing, appreciating and remembering each different nuance made in the individual work. To be interesting, the individual genre or formula film has some unique characteristics of its own, but these special qualities ultimately follow the rules of the game, in accordance with the system of conventions: "Variation is absolutely necessary to keep the type from becoming sterile; we do not want to see the same movie over and over again, only the same form".[12] Variations of this nature are synchronic; the differentiation (within limited bounds) of the standardized product makes economic sense in the maintaining of its popularity. The creator of a Western, for example, employs typical characters and situations that audiences expect -- the cowboy hero, the outlaw, the showdown, the poker game, but renews these characters and situations by adding new elements or a new perspective that will heighten the pleasure of the audience based on the recognition that comes from previous encounters with these conventions. Diachronic variations occur when the rules

of the game undergo revision: due to new social attitudes the formula evolves and develops new themes and symbols. The example of Indian representation in *Dances with Wolves* was earlier linked to a new social consciousness which condemned racist attitudes and encouraged the modification of that existing symbol (a more detailed discussion of this film can be found in chapter nine). Genre films do, however, have the tendency to "play it both ways", criticizing and reinforcing values, beliefs and ideas within the same narrative context. This tendency reveals how diachronic mutations of formula sustain the persistence of the myth at its deep structure. This process will be further explicated and exemplified in the following individual sections on the principal components of the Western formula: the cowboy hero, the Indian, the woman, and the landscape.

After establishing formula's two cultural functions, we can now proceed to discuss how they situate formula as a public indicator of myth. Because the Western formula embodies the ideology of the frontier myth, viewers who are able to escape into the formula world of the Western need to identify with that ideology. If the values purported by the ideology of the frontier myth are adopted and upheld by viewers of the Western, escapism is possible as no violation of the viewer's moral sensibility occurs. However, when the conquest of the frontier can no longer be aligned with the values of moral victory and justifiable violence, as was the overall effect of the Vietnam War, the world of the formula Western can no longer be a place where one may find the solace of comfort and security. The adverse effect of the Vietnam War on the Western is directly and empirically recorded in the approximately ten years of silence during which Westerns were no longer as profitable to produce. This public abandonment of the Western formula indirectly points to (and finds its source in) a loss of faith in the central

tenets of the frontier myth from which the formula world obtains its values in the construction of this particular "moral fantasy".

The activity of game playing carries with it a more sinister agenda. The positive portrayal of the Indian seems to reflect a non-racist attitude towards otherness, but it can be argued that the primary message of the myth remains the same: that of American exceptionalism. In "playing it both ways", genre movies have the ability to discredit the beliefs that they seem to affirm, making changes to the rules such that the audience is placated and yet leaves the cinema with the original sense of pleasure ostensibly emanating from the former set of rules. If we once again refer to the image of the Indian or Native American, we can relate the amendments needed to be made to that image as portrayed in films to the American culture's changing view of the settling of the West, Manifest Destiny, and the treatment of peoples whose cultures were overwhelmed by the infringements of civilization. *Soldier Blue* (1970), a Western based on the massacre by the U.S. Army of the Cheyenne at Sand Creek, places the Indian as an innocent victim of their white assailants, showing a very different and controversial view of how the West was won. In appreciating such a movie, the morality of the American audience is placated in the acknowledgement that crimes were committed in extending the white frontiers of the west. However, the hero and heroine (Peter Strauss and Candice Bergen) of this extremely violent "anti-violence" Western are white; they are seen to befriend and even attempt to protect the inhabitants of the Indian village, and they are themselves victims of an Indian raid. They live to tell of the atrocities committed by the other whites, but their innocence cannot be challenged, and their altruism cannot be denied. The massacre is thus tempered by the identification of the audience with these two heroic white figures, survivors of mercenary Indians seeking for gold, who

witnessed the horrific killing of the Indian villagers but are themselves set apart from any responsibility. The violence is partially justified in two ways; firstly, revenge against the Indians is taken for the hero and heroine, and secondly, by the rite of passage that these two white characters undergo in their realization of how brutal other Americans can be and conversely how hospitable some Indians are. The generic formula is varied to incorporate a controversial perspective of the settling of the West, but manages to exploit the qualities (in this example, the quality of American exceptionalism) that made the genre popular in the first place. The deep structure of the myth, containing the archetype of white heroism, remains intact.

This second cultural function of formula reveals a more complex aspect in its relation to myth. Though the formula changes, the ideology of the myth may in fact remain the same and even be reinforced. This kind of variation can only be assimilated by the formula if the foundations of the myth are not violated. Generic play can only begin when the requisite of escapism is satisfied. Thus, in the post-Vietnam War period, when the foundations of the Frontier myth were shattered and the Americans emerged not as victors but as the defeated, the game is discontinued. The progress of civilization justifying the violent acts of the Frontier hero becomes invalidated in the context of the Vietnam War, as noted by John Hellman:

> The American Mythic landscape is a place fixed between savagery
> and civilization, a middle landscape where the hero sheds the unnecessary
> refinements of the latter without entering into the darkness of the former.
> Ever-receding, this frontier gains its validation as a setting for the mythic hero
> because his killing makes way for the progress of civilization advancing
> behind him. In the memoirs of the Vietnam War, however, the American hero
> has somehow entered a nightmarish wilderness where he is allowed no linear

direction nor clear spreading of civilization, where neither his inner restraints
nor the external ones of his civilization are operating.[13]

Without the moral validation that accompanies the working out of the mythic paradigm,
the world of the Western no longer exists as a comfortable space to recede into. The
violent acts of the hero cannot be justified in the name of progress, and the Western
formula fails to maintain its popularity; the mythic surface is instead critiqued in the
Vietnam War films that follow after the Western's demise.

Edwin S. Porter and *The Great Train Robbery* (1903)

Before evaluating the various components of the Western formula, one of the first movie
Westerns to exhibit these components will be discussed, and analysed as contributing to
the prototype from which the reproduction of a pattern followed. The continued
reproduction of a successful pattern reifies the pattern into the status of formula, and
movies that later adopt that pattern into members of a genre. Most accounts of the
Western hail Edwin S. Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* as the progenitor of narrative
cinema and "the first Western".[14] It is important to use the distinction of formula and
genre at this point. Though the Edison company had played with Western material for
several years prior to *The Great Train Robbery*, contemporary audiences recognized the
film more as a melodramatic example of the "chase film," the railway genre," and the
"crime film".[15] Maltby locates the emergence of the genre at about 1910, when
American producers were attracted to its being a distinctly American product that their
European competitors could not successfully imitate.[16] The aspect of audience

identification is less tied to the Western formula, elements of which can already be witnessed in Porter's film.

The Great Train Robbery became a commercial success on a scale that no previous film had previously achieved. The film was of a remarkable standard considering that it was made in 1903, being almost a reel in length, relating its story visually without the aid of subtitles, with fluid cutting between interior and exterior shots, utilizing good visual compositions and editing for dramatic effect in the building of its tension. With these achievements, Porter set the precedent for later directors to refer to. George N. Fenin and William K. Everson provide a clear synopsis of the film:

> *The Great Train Robbery* opens with a sequence in the interior of a
> railroad telegraph office; a typically static long-shot fashion. However, there
> is an unusual effect: the arrival of the train shown through a window. . .a
> good, if occasionally unsteady, superimposition was the *modus operandi*.
>
> The bandits bind the telegraph operator; then, a cut to the exterior.
> As the train pauses by the railroad's water tower outside, the bandits board it.
> From the New Jersey exterior locale, Porter then cuts to a studio interior set of
> the express car. . .Porter then switches to another exterior, his camera placed
> on the rear of the tender, photographing the train in motion. The villains
> approach, and overpower the drivers. . .The callous treatment of the drivers
> seems to have been a deliberate attempt by Porter to emphasize that he was
> not glamorizing outlaws undeserving of sympathy. This is further emphasized
> when the train stops and an incredible horde of passengers- presumably the
> entire population of Dover- descends. One of them breaks for freedom, and is
> shot in cold blood.
>
> Their loot secured, the bandits escape the train, bring it to a halt some
> distance up to the track and in a long and smoothly executed panning shot,
> retreat into the woods. The crime established, the development now cuts
> abruptly to the forces of law and order. At the telegraph office, the operator's
> little daughter discovers the plight. The film cuts again, this time to the

dance hall. . .The final section of the film- the chase, the robbers thinking they are safe dividing the spoils, is, of course, a typical western finish.[17] .

Porter's pioneer work is useful for observing early standard Western plots and basic elements of technique. It is possible to analyse, at this early stage, how these met the requisites of escape and entertainment. The tenet of escape was analysed as the fulfilment of two primal needs: the need for order, peace, and security, and the contrary need for jeopardy, novelty and mystery. In the formula world, these two impulses are united. *The Great Train Robbery* was noted in its editing for dramatic effect leading to an increase of suspense. This suspense is built up in the dance hall scene, where the Westerners are shooting at the heels of a tenderfoot to force him to dance, while the audience waits in anticipation with the knowledge that the telegraph operator would arrive to seek their help momentarily. The whimsical shooting also serves as an harbinger of the climactic gun battle that is to come at the end of the film. The build up of suspense and the violent killing of the bandits is securely encapsulated by the typical Western finish of good triumphing over evil, and peace being restored. Thus the audience escapes temporarily into an imaginary world where they are "plunged. . .into a believable kind of excitement" (facilitated by Porter's smooth cutting) while their confidence that things will work out the way "they want them to" is confirmed.

The commercial success of the film led the Edison company and its competitors to make efforts towards replicating its success, turning out a series of films that imitated Porter's movie: *The Great Bank Robbery, The Bold Bank Robbery, The Little Train Robbery, The Hold Up of the Rocky Mountain Express.* These movies served to enhance the audience's familiarization with the early rules of the game: that of the outlaw threatening members of society, the cowboy taking revenge on the outlaw, and

the shoot-out. Some of the films inspired by the success of *The Great Train Robbery* were outright plagiarisms: Sigmund Lubin made a film with the same title which duplicated the sets and action of Porter's original exactly, with the only variation of a local bank's calendar.[18] These incipient rules would be added to with the making of more Westerns. An additional player within the game would be the cowboy hero, an early version of which can be witnessed in the films directed by an "extra" in Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* -- G.M. Anderson.

The Cowboy Hero and the Ideology of Nationalism

G.M. Anderson's decision to build the image of a cowboy hero in his films came about after the failure of his Selig Westerns, which Anderson had co-produced with Colonel William Selig on location at Colorado. Anderson had tried to repeat the formula of Porter's *The Great Train Robbery*, where he was cast in the minor role of a bandit until he showed that he could not "ride like a Texas Ranger" as he had assured Porter: he could not mount a horse, let alone ride it.[19] This attempt to repeat Porter's formula and the acclaim of *The Great Train Robbery* met with little success, and Anderson turned towards improving the formula by creating a central character on which the audience could focus their attention.

Anderson's first film, an adaptation of a Peter B. Kyne story was entitled *Broncho Billy and the Baby*, with its success Anderson was convinced that he should use Broncho Billy as a continuing character in his Westerns. Each story was still treated individually, so that it did not matter how many times Billy was married, reformed, or killed off. Anderson used the character of Billy in an estimated five hundred short one

reeler and two reeler Westerns. The cowboy hero soon became the main player of the formula, and his actions drove the narrative, communicating its central ideology -- nationalism.

Philip French lists the qualities of a typical Western hero:

> . . .the hero is the embodiment of good. He is upright, clean living, sharp
> shooting, a White Anglo Saxon Protestant who respects the law, the flag,
> women and children; he dresses smartly in white clothes and rides a white
> horse which is his closest companion; he uses bullets and words with equal
> care, is a disinterested upholder of justice and uninterested in personal gain.
> He always wins.[20]

These requisites of being a hero are closely aligned with what has been the distinct cultural profile of the American Nation's dominant group. Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris's description of the discourse by which this dominance is articulated is as follows:

> The cultural tradition, the language, and physical types of one of the state's
> society are proposed as the national language, the national culture, and the
> national physical type. . . .In the United States, the national ideal is English-
> speaking, Protestant, northern European in descent, and light Caucasoid in
> physical appearance.[21]

This dominance is at odds with the ideology of nationalism, for it creates a hierarchy of group identities and dispels the conception of the nation as what Ellis Cashmere has termed "a deep, horizontal comradeship".[22] Virginia Wright Wexman sees this contradiction at the center of the myth of imagined community to be a particularly troublesome one, for the tension between the ideal of a community of equals and the

drive for domination by groups within the culture has been pronounced.[23]   The contradiction is also apparent with relation to the ideology of the Frontier, for the settlement of the West brings into focus confrontations with indigenous racial others whose value systems were fundamentally at odds with those of the European settlers, and were not easily accommodated into the ideal of comradeship.   The previous discussions of the agrarian and industrial frontiers expressed this conflict.   The movie Western communicates the ideology of the frontier and manages to contain and neutralise this contradiction: the cowboy hero represents the dominant group, yet manages to promulgate the ideal of nationalism in either partially synthesizing the cultures of other groups or omitting their existence completely if their culture is so different that synthesis is not possible.   The minority groups are classified under the all encompassing term of "the Other", and the main representative of this "Otherness" in the Western is the Indian.

The Indian: Symbolic Surrogate

From the standpoint of Western film history, two contrasting approaches to the Indian co-existed.   One held the Indian to be a bloodthirsty, senseless savage while the other veered to the opposite extreme by depicting the Indian with dignity as the original American.   The sympathetic approach to the Indian was short-lived and dominated in the first phase of the history of the Western, witnessed in films such as *The Cowboy and the School-Marm* (1910) and *The Sacrifice* (1912).   The former stars James Young Deer and Red Wing, playing an Indian father and daughter who help the cowboy protagonist save the white female victim from her (non-Indian and Indian-hating) captors.   In the

second an Indian sacrifices his life to save the white heroine of the narrative, overwhelmed by the cold after he dispatches her towards safety on his sled. This latter approach manipulated the Indian into the role of a red-skinned menace whose only justification for existing lay in providing the formula action by taking to the warpath in opposition to the white heroes. This was especially so for the bulk of the "B" Westerns: in *Prairie Thunder* (1937) and *Fort Osage* (1952), for example, their warlike actions were deliberately spurred on by white renegades, and in *The Law Rides Again* (1943) because of erroneous grievances against the whites.[24] The acceptance of the Indian as a convenient mass enemy in Western films ensured that the ideology of American nationalism would remain intact, for the Indian failed to emerge as a candidate for that "deep, horizontal comradeship" and was instead regarded as a savage, a scourge to rid the land of. The myth of the "savage war" is actually a basic ideological convention for the extermination of Indians, with the Indian becoming a symbolic surrogate for the range of political and social inequality that tarnished the nationalist ideology of a perfect republic. The Indian is viewed as an obstacle to the creation of that republic. An example of a Western that embraces this perspective and is widely admitted to be the most famous and perhaps the most influential is John Ford's *Stagecoach* (1939).

In *Stagecoach*, the enemies of the bearers of civilization are the Apache Indians, who periodically arise like a pestilence to attack white men without any specific reason. Motivation becomes unnecessary, once the rule equating the Indian with the enemy is accepted. These Indians, led by Geronimo, appear suddenly with intense hostility against the stagecoach and its passenger load of Western types: Doc Boone, a conniving drunkard, Dallas, a prostitute, Hatfield, a shady gambler with the manners of a southern gentleman, Lucy, the pregnant wife of a cavalry officer, Henry Gatewood, a pompous

banker, and Samuel Peacock, a whiskey salesman. The coach is driven by Buck, a man with an aversion to Indians, and Curly, a lawman riding "shotgun". Before long, the coach picks up Ringo Kid: John Wayne in a star-making performance. The journey through Monument Valley has been likened to a spiritual passage, where the dehumanized Apaches symbolize demonic forces that terrorize the characters en route in senseless waves of violent hatred, with many Indians killed but none relenting. This view of the Indian would persist well into the forties, with more sympathetic perspectives adopted towards the sixties, as in Ford's *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964). *Stagecoach*, however, centres on the symbolic grouping of civilization and that group's encounter with its persecutors, the Indians.

The dialectical approach to the Indian as devil and noble savage gave way in the nineteenth century to a definition of the Indian way of life as an inferior and earlier stage in the development of civilization.[25] This redefinition of the Indian justified his assimilation or extermination -- providing the American nation's "dominant group" with the rationale for the brutal elimination of native American cultures. The portrayal of the Indian in Costner's *Dances With Wolves* has been perceived as belonging to a more recent approach, with films which are radically positive in their treatment of the Indian. The formulaic rule of racially discriminating against the Indian Other appears to be replaced by the new rule of appreciating his difference. I have identified this as a diachronic change. However, the more sympathetic representation of the Indian was not, as Jane Tompkins insists, available only in Costner's movie. There is a widespread understanding that *Broken Arrow* (1950) is a pro-Indian Western. Michael Walker provides a detailed analysis of the movie, focusing on its pro-Indian nature in *The Movie Book of the Western*. The movie was considered so radical in this aspect that the 1950

movie audiences had to be prepared for the reversal in ideology.[26] He also identifies

Westerns prior to *Broken Arrow* that were famous for protesting the injustice done to

Native Americans: *Ramona* (1936) is about the victimisation of Indians while *The*

Vanishing American (1925) and *Devil's Doorway* (1950) are about the dispossession of

Navajo Indians and a Soshone chief who fought with the Union Army respectively.

These changes in the formula's representation of the frontier myth are synchronic --

Drum Beat, the next Western that Daves made after the production of *Broken Arrow,*

sees the return of the Western's racism with a vengeance. The ability of the Hollywood

genre to "play it both ways" is relevant here, for the central tenet of white supremacy is

not violated in any of these Westerns, nor in *Dances With Wolves,* as a later discussion

of the film will elucidate. The brutalization of Otherness is intrinsic in the deep structure

of the frontier myth, and defies correction. Douglas Pye affirms this in the following:

> The history of the Western is littered with movies that attempt to develop
> liberal perspectives on the historical treatment of Native Americans.
> However, the racism that is inherent in the traditions of the genre makes
> almost any attempt to produce an anti-racist Western a paradoxical, even
> contradictory enterprise. It is, in effect, impossible to escape the genre's
> informing White supremacist terms.[27]

The white supremacy is enacted through violence that is committed against the Indian

enemy. These acts of violence are motivated by the role of the woman, who is forever

at the mercy of the lawless element and dependent on the hero for protection. Her

function as the central figure in the captivity narratives discussed in chapter two is

pertinent here.

The Woman: Shifting Reality and Static Prescription

A remark by Budd Boetticher enunciates the role of the woman in Westerns: "what counts is what the heroine provokes, or rather, what she represents. She is the one, or rather the love or fear she inspires in the hero, or else the concern he feels for her, who makes him act the way he does. In herself the woman has not the slightest importance."[28] The woman in the Western is, like the Indian, representative of "Otherness". However, her difference is one that can be partially eradicated -- she becomes a representative of what motivates the hero's actions. Thus even in the captivity myths where the woman is arguably the heroine of the narrative, her position is fundamentally a passive one. By resisting the physical threats and spiritual temptations of the Indians, she vindicates the power of the values of Christianity and civilization that are imperilled in the wilderness war. The worth of the woman lies in these values that she symbolizes, and as Budd Boetticher states, "in herself" she "has not the slightest importance".

The role of the woman then, is to provide the motivation for the heroic action undertaken by the cowboy in the Western. Like the Indian, the portrayal of the woman undergoes some change over the years, but her function has not altered considerably. At this juncture a qualification has to be made with respect to a significant group of 'B' Westerns in the late 1930s, a point that is taken up in chapter 6. In general, however, irrespective of the shifting roles of women in American society, women in Western films are subject unrelentingly to the same prescriptions. Jon Tuska demonstrates this reification process by contrasting *The Return of Draw Egan* (1916) with *Heaven's Gate* (1981).[29] In the first movie, William S. Hart plays "Draw" Egan, an outlaw who goes

into hiding after rumours are widely circulated that he was killed in a shoot-out. He is appointed as Sheriff by the head of the reform committee at Yellow Dog and regards it as capital cover for resuming his outlaw activities. However, upon meeting the heroine of the movie, Egan decides that he must reform and prove his morality by stamping out the evil element at Yellow Dog -- the film concludes when Egan is forgiven for his transgressions and accepted by the heroine. The point that Tuska makes is that the heroine is entirely passive, it is merely her appearance that marks the crisis moment in the film when everything changes. The role of the woman in *The Return of Draw Egan* is to be the hero's motivation, and this role carries on into *Heaven's Gate*. The plot of Michael Cimino's film revolves around Jim Averill's determination to save Ella Watson's life -- the latter a prostitute who is on the "hit list" of a vigilance committee made up of rich cattlemen to deal with immigrant rustling.

Though the feminist movement in the 1960's historically liberated women from these passive and stereotypical roles, the roles prescribed to women in Westerns have for the most part remained static. The function of women as captives is as integral to the frontier myth and Western as it is that the Indians are inferior to the whites. In *Unforgiven*, a Western made in 1992, the women are still prescribed the roles of prostitutes, who must seek their revenge through the hero: Clint Eastwood plays the part of an infamous gunslinger who goes to their aid in return for the reward offered by the women at the brothel. By Slotkin's account -- which has a basis in Jungian psychology -- the Western genre's assignation of the role of motivation to women stems from the hunter myths, where the anima is the object of the hunter's quest. The hunter hero seeks union with his "lost half", his anima: the hidden part of male consciousness where feeling subordinates intellect, passive, feminine and essential.[30] Even though the

woman is passive, she is still essential, for it is only through her that the male protagonist may achieve personal salvation and acquire heroic status. This function is clear in all three Westerns mentioned. In *The Return of Draw Egan*, Egan decides to seek moral salvation when he meets the heroine of the film, in *Heaven's Gate*, Averill's heroic exploits are committed for the sake of Ella Watson, as in *Unforgiven*, where Clint Eastwood goes on a journey at a prostitute's request.

The Woman, Indian, and Cowboy are three of the main characters which fulfil central roles in the Western: the woman represents civilization, the Indian savage threatens civilization, and the hero is fundamentally committed to the preservation of civilization while possessing many qualities and skills of the savage. It is out of the multiple variations on the relationships between these groups that the various Western plots listed in the first chapter are concocted. This tripartite division of characters constitutes a major part of the Western formula -- with the Western setting performing an equally integral function.

Setting: "the Meeting Point Between Savagery and Civilization"[31]

The definition of the frontier by Turner as the meeting point of savagery and civilization marks a relatively brief stage in the social evolution of the West when outlaws and Indians posed a threat to the community's stability. Yet this brief period of struggle has been erected by the Western formula into a timeless epic past in which heroic individual defenders of law and order (without the modern social resources of police and courts) stand poised against the threat of lawlessness and savagery.[32] Cawelti sees several factors contributing to this particular fixation of the epic moment. One of these is the

ideological tendency of Americans to see the Far West as the stronghold of traditional values -- especially the value of nationalism that is associated with the cowboy. The importance of these values cannot be overstated, but it must be remembered that the Western's success as a popular form in the twentieth century derives from the great potential it manifested for cinematic expression.

In terms of visual articulation, the geographic setting of the Great Plains and adjacent areas have proved appropriate as a means of isolating and intensifying the drama of the frontier encounter between civilization and savagery. The sharp contrasts of light and shadow characteristic of an arid climate, combined with the topographical contrasts of plain and mountain, rocky outcrops and flat deserts, bare canyons and forested plateaus, visually enhances the contrast between civilized man and the wilderness. The research of Patricia Hills on the work of the American Art-Union in the 1840s and 1850s illustrates how such qualities were readily exploited in the era of Westward expansion. The project of the men who ran the American Art-Union was to promote and distribute patriotic images with the "Progress of Civilization" as a central theme. William Ranney's oil painting *The Scouting Party* (1851), for example, was that of a party of trappers with their horses on a high bluff overlooking the movements of Indians who were betrayed by fires in the prairie below.[33] The Western landscape's potential for visual expression is augmented through the medium of film. Tompkins observes that the typical Western movie begins with a landscape shot:

Desert, with butte, two riders galloping toward camera.

Stagecoach (1939)

Cattle on a trail, flat country.

Texas (1941)

Landscape with butte, a wagon trail, cattle.

My Darling Clementine (1946)

Desert with wagon trail, flat country, a few hills.

Red River (1948)

Flat foreground, river, large mesa on the opposite shore,

Rio Grande (1950)

Desert landscape framed by the doorway of house.   Song:

"What makes a man to wander, what makes a man to roam,

what makes a man to wander, and turn his back on home?"

The Searchers (1956)[34]

The opening shots of all the films above, except for *Rio Grande* unite the structural

element of civilization and wilderness, where the cattle, wagon trail and house are

representatives of the former.

Four topographic features of the Great Plains are especially pertinent in creating

an effective backdrop for the Western: its openness, aridity and inhospitability to human

life, extremes of light and climate, and paradoxically, its grandeur and beauty.[35] The

importance of this paradox is in the capacity that it wields as a source of regenerating

power: the inhospitable but open prairie can be tamed and inhabited through an

extension of the boundaries of civilzation. The thematic conflict between savagery and

civilization generally centres on the visual images of the isolated town, ranch, or fort

surrounded by the vast open grandeur of prairie or desert that is connected to the rest of

civilization via railroad, stagecoach, or trail. *Stagecoach* exploits these visual resources.

The opening of the film dwells on the visual theme of the restrictive character of town

life, as a fragile town with rickety false fronts, and dark, crowded interiors.   As the

stagecoach departs on its voyage, this restriction and artificiality is contrasted with the

epic wilderness -- Monument Valley's topography of a large flat desert between steep

hills embodies a mixture of grandeur and savage hostility.   This propensity of the

Western setting for strong visual contrasts not only aids the dramatization of the

tripartite division of characters, it dominates the Western pattern of action, and thus the

Western's film narrative.

The Western Film Narrative: Enigma and Resolution

Janet Staiger's chapter on the formulation of the classic Hollywood narrative finds the

American classical cinema's narrative based on compositional unity: a chain of cause and

effect linking separate events, so tightly constructed that no extraneous event could

enter the film's plot.[36] Causality and motivation with a pattern of linear determination

and multiple lines of intertwined actions formed the classical narrative model, with

character psychology functioning to initiate and sustain a unified, developing narrative

line.   The notion of character psychology in the Western film genre manifests itself in a

cast of fictional characters with certain traits of personality, motivations and desires:

basically, the woman, Indian and cowboy.   The classical narrative is organised around a

structure of enigma and resolution, whereby a fictional environment begins with a state

of equilibrium, and suffers a disruption before a new equilibrium is produced at the end

of the story.[37]   It is through the agency and authority of the hero that a narrative

resolution of the conflict is brought about.   The Western, in this narrative aspect, is part

of a generic entity -- the classical Hollywood movie.

Like the Western setting, the focus of the Western narrative is on the Indian story or the battle to exterminate Otherness. The Indian War provides the disruption that the cowboy hero eliminates to restore equilibrium to the narrative structure. It is appropriate to note at this point that the qualities symbolized by the Indian savage can be superimposed onto the outlaw, who stands for the same negative values of lawlessness, a love for violence, and the rejection of civilization for the freedom of the wilderness. Will Wright provides the structure of the classical plot, which I will list here to present the basic development of the Western narrative:

1. The hero enters a social group.
2. The hero is unknown to society.
3. The hero is revealed to have exceptional ability.
4. The society recognizes a difference between themselves and the hero; the hero is given a special status.
5. The society does not completely accept the hero.
6. There is a conflict of interest between the villains and society.
7. The villains are stronger than society; the society is weak.
8. There is a strong friendship or respect between the hero and a villain.
9. The villains threaten society.
10. The hero avoids involvement in the conflict.
11. The villain endangers a friend of the hero.
12. The hero fights the villains.
13. The hero defeats the villains.
14. The society is safe.
15. The society accepts the hero.
16. The hero loses or gives up his special status.[38]

According to Wright, this narrative structure of the classical Western is the prototype for all Westerns, and the foundation on which variations are built. The ideological

import of this film narrative is explicit: the Indian or villain presents a problem for the hero (who articulates the discourse of the dominant group) and must be overcome so that peace may be restored, security ensured, and civilization perpetuated. The success of the hero achieves the realization of the American national identity: that of a democratic polity, an ever-expanding economy, and a phenomenally dynamic and 'progressive' civilization.[39]

The Western formula and film narrative as expressions of the American Myth of the Frontier, thus served to enunciate the dominant ideology of the American nation. This formula, already incipient in *The Great Train Robbery*, remained popular well into the 1930s when it suffered a sudden and sharp drop during the crisis of the Depression. The formula of the Western evoked a mythology and ideology linked with the heroic age of American expansion, and the dream of limitless growth. In 1932-1935, this vision no longer seemed valid, for the historical catastrophe of the Depression revealed the failure of the progressive dream embodied in the Western. Westerns were replaced by other film genres that spoke directly to the social crisis of the 1930s and entertained the possibility of such a catastrophe: these were the crime film and the social drama.[40]

The following chapter focuses on the temporary demise of the Western in the Depression era. The two film genres that were activated by the depression and replaced the Western share a common function with the latter as vehicles for a continuously developing mythology. To a large extent, both genres absorbed the mythic charge of the Western and applied its mythic material to the concerns and imagery of the Depression, and the New Deal. However, the myth that surfaced at the level of discourse did not do so in its entirety, suggesting that cultural verisimilitude neccessitated a modification beyond the level of its surface structure. The communication of frontier mythology in

the Gangster movie and the 'B' Western manifested a period of negotiation before the

re-emergence of the Western in 1939.

The Western and Depression America

4 The Depression Era
Progressivism and the Discrediting of the West

> Maybe these gangsters will put up a lot of factories and use all the water in our creeks for power and our trees for paper pulp and our kids to run the machines for them! Maybe if we pay 'em enough they'll put up a lot of tall buildings so we can't see the sun for the smoke from chimneys! And all the cowboys left in this country'll get jobs driving trucks.
>
> Cowboy in *Gunsmoke* (Paramount, 1931)

The collapse of Wall Street in 1929 ended a period of optimistically uncontrolled growth, ushering in the Depression and the New Deal.[1] The "Jazz Age" was characterized by a spectacular increase in consumer spending as the practices of conspicuous consumption permeated through the social system to the lower middle classes. This economic expansion aided the Coolidge years by a *laissez faire* approach to economic regulation under the Republican administrations of the 1920s. The apparent success of the economic system during the 1920s, especially in the consumer industries had confirmed the psychology of Frontier dynamics that linked expansion with a sound economy.[2] This economic expansion provided a replacement for the expansion into empty land, abating Turner's concern for the closing of the frontier.

A component of that psychology was what Francis Jennings has called the "crusader ideology", where the "conquerors of America glorified the devastation they

wrought in visions of righteousness".[3] This ideology was applied to the domestic economy in the decade prior to the Depression. Bruce Barton, a successful journalist and a leading figure in the advertising industry, was one of many who imagined himself in terms of frontier heroism. In seeking to demonstrate the links between corporate business and a liberal Protestant Christianity, Barton appropriated the crusader ideology from the context of a wilderness environment to a business environment. This is clear in his rhetoric:

> Great progress will be made in the world when we rid ourselves of the idea
> that there is a difference between *work* and *religious work*. . . .All work is
> worship; all useful service prayer. And whoever works wholeheartedly at any
> worthy calling is a co-worker with the almighty in the great enterprise which
> He has initiated but which He can never finish without the help of men.[4]
>
> (Barton's italics)

Barton transformed "business men into ministers of Christ"; the new corporate system of the 1920s was "not secular but divine".[5] This conjoining of business with religion made it possible to view economic expansion as the equivalent to territorial acquisition. Both were activities conducted in the interests of Holy Church.

The American Film Industry benefited tremendously from both trends of increased consumer spending and conspicuous consumption -- Tino Balio calculates that in 1930, motion-picture attendance reached a then all-time peak of 80 million spectators a week.[6] The assets of the industry between 1926 and 1930 tripled to reach $1 billion.[7] A significant change to the industry was the new sound technology, which led to a consolidation of the studio system with audience responses at the time providing the economic rationale for the studios' conversion to sound. The immediate increase in

profits justified the initial outlay of up to $500 million in capital expenditure required by the sound conversion.[8] However, beginning in 1931, the movie business directly suffered from the effects of the Depression and its associated sense of economic dislocation. Theatre admissions dropped by more than 12% to 70 million per week in 1931, with the price of theatre tickets falling by 35% to 20 instead of 30 cents per ticket. The conversion to sound now proved to be an economic hurdle, more than doubling the original production costs for the silent movies.[9] The continued investment demanded by the sound revolution led Fox, Paramount and RKO (Radio- Keith- Orpheum: its founding in part due to the arrival of sound) into receivership.

The 1930s was also a turning point for the Western -- it saw the bifurcation of the genre into two sections with differing levels of popularity. The 'A' Western suffered a sudden and precipitous drop in its production, while the 'B' Western flourished and reached its peak of popularity, arguably providing the economic motive for the resurgence of the 'A' Western in the 1940's.[10] 'A' movies in general were made on budgets averaging $350,000 or more, featuring stars with known box-office appeal, while 'B' movies filled the bottom half of the double bill -- an industry practice that was standardized in 1935 where audiences were promised two films for the price of one.[11] Brian Taves's "practical multilevel taxonomy" for the 'B' film is probably the most accurate to date; in order of prestige it consists of: (1) major-studio programmers, (2) major-studio 'B's, (3) smaller-company 'B's and (4) the quickies of Poverty Row.[12] The statistics that follow chart the performance of 'A' and 'B' Westerns in the Depression era -- they are based on the tables constructed by Ed Buscombe in *The BFI Companion to the Western*. However, his and Slotkin's (the latter deriving the statistics from Buscombe's tables) definition of what constitutes a 'B' film differs from Taves's

categories in that both identify movies screened prior to the standardization of the double bill as belonging to the 'B' category. Their classification appears to be more dependent on the criterion of budget and running time; nonetheless the statistics are useful as a rough illustration of the decline of the 'A' features in relation to the 'B's.[13]

In 1930 'A' Westerns made up 2.6 percent of all films produced by the seven major studios, and 21.4 percent of all Westerns. In 1931 these figures dropped to 1.6 percent and 16.7 percent, with both 'A' and 'B' Westerns continuing to comprise 16-17 percent of all Hollywood films produced by the major studios and independents. In 1932, though the Western share of all Hollywood films rose to 22 percent, 'A' Westerns actually dropped to 0.6 percent of major studio production and 4.7 percent of all Westerns. The depths of unpopularity were reached in 1934, when no 'A' Westerns were produced. Between 1932 and 1934 Westerns continued to average 17 percent of all Hollywood productions, but, again, the 'A' Western averaged only 0.3 percent of all major studio productions and 2.4 percent of all Westerns.[14]

These discrepancies may be explained by the rise of the 'B' Westerns, which were not only marketable but cheap enough for the Poverty Row studios to produce. After 1931, the seven major studios became sceptical about the market for feature-length Westerns, and their investment of money and resources for this genre were directed at lower budget equivalents: of the 1336 Westerns made by all producers between 1930 and 1941, only 66, or a mere five percent, could be classified as A-features, with 31 of those A-features falling within the years 1939-1941.[15] These 'B' Westerns appealed to a different section of the American public, cultivating an audience outside of the metropolitan boundaries defining the patrons of its 'A' counterpart. In general, the B films targeted not the white middle class, but rural, black and immigrant

groups.[16] The lower budget Westerns were also designed to fill the bottom half of the double bill. In 1935-1936 the attempt made by the studios to revive the Western genre was assisted by the standardization of the double-bill which increased demand for cheap fillers which the 'B' Westerns (which had a budget of US$50,000 to US$200,000[17]) were ideally placed to supply.[18] The production of Westerns jumped from 59 in 1934 to 106 in 1935 due to the growth of the double-bill, and, through the decade the annual number of films produced by the Hollywood film industry generally increased. However, the three 'A' Westerns made in 1937 and the four made in 1938 were less than the five made in 1931.[19]

Progressivism and the Turner Thesis

Few would disagree that the crisis of the Depression had a direct influence on the decline of the 'A' Western. The reasons given for this decline vary, and though they ultimately lead to economic considerations, ideological conflicts do come into play. As a direct expression of Turner's progressivism and an embodiment of America's aspirant culture, the Western's ideological message was at odds with the waning of optimism that characterised the Depression years. The mythology of progressivism requires the belief in pioneering as a defining national mission (a 'Manifest Destiny'), and envisions the westward settlements as a refuge from tyranny and corruption, a safety valve for metropolitan discontents, a land of golden opportunity for enterprising individualists, and lastly as an inexhaustible reservoir of natural wealth on which future limitless prosperity could be based.[20] The frontiering experience espoused in this mythology is proclaimed in Turner's thesis, where it is considered to be a major determinant in the

shaping of American civilization. The American version of progress was thus intrinsically associated with territorial expansion.

Prior to the 1930s, Progressives had utilized the frontier hypothesis to rationalize Theodore Roosevelt's ideas about the New Nationalism. They held a collective belief that as the frontier had disappeared a new age was emerging.[21] In 1909, Herbert Croly, a journalist who greatly influenced Roosevelt's speeches, attempted to develop an ideology for progressive reform on the basis that economic conditions were profoundly modified by the passing of the frontier. He prescribed a vast increase in the powers of federal government to develop economic and social policies to compensate the disappearance of the frontier.[22] Though for some historians the Progressive era extends back to an earlier date, the Progressive party was launched in 1912, with a platform that linked the idea of progress with big business, coupled with a belief in the efficiency of business and the desire to emulate its techniques.[23] As a leading expounder of the businessman's creed (publishing *The Gospel of Wealth* in 1900), Andrew Carnegie held that the methods by which he became a self-made millionaire would have similarly beneficial results when applied to the fields of humanitarianism and international relations: this belief was widely shared.[24] The component of territorial expansion as a reservoir of wealth translated into an industrial frontier that sought to accommodate the disappearance of the wilderness. As explained in chapter two of this thesis, the exchange of an agrarian for an industrial frontier following the failure of the Homestead Act did not in any way undermine the dynamic of frontier psychology. The new resource reservoir in the form of precious minerals would offer the same promise of infinite opportunity to an unlimited population of free men to fulfil their aspirations.[25] The Myth of the Frontier as espoused by Turner retained its validity with his Thesis

embraced by most professional historians in the Progressive era. To some, its validity was incontestable -- in 1907 Frederic Logan Paxson stated that "within recent years it has become commonplace in American history that the influence of the frontier is the one constant to be reckoned with in accounting for the development of American life during the first century of independent existence".[26]

The decade of the 1920s saw a change of mood as the optimism characterizing the earlier years began to wane. World War I gained for the Americans a more pronounced sense of their global significance, and the increased pace of industrial and technological advance led to the diminishing of the role of agriculture in American life. The transition to an industrial frontier, along with its extolling of Turner, had ironically been characterized by a deep nostalgia for the agrarian past. These changes shifted the emphasis to international and urban dimensions. By the end of the 1920s, not only had the frontier theme been minimized, serious fissures were apparent in the consensus on the validity of Turner's Thesis.[27] In the wake of the Depression, the progressive myth contained in Turner's doctrines was more rigorously questioned. Five competing hypotheses challenged the central impact of the frontier as an explanation for American development. These were concerned with economic determinism, psychological analysis, spiritual influences, and the impact of immigration and cultural values.[28] The economic interpretation of history as propounded by Charles A. Beard was persuasive; he found it "questionable whether even up to that time [1890] the frontier or the whole agricultural West had exercised a more profound influence on American development than either the industrialism of the East or the semi-feudal plantation system of the South."[29] More damning was the charge that the frontier thesis had fostered the myth of

Rugged American Individualism, rather than moulding the democratic character of the American people and their political institutions. He wrote:

> The cold truth is, that individualistic creed of everybody for himself and the devil take the hindmost is principally responsible for the distress in which Western civilization finds itself. . . .Turner overemphasizes, in my opinion, the influence of the frontier economy on the growth of the democratic idea.[30]

Even Frederick L. Paxon was moved by the Depression to retract his previous claims championing Turner and endorse instead the theory of class conflict, declaring that the frontier of 1935 was the social boundary between those who have and those who want. John C. Almack, an education professor at Stanford University voiced a summary of the general criticisms directed against Turner:

> For thirty years American historical thought has been dominated by the frontier shibboleth. . .The frontier theory appears to be nothing more than a diluted type of Marxian determinism; its foundation an unmistakable materialism, conceiving men as the slaves of forces over which they have little influence or control. . .All people have had frontiers. . .While the frontier has been an important factor in American life, it has not been an important agency of progress. . .The advances which have been made were made in spite of, not because of, the environment.[31]

Almack made this observation in 1925. When the Depression undermined any belief in a frontier of unlimited opportunity or an infinite resource base, it further stimulated the criticisms of Turner's thesis that had begun in the previous decade. The difference with this post-crash critique of Turner was that at the same time as professional historians were rejecting his explanation of American progress, movie audiences appeared to be

rejecting the Westerns that were essentially visual counterparts of Turner's thesis. This was registered by the poor reception of the genre at the box-office.

Though the legitimacy of Turner's thesis was questioned, it did not mean that expressions of Frontier mythology declined correspondingly. Michel Foucault's 'Repressive Hypothesis' is relevant here for understanding the relationship between frontier discourse and American history. In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault makes the initial observation that the 17th century marked the beginning of an age of the repression of sexuality, to the extent of extinguishing the words that rendered it too visibly present.[32] He proceeds to qualify this observation in providing evidence for how in the last three centuries there has been a veritable discursive explosion, with the codification of a whole rhetoric of allusion and metaphor. There was a steady proliferation of discourses concerned with sex and a discursive ferment that gathered momentum from the 18th century onwards, with:

> . . .the multiplication of discourses concerning sex in the field of the exercise
> of power itself: an institutional incitement to speak about it, and to do so more
> and more; a determination on the part of the agencies of power to hear it
> spoken about, and to cause *it* to speak through explicit articulation and
> endlessly accumulated detail.[33]

The subversion of Turner's progressivism and the accompanying demise of the 'A' Western in the Depression era is analogous to a repression of sexuality in the sense that the frontier discourses they contain are too visibly present. The incitement to articulate frontier discourse is also as forceful because the frontier myth (with notions of rugged individualism and a hatred of Otherness) is arguably as crucial to American self-definition as sexuality was to the Victorian of Foucault's imagination.

Thus discourses of a mythology ineluctably linked with the heroic age of American expansionism and the dream of limitless growth might seem inappropriate after the historical failure of progressivism, but they continued to thrive in less explicit forms: crime films set in a recent urban past, and cheaper 'B' productions which addressed the changes wrought by urbanization. The crime films (discussed later in chapter 5) took over the mythographic function of the Western, and also dealt more explicitly with Depression era problems of prohibition and organized crime. The 'B' Westerns (discussed in chapter 6) subdued the rhetoric of frontier expansion with music. The achievements of these two Depression genres provided a discursive framework of masked repetition that sustained the central tenets of frontier mythology until 1939, when it emerged once again in less hidden versions. In economic terms, this generic shift to differing versions of the same frontier mythology and the appeal to other audiences (associated with the cheaper 'B' productions) were two parts of Hollywood's strategy to recoup the losses in profits that it suffered in the Depression years.

The fact of the 'A' Western's eclipse is significant. The following section of this chapter investigates, within the context of American social and cultural history, the possible reasons linked to its demise. This eclipse has been attributed in general to the deepening Depression that reduced theatre audiences, and to three other more specific reasons: the failures of two big-budget Westerns at the beginning of the 1930s; an explicit rejection of the progressive interpretation of Turner's Frontier Thesis in President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal; and the attraction of other genres.[34] A consideration of these various factors will lead the discussion into the ideological project contained in the classic Gangster films and, in a later chapter, the cultural instrumentality of Gene Autry's Singing Westerns. The masked repetition of frontier discourse

manifests the attempt at preserving the utility of the frontier myth as it confronts the failure of the progressive dream.

I) Costly Disasters : *The Big Trail* and *Cimarron* (1930)

With regard to the decline of 'A' Westerns during the 1930s, Ed Buscombe offers a plausible determinant in the box-office returns of the Westerns which were made at the start of the decade. By 1920 the average expenditure on a feature had risen to US$60,000, with Paramount productions reaching in excess of US$150,000.[35] Fox's *Big Trail* (1930) followed in the tradition of James Cruze's *The Covered Wagon* (1923) which signalled an increase in the number of longer and more expensive Westerns. Slotkin has termed Westerns from 1923-1931 "epic Westerns" due to their scale and sophistication.[36] Cruze's film was ten reels long when originally released, and at US$782,000 (about US$8 million in 1988) it was the most expensive Western to date. Its income from rentals totaled US$3.5 million.[37] *The Covered Wagon* thus superseded its historical precedents in scope and scale: after the success of Cecil B. Demille's feature-length Western *The Squaw Man* (1914) which exceeded US$37,000 and was six reels in length, William S. Hart made feature-length pictures, and three years later with John Ford's first five-reel Western, *Straight Shooting* (1917), feature-length pictures were common.[38] The significance of *The Covered Wagon* was that it led directly to a marked increase (from 1923) onwards in the number of Westerns with bigger budgets, as most were over six reels in length. *The Iron Horse* (1924), a Ford 'Prestige Western' and Fox's first epic Western, had a phenomenal budget that catered for 5,000 extras needing 100 cooks to feed them, and had a running time in excess of 2 hours, overtaking

the 108 minutes of *The Covered Wagon*. *North of 36* (1924), *The Pony Express*, *The Vanishing American* (1925), and *Redskin* (1928), commanded similar epic status, along with *Tumbleweeds* (1925) which cost US$302,000.

Seven years after *The Covered Wagon*, *The Big Trail* had a budget of US$2 million, more than double the amount of the former film.[39] The cost of production was linked with the intention to launch John Wayne as a star, and the fact that the film was one of the first to be made in Grandeur, a 55mm wide-screen colour process so impressive that the premiere audience cheered and gave the film a standing ovation at its conclusion. The film was, however, a disaster at the box-office, perhaps because most viewers would only see the film in standard 35mm black-and-white screen, taking away its impact. There are also sections of the film where the background noise overpowers the dialogue of the actors and actresses -- Variety's 1930 review of the Western labels it a "noisy *Covered Wagon*".[40] This occurs at various points in *The Big Trail*, but most critically at the beginning, where the sound of moving wagons and horses marrs the scene where Wayne makes his entrance. Wayne was subsequently condemned to Poverty Row and 'B' Westerns for the rest of the decade. Radio Picture's (later RKO) *Cimarron* was slightly less ambitious, costing the studio an unprecedented US$1,433,000 to produce (it was filmed in black and white), but despite winning an Academy Award for Best Picture it lost US$565,000.[41] Its poor box-office performance could be attributed to its overtly classic Turnerian frontier-as-safety-valve perspective; a feature that the film shares with *The Big Trail*.

The Big Trail's opening is a dedication to "the men and women who planted civilization in the wilderness and courage in the blood of their children", establishing the setting of a gathering of these people "from the North, the South and the East" as "they

assemble at the bank of the Mississippi for the conquest of the West". The mise-en-scène of the establishing shot consists of a cluster of wagons, and the camera moves in to focus on one pioneer family, with Zeke (played by Tully Marshall), the father, as the leader of the Missourians. On his way to the "pow wow" with the leaders of the other states, Zeke meets Breck Coleman (played by John Wayne), who tells him about a stretch of land North of Oregon -- "Indian country" -- uninhabited by white men except for a few trappers. Coleman then denies Zeke's request for him to lead them to the valley, as he is on the trail of "a pair of scum". All the dialogue up to and including this scene is muffled by the background noise of the movement of wagons and horses, and dogs barking. The next sequence is of more pioneers who have travelled via boat, and the other key protagonists make their entrance: Thorpe (Coleman's antagonist and rival), Ruth Cameron (Coleman's love interest) and Gussie (El Brendel providing the comic relief). As the plot unwinds Coleman discovers that his personal trail will take him in the same direction as the group of pioneers heading for the valley, and Zeke employs him as a trail scout. Overcoming rivers, cliffs, an Indian attack and a snow storm, the "prairie schooners" roll West and finally reach their destination. Thorpe is killed and Coleman is united with Ruth Cameron.

The portrayal of Indians is surprisingly liberal, a quality that is also reflected in *Cimarron*. Wayne's persona is of a frontier hero who comes from the plains and the mountains, and lives with the Indians. In the scene where the men are discussing Old Ben's untimely demise and blaming the Indians, there is a dissolve to the place and time of the murder, with Wayne (and an Indian companion) discerning the work of "renegade whites". The culprits are later discovered to be a belligerent "grizzly" Flack, and his accomplice Lopez (Charles Stevens playing a Mexican). The audience is encouraged to

perceive these men as the locus of hostility and treachery, while the Indians are regarded as valuable allies. When Wayne is questioned by some children about whether he had ever killed an Indian, what follows is a lesson in tolerance such that his later persona in *The Searchers* appears to be an exercise in off-casting:

> The injuns are my friends, they taught me all I know about the woods, they taught me how to follow a trail by watching the leaves, how to cut your mark on a tree so you won't get lost in a forest, they taught me how to burrow deep in the snow so you won't freeze to death in the storms, and they taught me how to make a fire without even a flint. . .

Wayne displays his Indian expertise and affiliation in different parts of the film, at one point in the trail preventing an Indian attack by recognizing the Cheyennes, riding his horse in a zigzag fashion as an Indian signal to confer with them, at another using a Commanche yell, and in being the only white man that the Indians know by name. The Indians in the film are also played by Native Americans, communicating to the pioneers via hand gestures, and only expressing hostility towards the end of the film where a battle proclaims the film's immense production values. The supremacy of the whites over the Indians is, however, maintained when Zeke claims that "Injuns have never yet prevented our breed of men from travelling into the setting sun".

The depiction of women is less progressive, with mother-in-law jokes as the sole source of humour, and a female protagonist who is utterly dependent upon the hero. Women are portrayed as fickle, unpredictable, and irrational -- Ruth Cameron is forced to change her inappropriate attire at Wayne's suggestion, and in acting impulsively nearly gets him wrongfully hanged. Her apology later is self-denigrating and emphasizes

yet again her inferior status: "Sorry I was so stupid, I should have known better." *Cimarron*'s representation of women is more liberal.

Wesley Ruggles's film opens with a clear declaration of its theme, the founding of Oklahoma:

> A Nation rising to greatness through the work of men and women. . .new
> country opening. . .raw land blossoming. . .crude towns growing into cities. .
> territories becoming rich states. . .
> In 1889, President Harrison opened the vast Indian Oklahoma Lands for
> White settlement. . .2,000,000 acres free for the taking, poor and rich pouring
> in, swarming the border, waiting for the starting gun, at noon, April 22nd. . .

The film's hero is Yancey Cravat (played by Richard Dix), a typical frontier hero who initially settles in Oklahoma but finds himself still stricken by "wanderlust". After refusing the appointment of governor, he leaves his wife and children for "newer fields". She takes over the running of their paper though retaining his name as editor. Many years later an incident of heroism occurs in the Osage reservation, where a "drifter" cushions a torpedo with his chest, sacrificing his life for a group of oil miners. Yancey dies in his wife's arms.

Though *Cimarron* is an explicit representation of the settling of America, with the generation of wealth intrinsically tied to the extension of a territorial frontier, it is surprisingly pro-Indian for its time. This latter factor might also have contributed to its lack of popularity: Yancey educates his wife that the derogatory terms "dirty" and "filthy" should not be attached to Indians but to crooked politicians who double deal to rob Indians of their land (and oil); he is also approving of his son Cimarron's marriage to their hired Indian girl, the children of this mixed marriage later feature, and the subject to

commemorate the Oklahoma Wigwam's (the paper that Yancey is the editor of) anniversary is the acquisition of Indian citizenship. Sabra Cravat (played by Irene Dunne), Yancey's wife, becomes a member of Congress, and her involvement in politics is also lauded in the film. She is praised for what she has done "alone" (i.e. without the help of a man) and the role of women in politics is seen as a "natural step". The film's ending is mirrored exactly in Anthony Mann's conclusion of the film (1960), with the statue of Yancey Cravat in a posture that shows him aiding the progress of the Indian: he is depicted holding the hand of an Indian and helping him forward.

Mann's version of Yancey's frontier adventures and pro-Indian attitudes 30 years later vary only slightly from Wesley Ruggles's film; if anything, it centres less on Indian issues and the status of women. Mann's *Cimarron* omits the topic of Indian citizenship and has Sabra Cravat echoing the words of Pegler's widow: "It isn't worth it, I am a woman, where is my man. . .". Unlike Ruggles's Sabra she takes no pride in her achievements and consigns the admiration placed upon her onto her husband. Thus on the one hand, the rise in wealth via a frontiering experience of the Cravat family, and on the other, the pro-Indian (and attendant castigation of those who are anti-Indian) and pro-woman perspectives in Ruggles's *Cimarron* could account for the lack of appeal that it had for audiences of the Western in 1931. This rationale (excluding the pro-woman representation) also holds for *The Big Trail*. *Variety*'s moderately scathing critique of the film suggests that the frontier adventure is no longer a meaningful or popular theme -- "the players mean nothing, nor does the story. It's just the moving camera, going ahead at 10 miles a day as the caption mentions, with Oregon 2,000 miles away and the film getting there in 125 minutes".[42]

The failure of these two 'A' Westerns to make a profit at the box-office and justify the studios' vast investment of capital and labour logically resulted in the withdrawing of that investment. It would appear that the frontier's allure as an explanation of American progress was fast fading, and that this presented an obstacle to the popular reception of the Western. The continued lack of a market for the feature Western until its return in 1939 may be comprehended in the context of the dominant political ideology of the Depression era. From Foucault's work on psychopathology, a particular discursive formation, we can derive terms that relate to the discourse of frontier mythology. These obstacles to the emergence of frontier discourse in the 'A' Western, such as the performance of the 'A' Western at the box-office and the political context discussed below, act as "authorities of delimitation". For Foucault, a major authority of delimitation was the medical profession, an institutional body that possessed a certain knowledge and authority recognized by public opinion, law and government. Another aspect of the discursive formation is, in Foucault's terms, the "grid of specification". He links this to the different kinds of madness that were specified and related to one another in psychiatric discourse. The discursive formation makes its appearance in "surfaces of emergence". In Foucault's analysis these were the family, immediate social group, and the religious community.[43] For the discursive formation of frontier mythology, the novels of American writers such as James Fenimore Cooper, the rhetoric of American politicians, and the various Hollywood film genres, are surfaces of emergence. The grids of specification can be tied to factors that channel the migration of frontier discourse from one outlet to another. The factors influencing the grid of specification listed in this chapter, for example, help explain the migration of frontier discourse from the 'A' Western to the Gangster film.

II) The Frontier and Roosevelt's New Deal

Turner's Frontier Thesis was part of the ideology of the New Deal administration; President Franklin D. Roosevelt and other members of his "Brains Trust" used his theory of frontier closure to describe the new condition of the American Economy. However, they rejected the progressive gloss on Turner that looked to new frontiers of imperial conquest or unlimited industrial growth to replace the lost Frontier.

The 1930's incited a more severe critique of this version of progress, a critique that was apparent in the political agendas of the time. As F. D. Roosevelt declared in a 1932 address,

> Our last frontier has long since been reached. . . . There is no safety valve in the form of a western Prairie. . . . Our task is not the discovery or exploitation of natural resources. . . . It is the less dramatic business of administering resources and plants already in hand. . . of distributing wealth and products equitably.[44]

The prevailing ideology thus contradicted the mythology of progressivism. The task that lay at hand was not to rely on the frontier as a safety valve to escape from metropolitan discontents, but to attain a more satisfactory distribution of wealth such that those metropolitan discontents are eradicated. The crisis of the Depression years proved that the bonanza economy fostered by the existence of the Frontier was no longer a prospect but an accomplished fact, and that this agrarian-based economy was now slackening. Professor Alvin Hansen of Harvard University echoed these sentiments when he wrote that "the opening of new territory and the growth of population were together

responsible for a very large fraction -- possibly somewhere near one-half of new capital formation in the nineteenth century. . .these outlets for new investments are rapidly being closed. . .This movement ended in the Great Depression."[45]   Hansen was the leading Keynesian in the United States, and represented the mainstream of economic thought in the late 1930s and 1940s. He based his reasoning on the assumption that the American system was, after the ending of the frontier, now encapsuled in closed space.

Conversely, the Western was a medium that communicated this version of a still open system of progress. Moreover, as it dealt more with America's agrarian past and often incorporated ambivalent attitudes to industrialization, it proved unsuitable as a representation of America's urban technological present. The continuing migration of Americans to cities in the 1930s led to an urban interpretation of the national experience, with an emphasis on the role of the immigrant -- explaining in part the rising popularity of Gangster films. The Western, on the other hand, expressed a more traditional attitude to the West that involved the American commitment to agrarianism. Henry Nash Smith has traced this attitude to a specific phase in American history:

> With each surge of westward development a new community came into being. These communities devoted themselves not to marching onward but to cultivating the earth. They plowed the virgin land and put in crops, and the great interior of the valley was transformed into a garden: for the imagination, the Garden of the World. The image of this vast and constantly growing agricultural society in the interior of the continent became one of the dominant symbols of nineteenth century American society. . . that defined the promise of American life. The master symbol of the garden embraced a cluster of metaphors expressing fecundity, growth, increase and blissful labor in the earth, all centering about the heroic figure of the idealized frontier farmer with that supreme agrarian weapon, the sacred plow.[46]

Unlike the Gangster film with its explicit focus on the metropolis, feature Westerns seldom contained expressions of industrialization. *The Iron Horse* (1924) was probably the only Western to do so in a significant manner before the 1930s. *Union Pacific* (1939), *Bend of the River* (1952), *The Far Country* (1955) and *Guns in the Afternoon* (1962) are other examples. The emphasis on the metropolis coupled with the decreasing relevance of the Old West explain the utility of the Gangster figure. However, the substitution of the Gangster for the Westerner also needs to take into account factors other than the appropriateness of setting. The factors that contributed to this generic shift, and relating to Foucault's grid of specification, are considered in the following section.

III) The Attraction of the Gangster

The first phase of gangster movies, conventionally known as the "classic" gangster cycle, lasted for a brief duration: the result of one production season 1930-1931. There is evidence in the trade press of the period that by 1931 these films were already seen as substitutes for the Western. In an article entitled "Gangster Film Wave?", *Variety* reports that the films are "hotter fare than 'Westerns'":

> Gangster films are now in the spot where the westerns were in the early days
> of the pictures. Probability that they will be made in series, as in the former
> western heyday, is not so far remote, according to producers. . .One
> producer's viewpoint as to the probable substitution of racketeer films for the
> Westerns, especially in the second and third class houses, is that the so-called
> tough and rough stuff on which the horse operas were based is so tame when

stacked against the current banditry that it makes the wicked west and the frontier days seem Sunday schoolish.[47]

The next chapter will engage with the Gangster films primarily at the level of movie content, dealing substantially with the gangster protagonist as urban cowboy and ethnic scapegoat. At this point however, it is of some significance to notice that the producer mentioned in the excerpt locates the attraction of the Gangster film to "the current banditry" of his present. His explanation can partially be attributed to the documentary motive that becomes important in the 1930s, a factor that will be elaborated in the rest of this chapter together with the other conditions influencing the economic base of the movie industry in that decade. In attempting to explain the hegemonic trends leading to this substitution of the cowboy and the subsequent abrupt end of the gangster movies' classic phase Foucault's discursive paradigm will be uitilized. Chapter 5 will address one of the primary surfaces of emergence of the frontier myth, while the following will elaborate on the grids of specification (the historical context). This last aspect of Foucault's paradigm is here constituted by three factors -- ethnic exclusion, the Protestant business ethic, and the appeal of documentary.

A) Ethnic Exclusion in the 1920s

The Progressives were noted for their anti-immigrant sentiments in the earlier sections of this chapter, and W.W.I witnessed an increase in the general suspicion of the foreign born, or 'hyphenated American'. This group of the population were assumed to have a divided loyalty. The cultural panic that ensued in the postwar period fuelled stronger assertions of American superiority and anxiety over foreign infiltration, of which the

1919 Red Scare is an obvious example. The pervasive unease in American society towards European immigrants was codified in a series of acts: the Immigration Act of 1917; the Quota Act of 1921, and the National Origins Act of 1924 (also known as the Johnson-Reed Act). The Johnson-Reed Act, in particular, recalled the ethnic divisions of the 1890 Census by observing its quotas restricting migration,[48] and its general effect was to build discrimination against suspect nationalities into the system.[49] These 'new immigrants' or 'white ethnics' presented some cause for concern to the rest of native-born American society, due firstly to their being foreign and secondly because they came to symbolize urbanization and social change. The rationale for the massive immigration from Eastern and central Europe was escalating urbanization. Despite immigration laws, technological changes increased the demand for unskilled laborers that forced key industries to absorb these laborers in vast quantities irrespective of their backgrounds.[50] However, organized labour in America feared that the continued importation of cheap labour from overseas would adversely affect the maintenance of their wage-levels.[51] The overall result was the creation of a large population of urban industrial workers whose existence as hyphenated Americans posed a threat to the 'native-born'. The fear of these new immigrants is evident in the political discourse of Senator Albert Johnson, a sponsor of the 1924 Act:

> It is no wonder, therefore, that the myth of the melting pot has been discredited. It is no wonder that Americans everywhere are insisting that their land no longer shall offer free and unrestricted asylum to the rest of the world. . . .The United States is our land. If it was not the land of our fathers, at least it may be, and it should be, the land of our children. We intend to maintain it so.[52]

Senator Johnson justified his prejudices with the rationale that 'the foreign-born flood' was a threat to American institutions and liberties, and to the happiness of individual Americans.

The natural assimilation and Americanization of the white ethnic was also circumvented by moves to preserve this ethnicity. In her study of industrial workers in Chicago (1919-1939) Lizbeth Cohen observes that cultural allegiance in twenties America was a contested terrain. Public policy in the 1920s was influenced by a desire not only to limit additional immigration drastically, but also to assimilate immigrants into a pre-existing American norm, while ethnic leaders in Chicago were motivated by a desire to keep their members tied to national communities.[53] They made deliberate efforts to prevent ethnic Chicagoans from succumbing to the pull of mainstream America, with their greatest energy directed into ensuring the survival of basic institutions -- the expanding of their communities' welfare programs, the stabilizing of their mutual benefit societies, providing ethnic alternatives to thriving mainstream institutions such as banks, and consolidating their church parishes. These efforts were not negligible: by 1928, the Italo-American National Union alone had incorporated more than twenty-seven smaller mutual aid societies in Chicago.[54] In totality, these four basic institutions consolidated local and European loyalties into larger, national ethnic communities. Jewish welfare agencies, Italian fraternal associations, Bohemian banks and Polish parishes serviced a more national ethnic community within America.[55]

The prominence of the ethnic-based infrastructure highlighted the dominance of ethnicity and consequently retained new immigrants in a separate category from the native American, defining them as "Other". The emergence of national ethnic communities in the late 1920's served to heighten this Otherness further and made it

more obvious. The resultant ethnic division was, however, a barrier to the quest for a coherent national identity that the American state and political formations strove for throughout the 1930's. The cause of this division did not solely lie with the ethnic leadership; the ideological message embodied by the National Origins Act clearly advocated the supremacy of native born WASPs, or what Graham Barnfield has called 'Nordic Stock'. However, the forging of a national identity that included the immigrant industrial worker did not occur immediately. Participants in the nativist social movements of the 1920s were in the 1930s still insisting upon the ethnic divisions entrenched in immigration law, and questioning whether those of non- 'Nordic' stock were able and prepared to conduct themselves as decent Americans.[56] These sentiments were voiced in the sphere of popular culture, where the utility of ethnic divisions was still not yet exhausted, and where there were fears of an increasingly Jewish ownership of the motion picture industry.[57] The Jewish movie moguls were themselves aware of the threat their ethnicity posed and seemed eager to pledge their allegiance to the values of Middle America -- Louis B. Mayer did this by producing movies which trumpeted the values of family, loyalty, virtue, tradition and patriotism.[58] Once they had acquired prominence in Hollywood, the moguls shunted off the religious and social traditions of their inheritance. They were reluctant to promote the cause of Jewish actors and actresses, and re-married non-Jewish women.[59] However, the impact of their attempts paled in comparison with the masses of urban immigrants that arrived and settled in America.

The white ethnic served as a useful target on which the blame for the Depression and the alleged excesses of the 1920s could be displaced. In scapegoating the white ethnic, blame could be shifted away from the corrupt business activities of policemen

and politicians, and more firmly onto the bootleggers and gangsters with whom they shared a covert alliance. The ineffectuality of the law can be surmised in looking at the case of New York city, where out of 6,902 cases involving breaches of the Volstead Act, 6,074 were dismissed for 'insufficient evidence' and 400 not even tried.[60] The actual purveyors of corruption in the Jazz Age were not unknown to all sectors of the public imagination; a liberal weekly expressed its views on Prohibition by demanding the nationalization of alcohol on the grounds that the government "would not seek. . . to dominate local politics for their own ends. It would not bribe local officials to wink at law violations, as was the almost universal practice of the saloon, nor would it extend its operations into the allied occupations of gambling, drug-selling and prostitution. . .The corrupt politicians are working to prevent repeal and prolong the reign of the speakeasy".[61] This perception of metropolitan civic corruption was tied to fears for the future of Protestantism, an essential component of WASP values, and another factor determining the Foucauldian grid of specification.

B) The Protestant Business Ethic

The impact of immigration not only affected the racial character of America, it also transformed the nation's religious composition: membership of the Catholic Church rose from 9 million to 18 million between 1807 and 1920.[62] By 1928 the political race between Herbert Hoover and Al Smith demonstrated that many Americans were bitterly suspicious not only of city politicians, but of Catholics. Born on a farm, Hoover stood for "old, predominantly rural, Protestant America", whilst Smith, born in the city and a Catholic, stood for immigrants and Americans of immigrant stock. The fear of

escalating urbanization was now complemented by religions in competition: Reverend Mordecai F. Ham, a Baptist preacher, told his congregation "If you vote for Al Smith you're voting against Christ and you'll be damned."[63] Fiery crosses placed by the Ku Klux Klan blazed in the fields during Smith's tour of the South-West. This threat of Catholicism was exacerbated by a sense of guilt arising from the business ethic that had influenced Protestant Churches in the 1920s -- reflecting a failure of Christian doctrines to overcome the spreading secularization of American culture.

The compromise of Protestant religious beliefs with the power of capitalism manifested itself in the organization and activities of its churches. Evidence of the adoption of business values is provided by Maltby in his discussion of *The King of Kings*, a film that typified aspects of Protestant belief in the 1920s. Religious practices were increasingly situated within the dominant business discourse, and a reciprocal affinity developed between the doctrines of liberal Protestantism and the ideological infrastructure of capitalism.[64] Clergymen endorsed business spokesmen and offered them their pulpits and periodicals, whilst business spokesmen responded by endorsing the application of business ideas to churchwork. Business managers and efficiency experts were hired by some of the larger churches, and business administration courses were offered to pastors in divinity schools.[65] Christianity was increasingly superseded by a business ethic that doubled the value of church property between 1916 and 1926 in the face of an unremitting decline in religious belief. In 1929 Middletown:

> Secular marriages are increasing, divorce is increasing, wives of both workers
> and business men would appear to stress loyalty to the church less than did
> their mothers in training children, church attendance is apparently less regular
> than in 1890, Rotary which boasts that it includes all the leaders of the city
> will admit no ministers, social activities are much less centered in the

churches. . . In theory, religious beliefs dominate all other activities in Middletown; actually, large regions of Middletown's life appear uncontrolled by them.[66]

The church also began to use the appeal of motion pictures to solve the problem of declining attendances. In Rockport, Massachusetts, a church that started using films in its services had its evening congregation increase from 12 to 500.[67] By 1923, an estimated 15,000 church schools and clubs were showing motion pictures as part of their activities, and by 1927 27,0000 schools, churches and other institutions were equipped with projection machines.[68] According to Maltby, this practice of exhibiting films in churches was part of a larger institutional project to establish a close relationship between the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America, Inc. (MPPDA) and the liberal Protestant Churches, and it is his contention that the project failed. However, by 1929, business and religion merged in the popular imagination; devotion was repaid in purely financial terms with the Dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School telling a reporter that a businessman could make more money if he prayed about his business. President Calvin Coolidge's observation was that "the man who builds a factory builds a temple", for "the man who works there, worships there."[69]

With the Crash of 1929, the liberal Protestant Churches were pushed to reassess their adaptation of business ethics in the 1920s, and their relationship with the MPPDA in particular came under attack: blame was diverted from the secularization of Protestantism and its corresponding assimilation of business techniques and infrastructures to a critique of the motion picture industry. Of the three gangster films of the classic cycle, two (*Little Caesar* and *Scarface*) are about Italian gangsters; while *Public Enemy*'s Tom Powers has an Irish father. This not only established a convention

that derives from the notoriety of Al Capone in the Prohibition period, but is also significant in its association with Protestantism's "Other"-- Catholicism. The Italian protagonists who are scapegoated for the excessive capitalism of 1920s America can thus be seen as a strategic move by Hollywood to appease and regain the support of liberal Protestant opinion. These attempts at placation ultimately ended in failure and, ironically, when Hollywood was forced to seek elsewhere for support, they turned to the Roman Catholic Church.[70]

C) The Appeal of Documentary

The documentary motive of the 1930's provides a further explanation for the substitution of the Gangster Film for the Western. In his investigation of the documentary approach in thirties America, William Stott provides this definition: "Documentary is the presentation or representation of actual fact in a way that makes it credible and vivid to people at the time."[71] The subject of documentary is generally the experience of a group of individuals of low economic and social standing in the society; lower than the audience for whom the documentary is made. Stott observes that the primary expression of the thirties was based not on myth or fiction, but on actuality, and that documentary was the vehicle that suited this requirement. A significant reason for explaining why the documentary approach was characteristic in the 1930's was the Great Depression: during the Depression, the American public was shielded from knowing the basic facts of their economic plight. The Hoover government, the business community and most of the media minimized the truth of the failing economy in their attempts to restore confidence. Hoover, for example, "corrected" the results of the

1930 Census by cutting the figure of 3,187,947 unemployed in the U.S. to 1,900,000.[72]

As the Depression progressed, it became evident that the government, business, and the press (those who claimed knowledge of the present situation) were arranging evidence towards their own ends and prejudicing their estimates. This growth of scepticism compelled a need for the presentation of actual facts, and documentary satisfied this need. Paula Rabinowitz's contention that in the 1930s a "slippage" occurred between the spheres of documentary and the fiction of what she terms "Hollywood's dream machine" is pertinent here.[73] Though she only gives brief mention of the Gangster films in her argument, she does discuss how *Gold Diggers of 1933* was affected by the documentary impulse: evoking images of the Depression familiar to middle-class listeners of Roosevelt's Fireside Chats and to urban working and poor people whose lives formed these images. Her analysis strengthens the notion of commingling between documentary and Hollywood movies in the early 1930s.

The popularity of the Gangster film can thus be linked with its proximity to the documentary genre. A figure constructed out of the daily headlines, the exploits of the gangster protagonist appeared to "represent actual fact". In the 1920s, organized crime was a public spectacle; the big gangster funerals beginning with Big Jim Colosimo in May 1920 became media events, whilst tabloids thrived on the melodrama provided by police raids and gangland wars.[74] The Gangster films, particularly *Little Caesar*, utilized a quasi-documentary form. Conversely, the adventures of the Cowboy on the frontier belonged to an era embedded in the distant past, and were associated more with myth than actuality. The Western and its iconography of gunslingers, horses and stagecoaches were inappropriate to an era which shifted its emphasis to the city. For 1930's audiences with a documentary bias, the gangster as a figure from their immediate past,

together with the iconography of machine guns and limousines, held greater relevance. The argument that the Gangster films were popular merely because they were culturally more verisimilar than the Western cannot alone explain the genre's popularity in the 1920s. The documentary motive, in tandem with the requisite of cultural verisimilitude, is important for understanding the attraction of the Gangster. Thus, like the subject of documentary, *The Public Enemy*, *Little Caesar* and *Scarface* are concerned with tracing the careers of "a group of individuals of low economic and social standing in the society" -- ethnic succession predicates that the immigrant would automatically occupy the bottom rung of the social ladder, and thus as immigrants of Catholic stock, these protagonists were on a social standing lower than the WASP audience whose approval the films set out to gain. In addition to the use of sound, documentary-type techniques were adopted to create greater realism -- the representation of working-class Chicago in *The Public Enemy* with its stockyards, beer parlours and the Salvation Army marching down the streets corresponds to the assertion made in the beginning of the film that an attempt is being made to depict a social environment honestly.[75] The documentary and sociological approach to the creation of the gangster protagonist and his life-style in the films concur with the needs of 1930s American audiences that social documentary in particular fulfilled.

These three factors, the appeal of documentary in the thirties, ethnic division, and the need to placate the Protestants, explain why 1930-1931 was an appropriate moment for the motion picture industry to produce and release Gangster films. The effect that these Gangster films had on American audiences, however, proved contrary to the ideological project of establishing the cultural solidarity of the WASPs. This is perhaps due to the failure of Hollywood to recognize an additional and essential aspect

of documentary that in this specific context was detrimental in its manipulation of audience reception:

> The people documentary treats are felt to be more real than those on top of society, but that is not all. Social documentary is instrumental, *and its people tend, like the innocent victims of propaganda, to be simplified and ennobled -- sentimentalized, in a word.*[76]
>
> My Emphasis

The ability of documentary to ennoble its subject, and to encourage audiences to empathize with the circumstances of its protagonists, was an aspect that worked against the aims of the film industry. Social documentary, though a medium that satisfied the needs of the American public in the thirties, was also instrumental in undermining the establishment, and in adopting the documentary approach in their gangster films, the film industry unwittingly contributed to this weakening of establishment values.

The two factors in the discursive grid of specification designating Catholicism and the ethnic as "Other" would appear to suggest that the Gangster protagonist was meant to function as a scapegoat. This explanation adheres with the generic necessity of his death. The attempt to transpose frontier discourse onto an urban setting, discussed in the following chapter, consolidates the argument in illustrating that the gangster's death also fulfilled the requisite annihilation of Otherness that is central to the mythology. The utilization of documentary techniques, however, aided a translation in which the encoded ethnic scapegoat was decoded as a tragic American hero. The substitution of the Gangster film for the Western proved to be a failed project in scapegoating. This failure not only dictated the end of the gangster cycle, but also

sealed an outlet in which discourses of frontier mythology could emerge. The next chapter considers the authorities delimiting the boundaries of frontier discourse that emerged in the thirties, focusing on the Gangster film as a surface of emergence.

5 Negotiating the Thirties

Gangster Heroes and Masked Discourses of the Frontier

> During the early thirties the documentary approach was practised by those who wished to embarrass the Hoover administration and upset the status quo: in particular journalists of the Left and by social workers trying to inform the more fortunate classes about the hardship of the poor and unemployed. Such documentary. . .exposed America's shortcomings: the government mendacity, the brutal wastefulness of a capitalistic system. But when the New Deal came to power, it institutionalized documentary; it made the weapon that undermined the establishment part of the establishment.[1]
>
> William Stott

When the historical "West" of the frontier lost its mythological resonance in the cultural crisis of the 1930s, a surface innovation occured in the frontier myth. This was a migration of frontier discourse from Westerns that depicted the surges of westward development to movies that addressed a more recent past. The abandoning of its progressive gloss simultaneously manifested a change at the deep structure of the myth - - the tenet of expansion was for the moment suppressed, though the other elements of which the myth was composed still emerged at the level of discourse. These other elements included notions of WASP superiority, a hatred of Otherness, the role of the

woman as a motivation for the hero's actions, and the influence of the environment. This slight transformation of the myth as a reaction to the events of the early 1930s is an example of a diachronic change. However, the myth was not suppressed in its entirety -- though the new genres in the early 1930s accommodated the climate of the depression, they had narrative and mythic structures that mirrored those of the Western. This migration of frontier discourse thus exhibited an attempt to communicate the myth's version of national identity through a different setting. This tactic was only partially successful.

Alternative Routes to Discourse: Hollywood's Double System of Repression

> . . . . Classical Hollywood's double system of repression: first, its deployment
> of the classic western's structures as a means of displacing crucial anxieties,
> and second, the further concealment of that strategy itself, achieved by
> displacing those structures into disguises they assumed in other genres.[2]

Chapter one dealt with the corporate consolidation of the Hollywood studios, and the economies of scale that pointed the industry toward the mass production of films, in turn facilitating the proliferation and evolution of film genres, by maximizing the advantages inherent in the systematic repetition of successful formulas. Studios prospered by learning to anticipate shifts in the public's interest in particular kinds of story, and by their industrial capacity to exploit a discovered preference by reproducing the story-type promptly and in quantity. In the early 1930s, box office receipts convinced the studios that the public's interest had for the moment shifted from the feature Western onto genres that were more relevant to the crisis of the time. Amongst others, the Gangster

film was the discovered preference that studios exploited and commenced to produce speedily and in abundance. The films assimilated the mythic charge of the Western, containing its structure and endorsing its values.

The final section of chapter three provides an explication of Classic Hollywood's narrative model, concluding that the paradigm contained a naturalizing effect, such that the manufactured medium appears to be spontaneous. The spectator is presented with a constantly shifting perspective in a decision-based medium, but is made to feel (through the concealment of the pattern of choices that constitute style in an art form) that the necessity for choice does not exist. This establishes the first level of Hollywood's system of repression: the denial of the necessity for choice. The explanation of Classic Hollywood's narrative paradigm was then followed by a specific application of that paradigm onto the Western, and the mythology of the Frontier.

Robert B. Ray posits that the Western's importance is derived from the national ideology's eagerness to assert an American exceptionalism as the basis for avoiding difficult choices.[3] This exceptionalism turned on notions about the availability of uncivilized, open land (firstly the American continent remote from Europe, and later West of America's urbanized Eastern region). The ideology of space transposed itself into the promise of endless economic growth, and the mythology of the Frontier with its explanation of American progress influenced a large percentage of American policy making. The result of an external safety-valve was a postponing of internal reforms, such as civil rights and welfare legislation. This ideology encouraged repeated American interventions abroad, and was validated each time the intervention proved successful and American victory was confirmed, as in the two world wars. The narrative of movie Westerns expressed and promoted this ideology of progressivism and American

exceptionalism, supporting the status quo in the same way that the Classic Hollywood procedure denied the need for internal revolution and change.

This conservatism results in a doubling effect when masked discourses of the frontier in the depression genres are considered: like the Western, its disguised counterparts repeated notions of American exceptionalism, but these modernized versions went further in resolving the anxieties perceptible in the frontier mythology's promise of unlimited space and the inevitable encroachment that threatened (and accomplished) a diminishing of that space. In addressing an urban present and a West that was changing due to industrialization, they dissipated the anxiety that directly confronted the myth in the context of the Depression era. Moreover, with the discrediting of the mythic West, as explained in the previous chapter, the urban setting functioned as a new site for frontier discourse. This argument differs from Ray's deployment of disguise. Ray sees almost every other Hollywood genre as a "disguised" Western, not only giving unwarranted precedence to the Western but also collapsing notions of discourse, myth and the Western narrative. The frontier myth is an important component of American ideology, and its discourse is often most completely articulated in the Western, but this does not equate films where frontier discourse surfaces to Westerns in disguise. Rather, frontier discourse tends to be less explicit in movies existing outside the Western genre, and this most often happens when that discourse cannot be articulated within the genre itself.

The beginnings of a widespread agitation for alcoholic prohibition began as early as 1880, when the Prohibition party fought a Presidential election for the first time. The Progressive era saw a strengthening of anti-alcoholism, with the formation of a new class that believed in totally forbidding the manufacture, sale and purchase of alcoholic drink. They were also anti-socialist, anti-immigrant and anti-working class. However, the conservative instincts of the progressives hindered them from dictating fundamental changes to the American system. It would take the patriotic fervour of WWI (brewers were commonly of German origin) for prohibitionists to induce Congress to pass a Constitutional amendment (the Eighteenth) forbidding the export, import, 'manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquers', from then on. The ammendment became law on 29 January 1919. Until 1933 when the Volstead Act was changed to permit the manufacture of beer and light wine again, the demand for alcohol escalated and put $2,000,000,000 into the pockets of bootleggers and gangsters (who worked in close cooperation with corrupt politicians and policemen).[4] Al Capone achieved national prominence in the 1920s, when gangster activities were an acceptable media spectacle. However by March 1930 Capone was named Public Enemy No. 1 by newspapers across the country.[5]

The media attention Capone courted and the urban disorder of the Depression's tumultous first years spawned a new genre: the Gangster film. The beginning of the new genre dates at about 1931 due to the success of two movies -- *Little Caesar* (1930) and *The Public Enemy* (1931). The genre's popularity throughout the 1930s has been explained particularly by relation to the early Depression years in which the films were

132

produced. For the financially constrained studios the Gangster film's relatively cheap production costs were a bonus: primarily using contemporary dress, minimal sets (backroom offices, seedy restaurants and hotel rooms) and exteriors that rarely demanded anything more than the standing sets of the backlot. The generic formula of the Gangster film has as its central protagonist a hero embodying the values of Americanism, but unable to succeed due to the limitations of the city. Most critics agree that the genre thus captured the public imagination through its response to and reflection of contemporary concerns.

Robert Warshow's essay "The Gangster as Tragic Hero" (1948) was significant in its promotion of such interpretations of the Gangster film. His selection of *Little Caesar* and *Scarface* arguably influenced a trend of critical writing that combined these two films and *The Public Enemy* as "classical" precedents of the gangster genre. This consensual interpretation of the Gangster films has more recently been contested by Richard Maltby. Though much of the critical writing on the Gangster film recognizes that the movie gangster was a derivative of his media representation, Maltby's contention is that most critical literature on the genre fails to consider the instrumentality of the media in concealing "the practical realities of liquor-related crime" where "the bootleggers, racketeers and speakeasy operators were 'technicians' in a business enterprise run by 'respectable' brewery owners, law enforcement agencies, politicians and public officials."[6] Police raids, gangland wars and big gangster funerals became the media events that fuelled the tabloid melodrama, the latter serving as a "convenient and entertaining distraction from the realities of 1920s muncipal realpolitik, in which city government was an exercise in barely concealed corruption". Maltby's gangster is thus not Warshow's tragic hero, but a scapegoat villain, and "an embodiment of guilt to be

expiated."[7]   Before discarding Warshow's interpretative framework entirely, his

perspective on the Gangster film does allow for an important correlation to be made

between the Western and Gangster formulas: the conflict between the values of the

individual and the community. This consensual interpretation of the classic Gangster

films yields an analysis of how Hollywood still manages to reconcile its tragic hero with

his environment. Maltby's argument of the gangster as scapegoat lends greater

complexity to the Hollywood mechanism, revealing the sophistication with which it

operates in endorsing the status quo.

According to most critics of the Gangster film, including Stephen Louis Karpf[8]

and Jack Shadoian[9], *Little Caesar* inaugurated the classical phase of the Gangster Film.

The genre reached the point of classical development soon after its appearance, with *The*

Public Enemy (1931) and *Scarface* (1932) iconographically and thematically close to the

first film. The second phase of the Gangster film came about in 1935 with a cycle of

films similar to William Keighley's *G-Men*. Unlike the films of the classical period, these

movies had F.B.I. agents as their central protagonists in an attempt to appease the

censors, and to endorse the status quo more firmly. However, the classical Gangster

films did set the tone and establish the generic rules for the subsequent phases of films to

follow.   This is manifest in the behavior of the G-Men, which was no different from the

gangsters they supplanted.[10] The movies following the Classic Gangster cycle (notably

Gabriel Over The White House and *This Day and Age*) exhibit a quality of vigilantism --

where the law is taken into the hand of the citizenry -- that is usually associated with the

Western, but here transplanted into a contemporary urban setting.

The widespread acceptance of the gangster as a career obsessive individual

whose raison d'être is "a drive for success" with the "typical" Gangster film presenting a

134

"steady upward progress", culminating always in his death explains why certain Gangster movies, though noted for their value, have not been seen as 'classical'.[11] Maltby has identified the crime movies that were made in the 'classical period' but which fail to reach 'classical status': *Doorway to Hell* (1930), *City Streets* (1931), *Quick Millions* (1931) and *The Secret Six* (1931). In *Doorway to Hell*, Lew Ayres plays Louis Ricarno, a beer baron who gives up his bootleg racket to get married. He resists the 'classic' criterion on two counts -- sacrificing his ambition, and also in that move elevating marriage (and the woman) above his career. He does fulfil one tenet in dying at the hands of his former gang. In *City Streets* Gary Cooper plays "The Kid", a protagonist who initially refuses to work for a beer-running racketeer McCoy, but finally succumbs to acquire evidence that might aid the release of Nan Sooley (Sylvia Sidney) from prison. When she is released from jail Nan tries to persuade The Kid to leave the rackets, and in the process she is framed for McCoy's death. The finale sees a reunion of The Kid and Nan, after he saves her from the gang. The gangster protagonist here is not only defined by a lack of ambition, he also manages to survive.[12] The importance accrued to gangster movies that do fit the Warshow paradigm is significant, perhaps only because they embodied the mythic charge central to notions of Americanism. As expressions of frontier mythology, these classic gangster movies incorporated that which was deemed culturally significant within the domain of the Western. That cultural significance was by the same process transferred.

This section of the chapter will thus derive examples from the three archetypal films associated with the gangster genre (*Little Caesar* [1930], *The Public Enemy* [1931] and *Scarface* [1932]), exploring the way in which these films commented on the historical background and current public issues related to the Depression. It will aim to

reveal that below these surface innovations of discourse, an unbroken link persisted between the narrative and mythic structures of the Gangster film with those developed in the Western. The delivery of this revelation will initially utilize a comparison of the Gangster figure with the Cowboy.

I) Cowboy, City Boy: The Gangster as an Urban Westerner

In 1929 the gangster for the first time surpassed the cowboy as a subject for Hollywood moviemakers. Though the gangster figure is generally thought to be a contemporary of 1930s movie audiences, he was actually a part of their immediate past. Maltby writes that the Gangster films were:

> all overtly retrospective accounts of the excesses of the 1920s as seen from the perspective of the worst years of the Depression. In all of them a strong element of criticism of their central character is present, couched in a rhetoric comparable to that used by press editorials, and their press campaigns endorsed that position as the only credible one available for their promotion.[13]

These figures were, however, far from mere reflections of social actuality; they were instead, social and imaginative constructs. The gangster was the product of genre and convention, of the creative instincts and commercial calculations of producers, writers, performers, and above all, the products of ideology; the products of an ideological struggle that sought to countervail a cultural crisis. This new type of gunfighter replaced the Western gunslinger, and arguably, had roots that intertwined with the latter. Eugene Rosow asserts that to Howard Hawks, the gangster and cowboy heroes are basically the same character: a man with a gun.[14] The gangster was, however, to

136

address the darker aspects of progressive history which had featured in earlier Westerns, but would also figure later and with increased frequency in the "outlaw Westerns" of the late 1930's (*The Oklahoma Kid, Jesse James* [1939]). The next two sections discuss the individuality of the gangster, particularly how that individuality threatens the ideology of a classless society.

Individualism and the Democratic, Classless Society

Like the Cowboy, the Gangster embodied an internal contradiction between advocating the values of community and those of individualism. In the period of rapid industrialization that followed the end of the Civil War, American commitment to individualism and success (as represented in economic terms by *laissez-faire* capitalism and in political terms by attachment to States' rights[15]) was significant in determining the quality of the cities that grew at this time. The burgeoning and associated uncontrolled capitalism of New York and Chicago attracted large numbers of immigrants, with the lack of influence by a central government leading to the surfacing of the boss system in city politics and to a tradition of civic corruption. Ironically, the threat that the movie gangster faces is one that seeks to rob him of his individuality. Law and order, as symbols of the forces of civilization, seek to suppress the criminal activities of the gangster.

This contradiction between the community and the self is nullified in the Western when the Cowboy neutralizes the existing representations of plurality, and also partially by his ability to ride off into the sunset, leaving both community and contradiction behind. In the latter example, the contradiction is resolved temporarily, until he rides

137

into another town again. The narrative envelope provides the temporal resolution, and the lack of a permanent resolution facilitates a future expression of the contradiction between community and self, an expression that is arguably an attraction of the genre. The gangster figure is a Westerner with no sunset to fade off into. He is denied a place in the mythic West, a place beyond the boundaries of legal and social restraints of civilization. This mythic West offers a positive, democratic, and moral environment; according to Frederick Jackson Turner, the frontier was a guarantor of demographic and social mobility that gave American society its democratic and open quality. Nash Smith locates the Turner's affirmation of democracy and doctrine of geographical determinism as derivative of the stream of agrarian theory that flows from eighteenth-century England and France through Jefferson to the men who elaborated the ideal of a society of yeoman farmers. He notes that in nourishing an agrarian philosophy Turner's model offered no intellectual apparatus for taking account of the industrial revolution. Turner's thesis was powerless to confront issues arising from the advance of technology.[16] This flaw in the utility of Turner's thesis as an explanation for the character of the American nation has its corollary in the perception that democracy is not attainable within an urban environment. A child born after the closing of the frontier, and into the environment of the city, the gangster is bereft of the mobility that is afforded the cowboy. In the city, the gangster is faced with the threat to his individuality and freedom.

The majority of Gangster films make some comment about the nature of the city: the city is never a neutral but often a virulent environment. The industrial reality not only erodes the positive vision of the mythic West, the only outlet for creative expression appears to be (at least according to Hollywood) a life of crime. Hollywood

did not, for example, make films that lauded the meritorious actions of trade union leaders: Rowland Browne's original script for *the Doorway to Hell* ("A Handful of Clouds") has this to say:

> Gangsters are really the invention of capitalists. My first job was breaking a strike, at twenty bucks a day; and all I had to have was a gun. I was over on one strike in Pennsylvania and saw that a lot of my countrymen working there and living like animals; so I decided I was on the wrong side of the fence, and became a labor leader *and later an underworld power.*[17]

<div align="right">My Emphasis</div>

When a life of crime is presented as inevitable, the opposition of individualism to the agents of democracy, and the dilemma of mutual existence, is to a large extent more convincing. A criminally inclined occupation is logically at odds with the token moral agents of civilization. Nonetheless, as in the Western, the Gangster genre contains the contradiction such that both values of self and community are upheld -- dissipating the threat to individuality that arises from the closing of the frontier and the threat to community with its evils of organized crime and corruption.

At a time when Americans defined themselves by the quality of life afforded to them in the city, the general sentiment was one of national disillusionment. The prohibition act had promoted an unparalleled level of corruption that was now fuelled by the dissatisfaction with a weak economy. The film that commented on the national disillusionment was *Public Enemy*: a gangster movie that in approximately half an hour traces the life of a young man (Tom Powers) who begins his career with the theft of a pair of roller skates and "six-buck-a-piece" watches, graduates to grand larceny, bootlegging, murder, and ends with his bound and trussed body falling through his

mother's front door. Ironically, it is via Mike Powers, Tom's elder brother, that the ideals of the pre-Depression years are shown to be inadequate. The character of Mike exemplifies the impossibility of presenting a WASP patriarchal hero to contemporary audiences in a Depression context. The irony lies in Mike's personal belief in the values of patriotism and altruism; this is apparent in the conversation he has with Tom in their bedroom, as he packs in preparation for service in W.W.I:

> Tom: Gee, you're rushing it.
> Mike: Well, Tom, when our country needs us. . . she needs us.
> Tom: I suppose so. I suppose you think I ought to go too.

Mike then gives Tom some brotherly advice about being the "man of the family" and looking after their mother. He sets up a moral code of unselfishness and virtuosity that is undermined by Tom. When Mike accuses Tom of the latter's involvement in "some crooked work", Tom retaliates:

> Tom: . . .You ain't so smart. Books and that whoey don't hide everything.
> Mike: You're a liar Tom! You're covering up.
> Tom: Covering up? To you? Say. . .You're only a sneak thief! A nickel snatcher! Robbin' the street car company.

The opposing beliefs underlying Tom's cynicism are confirmed when Mike lashes out and catches Tom on the chin, knocking his brother down. Mike's moral code fails in view of his own actions; he fails in his role as the patriarchal hero. The ideal of patriotism is critiqued in a later incident, when Mike comes home from the war and

discovers that his brother has developed into a full-time gangster. He is enraged at

Tom's gift of a keg of beer (the movie is based on John Bright's *Beer and Blood*):

> Mike: You'd think I'd care if it was just beer in the keg? I know what's in it!
> I know what you've been doing all this time. . .where you got the clothes and
> those new cars -- you've been telling Ma that you've gone into politics. . .that
> you're on the city payroll! I know everything! You murderers! It's not beer
> in that keg! It's beer and blood. Blood of men!
> Tom: You ain't changed a bit. And say. . .you ain't so good yourself. You
> killed. . .and you liked it! You didn't get all those medals for holding hands
> with them Germans.

Tom's contempt of Mike and his ideal of patriotism is evident in the logic that there is

no difference between killing for the defence of one's country and killing to get rid of

bootlegging gangs that are a threat to one's profit. The community values espoused by

Mike are subverted by Tom. The values of individualism held by Tom conflict and

appear to prevail over the values of community held by Mike.

Tom as the gangster, on the other hand, is glamorized. He is depicted in heroic

proportions -- coupled with James Cagney's charismatic performance as Tom, the

audience is attracted to Tom's dynamism, and his self reliance. The dubious morality of

the gangster is counterpointed by the limitations of society, a society that denies

individualism and provides only minimal options to the struggling male from an inner

city, working-class background (in the opening of *Public Enemy* the six shots prefaced

by the title "1909" establish the setting as a Chicago working-class neighborhood).

According to Hollywood, the gangster is partially justified in his chosen career path

because it is shown to be the only profitable and engaging occupation available. It is

significant that Tom Powers is not only at odds with the agents of civilization. His fight

against rival gangs echoes the Classic Westerner's separation from both community and other outlaws. Tom Powers, Rico Bandello and Tony Camonte are advocates for America's aspirant culture in their drive to rise. Rico takes over Sam Vettori's gang, and tells Otero that "Diamond Pete ain't so tough" -- after taking over Diamond Pete's territory, he now confides to Otero that even the Big Boy won't be on top much longer. In *Scarface*, Tony tells Gino: "This business is just waitin' for some guy to come and run it right, and I got ideas", and when Gino reminds him that they are working for Lovo, Tony replies: "Lovo! Who's Lovo?. . .Just some guy that's a little bit smarter than Big Louie, that's all. Hey that guy's soft. I could see it in his face. He gotta set-up, that's all, and we just gotta wait. Some day I'm gonna run the whole works!". Like the Cowboy who leaves community behind him and is ever in search of new frontiers, the City Boy expresses individuality by not conforming to any organization, and by aiming high and getting ahead. Both heroes espouse the ideology of America as a land of opportunity, and fulfil the American Dream that culminates in the acquisition of wealth: the cowboy extends the frontier thereby regenerating the fortunes of those inhabiting civilized territory, and it is significant that most movie gangsters begin their upward journey from working class backgrounds. In both the Western and Gangster genres this fundamental belief in an individual's progress opposes the ideology of a classless, democratic society because being an individual creates inequality by setting one apart on a level above others.

Thus, though this validation of the gangster's individuality is put forward at the expense of community values, the gangster movie still manages to endorse a positive cultural model, and it does this in two ways. Like *Little Caesar* and *Scarface,* the release prints of *The Public Enemy* carried a careful rationalization in its forward that

the audience would see a national problem explored through film, and not the glamorization of gangsters. Tom Powers, as the hero of the movie, did little in support of the law, order, or conventional morality. Without a sunset to ride off into or a place in civilization, the movie does culminate in his death and appeases the censors. The subject of the gangster's death draws much debate, and the most popular observation is that the death of the movie gangster, like the obligatory gunfight that resolves the Western's conflicts, is an essential generic formality. In *Underworld USA*, Colin McArthur contends: "That the gangster must ultimately lie dead in the streets became perhaps the most rigid convention to the genre".[18] It is perhaps more appropriate to view the gangster's death as a generic necessity. This generic necessity conformed to Hollywood's implicit code of social order that governed the resolution to virtually all of its classic genre films. The conflicting values of self and community are equally lauded: Tom's criminality forms an essential part of his heroism, but it is ultimately not a path to power and wealth. Later from his hospital bed, Tom shows signs of remorse and reform, before his tragic demise. He dies to re-affirm the laws of society. We witness in this narrative strategy the ability of the gangster genre to "play it both ways" -- while defining heroism through ruthless individualism and ambition, the Classical Hollywood procedure complied with a more pro-social message of celebrating social order and a sense of community morality.

This resolving of the contradiction between community and self is an echo from the Western. Unlike the cowboy the gangster dies, but his death, as will be discussed in the following section, simultaneously affirms both the values of individuality and community. The fascination with crime and violence has a deep appeal that links both genres, with anti-social behaviour being one of the strongest forms of romantic

individualism. The American ideology of nationalism is founded on the notion of individual energy and decisive action, making that energy admirable, but paradoxically, having to curtail it in its own interests. In the Western, the rugged individualism which built the frontier society conflicts with the restraints on that individualism imposed by the newly-established community: the cowboy and farmer are rarely on friendly terms. The Cowboy always rides into sunsets farther West because he is ill at ease with the civilization he has recently defended, and still defends. This structural component of the frontier myth is transposed onto the gangster genre -- the gangster's frustrations with urban society stem from a revolt against society's restrictions. As in the Western, the dramatization of this conflict and its temporal resolution is also the means through which the audience's acquiescence to the contemporaneous political system (conservative and committed to laissez faire) is encouraged.

Success and the Status Quo

Robert Warshow's conclusions on the death of the gangster are persuasive:

> The gangster is doomed because he is under obligation to succeed, not because
> the means he employs are unlawful. In the deeper layers of the modern
> consciousness, *all* means are unlawful, every attempt to succeed is an act of
> aggression, leaving one alone and guilty and defenseless among enemies: one
> is *punished* for success. This is our intolerable dilemma: that failure is a kind
> of death and success is evil and dangerous and -- ultimately -- impossible.
> The effect of the Gangster Film is to embody this dilemma in the person of the
> gangster and resolve it by his death. The dilemma is resolved because it is his
> death, not ours. We are safe; for the moment we can acquiesce in our failure,
> we can choose to fail.[19]

This passage raises two important points about the gangster's death: in confronting the problems and anxieties relating to increased levels of crime and a slackening economy (and the lack of space outside of civilization to escape from these evils), the gangster genre showed that the individuality ordinarily expressed by the cowboy in his conquest of new frontiers can still be asserted. His act of aggression, like that of the cowboy's is an attempt to succeed. The death of the gangster, while displacing the anxieties of corruption, simultaneously acts as the consummate reaffirmation of his own identity: an identity constituted by a dedication to the American ideals of rugged individualism, capitalism, and upward mobility. Like the cowboy, the gangster espouses the ideology of nationalism and the "deep horizontal comradeship" by the suggestion that regardless of social class, education, or opportunity, the American individual can control his own destiny. The intensity of the gangster's commitment to his fate indicates that power and individuality are worth more than a long life.[20] The tragedy of the gangster's death is thus from this perspective the working out of a success story.

Secondly, the Gangster Film endorses the status quo in its support of the existing capitalistic structure. The gangster is a rebel, and expresses his individuality in his acts of rebellion, but only within the confines of the existing order. He does not seek to establish a different kind of structure, and there is never the suggestion that a different social and political structure might allow for more humane possibilities. Warshow comments on the gangster as a tragic figure, but the tragedy of the gangster's death is not traced to its social cause, rather out of the gangster's character: he appears to make the choices that leave him vulnerable to those that covet his position. On the other hand, the aggressive acts that he commits to survive within the confines of the capitalistic

145

structure are lauded as expressions of individuality and routes to power. Judith Hess Wright views the continuing appeal of the Gangster Film (and all genre films) in their provision of a refuge from the alternative of questioning the hierarchical social structure:

> We may trace the amazing survival and proliferation of genre films to their function. They assist in the maintenance of the existing political structure. The solutions these films give to the conflicts inherent in capitalism require obeisance to the ruling class and cause viewers to yearn for not less but greater freedom in the face of the insoluble ambiguities surrounding them. Viewers are encouraged to cease examining themselves and their surroundings, and to take refuge in fantasy from their only real alternative -- to rise up against the injustices perpetrated by the present system upon its members.[21]

Though her analysis of spectatorship is too deterministic here, Wright's observation of genre films with their obeisance to the existing political structure as part of their function is pertinent. The central contradiction of individualism and the value of democracy inherent in the frontier myth continues in the Gangster film as an "insoluble ambiguity". Though the settings of the two genres obviously differ, both genres address the same issues, and the roles of their heroes occupy the same function of displacing crucial anxieties. The politics of both genres speak the same ideology: Jack Shadoian in *Dreams and Dead Ends* initially observes that the bias of the thirties is towards the Left, but concludes that the gangster genre "offers no alternative to the American way of life. America's political, social, and economic flaws are not hidden, but the system in principle, is never seriously argued with."[22]

With Maltby's contribution to the existing critical knowledge on the Gangster Film, the extent of Hollywood's ability to play it both ways is more complete. The

portrayal of the gangster figure allows for an interpretation that assigns this figure the status of a tragic hero. However, as a container of the values of indivualism that are an intrinsic part of America's aspirant culture, the gangster has a flaw other than that of hubris. The gangster roles played by Paul Muni (Tony Carmonte), James Cagney (Tom Powers) and Edward G. Robinson (Cesare Enrico Bandello) have one thing in common, they all stand outside of the boundary that separates those who are White, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant from the rest. Muni and Robinson play Italian gangsters, while Cagney's character is "the public enemy" -- a direct reference to Al Capone (as is Scarface). The gangster films viewed from this perspective are thus exercises in the scapegoating of ethnic stereotypes. The movie gangster is an insufficiently Americanized figure who rises to prominence, and the threat of his success is eradicated in the repressive narrative structure of the Gangster Film, a narrative circumscribed by the gangster's rise and the closure of his death. The gangster is doomed not because he is under the obligation to succeed, but because his success threatens the authority of the WASP American hero. *The Secret Six*, *Beast of the City*, and *Gabriel Over the White House* -- the last movies of the gangster cycle -- are more obvious in their elimination of this threat. The WASP heroes in these films enact the role of the vigilante, suppressing the aspirant non-WASP gangsters.

This argument begs the question of why the WASP hero who is usually at the centre of the Hollywood film is absent from the classic Gangster films. The lack of a father figure in *The Public Enemy* has been noted, and this is echoed in *Little Caesar and Scarface*. This absence of a central male patriarch points to the difficulty of representing such American heroes during the Depression era. The problem is partly one of the depiction of a hero embodying the promise of unlimited space and endless

economic growth being incongruous in a period when the focus is on the limited

environment of the city and an adverse economy. Another reason for this difficulty in

representation could lie in the American public's loss of faith in authority figures that

failed them in the beginning of this era; the men that had led America in the wonders of

business Progressivism were now marred by revelations of conspiracy and fraud.

According to Murray Kempton:

> The year 1931 was not a time when the American business man held his head
> high. All the ancient values he represented seemed to wither around him. The
> early Thirties tried bankers and found them guilty as steadily as the Fifties
> were to try Communists. The image of the American Dream was flawed and
> cracked; its critics had never sounded more persuausive.[23]

It would be an understatement to say that perhaps the most conspicuous WASP

patriarch of those years -- President Herbert Hoover -- also fell short of his public's

expectations. At the end of 1932 there were 13 million unemployed, and Hoover who

could not give work to his people, now also refused to give them bread. Those who

knew him personally did not doubt his compassion; Hoover toiled 18 hours a day, until

his hands trembled, his voice became hoarse and his eyes were red with exhaustion.[24]

However, to the unemployed masses he appeared hard-hearted and inert. The reason for

this perceived inhumanity of their president stemmed from his desperate attachment to

the values he deemed befitting of an American leader:

> . . .he had always been an ideologist, who believed in what he called American
> individualism: in the social arrangements which made it possible for a poor
> Iowa farm boy to become, first, a millionaire by his own efforts, and then
> President of the United States. The system which had made such an

achievement possible must not be tampered with in any circumstances; it must be vigorously defended, whether against monopoly capitalists. . .or, now, the economically and politically ignorant who wanted the state to take on responsibilties which, in the American system, belonged exclusively to the individual. . .If the state made itself responsible for seeing that men had work, food, shelter -- made the direct pursuit of happiness its business -- then everything that made the United States unique and glorious would be betrayed. The mission of the federal government was to get the productive machine operating again without destroying the moral fibre of the citizens.[25]

These disciplinary measures now appeared contemptible when widespread starvation, homelessness, despair and humiliation made it clear that state assisstance was imperative.

The impossibility of portraying credible WASP figures in movies is evident in their new status as 'non box office' elements. Movie audiences during the Hoover administration were unsympathetic to films where politicians were depicted as heroes -- in *Washington Masquerade* (1932), a reference is made to Hoover as "a man whose heart is breaking because some of us are traitors". This allusion, and other such 'non box office' qualities of the movie led to the following comment in *Variety*:

> The people -- the theater-goers for this discussion -- are at the moment pretty thoroughly impatient with politicians and a story that undertakes to glorify the Washington salon isn't going to win popular acclaim.[26]

Reviews in the trade press were equally disapproving of *Washington Merry Go-Round* (1932), with the "scene causing the most concern" being the one "where the body of a lynched politician is thrown on the Capitol steps":

The whole picture is. . .apparently dedicated to the principle that all politicians are noble statesmen and their only fault is that they are just a leedle [*sic*] feeble-minded and let themselves be hoodwinked by sinister master-minded crooks bent on sending the country to the dogs for their own fell purposes.[27]

The problem of representation dissipates in substituting insufficiently Americanized ethnic scapegoats who fail to succeed. The key to why Westerns were scarce in the 1930's lies in that tragic end of the gangster figure.

The representation of positive heroic male figures is integral in the Western genre. In a period when this representation is difficult, the virtues are instead transferred to other figures. However, the difficulty of direct representation leads to the substitution of protagonists who stand outside the WASP boundary, and who come to a tragic end. This central factor separating the cowboy from the cityboy supports the theory that when the portrayal of WASP virtues are a problem, they can still be indirectly extolled by representing the vices of the Other, those who stand outside the WASP boundary. By inverse association, the patriarchs with the values and ideology they contain are lauded, and the attempt to portray the WASP hero no longer presents itself as an obstacle. As hero, or as scapegoat, the gangster resolves the conflict of his individuality and American democracy with his death. In both scenarios the WASP virtues are kept intact and extolled.

The argument of the gangster as scapegoat leads to an interesting parallel when aligned with the position of the Indian in frontier mythology. The Indian is sacrificed to purge the White hero of his own evil, as the fight between the two opponents is seen as the external manifestation of a spiritual battle whereby the hero defeats the savagery of his own soul. However, to defeat the savagery of the wilderness first, the Frontier Hero

must be rid of the false values of the metropolis, and he does this by a process of acculturating the Indian ways -- the frontier "strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin. . .he shouts the war cry and takes the scalp in orthodox Indian fashion."[28] The gangster as an ethnic Other is scapegoated for the excesses of white middle-class America in the 1920s. However, the dominant school of thought has for some time regarded the gangster as a hero who comes to a tragic end. When both interpretations are considered, the gangster as possessing heroic qualities and yet being defeated provides a striking similarity to the Indian, whom the Frontier hero imitates to conquer the wilderness, yet kills ultimately for his own excesses. This method by which the Other is scapegoated in frontier mythology and the Western is perpetuated in the Gangster films. The Indian is scapegoated to expel from the WASP frontier hero the residual corruption which originated from the European metropolis. The gangster is scapegoated to clear the WASP hero of any liability that has resulted from the latter's involvements with the 1920s. The following section deals with the role of the woman and particularly the mother figure in the Gangster film. This figure gains prominence in the absence of the male patriarch.

II) The Woman: A Convenient Avenue Towards Death

The Western and Gangster genres have another unifying factor: their portrayal of women. In the frontier myth, action is a male prerogative that is denied the female, and in both movie genres women are consistently relegated to passive or negative roles. Karpf writes of the relationship between the gangster and the women in Gangster films, particularly the sister-mother-best friend involvement:

Normally clever, unafraid, and consistently able to outwit rival gangsters and police, his love of the unattainable and/ or his possessiveness prove to be his "fatal flaw". Without believable motivation and often with a noble intent foreign to his character, the "fatal flaw" causes the steel-nerved gangster to commit an unreasonably foolish act in the next to last reel of the film. This act is his death knell.[29]

In *Public Enemy*, Tom Power's complex personality of violence is blamed on too much motherly love, and in a completion of the circle, his last "foolish act" lays him bleeding on her doorstep. In the frontier myth, the hero exerts his masculinity in saving the captive woman from the savage Other. This violent conquest of savagery is attained with the woman as its prime motivation. James Cagney as Tom Powers marks the emergence of a cultural type whose violent streak is explained via overprotective motherhood. The gangster and cowboy heroes share the same motivation for their acts of violence: women.

Robert Sklar sees the emergence of what he calls the "roughneck sissy" in popular media as a response to wider cultural discourses in the 1920s. In that decade, one of the dominant themes of American culture was voiced in the behaviourist psychology of John B. Watson, whose most influential publication *Psychological Care of Infant and Child* (1928) castigated American mothers for over-indulging their children.[30] This theme was taken up and expanded by Philip Wylie in *Generation of Vipers* (1942), and between the two books were the peak years when the urban tough guy held sway in American popular entertainment. The gangster as a cultural type was fully interwoven with this broader social discourse about overprotective mothers and dependent sons.

152

The tone of protective and often smothering mother-love permeates many Gangster Films, from LeRoy's *Public Enemy* to Roger Corman's *Bloody Mama* in 1970. In the former, Beryl Mercer as Mrs. Powers is overwhelming in her devotion to her son, to the point of a contrived sentimentality. This form of excess intensified when mirrored in Tom's relationship with the three other women Tom comes in contact with. All three want to mother and domesticate him. The famous and often-quoted scene of Tom administering a grapefruit to Kitty's face does not (as it has been interpreted) register Tom's innate misogyny; rather it is the domestic nature of the breakfast and conversation they are having that lead to this particular violent action. The protective gestures and verbal comforts of all three women are an echo of Mrs. Powers calling Tom "My baby" (Gwen's seduction of Tom is characterized by her mothering him: she calls Tom "My bashful boy") and not only testify to but perpetuate Tom's inability to assimilate the social value of the family or to arrive at some degree of sexual maturity. Instead, his contact with women serves to fuel his frustration at this weakness and as each relationship is linked with Tom's acts of violence, the equation may be extended to apply to other acts of violence that are committed. This is manifest in his last relationship with a woman in the film. As Jane tucks Tom into bed she uses motherly phrases to soothe him in his drunken state ("Be a good boy and sit down/ Just a goodnight kiss for a fine boy"). However, the next day when she alludes to their night together, Tom slaps her in a fit of fury and rushes out into the streets, in defiance of Paddy's orders. Matt follows him and gets gunned down, and it is this desire for revenge that stemmed from Jane's mothering of Tom (a crucial element of the seduction process) that leads Tom to his attack on the rival gang.

This mother-son obsession is enhanced by the absence of a father-figure; instead the biological father is replaced by substitute fathers (usually leaders of the gangs or the syndicate that the gangster is a member of) who would normally have no romantic alliances with the gangster's biological mother.[31] In fact, the social and familial values held by the latter would be in opposition to the moral code (or immoral code) adopted by the substitute fathers. The lack of a father makes a further statement on the disintegration of the family, or the abnormality of the family climate that appears in most Gangster films. The syndicate or gang becomes the new family, a family that expresses an unfeeling attitude towards its members. Rico kills his "brother" in broad daylight and says his gun will "speak its piece" to anyone else in the gang who threatens to cross him.

The Gangster Film as Entertainment in the Depression Era

Whilst using the Depression crisis as the contemporary background with which they modernized the referents attached to the mythic story of the frontier, Hollywood kept the underlying structure and ideology intact. The Gangster films appeared to address an active public issue (the corruption and criminal activity in the early Depression years) but had an agenda that sought not to motivate its spectators to action but instead to render its audience an escape from their daily turmoil. This desire for escapism was manifest not only in the Gangster films, it also showed itself in the media coverage and in the discourse of politicians.

The effect of the Depression in lowering the standards of living was very real. Economic statistics, such as capacity utilization and capital investment indicated the economy's fundamental stagnation. Starving people waited in lines for food; families

were evicted from rented apartments, mortgaged homes and farms; families were broken up as they wandered from one place to another. However, as people died of starvation and illnesses associated with malnutrition, President Hoover reportedly told the country that "Nobody is actually starving. The hoboes, for example, are better fed than they have ever been."[32] The media followed the government's cue in its refusal to acknowledge the depth of the current problem. The local press of Middletown, for example, suppressed unpleasant evidence, placing hopeful statements by local bankers and industrialists on the front page and relegating shrinkages in plant forces and related unhappy news to small spaces on the inside pages or omitting them entirely.[33]

Frank depictions of the Depression were rare in Hollywood films for obvious reasons. An explicit acknowledgement that the American society (its family unit) and economy were disintegrating would undermine the status quo. However, in scapegoating an ethnic stereotype for the dysfunctional economy and extolling the values of the WASP patriachs, this status quo was preserved. The Hollywood procedure also complied with the politicians' agenda of promoting escapism. This element of escape in the Gangster Film fulfils the two psychological needs discussed in the preceding chapter: firstly, the films provide excitement (with its chase scenes, and scenes of violence) and interest (with its contemporaneity) which transcend the boredom and routine of the audience's daily lives. The second impulse is satisfied when an escape from the insecurities and ambiguities of life is provided: the Gangster films expressed a courageous approach to the Depression in the representation of its central protagonist. Gangsters projected a self-confident, defiant determination to withstand the most adverse circumstances, overcoming the obstacles that confronted them. With a national mood characterized by apathy, disorientation, ambiguity, and defeat, the

gangsters were actively self-reliant in their pursuit of their goals.   As movie patrons

vicariously experienced this courageous approach to the Depression experience, they felt

"better able to gather up (their) worries and thrash them soundly; to line up (their) cares

against the wall, to shoot them one by one and glory in it just as (they) saw the hero

do."[34] A Texan movie patron wrote:

> Movies have helped us forget. It is a delight to move up the economic ladder.
> But it is trying indeed to descend, so mankind has sought relief from trouble
> and worry. . .Thank God for the movies -- they have provided the sanity-
> saving diversion, often the inspiration that mankind can afford and has so
> sorely needed in the most trying days within the recollection of people living
> today.[35]

The tenet of entertainment follows in the tradition of the Western and all genre films.

The conventions established by the early and classic Gangster films become the rules of

the genre that are later transformed or subverted in later films of the same genre.

It is significant that the movies would effectively drive the audience not to

change the circumstances of their distress, but merely to cope with it. In the 1934

President's Report to the Motion Picture Industry, Will Hays expresses the movie

industry's viewpoint, asserting that their aim was to provide entertainment that made

movie patrons forget about the Depression:

> No medium has contributed more greatly than the film to the maintenance of
> national morale during a period featured by revolution, riot and political
> turmoil in other countries. It has been the mission of the screen, without
> ignoring the serious social problems of the day, to reflect aspiration, optimism,
> and kindly humor in its entertainment.[36]

The dominant Myth of the Frontier has an integral part in the constitution of America's national morale, and in an era beset by political turmoil and a questioning of the myth's ideals, the industry still succeeds in reflecting optimism and aspiration. The tactic of displacing the Western's structures onto the Gangster genre is an example of the American cinema's conservative response to challenges to the status quo, and its attempts to dissipate events of cultural crisis.

The Production Code and The End of the Gangster Film

The transference of frontier discourse from the Western to the Gangster genre carried an observation that the gangster's demise was predicated on his incomplete assimilation of WASP values. At a time when the frontier myth was being undermined, its WASP hero was also difficult to represent; instead, the establishment values contained in the myth and its hero were indirectly extolled in the failure of a hyphenated American who aspired to usurp that position of cultural authority.

This ideological message was not, however, the same one that audiences of gangster films received, and indeed the consensual interpretation of the gangster protagonist in subsequent critical writing is of a "heroic, inner-directed individualist, a self-made man in the guise of the American Adam who died because his individual ambitions were boundless in an environment that was determined to limit him."[37] This celebration of the gangster hero was in direct opposition to the intentions of the film industry, in the light of the defensive posture it had toward not only religious, but civic groups that were anxious about losing their dominance over American culture to foreign

parties. The threat of ethnicity, coupled with fears of Catholic ascendancy, now appeared to be validated by audiences who empathized with the plight of the gangster protagonist -- a problem that was expressed in Henry James Forman's *Our Movie Made Children.*

Forman's account was part of a project sponsored by the Motion Picture Research Council in 1928, with the intention of demonstrating the ill effects of films on children and adolescents. Under the direction of Professor W.W. Charters of Ohio State University, the studies were prepared by professional social scientists, psychologists, and educators from leading American universities.[38] Forman's book was the popularized account of these academic studies, and a few extracts suffice in revealing the basic premises of how gangster films exceeded their moral boundaries:

> We are all of us, it has been said, potential criminals, and the movies, some psycho-analysts believe, provide the spectators with opportunities for vicarious killing. It follows that the young, being more malleable, are likely to be more subject to influences than the adults. In the back of our heads there has for some time been a vague notion that in some manner movies have a relationship to delinquency and crime.

> Through facility of seeing them is created a tolerance of criminal patterns and a ready stimulation to those either predisposed to delinquency and crime or to those whose environment is too heavily weighted against them. The seed is supplied all too lavishly to the fertile ground.

> It was found that. . .the "gangster" or "crook" type of picture. . .caused the trouble. In a high delinquency area, as Professor Thrasher and Mr. Cressey found, it is the gangster picture that points the way to wealth, and thereby the way to "high society." The themes and characters of such pictures are more familiar to the people concerned, the atmosphere more natural and kindred to

their environment and interests. . .They exhale possibility within reach of the aspiring among themselves. . .[39]

Forman also gathered evidence of these corrupting effects from the Blumer-Hauser survey, which observed that high-school boys and girls often expressed sympathy for the criminal, and that more than half of truant and behaviour problem boys examined indicated that pictures dealing with gangsters stirred in them desires for wanting "to make a lot of money easily". The examples from Blumer and Hauser show children being more tolerant of criminality as a result of the movies, leading Forman to the conclusion that compared with the "continuous production" of the "gangster" or "racket" picture, "the sale of whisky to reservation Indians is a trivial offense."[40]

Though Forman's summary was denounced as inflammatory and unscientific, his book gained a wide readership, and had the approval of Professor Charters, who endorsed Forman's manuscript with the statement that he showed "a thorough grasp of the facts in the complicated materials presented in the nearly 3,000 pages which constitute the report of the 12 studies."[41] The book's unequivocal linking of delinquency and the watching of gangster movies, and its obvious exaggeration of the films' damaging effects contributed to a greater furore over the production of these films that would strain the relationship of the motion picture industry and the moral guardians of America's community values; but this did not, however, greatly destabilize the position of Will H. Hays and the organization he represented. As President of the MPPDA, Hays had prepared a strategy for greater diplomacy with America's civic, religious and educational organizations, in the form of constructing a mythology where Hollywood was scapegoated to accommodate any mistakes that the industry made.[42] Attention was deflected from the industry to the producers of films, who had to be

educated to recognize the demand for better movies -- a demand that audiences would be taught to cultivate. The slip-up over the gangster films was thus seen to be a result of the MPPDA's incomplete control over Hollywood's film producers, but the actual blame for the effect of these films lay solely on the latter party. The hostility of these nationally federated educational, civic, and religious groups were channelled towards achieving a more effective control of film production, and the MPPDA's answer lay in re-enforcing the largely ineffective Production Code that had been officially accepted on March 31, 1930.[43]

The threat of Catholicism, the religion that represented the new immigrant, was now converted into the linchpin for reforming the movies. Presented with an unremittingly hostile Protestant religious press, the Roman Catholic hierarchy was seized on as the moral institution that could now buttress the MPPDA's cultural respectability. Joseph Breen, an active lay Catholic, organized the Catholic publicity campaign that approved the purposes of the Production Code, without committing any Catholic Party to endorsing the Code's effectiveness.[44] Amongst other guidelines, the particular applications of the Code stipulated that with regard to crimes against the law:

> These shall never be presented in such a way as to throw sympathy with the
> crime as against law and justice or to inspire others with a desire for imitation:
> > The treatment of crimes against the law must not:
> > a)Teach methods of crime.
> > b)Inspire potential criminals with a desire for imitation.
> > c)*Make criminals seem heroic and justified.*[45]
> > > > > My Emphasis

160

If the practical implementation of the Code had been successful when it was adopted in 1930, then it is arguable that the classic cycle of Gangster films with their tragic but heroic protagonists would not have existed. However, the implementation of the Code in the early thirties was hampered by an extensive negotiation over interpretation, enforcement and procedure, as well as the lack of cooperation between the studios and the Studio Relations Committee.[46] The popularity and effect of the films raised a protest that incited a potential public relations crisis, and in a move to avert the calamity, the Association of Motion Picture Producers (AMPP) passed a resolution banning the production of further Gangster Films in 1931. The Code itself would only achieve full effectiveness with the recruitment of the Legion of Decency, a vehicle through which the Episcopal Committee on Motion Pictures (appointed by the American Bishops and composed of religious leaders including the Most Rev. John T. McNicholas, O.P., Archbisop of Cincinnati, Ohio, who was its chairman, and The Most Rev. John J. Cantwell, Archbishop of Los Angeles, California) exerted its influence.[47] This would take place in July 1934.

In the years after 1934 Hollywood enjoyed its "Golden Age of Order", a term Robert Sklar gives to describe the second half of the thirties for the movie industry. The increase in moral conservatism in the early thirties, coupled with fears that threatened the status quo, and more importantly the establishment values guarded by America's religious, civic and educational institutions, forced an abrupt termination of the Gangster film's classic cycle. The films were in themselves pro-establishment, in their attempt to scapegoat non-WASPs for the excesses of the 1920s, in the same way that the Indian is scapegoated in discourses of the frontier. However, just as the ideological message of scapegoating the Indian cannot be directly expressed, this masked repetition of frontier

discourse in the Gangster film could not be unmasked to educate the public as to how, in actual fact, the superiority of the WASPs was being advocated. The lengthy process of negotiation that followed between the industry and the institutional guardians of America's moral and community values coincided with the increasing prominence of ethnicity, and its counterparts -- urbanization, Catholicism, and generally, a culture of Otherness. The equation of ethnicity with Otherness was a factor influencing the ease with which frontier discourse was displaced onto the Gangster genre. When these fears were alleviated in the latter half of the thirties, the instruments attacking Hollywood's economic base eased accordingly. At this juncture, it would appear that the authorities of delimitation were of the persuasion that the urban setting had ceased in its capacity as an outlet for frontier discourse. The re-assertion of the Production Code was an explicit manifestation of the negotiation that existed prior to 1934; it was concerned primarily with movie content and only symptomatic of the destabilizing occurring at the economic level. The institutions responsible for that destabilization were not solely placated by the effective implementation of the Code, but also by the events that led to an alleviation of the threats to America's cultural hegemony. Roosevelt's New Deal was one such event.

Statism in the late thirties

Compelled by the Great Depression, the motion picture industry scapegoated white ethnics to strengthen establishment values. Though this attempt backfired, the effect of the Crash itself would lead a younger, more Americanized generation of ethnics to look beyond their own communities and institutions for support. The basic services of welfare, security and employment that they had relied on their ethnic communities and

bosses to provide were appropriated by the federal government. The New Deal began to play an important role for ethnics, with its federally funded relief programs, and ultimately a permanent Social Security system that substituted the welfare previously sponsored by ethnic and religious communities.[48] The Depression, rather than turning industrial workers against the political system, and further threatening the status quo, drew them to it as they became beneficiaries of government programmes and even party voters. In 1920s Chicago, large numbers of industrial workers failed to vote; amongst the foreign-born, less than one third of the potential electorate turned out for the presidential election of 1924, in contrast to the 65% in native, middle-class wards. By 1936, 81% of first- and second-generation ethnics supported Roosevelt: many of them were new recruits who had not voted in the 1920s.[49] The evidence was clear: ethnic workers were looking increasingly to the state.

The documentary approach became an intrinsic part of the establishment -- and it was epitomized by the New Deal's chief executive, Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt's Fireside Chats utilized the radio to make a direct and personal contact with the public, and to diminish ethnicity's importance; thus his speech to the Daughters of the American Revolution which addressed them as "Fellow Immigrants."[50] The documentary technique was part of Roosevelt's strategy of persuasion. In a 1932 campaign, he relates the following incident to explain his political decision to support old-age insurance:

> I shall tell you what sold me on old age insurance -- old age pensions. Not so
> long ago -- about ten years -- I received a great shock. I had been away from
> my home town of Hyde Park during the winter time and when I came back I
> found that a tragedy had occurred. I had had an old farm neighbor, who had
> been a splendid fellow -- Supervisor of his town, Highway Commissioner of

his town, one of the best of our citizens. Before I had left, around Christmas time, I had seen the old man, who was eighty-nine, his old brother, who was eighty-seven, his other brother, who was eighty-five, and his "kid" sister, who was eighty-three.

They were living on a farm; I knew it was mortgaged to the hilt; but I assumed that everything was all right, for they still had a couple of cows and a few chickens. But when I came back in the spring I found that in the severe winter that followed there had been a heavy fall of snow, and one of the old brothers had fallen down on his way out to the barn to milk the cow, and had perished in the snow drift. The town authorities had come along and had taken the two old men and had put them in the county poorhouse, and had taken the old lady and sent her down, for want of a better place, to the insane asylum, although she was not insane but just old.

That sold me the idea of trying to keep homes intact for old people.[51]

Roosevelt did not simply give the reason for his political decision to support old-age insurance; he documented it. His documentary imagination subverted the unsettling effects that the genre had achieved in the early Depression years. In relation to ethnicity, the poignancy of establishment victims could now be converted into a 'usable past': when Chicago's ethnically-owned banks collapsed between 1929 and 1933, their community leaders were held partly responsible. The contemporary irrelevance of ethnicity was emphasized and relegated a minimized role as a 'way of life' conducted within specific communities.[52]

Though the New Deal was not without its limitations, its significance is cogently stated by Lizbeth Cohen in her recognition that:

. . . . the New Deal's impact should be measured less by the lasting accomplishments of its reforms and more *by the attitudinal changes it*

produced in a generation of working-class Americans who now looked to Washington to deliver the American Dream.

My Emphasis

National Identity and Popular Culture

With the re-affirmation of establishment values, the late thirties began to present greater promise for Westerns to once again contain discourses of the Frontier. The basic assumption of the Production Code was that films could not be divorced from moral responsibilities; it was imperative that an affirmative view of the American society be presented. It is likely that this requirement could not be met in the early years of the Crash, when American society was threatened by fears of fragmentation and economic failure. The brief classic gangster cycle was an explicit manifestation of the ideological negotiation that ensued, revealing a failure of absolute control between forces that influenced the movie industry's economic base, and what appeared at the level of movie content. This incomplete control was also evident in the vogue for films that sympathetically depicted women of easy virtue during the years 1931-1933: *Susan Lennox: Her Fall and Rise* (1931) elicited *Motion Picture Herald*'s disdainful comment that "MGM seems to have continued in its 'sin and succeed' series with Greta Garbo. It. . . is proof sufficient that its present form, the Hays Code is nothing for producers to worry about."[53] The economic triumph of the film led to others and created a new genre that was as distinct and short-lived as the Gangster cycle -- *Possessed*, *The Easiest Way*, *Illicit* (1931), *Blonde Venus*, and *Redheaded Woman* (1932) constituted the films that championed women of dubious morality. The genre of the "Fallen Woman", like the Gangster Film, signalled the difficulty in endorsing the values of traditional morality.

However, with the erosion of ethnicity and the success of New Deal measures, a consolidated perspective of American national identity now existed. This re-affirmation of Americanism was no doubt aided by the cultivated image of a new WASP Patriarch who replaced Hoover and ended a period of public frustration with authority figures. In one of the turning points in American history Roosevelt achieved in a few minutes what had eluded Hoover for four years and renewed the self-confidence of the American people; promising jobs and assistance:

> Our greatest primary task is to put people to work. There is no unsolvable problem if we face it wisely and courageously.
>
> It can be accomplished in part by direct recruiting by the government itself, treating the task as we would the emergency of a war, but at the same time, through this employment, accomplishing greatly needed projects to stimulate and reorganize the use of our natural resources.[54]

Eight days after his inaugural speech, Roosevelt declared the banks safe due to his Emergency Banking Act -- the evidence that the American people's faith in presidency was restored came the next day when bank deposits exceeded withdrawals.[55] Roosevelt's famous Fireside Chats were also an indication of his strong actor's instinct, a quality that is later relevant to images of Reagan and the next moment of political crisis that would sweep through America.

This sense of nationalism and patriotism was further strengthened with economic recovery and by America's entry into war in 1941. It would take this revival for mass, and particularly, metropolitan audiences to welcome 'A' Westerns; meanwhile the last years of the 1930s were marked by a proliferation of Westerns that offered more

explicit versions of frontier discourse -- dealing with most aspects of pioneers, settlers and frontiersmen. The following is a comment from *Variety* in 1937:

> The big crops are booming the market for Westerns. Bountiful yields and comparatively high prices spell prosperity and increased buying power for farmers, and they and their families and farm-hands are starting to flock to the theaters and the small towns, but they demand Westerns or action pictures.
>
> Society and sex dramas, in particular, are nix with this element. The farmers give the musicals a slight tumble, but even the girl shows don't begin to supplant their first love -- the cowboy drama. As a result, local film exchanges are selling all the westerns they can get their hands on and report the demand for this type of picture is the biggest in history.[56]

These Westerns provided a new outlet for the emergence of frontier mythology that, like the urban settings of the Gangster films, was located in more recent times. The Westerns that catered primarily to Southern audiences, and reinvented a new site for frontier mythology, are the topic of the next chapter.

6 The New West Hero
Gene Autry and the Antimodern Resolution

> While my solutions were a little less complex than those offered by FDR,
> and my methods a bit more direct, I played a kind of New Deal Cowboy
> who never hesitated to tackle many of the same problems: the dust bowl,
> unemployment, or the harnessing of power. This may have contributed
> to my popularity with 1930s audiences.[1]
>
> <div align="right">Gene Autry</div>

Traditional film scholarship has tended to concentrate on the products and industrial

context of the major studios, offering less detailed accounts of the histories of low-

budget producers. This marginalization of the independent and minor studios in the

majority of histories of the film industry corresponds to an impetus of viewing history as

a linear process -- neglecting areas that pose questions of disruption, displacement and

overdetermination. Accounts of history that incorporate such questions have been

termed by Jean-Louis Comolli as "materialist".[2] Comolli pits materialist historical

accounts against linear histories, the latter further developed by Thompson and Bordwell

into a taxonomy of linear historical patterns: evolutionary, teleological and seriality.[3]

For example, according to Paul Seale the teleological movement leads historians to

equate marginal economic power with marginal historical status, resulting to an

exaggeration of the limitations of studios existing outside of the majors. Seale observes that these limitations are implicit in the language of critics: Douglas Gomery notes that where 90% of the available profits were made by the majors in the studio era, others "scrambled" for the remainder.[4] He also contends that such language "translates the oligopolists' tendency toward stability into historical stasis, implicitly denying that the flux on the periphery might have effects on the dominant forces in the industry."[5]

This chapter, amongst other concerns, is an attempt to correct the historical bias towards the major studios. It seeks to demonstrate that the products of the minor producers did have repercussions on the decision making of their usually dominant counterparts, and were instrumental in the restoration of the frontier myth in the popular imagination. Such an argument is especially pertinent to the 1930s, and with regard to a discussion about the production and reception of the Western genre in that period. Though for the most part Seale focuses on the Poverty Row Studios, he does make the comment that what is lacking in books taking the 'B' movie as their explicit subject is an attention to films that follow less canonic lines. Thus he praises the accomplished economic analysis of the 'B' film and low budget production in Paul Kerr's "Out of What Past: Notes on the B Film Noir", but objects to his preference for the more "stylistically quirky" products of Edgar G. Ulmer and Val Lewton.[6] Instead, Seale advocates research on the movies of Joseph Kane, with his copious record of Westerns produced for Republic.[7] Kane's work is also noticeably absent from Todd McCarthy and Charles Flynn's *Kings of the Bs: Working Within the Hollywood System.* The Westerns produced by Joseph Kane and starring Gene Autry will be utilized to illustrate the argument of this chapter. It is befitting, at this juncture, to acknowledge the

direction and expertise of Peter Stanfield, through whom I gained access to the Westerns and a considerable amount of the material referred to in this chapter.

The choice of Gene Autry stems from his appropriation of the Cowboy persona and frontier values as answers to the heightened crisis of the Depression years. In providing those answers Autry's Westerns reinvent frontier mythology in a new site outside the boundaries of the "Old" West. It was argued in the previous chapters that, in Foucauldian terms, the authorities delimiting frontier discourse had created an obstacle for the myth to surface in Westerns that depicted the "Old" West. The termination of the Western as a surface in which frontier discourse could emerge explains why the myth was transposed onto an urban setting. The factors determining the discursive grid of specification, such as the role of ethnicity, also contributed to the Gangster film's status as a surface of emergence. The end of chapter 5, however, questioned the success of this passage of discourse. While the Gangster film contained mythic and narrative elements of the Western, its effect on audiences seemed to be tainted by a moral ambiguity that failed to convey a pure sense of WASP superiority. This flaw directly violated a crucial tenet of frontier mythology and predicated the Gangster film's demise as a vehicle for the discourse to emerge. The popularity of the Autry Westerns may be seen in the context of statism and the New Deal, when Roosevelt restores credibility in the American nation's WASP leadership. Their relevance also stems from the employment of a strategy not unlike that of the Gangster film. In replacing the "Old" West for a "New" West setting, the Western genre acquires a new sense of mythological resonance that meets the requirements pertaining to cultural verisimilitude in the 1930s. The next section first establishes the industrial context of Republic Studios and the Double Bill.

The B Studio and The Western

In 1928, *Variety* noted that Paramount, Universal, First National, Fox, FBO, and Pathé (major companies and larger independents) were the chief producers of Westerns.[8] Such formidable competition was enough reason for the smaller independents to avoid the genre. In a review of 1928 entitled "Pictures' Most Sensational Year," however, *Variety* claimed that the Western genre was at its end:

> ### PASSING OF THE WESTERNS
>
> Recalling the past year, outside of the sound phase, a subject which must be narrated by itself, 1928 began making picture history in mid-January when it signalized the passing of westerns and their familiar shootey-up thesis. If the theory of cycles proves true, it will be seven years before these wild riding and gun play stories feel the call of revival. The present tenor of the time reveals nothing to refute the edict that the western has passed, at least, for this year.[9]

While the majors continued to make Westerns on a smaller scale, the decrease in production gave Poverty Row producers the opportunity to meet the ongoing demand for the Western product. This continued demand in the face of a shrinking supply was apparent in February 1929 when *Variety* claimed: "Although the bottom has fallen out of Westerns it appears that there is still enough of a demand for the cowboy operas and suddenly almost no supply to meet the market."[10] The request for more Westerns specifically arose from small town audiences, and was mainly for low-budget programmers and serials.[11] In September of the same year, *Variety* recorded the conclusions reached by a mass meeting of Texas Motion Picture Theatre Owners, that

while the small towns of Texas "crave at least one good Western a week" only one major producer had Westerns to offer for the coming season.[12] By October 1929 the majors were booking the Westerns of the independents for their own exhibition, and by April 1930 when Universal stopped its production of the genre, Poverty Row producers had mastered the problem of sound expenses.

When the National Recovery Administration prevented the major studios from banning the double bill in 1934, this further increased the demand for the low-budget Western. The origin of the double feature can be traced back to 1927, where its prevalence was noted in *The Film Yearbook 1928*.[13] The greatest impact, however, appears to have occurred in 1935 when double billing became standard practice on a nation-wide basis. In this year all the majors opened B units that were deliberately calculated to satisfy the exhibitor demand cheaply, via low-cost films intended for the second half of double bills. Major studio 'B''s had budgets that ranged from $30,000 to $300,000, and were made on schedules that averaged three weeks by studios including Warners, Fox, MGM, Universal, Columbia and Paramount.[14] However, this strategy failed to meet the demand for the low-budget film especially during the 1934-1936 seasons, when the exhibitor demand for 'B' movies to fill double bills and Saturday matinees escalated. This resulted in a proliferation of the products of various smaller companies, but by 1937 increased production of the 'B' films had resulted in a glut that together with the dominance of the major studio 'B''s, led marginal companies to shut down. Another outcome in response to threatened closure was the merger of minor studios.[15] A significant step towards this coming consolidation was an amalgamation of the independent front that occurred in March 1935, which led to the birth of Republic Pictures.

Republic Pictures belonged to the category of secondary studios in a tier above Poverty Row, distinct from the quickies by their longer shooting schedules and bigger budgets but lacking the quality and resources of the majors. Other studios in that category included Monogram, Grand National, Mascot, Tiffany, Ambassador-Conn, Chesterfield, Invincible, Liberty, Majestic, Sono Art, Educational and World-Wide. Their budgets seldom went beyond $100,000, but the quality of their products nearly approximated the 'B''s of the majors. Republic Pictures grew out of Monogram and Mascot, a union that would exploit Monogram's national distribution organization of exchanges to 39 cities, and Mascot's studio which had specialized firstly in serials and then features in 1933. Herbert J. Yates offered to join forces with Nat Levine, the founder of Mascot, in a move that guaranteed an improvement in quantity and quality: optimum usage of Mascot's studio and Monogram's controlled distribution.[16] Republic thus began in a strong financial position that enabled the production of higher-grade 'B' movies.

According to McCarthy and Flynn, Republic epitomized the classical Hollywood 'B' studio, being the largest and most staple organization, releasing 66 serials within 22 years.[17] Republic's 'B' Westerns, many directed by Joseph Kane, are of particular interest due to their variation of the Western formula, genre and frontier mythology -- in their utilization of a singing protagonist (Gene Autry), their modern setting (the New West), and the corresponding acclamation of frontier values in a space dislocated from the frontier in terms of distance and time. Though most 'B' Westerns were aimed at minor houses attracting Saturday matinee and juvenile audiences, especially in the small town and rural market, Republic's higher-grade 'B' Westerns occasionally premiered at theatres in Hollywood Boulevard, finding an audience beyond the rural and small town

boundary. Republic's 'B' Westerns were made on modest budgets, but its profits were

not insignificant: Autry's first starring vehicle *Tumblin' Tumbleweeds* (1935) cost

$18,000 to make, but ultimately grossed over $1 million.[18] Though due to problems of

accessibility the Westerns made by Poverty Row studios are not included in this chapter,

it is important to state that a large number of such films were produced by these studios

in the 1930s, and merit consideration. The following attempts to derive an

understanding of the ideological function of the singing Western with a resource base of

7 Autry Westerns, chosen for their thematic concerns of industrialization and its effects.

An appropriate point to begin with relates to the reconstruction of frontier mythology as

a response not to Indian hostility but to advances in technology, a process relevant to

the landscape of these films -- the New West.

The New West and the Frontier Myth

In his analysis of *Witness,* Wayne J. McMullen compares and contrasts films set in the

Old West and the New West:

> A common theme in both the Old West and the New West is a protagonist's
> hero's attempts to protect a people from the evil forces against which they are
> largely defenseless. Furthermore, both the New West and the Old West exist
> in a dominatable [sic], exploitable, land-based sphere that calls for the hero to
> direct his energies outwardly.
> Unlike the Old West, however, the inhabitants of the New West attempt to
> keep the past alive in the present. The imperiled land in the New West is an
> enclave of past ways of living within a technologically advanced present-day
> society. Whereas in the Old West the land was to be conquered, the land in
> the New West now offers a refuge for a society tired of the ills wrought by

technology. In the scenic change from Old West to the New West, the action shifts from conquest to preservation. Within this preserve, the New West offers a retreat from the complexities of modern living to a simpler way of being.[19]

McMullen does not offer any explicit definitions for the "Old" West mentioned in the above, only a vague statement that "The physical reality of the American West. . .has been its closing as a frontier", with the New West occurring after the "demise of the Old West". It is interesting that historical definitions of the "Old" American West and the "Old" West of the popular imagination are not confined within similar time and spatial boundaries. Richard White's definition of the historical American West is the period of American expansion beginning with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, continuing through the acquisition of Texas, the Oregon Territory and the Mexican Cession in the 1840s, ending with the 1853 Gadsen Purchase of the lands between the Gila River and the present Mexican boundary.[20] A definition of the Old West from the perspective of popular culture, derived from Cawelti in *Adventure, Mystery Romance,* is more graphic but less specific:

> The symbolic landscape of the western formula is a field of action that centers upon the point of encounter between civilization and wilderness, East and West, settled society and lawless openness. The frontier settlement or group is a point both in space and time. Geographically, it represents a group of civilizers or pioneers on the edge of the wilderness, tenuously linked to the civilized society behind them in the East by the thinnest lines of communication. These links are constantly in danger of being cut by the savages -- Indians or outlaws -- who roam the wilderness. Historically, the western represents a moment when the forces of civilization and wilderness life are in balance, the epic moment at which the old life and the new confront

each other and individual actions may tip the balance one way or another, thus shaping the future history of the whole settlement.[21]

Will Wright's description of the Western's American West provides some dates for this historical 'moment':

> The crucial period of settlement in which most Westerns take place lasted only about thirty years, from 1860 to 1890. In 1861 the Indian wars began as the Cheyenne found the Colorado gold miners invading their lands, and in 1862 the Homestead Act was passed. By 1890 all the American Indians had been either exterminated or placed in reservations; in 1889 the last unoccupied region in the West, the Oklahoma territory, was opened to homesteaders with a massive land rush. Between these events, the major Indian wars were fought, and cattle empires blossomed and withered. The great Texas cattle drives to the Kansas cow towns, the inspiration for much of the Western myth, lasted only from 1866-1885. Even if we include the period of the California gold rush and the first wagon trains to Oregon, the entire period of western settlement lasted less than fifty years.[22]

The New West of the Western, then, is a historical period occuring after 1889 where all the regions in the West have been occupied (by settlers other than the Native American Indians), and also a state of mind, where the balance of old and new is not one between the wilderness and civilization, but between rural civilization and the encroachment of technology.

In the Autry Westerns, it is the state of mind, the "symbolic" West, that is instrumental. The response to technology that features strongly in his Westerns is coupled with the problems of the 1930s: Brian Taves observes that the key social theme of the 'B' Western was the loss of farms to foreclosure during economic hard times.[23]

In Autry's New West, the threat of foreclosure stems from a naiveté that places the rural farmers at a disadvantage in their attempts at modernization (via mechanization).

Technology and the values of urban civilization, sub-categories of the Modern, are pitted against the values of the frontier (qualities associated with the cowboy heroes of the Old West). A clear and frequent example of this juxtaposition is the use of the automobile and tractor as replacements for the horse. The balance of Old and New in Autry's Westerns is thus more complex than the urban and rural; it is the confrontation between the urban and frontier protagonist in a move to protect the members of rural civilization. Gene Autry and his group are always shown to be distinct from rural civilization -- an obvious marker of this is in their contempt of dairy cows (in the Westerns discussed the remark is twice made that those who tend to such cows are "playing milkmaid"). They are never seen in a domestic abode but are always on the move, some of the time, as in *The Old Barn Dance* (1938), necessitated by their trading of horses from town to town. All the 7 Westerns discussed in the following feature this confrontation of urban and frontier values. Three of them -- *The Old Corral* (1936), *Public Cowboy No. 1* (1937), and *Colorado Sunset* (1939) -- however, are also interesting for their usage of the gangster protagonist as an embodiment of urban values. Gene Autry, his sidekick Frog Millhouse (Smiley Burnette) and the cowboys that ride with them uphold frontier values which in the confrontation equate with the antimodern. This confrontation is the means via which values of frontier mythology are asserted. Discourses of the frontier also have a firm presence in the musical numbers, where the song narratives evoke nostalgia for the Old West. McMullen's description of the New West as a "land-based sphere that calls for the hero to direct his energies outwardly" would suggest the reinstatement of outward expansion, a tenet of the Frontier Myth's

deep structure. An assumption of the discussion that follows is that the diachronic change pertaining to territorial expansion in the myth is still in force. The suppression of this tenet of the myth, beginning with the Gangster Film, is a necessary component of the process of mythic repair. A defining element of the New West is, after all, in its existence in a period after the phase of territorial expansion in American history.

Gangsters in the New West

In *Public Cowboy No. 1* (a title that immediately brings Al Capone to mind) Autry has to contend with cattle rustlers who use refrigerator trucks, planes and two-way radios to purloin, slaughter, and send cattle off to market in a quick operation. The cattle rustlers are linked to the urban and modern not only via the tools of their trade but also the company to which they belong: the "Chicago and Western Packing Co." The first sequence of the film has these cattle rustlers carrying out their unlawful activities in Box Canyon, stealing a herd of cattle and murdering an innocent witness in the process. Gene Autry, Frog and their companions (on horseback) arrive on the scene and fail to catch up with the refrigerator trucks -- actualizing the rustler's claim that their "modern method of cattle ranching sure is making simpletons out of these ranchers." This is followed by a montage of newspaper headlines that further undermine the values that were upheld in the Old West (relating to the superiority of the horse and cowboy) in a style reminiscent of the Gangster film: "Reign of Terror Sweeps Prairie County", "Sheriff Doniphon no match for Modern Rustlers". The language in later scenes also alludes to the crime film -- when one of the rustlers shoots the Sheriff he describes it as having "plugged him", and when he is later captured and found murdered in jail, Autry

remarks that he was "killed by someone who was afraid he would talk." The second set of headlines publicizes the killing, and the demands for the Sheriff's resignation. The headlines question the capabilities of Sheriff Doniphon (played by William Farnum, who would be recognized by audiences of the Western as a representative of the Old West) who admits that an "old fashioned sheriff" and "a new fashioned rustler" can only mean that "enforcing the law belongs to the past." His sentiments are echoed by Autry who acknowledges the need for modern equipment to get results, noting the obvious imbalance of "airplane and truck versus horse and buggy." The rest of the film proceeds to dispel this negativism and to prove the cowboy and his horse's ascendancy over the forces of modernity. This is achieved in two ways, through spectacle, and through the narrative of the songs.

The replacement for the Sheriff is a clear (to exaggerated proportions) representative of modernity and the urban -- a criminal expert from the East, specializing in "Scientific Criminology", named "Quakenbusch" and with a foreboding reputation of being "bad news for bad men". His appearance in the town is applauded, but this is immediately followed by Frog's rendition of "The Defective Detective from Brooklyn", a song that humorously subverts Quakenbusch's authority (or what remains of the authority of anyone in possession of such a name). His Eastern origins are also ridiculed when Frog appears in a Charlie Chan disguise for part of the song. Frog's performance is immediately followed by Autry's rendition of "Old Buckaroo, Goodbye", which, in contrast, is sung in a sombre mode. Autry's song is in honour of the Sheriff, in a sentimental style that celebrates the Sheriff's efforts at upholding the law, but now being "weary and tired", he is asked to "dream of the days on the prairie", and to "dream of a new heavenly reign." The Old West that intrudes onto the new landscape does so

179

through the vehicle of dream, a motif that will recur to a great extent in most of the song narratives. The Old West of Autry's Westerns is an idealized and mythical dreamscape, often perceived as superior to a New West that has been tainted due to the changes wrought by industrialisation. The juxtaposition of the two songs and their differing effects curbs any support for the modern that may have surfaced with the anticipation that the lawful agents of modernity will effectively deal with the cattle rustlers. Any remaining faith in the agents of modernity is extinguished in the climax of the film, in the scene where the camera focuses on the mopeds and motorbikes of the police stuck in the mud, while Autry and his cowboys capture the rustlers on horseback.

The gangster makes a more definitive presence in *The Old Corral*, in the person and name of Mike Scarlotti. The film begins when Scarlotti murders Tony Pearl, a nightclub owner in gang-infested Chicago. The murder is witnessed by Eleanor Spenser (a blues singer), who escapes to the West for safety. The plot is an exemplification of the New West as a "refuge for a society tired of the ills wrought by technology." The bus that Eleanor travels on encounters Autry and company on a horse-drawn buggy, and in a scene that is repeated in the other 'B' Westerns, the unfamiliar sounding of the bus's horn frightens the horses and they veer off into a fence. The bus is later ambushed by some men on horseback (the O'Keefe boys), though any sense of real danger or evil is dispelled by a middle-aged passenger who expresses her enjoyment at this "real Wild West hold-up" and her sincere request for their autographs (which is light-heartedly denied). The "highway robbers" are also subject to less condemnation because of their ability to sing well, and their earnest attempts to get on the radio. This is followed by a sequence where the camera is in long shot and we see the O'Keefe boys riding along the grassy plains, and hear them singing "Down Along the Sleepy Rio Grande".

Meanwhile the plot sets out to establish its definition and focus of criminality --

Martin Simms, a nightclub owner, notices Eleanor's picture in a newspaper and tries to

get her to perform in the "Blue Moon". His ulterior motive is to contact Scarlotti and to

negotiate a ransom, but to gain her trust Simms lies to Eleanor that he will protect her

from the gangster.   The sequence that occurs prior to this liason declares the

ascendancy of a rural lifestyle in subverting the criticism of rustic indolence in

comparison with urban industriousness: Simms's attempts to get his automobile filled at

a petrol station are frustrated by the attendants, who are playing a game of chess.

Ignoring the desperate horns of the vehicle outside, they concentrate on a game in which

the execution of a single move requires the length of a whole day. When they finally

emerge, they register their contempt for the impatience of the "damn city boys" who in

their opinion are always getting lost.

What follows at the Blue Moon nightclub is a self-reflexive analysis and

commentary about the popularity of Autry's Westerns, and the nature of his audience:

Eleanor's operatic rendition of "With all My Heart I Long For You" fails to procure any

esteem from her audience, who are clearly of a rural, working-class origin. Conversely,

they think that the quality of her singing is "pretty bad". Autry comes to her rescue and

assures her of her "beautiful voice", explaining that her poor reception lies with her

audience, who are "not educated to that type of music". Autry and Eleanor then sing

"In the Heart of the West" in duet, and their performance is received with a rousing

applause. The lyrics of the song, as with "Old Buckaroo, Goodbye" in *Public Cowboy

No. 1*, present an idealized image of the Old West and its inevitable link to dreaming:

You will find in the heart of the West, happiness that I've found the best;

there 'neath the starlight, with love at our side, we'll ride the trail side by side.

Dreams come true in the heart of the West; dreams renew when the world's at

rest.

Something you've always longed for, something you've longed to do,

waits for you in the heart of the West.

"Silent Trails", the song performed by the O'Keefe boys is more like "Old Buckaroo,

goodbye" in its inherent nostalgia for the passing of the Old West:

> Silent Trails, are you lonely where you are;
>
> Do you ever get to pining, for the pioneers returning,
>
> for the empire still a'burning; silent trails.
>
> Silent trails, do the cowboys ride again. . .
>
> are the redskins somewhere hidin', are their spirits still a'ridin';
>
> Silent trails.

The nostalgia continues with Autry's singing of "Old Pinto". Concurrent to this

idealization of and nostalgia for the Old West is a deprecation of urban values -- Simms

finally makes contact with Scarlotti and the latter betrays any notion of fair dealing (in a

manner more extreme than Simms's duplicity with Eleanor), offering only to spare

Simms's life in exchange for information about her whereabouts. In a scene that almost

mirrors the ending of *Public Enemy No. 1, The Old Corral* reaches its climax with a shot

that proclaims the superiority of horse and cattle over their mechanized counterparts --

Autry and the O'Keefe boys pursue the gangsters (in their automobiles) on horseback, and utilize the ingenious scheme of raising a cattle stampede to disable the latter.

The shot which parallels that of the motorbikes caught in the mud is that of an empty automobile, unable to function because it is surrounded by cattle. It is significant that the O'Keefe boys are exonerated from any form of disapprobation, such that the image of the cowboy is not sullied -- Autry explains to Frog that the boys are vindicated on three counts, firstly because they "returned the loot", secondly because they "saved Eleanor from Scarlotti", and lastly (here Autry's commercial agenda surfaces more directly) because they "pulled the holdup to get publicity" for a radio job. The definition of evil in this moral drama is placed squarely on Scarlotti and his aides, representatives of modernity, urbanization and technology.

The gangster motif recurs in *Colorado Sunset*, where milk is substituted for beer in Autry's exposing of a protection racket. This later film is also marked by an explicit increase in production values -- the cast boasts the addition of Patsy Montana and the CBS KMBC Texas Rangers, and the opening sequence presents sophisticated camera techniques that make fluid transitions between close-ups of each of the cowboys as they sing their solo pieces on horseback, and panning backwards to a long shot when the group sings in unison. The rationale that is constructed for Autry's participation in the dairy business is tenuous, but not entirely inconceivable -- Frog thinks that he has bought (with the pooled financial resources of Autry, a group of cowboys, and himself) a cattle ranch, but it turns out to be a herd of dairy cows. An expression of disgust is clear in their reaction to this turn of events, and to the notion that they might soon be "playing nursemaid to some cows". The frequent distinction between cattle ranching and dairy farming is important, associating Autry and his group with a notion of masculinity that

excludes the domestic, overcompensating to the extreme that even the animals they deal with cannot be female. The preference (almost a requisite) for ranching and not farming also establishes a separation from civilization with its attendant sense of rootedness, raising the function of cattle in Autry's Westerns to a level that is more complex than is suggested by Jane Tompkins:

> Economically cattle are the basis of the way of life that Westerns represent, but if anything they are even more invisible than horses are, in the sense of not being seen for themselves, or as they would see themselves. With few exceptions (usually scenes of branding or rescuing of calves), they are seen only from the viewpoint of their utility for humans; as factors in an economic scheme, as physical obstacles to be contended with in an heroic undertaking, or as the contested prize in an economic struggle.[24]

In addition to their crucial role in defining the cowboy's masculinity, cattle in Autry's Westerns also possess a utility that exists outside of a mere economic scheme -- the capture of Scarlotti and his gang in *The Old Corral*, for example, placed the animals as active agents in the fight between good and evil. Tompkins's pedagogical statement that in Westerns "cattle exist, from a human point of view, in order to die and become meat, and it's hard for people to look at that fact very closely" is countered in the song "Poor Little Dogie". In this song Autry looks reasonably closely (albeit in a whimsical manner -- enabling to a large extent Tompkins's curious request for the cattle's perspective, and also alleviating the sombre nature of her pronouncements on the topic) at the fact that cattle exist not just in order to become meat, but a gourmet dish:

> Poor little dogie, if you only knew, what modern inventions are doing to you;

You were so happy when you roamed the range, but somehow your life has to change.

Once you could graze on the grain of the land, but now they'll be feeding you out of a can;

You'll get a diet of tenderized hay, you must have vitamin A.

You were contented when you bedded down. . .

Poor little dogie your life is a wreck. . .they've caused you remorse;

In spite of the changes they're trying to make, you'll wind up a porterhouse steak.

The above lyrics are also marked by a strong nostalgia that disparages modern methods (the "modern inventions") of rearing cattle in causing the animals' discomfort. This function of nostalgia in relation to cattle, and more particularly horses, is also noted by Tompkins: ". . .horses fulfill a longing for a different *kind* of existence. Antimodern, antiurban, and antitechnological, they stand for an existence without cars and telephones and electricity."[25] "Poor little Dogie" is preceded by Patsy Montana's energetic rendition of "I want to be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" (a thousand miles from the city life), which has lyrics reminiscent of the more sentimentally performed "In the Heart of the West":

I want to be a cowboy's sweetheart, I want to learn to rope and ride;

I want to ride over the plains and the desert, I want to ride over the great divide.

I want to hear the coyotes howling, while the sun sinks in the West,

I want to be a cowboy's sweetheart, that's the life that I love the best.

As with all of the songs discussed previously, "I want to be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" consolidates a position that idealizes the past of the Old West.

The purchase of the dairy cows proves, however, to be irreversible, and the acquisition of a dairy business leads Autry and his group into an entanglement with Dr. Rodney Blair's "protective association". Dr. Blair poses as a veterinary for the dairy association and surreptitiously heads a version of bootlegging, where dairy farmers are coerced into paying exorbitant rates for the transport of milk (via the trucking company "Crescent City") into town. When the farmers attempt to bypass the company, their wagons are wrecked, and their containers of milk overturned. When Autry and Frog succeed in eluding the system, Blair swears revenge ("I'm going to control every gallon of milk in Barton County and name my own price for it and no smart aleck cowboys are going to stop me either") and we see his outfit in operation -- he uses Carol Haines, a radio presenter, to broadcast veterinary advice about cows, but a secret code hidden in the broadcast alerts his team of "hoodlums" to enact their wilful destruction of Autry and Frog's property and milk supplies. The use of the radio is significant here; in *Colorado Sunset* and the following singing Westerns discussed, this is the only form of technology that is sacrosanct, but perpetrators of 'bad radio etiquette' who abuse its powers are always exposed. This also occurs to a lesser extent in *The Old Corral,* where the efforts of the O'Keefe boys to get on the radio is a crucial element in their absolution. The repercussions on Autry's singing career and radio sponsorship are obvious inducements to such representation.

The portrayal of women in this Western places it outside of the boundary of what Douglas Pye states is the widespread "massively skewed" representation of women in the genre. Pye quotes a section from Jacqueline Levitkin's feminist essay:

[Women] are the symbols, illustrations of the conflict that confronts the hero, and thus are the character types that have been pointed out by a number of critics. If they come from the East, they are school marm, minister's wife or pioneer woman. Identified with the West, they are the farmer's daughter, the Indian or Mexican woman, and , at times, the prostitute. . .if the woman character representing civilization is defined positively, the woman representing wilderness, by contrast, is defined negatively, and vice versa. Generally, women characters are seen to be in conflict with one another because they define choices of the hero. The narrative revolves around his choice.[26]

Firstly, Autry's women do not conform to the usual stereotypes named above: they are often conferred with professional status, as radio presenters, running radio stations, and having careers as newspaper editors. The rising independence and aggression of women is the subject of the song "The West Ain't what it used to be", in reference to a female editor in *Public Cowboy No. 1:*

Oh the West ain't what it used to be, wild and woolly and full of fleas,

Now we live a life of ease, oh the West ain't what it used to be.

Once the West was rough and tough, before the girls used powder puffs,

Now they're using rouge and stuff, oh the West ain't what it used to be.

There's a New Deal in the West, where the antelope used to play,

I met a deer/ dear this very day, oh the West ain't what it used to be.

There ain't much left of the West no more, the cowboys all turned troubadour,

A girl I know is an editor, oh the West ain't what it used to be.

Now the West will never be the same, since the cowgirl editor came,

She will make it safe and sand, oh the West ain't what it used to be. . .

(tails off into yodeling)

The passing of the Old West in all of the other songs discussed is usually a subject that is treated with nostalgia and seriousness, idealizing the past and reproachful of progress and modernization. However, when the increasing liberation of women is what is being observed in the modern New West, an element of redemption breaks through the negativism. The facts of women "using rouge and stuff" and being editors are not bemoaned but instead associated with the more neutral and even positive components of there being a "New Deal in the West", and that the Cowboys have "all turned troubadour". This unusually progressive aspect in a genre steeped in conservatism may be comprehended in the light of Autry's female patronage. Peter Stanfield has noted the centrality of the female listener and film-goer in relation to Autry's recording, radio and film work, quoting Pamela Grundy's research findings on surveys of radio audiences:

Women made up a large and vocal segment of the hillbilly audience. Radio surveys of the 1930s showed that despite the stories of farmers hurrying from their fields to listen to noontime shows, the major daytime audience comprised women and children. Women wrote more than two-thirds of the letters received by stations, sponsors, and performers in the period. . .Perhaps more important, however, was the role of women in arranging personal appearances for hillbilly groups. Personal appearances provided the lion's share of most musicians' income. . .local (women's) organisations played an essential role in the system; in most cases they were the ones who rented a space, provided publicity and handled the finances, dividing the profits with the musicians at the end of the performance.[27]

In *Colorado Sunset*, the narrative also revolves not around the choices of the male hero, but the choices of the female protagonists. Autry is elected sheriff because the women actively coerce their husbands into voting for him -- they rally support for Autry with inducements of maintaining noise control in the house, and threats of permanently residing mother-in-laws. David Haines's election speech culminates in a fight where the women, wielding surprisingly effective weapons of umbrellas and handbags physically overcome Autry's opposition.

The next four Westerns place Autry in a role where he mediates the changes wrought by industrialization -- it is significant that in fulfilling this role he is not at any one time an advocate of such changes (this point is explicitly and repeatedly made in the films). Instead he offers aid to those members of rural civilization who are in need of protection from the owners of industrial assets who actively seek to exploit their naiveté financially. The forces of industrialization that form the subjects of these Westerns are irrigation, electrical power, mechanization and oil.

Industrial Sabotage in the New West

In *Man of the Frontier* (1936), a drought forces the ranchers to invest in an irrigation project: the "Red River Land and Irrigation Co.". However, the project is fraught with mishaps where explosions along the constructed dam cause the deaths of five "ditch riders". Autry applies for the job and narrowly escapes two attempts on his life. Due to sabotage the dam builders fail to receive their payroll, and Autry is framed for the crime. A fist-fight develops into a gunfight at the dam, where the irate builders try to destroy the work for which they have not been paid, while the actual culprits (including a bank

manager) hide-out in the control room.   When the latter see Autry returning with the payroll and their accomplice, they open the floodgates of the dam in a third attempt on his life, but the female protagonist (Mary) intercedes and wins the builders over to Autry's side. The ending declares plans of making Red River Valley one of the richest farming lands. The ranchers are saved from bankruptcy, and the dam is completed with Autry's intervention.

The Man from Music Mountain (1938) begins with the completion of Boulder Dam, but this does not liberate the rural populace from the tyranny of their urban counterparts. A group of real estate swindlers incite a "back to land movement", with promises that electricity from the Boulder dam project will bring a town along the Gold River ("dead for twenty years") back to life. Busloads of people, heading for the town begin to pour in, and one of these buses startles the horses of George Harmon, who has bought $2,000 worth of land at Gold River and is travelling there via stagecoach. Before Autry can stop the horses, George is dragged to his death, leaving Buddy, his grandson, in Autry's care. Autry tries to obtain a refund from Mr. Scandlon, the head manager, after discovering that the land development project is a hoax and that the proprietors of Boulder Dam have no intentions of bringing electricity to Gold River. His request is denied. Meanwhile Frog ("the sucker with the bankroll") is tricked into investing in the project and sets up an electrical shop, surrounded by the waffle parlours, beauty salons, barber shops and other signs of consumption that arise.

Autry's disapproval of Frog's new occupation is obvious, but Frog is adamant that he will not remain "a cowhand all his life". The former conceives of a strategy to trick Scandlon into buying back the land, but in the end gold is discovered in the nearby Betsy Lee mines, and Autry prevents the people from signing away their contracts.

Electricity from the Boulder Dam project is conferred onto the town due to the presence of gold, and once again Autry overcomes the instruments of exploitation. Scandlon and his men, as with all those on the wrong side of morality in the previous Westerns, are dressed in business suits, distinguished from the rest who are clothed in rural, working class apparel: checked shirts, denim, and boots. Autry's costume deserves a mention -- he stands apart from the other actors and actresses due to the elaborate detail of his attire -- the fishbone embroidery and contrasting buttons on his shirts (particularly on his collar and sleeves) signal his persona as a country music performer, further establishing the link between that persona and his acting career. This link is made explicit in *The Old Barn Dance* (1938).

In this Western Autry is solicited for his singing talents by a woman who runs a radio station. He declines at first, explaining that he is a horse trader, and not a radio entertainer. She manages to persuade him later, but conceals the fact that he will be sponsored by "Mammoth Tractor co.". Autry fails to sell any of his horses in the town, as most of the farmers have invested in tractors, and he expresses his displeasure to Sally. The daily newspaper marks a tremendous increase in the sale of tractors, on account of the deception that Autry is endorsing the product: "if Gene's singing for them they must be alright". The tractor company repossesses the machines of the farmers who are slightly late with their monthly payments, and the farmers plan their revenge on Autry just as he is telling Sally that he would never broadcast for Mammoth Tractors because he thinks it would be "wrong". When the farmers arrive the truth is revealed and Sally admits that she has been lying: Autry gives the farmers his herd of horses so that they can continue with their harvesting. The film culminates with a fight at the radio station which has been taken over by Mammoth Tractor company, with Autry enraged

at their using of his records to deceive the public into thinking that he is endorsing their product. The station, and all of their records are destroyed, and the film ends when Autry saves Sally and her brother. The latter are pursued for their possession of a record which contains evidence that the Tractor company were involved in provoking a stampede on Autry's horses. The integrity of Autry's sponsors is a notion that is developed further in *Mexicali Rose* (1939), where Autry sets out to expose an oil company who has sponsored his singing on the radio, because he believes they are selling "phony stocks": "a lot of people bought stock in this outfit on my account and I'm going to make sure they get a fair deal". The oil company are bringing oil to the derrick, without executing any actual drilling.   As with *The Man From Music Mountain*, Autry manages to beguile the oil company into buying back their stocks. However when the official tests on the site support the probability of oil, Autry deceives the oil company yet again and purchases all the stock on behalf of his radio audience. In this Western Autry befriends a Mexican, who sacrifices his life to be remembered as a "Robin Hood" character. The absence of hostility towards Indians or Mexicans, conventionally labeled as 'Other' in the Western genre, is unusual, but effectively directs animosity towards the purveyors of modernity.

The New Deal Cowboy

Peter Stanfield notes that the popularity of Autry's Westerns in the thirties is documented in the trade press of the period, beginning with *In Old Sante Fe* (1934) where Autry makes his first appearance in a featured spot. The 'What the Picture Did For Me' column in *Motion Picture Herald* read:

192

(In Old Sante Fe) is one of the best Westerns I've ever run. I highly
recommend it to any fellow exhibitor that uses Westerns. Good story, plenty
of thrills, comedy and some good music and singing by Gene Autry and his
band. This is the kind of Western that pleases my patrons.
Played 21-22 December 1934. Sammie Jackson, Jackson Theatre, Flomaton,
Ala. Small town and rural patronage.[28]

Further reviews publicized that Autry's Westerns guaranteed healthy performances at

the box office, and Autry's own rationale for his success (quoted at the beginning of this

chapter) furnishes a starting-point for understanding their popularity. The New West

setting provided contemporary iconography that satisfied the documentary appeal of

audiences in the 1930s, a factor in the grid of specification that was discussed in the

previous chapter. The fears of economic dislocation that confronted the rural populace

were however dispelled by a hero who embodied the values that were linked to the Old

West. The celebration of the Old West is also firmly imprinted onto the New West

landscape through the narrative of song, which through the dream motif constructed a

space in the popular imagination where symbols of the Old West could still be relevant.

The methods expounded in Autry's Westerns for negotiating the economic crisis of the

thirties were simply a celebration of the values of the Old West, through nostalgia and

the ideological message that the dangers of modernization necessitated the agency of the

cowboy, and the tools of his trade.

The ascendancy of this WASP hero with origins in and a masculinity defined by

the Old West in this discourse of the frontier, was in the second half of the 1930s

facilitated by the restored credibility in a WASP patriarchy led by Roosevelt.

Roosevelt's contribution to this restoration, and thus the role he plays in the success of

Autry's persona, is apparent in the latter's self-administered label of "New Deal Cowboy", with the attendent claim that his solutions were like the president's (and being simpler and more direct, perhaps even better).   Roosevelt's function in the grid of specification further clarifies why under Hoover's reign WASP patriarch leaders were 'non box office elements', and absent from the discourses of the frontier that emerged in the Gangster film. The discourse of frontier mythology in the Autry Westerns registers a diachronic change that, as with the Gangster film, shifts the focus away from the central quality of territorial expansion as an explanation for progress. However, a significant permutation to the discourse is marked by a change in the grid of specification due to Roosevelt's presence, reinstating the WASP protagonist as the hero. A more internal reworking of the grid of specification by the industry itself was the targetting of rural and female audiences, a strategy that effected a synchronic change to the discourse with less traditional representations of women.

The popularity of the Westerns produced by a minor studio anticipated what Slotkin has termed the "renaissance" of the genre in 1939, where the precentage of feature Westerns doubled, inaugurating a thirty year period in which "the Western movie became pre-eminent among American mass-culture genres as a field for the making of public myths and for the symbolization of public ideology."[29] Slotkin attributes the pressure for the revival of the Western to the popularity of historical costume dramas (with European subjects) and the renewed seriousness that critics and scholars treated American history and the frontier in the late 1930s, as well as Roosevelt's patriotic propaganda, and not to "a clear market signal". However, it is arguable that the box office successes of the low budget Westerns, and the explicit celebration of the Old West contained therein, sustained discourses of the frontier in popular culture -- preserving

the frontier in the popular imagination -- until the myth once more became the dominant

output of the major studios.

The Western After Vietnam

7 Civil Rights, Feminism and Vietnam

American Credibility and the Challenge of the Sixties

> If we lose in Vietnam, before you know it the Communists would be up on the beaches of Hawaii.[1]
>
> Senator Strom Thurmond, 1968

The 1930s were not singular in their discrediting of the traditional American values that were attached to frontier mythology. A more complex and devastating threat crested in the sixties with an infringement of the United Nations charter which explicitly forbade interference in the internal affairs of member states.[2] The events leading to American participation in Vietnam are far from obscure. Historians who have accounted for America's involvement in the war include Hugh Brogan, William H. Chafe and Tom Englehardt, who agree that it was due to the danger that Communism posed to US liberty. However, though this perception of Communism as a united threat against American liberty later proved misconceived, it was retained and perpetuated through self-deception, lies, and the attendant manipulation of Congress and the American public. The failure to understand the actual nature of the communist movement and the persistence in that

misconception suggest that Communism only partially explained the underlying motivations for American involvement in Vietnam. Another possible explanation lay in the fragmentation of American credibility, and the attempt to restore that credibility via an invocation of the myth by which it was initially established. This chapter will address the factors in the grid of specification that determined the configuration of frontier discourse in the early 1970s, with particular emphasis on the Civil Rights and Women's Liberation movements, and the Vietnam War.

The progression from a territorial frontier to one of an industrial nature in the late 19th century (first discussed in chapter two) was posited in this thesis as an explanation for how the economic crisis of the 1930s contributed to a subversion of frontier mythology. The lack of popularity of 'A' Westerns, as vehicles in which the frontier myth found direct expression, was in that decade also attributed to this undermining of the economic frontier. The frontier discourse observed in these earlier chapters was seen to herald a variation of the myth at its deep structure, where the narrative of expansion is suppressed. The "Old West" setting in which that period of expansion dominated was instead replaced by more contemporary landscapes: the urban backdrop of the Gangster film, and the "New West" of the 'B' Western.

From the 1940s to the early 1960s the Western entered a period of unsurpassed popularity that was initiated by the success of *Stagecoach* in 1939. An essential feature of this "Golden Age" of the Western was its vision of the "Old" West as a heroic period in the past distinct from the rest of American society and history.[3] No longer relegated to the 'B' Western's periphery of dream or subjected to complete absence as in the Gangster

film, the "Old" West of the frontier myth resumed unmediated expression that was an affirmation of its historical accuracy. The list of Westerns that Phil Hardy selects as those in which the idea of the frontier is "seen in its purest" is revealing. Hardy mentions *The Covered Wagon* (1923) and *The Iron Horse* (1924), then skips about a decade to *Dodge City* (1939), *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *Bend of the River* (1952) and *The Searchers* (1956).[4] The retrospective grouping of these pre-Depression Westerns with those occurring from 1939 is significant. It suggests that the frontier myth has in the interim undergone a process of repair.

That Westerns released from the 1940s to the late 1960s deserve critical attention is not an issue. Most studies of the Western to date focus on this era. Philip French, for example, bases his "model Western" on those made since WWII up to 1973, while Jim Kitses selects directors whose Westerns are associated with that period: Anthony Mann, Budd Boetticher, and Sam Peckinpah. In the *BFI Companion to the Western*, the Westerns that Ed Buscombe singles out as those which "merit our continued attention for both artistic and historical reasons" with "at least. . .some consistency in the prejudices revealed" mostly occur from the 1950s to the 1970s.[5] *The Movie Book of The Western*, a recently-published volume, concentrates on the period between 1939 and the present day, with most chapters discussing films made before and including *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* (1973). The last four (out of twenty-eight) contributions in the book analyse Westerns made in the 1990s, beginning with *Dances with Wolves* (1990), with the exception of one chapter on *Heaven's Gate* (1980). The aim of the following chapters of this thesis is to

ascertain the patterns of frontier discourse that emerge in that latter "gunfighter gap", approximately between the 1970s to the 1990s.

In the seventies the discourse of the frontier reverts back to a more territorial emphasis, with an international correlation of the necessity for boundaries that underlay the Indian Wars. The white-Indian conflict arose not only out of the need to displace and reduce the Other; in its boundaryless state the New World was overwhelming to the Europeans, and:

> That boundless wilderness might threaten to crush the settler, or alternately as
> a landscape of strange and sensual pleasures to seduce the settler. In either
> case, where no external boundaries existed, internal boundaries threatened to
> collapse, releasing into the world of the civilized, into God's world, either an
> unrestrained savagery or an unfettered sensuality.[6]

Tom Englehardt's analysis of the imposition of external boundaries in an attempt to circumvent the collapse of internal demarcations is pertinent in relation to the movements of the sixties that endangered the traditional barriers existing between whites and blacks, and males and females. In 1682, Mary Rowlandson's account of her captivity was published. Her account was an example of the captivity narratives drawing from Puritan sermons of armed retribution that later degenerated into what Englehardt calls "simple blood-and-thunder shockers."[7] Though superficially innocent, the ideological import of these narratives was considerable. They served to establish the much-needed boundaries of the American myth, and soon developed a clear distinction at the frontier -- between the

settled areas and wilderness; between the white women and the Indian invaders that sought to disrupt their civilized world.

The establishing of external boundaries within America was possible whilst the wilderness still existed, and more importantly, while there was still an Indian "Other" to displace. However, the initial efforts to marginalize America's native inhabitants were adequately successful, so that by the late nineteenth century the savage "invaders" were subjugated and forcibly relocated to land that was deemed worthless, consequently posing no threat to the whites. Each white conquest moved the frontier across the continent, until the division between the savage and settled areas no longer existed, and when in the 1970s there was once again the need for external boundaries, the myth necessitated a search outside of the America continent. Vietnam provided the opportunity for that external boundary to be re-established, and for the light of American civilization and victory once again to illumine and revivify the frontier myth.

The Civil Rights and Women's Liberation movements threatened to upset the traditional hierarchy of power that granted superiority to the white male. Their cumulative effect led to an impending collapse of internal boundaries, relentlessly attacking the status quo and the very foundations of what middle-class Americans defined as constituting the American way.[8] The American way was made up of more than middle-class beliefs in patriotism, religion, monogamy and hard work. These were superstructural components of the frontier mythology that had originally shaped what became the national American character. Thus in attacking the "very foundations" of the American way, it was the ideological base of the frontier myth that Civil Rights and Women's Liberation were

eroding. In a sense, these movements were authorities of delimitation that posed an obstacle to direct expressions of America's frontier myth. They served to unravel the constructed narrative of white male victory, revealing that the savage Other violently killed in the name of regeneration was actually a victim of white male atrocities, and that the white male hero saved the woman from her captivity only to return her to another form of captivity where he, and not the Indian, was her oppressor.

The Other as Victim

Slotkin's paradigm of "regeneration through violence" runs parallel to, and is consolidated by Englehardt's thesis that in the construction of this American narrative, the European settlers were first driven to overturn the ratio of their numbers and those of the New World's savage inhabitants. The inhabitants of the New World were always the victims -- they were the victims of an invasion that first brought virulent new diseases which annihilated above 90 percent of their people in southern New England, and later of the succession of wars that robbed them of their land and their lives.[9] Francis Jennings observes the fundamental disparity between intercultural contact between the European colonists and the Indians. While the former benefited from Indian guidance in transportation and survival techniques, the latter became addicted to European products, losing their neolithic skills through disuse.[10] However, a narrative of Indian victimization by European invaders was not, for obvious reasons, deemed a suitable legacy for the newcomers who now inhabited the land. The European settlers were guilty of

victimization and theft, and the task they set themselves was -- in the face of contrary evidence -- to convert that guilt into innocence.

In *The Legacy of Conquest*, Patricia Nelson Limerick analyses white Western expansion across the American continent anthropologically, seeing it as an example of the extraordinary power of cultural persistence. An aspect of that cultural persistence was the idea of innocence:

> Even when they were trespassers, westering Americans were hardly, in their eyes, criminals; rather, they were pioneers. The ends abundantly justified the means; personal interest in the acquisition of property coincided with national interest in the acquisition of territory. . . .Innocence of intention placed the course of events in a bright and positive light. . . .[11]

The idea of innocence easily materialized through narratives of captivity, where the white woman captured by Indians symbolized the ideal innocent victim. The captivity narratives not only established the external boundaries that served to keep internal ones intact, they also allowed a reversal of roles whereby the Indian victims could be viewed as savage invaders, and where the white conquerors could be aligned unequivocally with the innocent victims of invasion. A commensurate justification for Indian violence against white invasion was simultaneously withheld. This was perpetuated through the constant of Indian inferiority.

In an earlier revisionist account of the settling of America, Jennings explains the mythic inception of Indian savagery. According to Jennings the invention of savagery was devised to fit the varied purposes of the colonists. The notion of Indian inferiority

203

was a constant that implied a rejection of his humanity, denying any form of justification for Indian resistence to European invasion. Jennings sees the logic of savagery operating in the landmark decision made by Chief Justice John Marshall in 1823: "That law which regulates, and ought to regulate in general, the relations between the conqueror and conquered was incapable of application to a people under such circumstances".[12] Thus,

> To invade and dispossess the people of an unoffending civilized country would violate morality and transgress the principles of international law, but savages were exceptional. Being uncivilized by definition, they were outside the sanctions of both morality and law.[13]

The civilized war (fought by the whites against the Indians) is differentiated from the savage war (fought by the Indians against the whites). The former is a rational, honourable and progressive activity, while the latter is attributed with qualities of irrationality, ferocity and unredeemed retrogression.[14]

Coupled with the narratives of captivity, the white acts of violence and theft were transformed into justified, honourable exploits of rescue and vengeance -- and their guilt correspondingly translated into innocence. Such narratives were operative in WWII, when anti-Japanese propaganda denigrated the race to the level of beasts:

> In Europe we felt that our enemies, horrible and deadly as they were, were still people. But out here [the Pacific] I soon gathered that the Japanese were looked upon as something subhuman or repulsive; the way some people feel about cockroaches or mice.[15]

The analogy of the savage war was more directly invoked by government officials and in popular culture. Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison, who became a rear admiral for his service to naval history explained: "We were fighting no civilized, knightly war. . .We were back to primitive days of fighting Indians on the American frontier; no holds barred and no quarter". Allan Nevins, another eminent historian, claimed that "emotions forgotten since our most savage Indian wars were reawakened by the ferocities of Japanese commanders". Hollywood perpetuated the analogy: in 1942, a stream of pictures was released that capitalized on the theme of Japanese brutality and treachery. The combined image of the enemy in *A Prisoner of Japan, Menace of the Rising Sun, Remember Pearl Harbour* and *Danger in the Pacific* was that of "fiendish, diabolical" "murderers", playing a "filthy game of treachery", killing "for no apparent reason but to satisfy their blood-lust".[16]

It would take the emancipation of an American minority in the 1950s and its attendant disclosure of racial horror to cast a shadow of doubt on the legitimacy and origin of this idealistic American self-image. It is arguable that the cultural change would facilitate the writing of revisionist accounts of American history by such writers as Jennings, Slotkin, Richard White, and Patricia Nelson Limerick. This project is clear in the sub-title of Richard White's volume, "A New History of the American West". Jennings is particularly emphatic in separating himself from earlier versions of history:

> European explorers and invaders discovered an inhabited land. Had it
> been pristine wilderness then, it would possibly be so still today, for neither
> the technology nor the social organization of Europe in the sixteenth and
> seventeenth centuries had the capacity to maintain, of its own resources,

outpost colonies thousands of miles from home. Incapable of conquering a true wilderness, the Europeans were highly competent in the skill of conquering other people, and that is what they did. They did not settle a virgin land. They invaded and displaced a resident population.

This is so simple a fact that it seems self-evident.[17]

He condemns the work of previous historians who acknowledge the fact of America being inhabited, but then paradoxically repeat identical phrases in purporting that the land-starved people of Europe had found magnificent opportunity to pioneer in and bring civilization to a savage wilderness. These sentiments were a reverberation of the indignation apparent in the rhetoric of Civil Rights leaders. Evidence of white savagery destabilized the construction of innocence, with this revelation gaining strength during the 1960s and 1970s.

Civil Rights

The main agenda of the Civil Rights activists was for liberation from racial segregation and social, economic and political integration of minorities with the larger, dominantly White society. The concurrent desire for integration destabilized traditional boundaries of racial containment that were an essential thread in the fabric of American society, for this desire:

was not the desire to "pass" for white, but to "pass over" openly into a land officially declared available to all by piercing invisible yet fiercely policed boundaries not just around lunch counters, bus seats, and toilets, or even schools, housing and workplaces, but inside heads.[18]

This mental barrier between white and non-white was strikingly similar to the one that the first settlers encountered in the New World. The barrier was one that separated "unrestrained savagery" and "unfettered sensuality" from the opposing values of civilization. To prevent an outward manifestation of these repressed but inherent desires, the volatile internal barrier had to be projected externally against a scapegoat who would symbolize these qualities, and with whom the Europeans could physically battle and obliterate. In that act of violence, they would obtain victory over not only the Indian savage, but the impulses of savagery that lay within themselves, and maintain the internal barrier between the values of civilization and savagery.

The cry for integration thus recalled parallel fears of the consequences that would ensue when the whites were forced to confront an assimilation of opposing values that they had projected externally out of themselves. Integration entailed more than granting liberation to the minorities in the economic, social and political spheres; it also necessitated a merger of Self and Other: the initiation of a union that would re-place the savage back into a position that would potentially mar the WASP American's idealistic self-image.

And it did. Civil rights leaders:

> transformed the war story back into a tale of atrocities and turned whites --
> from Birmingham Police Chief Bull Connor to Alabama Governor George
> Wallace, from abusive students at the University of Mississippi to Klan
> bombers -- into savages. . . .From beatings to hosings, from firebombing of
> busses to the bombing of churches, from the mutilated bodies of murdered

civil rights workers to those of abused schoolchildren, images of horror and horrific disproportion were displayed.[19]

The Civil Rights movement fused the horrors of racial atrocities to the ideal of American innocence and democracy, and in doing so, appropriated the discourse of the frontier to their benefit. In 1662, Michael Wigglesworth wrote of the unsettled forest as a "Devils den":

A waste and howling wilderness,
Where none inhabited
But Hellish fiends, and brutish men
That devils worshipped.[20]

However, in 1965 when *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* was published, the white colonists traded places with the non-white Other in exhibiting "Hellish" and "Brutish" characteristics:

'Unless we call one white man, by name, a "devil", we are not speaking of any *individual* white man. We are speaking of the *collective* white man's *historical* record. We are speaking of the collective white man's cruelties, and evils, and greeds, that have seen him *act* like a devil toward the non-white man. . . .You cannot find *one* black man, I do not care who he is, who has not been personally damaged in some way by devilish acts of the collective white man!'[21]

The boundary separating the savage from the civilized became blurred with this reversal of roles when the historical acts of violence were seen for what they were, not morally justifiable events but examples of white "cruelties, and evils, and greeds". The white idea of the interchangability of the Other was now reversed -- African-American claims required a reassertion of some other Other and located the historical embodiment of this Otherness in the white man. This projection of savagism onto the white man by the African-Americans shifted the balance of savagery and civilization back onto the internal barrier that had confronted the first European settlers.

The 1960s were also an opportune moment for the original victims of that cruelty. The sovereignty of American Indians was reasserted in a series of decisions issued by the US Supreme Court, resulting in the recognition of the higher legal status that tribes held in relation to the states and the consequent limitation of state power on Indian reservations.[22] This re-establishment of Indian sovereignty occurred contemporaneously with the Civil Rights movement, the latter providing a corps of lawyers who would enable the Indians to turn the legal system that had once dispossessed them to their favor.[23] The Indians were demanding their rights as American citizens not just on the reservations, where the land was considered worthless by the whites, but also on lands not covered by special treaty guarantees. Their demand for equality also meant "passing over" the invisible "policed boundaries", with similar consequences of questioning an ideology that was historically grounded on the barrier between the Indian and the white man. The source of this external barrier -- the constructed narrative of white female captivity -- that had sanctioned its related violent acts, rendering them innocent, now joined ranks with the

blacks and Indians as victims of white male oppression. The notion of female captivity

began to play a central role in further undermining the ideology of the frontier myth.

The Women's Liberation Movement

The emergence of the Civil Rights movement provided the catalyst for women to

formulate a feminist consciousness that opposed the denial of equality. The movement

which had stressed the immorality of treating a person as less equal than another on the

basis of a physical characteristic, embodied a message that linked the modes of oppression

suffered by women and minority races. A source that offered statistical evidence of this

inequality and gender oppression was the 1963 President's Commission on the Status of

Women, where John F. Kennedy appointed a group of officials to investigate the

"prejudices and outmoded customs" blocking the realization of women's basic rights.[24]

The political purpose of that report was, ironically, to win more female votes. However,

though recommending equal pay laws and government funding of day-care centres, the

report opposed the Equal Rights amendment, endorsing tradition in the roles of women as

homemakers, and men as breadwinners. Moreover, statistics were produced that

documented gender injustice: the earnings and job status of women were lower than

men's, and they were inferior in both their educational level and legal status. Further

concrete evidence on which the accusation of inequality could be based was drawn up by

the thirty-two state commissions that followed the federal report: women were seen to be

trapped in separate and unequal roles, the victims of propaganda by advertisers, psychologists and educators who perpetuated male superiority.

The Women's Liberation movement of the 1960s was not historically the genesis of this drive to redefine female roles in society. By the 1920s Americans were already shedding the barriers that prevented women from entering the public world: large numbers of women joined the workforce, participated as consumers, and later, as voters.[25] However, the sex segregation that had obstructed women's entry into the public domain relocated itself within the workforce. In the late 1960s there was still little opportunity for individual advancement or promotion, and assumptions about male and female spheres of responsibility were deeply ingrained.[26] The women were still "trapped", held captive in positions of inferiority by white male dominance, and in the 1960s, with the aid of the Civil Rights movement and the evidence that developed out of the Federal Report, response to this form of captivity rose from the level of personal indignation into a feminist ideology that translated into a mass movement. This mass movement towards the emancipation of women initiated dramatic changes in the areas of politics, education, employment, and a revolutionary definition of female physiology.[27] More than 12 percent of lawyers and judges were women in 1980, for example, whereas fewer than 5 percent were in 1970. The increase in professional degrees among women led to a greater degree of integration among male-dominated professions.[28]

This call for integration was instituted by the National Organization for Women (NOW). Beginning in 1965, the organization addressed the right of women to obtain equal access to education, professions and political office, integrating females into the

masculine realm, sharing equal financial and social powers with males. The demand for integration that had threatened white male superiority with the Civil Rights movement for blacks, now with the successes of the late 1960s managed to de-stabilize the structure of patriarchy and the notion of manliness. The conclusions of Peter G. Filene regarding male hostility to female equality at the turn of the twentieth century are pertinent in explaining the male fears that arose from the destabilization of sexual barriers:

> . . .the answer derives from their fear that female passion would deplete their own bodily strength. . .The wife should be -- must be -- the better half. If she abdicated her part and became an equal sexual partner, then she would drag a man into a sperm-depleting, manhood-killing orgy. In passion lurked the seeds of destruction. . .Derangement of the patriarchal order at home would be followed by derangement of patriarchy outside. . . "Equal suffrage is a repudiation of manhood".[29]

When women abdicated their duty to be the "better half" and desired instead to be only equally good, the boundary between male and female spheres became less distinct. Women had traditionally been associated with (and confined to) the "virtuous" and "affectionate" home, and their movement into "amoral" and "competitive" society threatened to unmask the ambivalences inside manliness.[30] This association had depended upon an investment in the distinction between spheres.

The confusion that arose due to this desire for equality is clear in accounts of contemporary journalism. *Time* magazine's 1972 special issue on the American woman contained the astute observation that:

In a sense, if the feminine revolution simply wanted to exchange one ruling class for another, if it aimed at outright female domination (a situation that has occurred in science fiction and other fantasies), the goal would be easier to visualize. The demand for equality, not domination, is immensely complicated.[31]

Included in the issue was an attempt to dissipate the confusion: the article "Male/ Female: Differences between them" marked the distinction between the sexes via "Internal organs", "Sex typing", "Female passivity", and "Sex and Success". Nowhere was the distinction between male and female more crucial than in a mythology where women represented civilization, and where male action (and the masculine identity) was defined by the symbiotic relationship between that sphere and what lay outside.

To arrive at the act of violence that the Frontier hero executes, he must first acculturate to Indian ways -- a symptom observed in Turner's Thesis. In Slotkin's account this acculturation is intrinsically associated with the archetype of the hunter, where there is a mysterious sense of identification between the hunter and the hunted. On an extended hunt for the beast, the hunter is forced to follow in the animal's footsteps, eating, moving and sleeping in tandem with his prey.[32] The beast, however, is more than a mere animal, and its symbolism gains weight in relation to the challenge of Civil Rights and Women's Liberation. The hunted animal represents what exists outside of the white hunter's sphere in terms of race, and sex. The racial aspect of the beast lies in its equation to the Indian, thus the acculturation of the hunter to the beast mirrors his acculturation to Indian ways; the sub-humans who possess an innate knowledge of the wilderness. The sexual aspect of the beast is in its equation to the hunter's anima -- "the hidden part of his

male consciousness where feeling subordinates intellect: passive, feminine, essential". To attain regeneration, a union with the beast is required, effecting a transformation with the racial Other and a symbolic marriage with the hunter's feminine self. However, this process fractures the idealistic image of the American hunter-hero, threatening his manliness and racial purity. Thus, the beast must be killed; in doing so, any claims to the hunter's racial and sexual purity are exorcised. The Jungian anima converts into a representation of the hunter's Fruedian id, and is recognized solely to be repressed and destroyed.[33] Integration -- racial or sexual -- would reverse the exorcism, leading to a collapse of the boundaries defining heroism and masculinity, questioning the integrity of a myth that depended on the stability of these distinctions.

The effect of these domestic problems was to contradict an ideology that had developed to justify the establishment of external boundaries (that had arisen from the need to prevent internal boundaries from disintegrating). The white male hero could no longer be white, if Civil Rights leaders claimed integration and equality for non-whites; or male, when women claimed entry into the masculine realm; or a hero, when definitions of heroism relied on the exclusion of racial and sexual Otherness, and when the object of that heroism -- the female captive -- uncovered a system of oppression, and not deliverance. Without recourse to a physical wilderness or a racial scapegoat to project within America, the frontier was once again extended outside. This outward projection furnished the external barriers that would suppress the ambivalences of the masculine identity, keep internal boundaries intact and perpetuate the nation's founding mythology of America. This imposition of an international utility aimed to restore the damaged image of heroism

214

and American credibility, with the opportunity for effecting restoration presenting itself in Vietnam. Vietnam functioned as the symbolic landscape whereby Americans could regenerate their past virtues, with the soldiers entering an alien landscape akin to the first pioneers. Like the Europeans who represented the city in its exploitative and self-indulgent pursuits, the subversion of Civil Rights and Feminism exposed an America that had fallen into the same trap of mediocrity and dissoluteness from which their frontier-fathers had fled. Vietnam provided the arena in which Americans could participate in a "ritualistic return to the hardiness, self-sacrifice, and purposefulness of the true American character", and shifted the focus away from the domestic challenges facing America in the 1960s.[34]

The Vietnamese Wilderness

The drive to revivify frontier mythology is explicit in Kennedy's political rhetoric and his perception of the United States as standing on the edge of a new wilderness. Speaking in Los Angeles in July 1960, he declared:

> I stand tonight facing west on what was the last frontier. From the lands that stretch 3000 miles behind me, the pioneers of the old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West. . . .[But] the problems are not all solved and the battles are not all won, and *we stand today on the edge of a new frontier, the frontier of the 1960's, a*

frontier of unknown opportunities and paths, a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.[35]

My Emphasis

Kennedy's New Frontier thesis re-established the external boundary that had characterized the Indian Wars: pitting the forces of civilization against those of savagery. The difference this time was that the savages expressed their Otherness not in terms of race, but in their political beliefs. In September 1960, Kennedy insisted that the United States was facing a time of maximum peril in its relations with communist powers, for "freedom and communism (were) locked in deadly embrace", with the issue at stake being "the preservation of civilization".[36] It is significant that in this Inaugural Address, not a word was devoted to domestic issues such as race or poverty: the crisis at home was dealt with relative equanimity. The strong policy of anti-communism that was Kennedy's choice of emphasis minimized the domestic problems that would undermine the efforts to restore American idealism. When Kennedy repeatedly insisted that he would "welcome this challenge", defining himself as the "commander of the Grand Alliance" in relation to the communist peril, he deflected attention away from the internal challenges faced by 1960s America. The *New Republic*'s observation was that Kennedy's Inaugural Address had the "ring of command that emboldens men to renew their faith".[37]

This faith had its source in a mythology that invoked masculine heroism, the excitement of confrontation, and the exhilaration of victory. The frontier myth reached its height of popularity from the years 1948 to about 1972, when its discourse was manifested in the appearance of countless movie and TV Westerns. By 1956 the number

of Western feature productions rose to 46, with the sharp decline that occurred in the years following until 1962 reflecting an industry-wide contraction in response to competition from television, where the discourse of the frontier was channeled. The level of audience interest sustained by the television Western was impressive, commanding a share of prime time unrivalled by other types of action/adventure (detective/police, combat, etc.) shows in the period through the sixties.[38] Cawelti writes of how these TV Westerns launched in the 1950s were based on the classic, traditional Western formula.[39] The first TV Westerns were disparaged as the worst of television programming, due to the perceived mediocrity of former 'B' Western producers who filled the airwaves with *The Lone Ranger* (1949-1957), *The Cisco Kid, Wild Bill Hickok,* and *The Adventures of Rin Tin Tin.* The new medium was however legitimized when *Gunsmoke,* among the longest of the TV Western series, was given John Wayne's endorsement. In a sequence that appeared before *Gunsmoke*'s opening credits, Wayne spoke directly into the camera and informed viewers that this was the first TV Western which he deemed worthy of his appearance. Standing behind a hitching post, he said: "I think it's the best thing of its kind to come along. . .It's honest; it's adult; it's realistic."[40] The 3 million American youths who went to Vietnam as soldiers had the average age of nineteen -- and if they were nineteen at about 1962, when Kennedy signed National Security Action Memorandum No. 124 equating the importance of subversive insurgency to conventional warfare, then they would be among the audience cohort that grew up with and directly experienced the Western's "Golden Age", as well as the charismatic star persona of John Wayne. This generation of youths derived from their culture of early childhood entertainment and play a

pure, optimistic version of frontier mythology -- the idea of fighting in Vietnam would later bring a sense of being "released from everyday life into a John Wayne version of American promise".[41] Vietnam memoirs indicate the influence of popular culture in nurturing a correlation of the War to an extension of the American frontier -- Ron Kovic relates in his personal testament, *Born on the Fourth of July*, how as a child he and his friends saw *Sands of Iwo Jima*:

> . . .we sat glued to our seats, humming the hymn together and watching Sergeant Stryker, played by John Wayne, charge up a hill and get killed just before he reached the top. And then they showed the men raising the flag on Iwo Jima with the marines' hymn still playing, and Castiglia and I cried in our seats. I loved the song so much, and every time I heard it I would think of John Wayne and the brave men who raised our flag on Iwo Jima that day. I would think of them and cry. . .John Wayne in *The Sands of Iwo Jima* became one of my heroes.[42]

Though *Sands of Iwo Jima* was ostensibly a WWII movie and not a Western, many films of that former genre expressed discourses of the frontier. Movies starring John Wayne, often regardless of genre, could not escape his equation with the quintessential American frontier hero.[43] Moreover, other WWII films were produced in much the same vein. In addition to the anti-Japanese propaganda movies mentioned previously, Robert Ray sees the war as providing the American film industry with an occasion for reaffirming traditional forms. Ray argues for a continuity between Hollywood's Classic movies and the wartime films, asserting that the narrative of *Casablanca* (1942) is "clearly derived from the western" with Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) firmly connected to Warshow's

definition of the Western hero.[44] He also categorizes the combat films of WWII as adherents of the same model. In a more complex fashion, Thomas Doherty sees movies of the same period containing the "solo hero", a requisite "deeply ingrained in the American tradition" and expressed in the "lonesome cowboy, the private detective, the single-minded inventor" and "even the will to power of the urban gangster". Doherty's initial referents are *Thunderbirds* (1942) and *Desparate Journey* (1942). Though he does later observe a generic progression to an "airborne brotherhood", Doherty notes that "the noble act of self-annihilation" is still retained as "the only really permissable form of self-assertion".[45]

However, unlike the experience of WWII, the danger of universalizing the American experience of the Indian Wars became apparent as the war in Vietnam unfolded. The Vietnamese wilderness was not the wilderness West of American civilization, though Lyndon B. Johnson, successor to Kennedy, seemed to think it was. In Oct 25, 1966, American troops at Cam Ranh Bay, S. Vietnam, were urged by Johnson to "bring the coonskin home" from Vietnam and "nail it to the barn".[46] Johnson's allusions linked Vietnam to a frontier past, likening the Vietnam War to an Indian War -- giving journalist Hugh Sidey the reason for his involvement, Johnson said that "he had gone into Vietnam because, as at the Alamo, somebody had to get behind the log with those threatened people."[47] The Vietnam veterans who returned from the war similarly equated their experiences with the Indian wars. Michael Herr describes the "wild haunted going-West look" of the soldiers, who are told by their captains: "we'll take you out to play Cowboys and Indians".[48] Richard Drinnon cites a passage from Joseph Strick's *Interview with My*

Lai Veterans, where Vernado Simpson, Jr., a black antipoverty worker in Jackson, Mississippi; James Bergthold, a white part-time truck driver in Niagara Falls, New York; and Gary Garfolo, the unemployed white son of a barber in Stockton, California, reminisced about their former messmates:

> Simpson: They would mutilate the bodies and everything. They would
> hang'em. . .or scalp'em. They enjoyed it, they really enjoyed it. Cut their
> throats.
> Bergthold: They cut ears offa guy, and stuff like this here, without knowing if
> they were VC or not. If they got an ear they got a VC.
> Garfolo: Like scalps, you know, like from Indians. Some people were on an
> Indian trip over there.[49]

Another veteran recalled that the My Lai massacre was an "Indian idea. . .the only good gook is a dead gook", and troops of the US Marine Corps referred to the Vietnamese as "fucking savages".

The act of equating the frontier with Vietnam and the hope of renewed patriotism that lay therein inexorably deepened military engagement to such levels that a need to deceive the American public arose. The day before authorizing American ground troops to engage in offensive action, Johnson told a press conference: "I know of no far-reaching strategy that is being suggested or promulgated". The public's perception of the war was further controlled in a nationally televised speech at Johns Hopkins University in early April 1965 where Johnson pledged that America was prepared for an "unconditional discussion" with the enemy in order to end the fighting. An optimistic assessment of the

chances for peace and victory was offered in place of actuality, for in the privacy of government councils assessments of the situation in Vietnam were consistently negative: the Saigon regime entered a new period of instability, and the bombing had no appreciable effect on the North while infiltration into the South increased. However, too much was at stake for withdrawal, and Johnson's advisors insisted that the only course available was to pour more money, troops, and energy into the war. Administration officials led the public to believe that no basic decisions had been made, when in actual fact nearly 90,000 American troops were stationed in Vietnam, American aircraft flew more than 3,600 sorties per month, and American combat forces had begun to assume a major part of the responsibility for the ground war.[50]

Like Kennedy, Johnson's military decisions steered towards accommodating the domestic situation in America, and this motive obscured the illogical commitment of further escalation. In an act that mirrored Hoover's denials in the Depression years, Johnson denied any change in US policy three months later in July 28, intentionally misleading the American public so as to avoid undue excitement in domestic opinion. This occurred during the same week that his Medicare and civil rights bills were at a critical stage of deliberation, and the revelation of his true military decisions would have incited a national debate on war.[51] Such an uproar had the potential of shattering the consensus and endangering the enactment of Johnson's legislation where domestic issues were concerned. The public continued to be misled as long as the impression that America would defeat the Vietcong in South Vietnam could be sustained. It was clear what this victory meant -- in maintaining public acquiescence Johnson hoped to restore to

America a level of civilization and humanity that would be characteristic of his "Great Society". A year before in May 1964 Johnson voiced his vision of creating an America worthy of leadership, extending beyond material growth in possessing the "wisdom to use that wealth to enrich and elevate our national life, and to advance the quality of our American civilization", proving that "our material progress is only the foundation on which we will build a richer life in mind and spirit."[52] The advancement of the American civilization was not without its price: in the past, the Indian paid for the renewal of American values, in the 1960's this role was imposed on the Vietnamese. However, this time, history was not about to repeat itself. Denied of victory at the external frontier, the focus was to shift back to the domestic sphere, resulting in an unprecedented crisis in national ideology and mythology. The savage was now resolutely in its original birthplace: wrestling for primacy within the white soul.

The Victimization of Vietnam

A component of American involvement in Vietnam was the capacity to re-position the Other as enemy. The traditional embodiments of Otherness -- Indians, blacks and women -- could no longer be co-opted to fill this position convincingly, as Civil Rights and Women's Liberation enhanced instead the rationale and need for integration in the interest of a genuine democracy. In that process, the Other surfaced as the victim of WASP male domination. Vietnam appeared to furnish the hostile Other that could fill the gap in the cycle of American renewal. However, the nature of Vietnamese warfare and the terrain of

the battle forestalled the realization of such expectations. America's political hopes of restoring credibility would be denied on two counts: not only would the Vietnamese emerge as victims but the victory in battle that had assisted in sanctioning acts of violence against the Other also failed to materialize.

The war atrocity that converted the Vietnamese Other from enemy to innocent victim was the My Lai massacre. Ironically, like much of Massachusetts in Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, the Battambang Peninsula on which My Lai 4 was located was thought of by American soldiers as "Indian country", and the first stories of My Lai to feature in the United States attempted to perpetuate that mythical construct. The *New York Times* called the operation a significant success; its front page read: "American troops caught a North Vietnamese force in pincer movement on the central coastal plain yesterday, killing 128 enemy soldiers in day-long fighting", and the United Press International labeled it an "impressive victory".[53] My Lai remained a victory until November 13 1969, more than a year after the incident had taken place.[54] The story of Lieutenant William Calley Jr., a Vietnam combat veteran who "deliberately murdered 109 Vietnamese civilians during a search-and-destroy mission in March, 1968" hit the mainstream press, and within weeks shocking photos of the massacre would cause a trauma at the national level. *Life* published ten pages of "exclusive pictures, eyewitness accounts [of] the massacre at Mylai", under the heading "a story of indisputable horror--the deliberate slaughter of old men, women, children and babies".[55] The "128 enemy soldiers" had suddenly been transformed into innocent civilians, and helpless victims. Equating the American soldiers as the perpetrators of these atrocities occurred soon after

on national television, with platoon member Paul Medlo's confessional account on *CBS Evening News*.

It was increasingly apparent that the American presence did not bring light to this 'cornerstone of Asia.' The intensification of war spelt the cumulative destruction of the landscape and agriculture, robbing Vietnam of its most important source of income, and changing the country from a rice-exporting to a rice-importing nation. The inflow of equipment and well-paid American soldiers placed an immense weight on all the social services originating from a comparatively undeveloped economy, widening the scope for black marketing and profiteering.[56] America fared no better. Stephen E. Ambrose calculates that during the war American commitment mounted, from $10 billion to $20 billion to $30 billion, and 150,000 to 300,000 to 500,000 and more men a year.[57] The economic consequences of this commitment are summed up by Robert Stevens, who states that the results for the nation's economy of the Vietnam War duplicity were "the most virulent inflation in American history, the highest interest rates in history, and a series of balance of payments crises worse than any that had gone before, an unnecessary recession in 1970-71, two serious declines in stock prices (in 1970-73), two major liquidity crises at home (in 1966 and 1969-70), a collapse of the housing industry (1966)" and "financial market distortions that bore extremely heavily on small businesses and that forced state and local governments to retrench on education and other vital services."[58] The size and extent of this investment did not signify military effectiveness: by 1973 the Americans had lost the war to the Viet Cong, and by 1975 they had lost the country.[59] The American defeat in Vietnam inexorably re-located the public's focus to domestic

issues, turning their attention to the leaders that had inspired participation in the war with promises of victory. However, the disillusionment that ensued after Vietnam did nothing to encourage the American public's faith in their WASP male leadership. By the end of Johnson's Presidency 222,351 servicemen had been either killed or wounded, and though Richard Nixon announced a secret plan for ending the war, American participation lasted longer under him than it did under Johnson, resulting in the 56,000 US servicemen killed and 270,000 wounded. The incident that most condemned Nixon in disclosing his betrayal of public trust was the Watergate affair. Daniel Ellsberg, a former employee of the Defense Department, leaked the Pentagon Papers, an official but secret history of the Vietnam entanglement to the *New York Times*. The Nixon administration proceeded to hire a number of 'plumbers' to stop the leaks, and with a number of hired Cuban refugees, they broke into the offices of the Democratic National Committee in the Watergate building in Washington. In the midst of their attempts to bug the phones there, they were detected and arrested. Nixon tried to conceal the involvement of the White House, but following the confession of John Dean, his counsel, to the FBI, the American people and politicians were forced to confront the fact of their President's conspiring to pervert the course of justice. On 8 August 1974, Nixon became the first President in American history to resign from Office.[60]

If victory over the Vietnamese wilderness might have brought about a confirmation of frontier mythology and its attendant values in answer to the social challenges of the 1960's, then failure at the Vietnamese frontier could only discredit the myth, its values, and those who affirmed its discourse, both abroad and at home. Instead of turning

attention away from domestic issues, as America's politicians had hoped, Vietnam grew to be an uncanny reflection of America's domestic situation, where basic institutions and the values of society failed to nurture the achievement of genuine equality as stipulated by the 'American Creed' -- "individual freedom, equal protection before the law, opportunity to advance on the basis of one's merit, and the ability of those on the bottom of society to secure improvement of their lot through hard work and participation in established political processes."[61] It became evident that failed attempts to instill democracy in America translated into an inability to impose democracy abroad. Radical critiques by Black Power advocates in particular highlighted and condemned White America (and by association WASP leadership) for racial oppression and hatred, and this same thread of racial hatred appeared to motivate the practices of America's troops in Vietnam, permeating and arguably finding its source in foreign policy. American policy imparted the notion that Vietnamese culture was antithetical to their own, and strove to impose the 'American way of life' in Vietnam, effecting a course of action propelled by the same imperialistic designs that characterized the Indian Wars, and the subjugation of non-Whites and women. Platoon leaders embarked on a campaign of total destruction that implicitly condoned a poisonous doctrine of "crypto-racism", with the incapacity to distinguish between the Vietnamese they had come to save, and those who were the enemy. One GI recalled "We'd rip out the hedges and burn the hooches and blow all the wells and kill every chicken, pig and cow in the whole fucking village. I mean, if we can't shoot these people, what the fuck are we doing here?". Innocent civilians were transformed into the enemy: the rationale of another GI was that it did not matter who he

killed as "They are all Vietnamese".[62] However, even if the message of all Vietnamese

being the enemy was preached to the American troops, no victory or regeneration could

be attained in their destruction, for in death, "enemy bodies transmogrified into the

mutilated corpses of so many innocents. In death, the terrorist became an infant; the VC

messenger, a child; the VC whore, a girl; the VC suspect, an old man."[63] This

transmogrification from justified bloodshed to senseless murder occurred in tandem with a

full-fledged television age, culminating in reportage that had a devastating impact inside

and outside of America.

Unlike the 1930's, the Second World War and Korea, when censorship stemmed

the tide of anti-establishment values, with Vietnam there was no censorship of news

dispatches. With the exception of My Lai, where no nonmilitary reporters had been near

the scene, most of the reporters were well established by the time the American troops

arrived in force, and many were not ready to take the administration's view of the

conflict.[64] The surfacing of My Lai took its time due to the layers of official cover-up and

denial that had to be surpassed, but this was not so with the Tet Offensive. Taking place

on the 30th of January in 1968, footage of the desperate battles American troops fought

for control of their bases at Da Nang and Khe Sanh, the city of Hue and the grounds of

the US embassy in Saigon was soon displayed on network television for more than 60

million American viewers. Political and military propaganda of approaching victory was

directly undercut by the reality of the American embassy in rubble, and the fact of Tet

representing a defeat for the US.

In *Big* Story, Peter Braestrup argues convincingly that though the dominant themes of verbal and visual commentary from Vietnam added a portrait of defeat for the allies, this was not the perception of historians. On the contrary, the latter concluded that the Tet offensive had in fact resulted in a severe military-political setback for Hanoi in the South. Braestrup observes that "rarely has contemporary crisis journalism turned out, in retrospect, to have veered so wide from reality".[65]   The price of this misrepresentation was costly. It took only one month for the most respected figures of American journalism to place themselves on record in opposition to the administration. NBC anchorman Frank McGhee reported: "The cities are no longer secure. . .the Saigon government is weaker than ever. . .From all this, we must conclude that the grand objective -- the building of a free nation-- is not nearer, but further from realization". Walter Cronkite echoed: "It seems now more certain than ever. . .that the bloody experience in Vietnam is to end in stalemate. . .[and] the rational way out. . .will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy and did the best they could".[66]

The absence of censorship and corresponding dominance of anti-establishment reportage signalled a presidential failure on the part of Lyndon Johnson. In terms of commentary, photographic and television coverage, the Tet attacks were equated with a "disaster", directly undermining the Johnson Administration's "progress" campaign of fall 1967. The campaign was one of the repeated Administration efforts since 1965 to "sell" the war, and involved a mid-November flood of optimistic statements following the South

Vietnamese elections. At his November 17, 1967 press conference, Johnson laid out the "progress" line; what follows is an excerpt from the Washington *Post*:

> We are making progress. We are pleased with the results we are getting. We are inflicting greater losses than we are taking. . .The fact that the population under free control has constantly risen. . .is a very encouraging sign. . .overall we are making progress.[67]

After Tet considerable press comment highlighted Johnson's failure to warn the public of the war's bleaker sides and its probable further costs. His chronic prior refusals to disclose the possibility of heavy fighting that lay ahead appeared more damning in the light of the "progress" campaign. The campaign had carried the firm assurance that investment in Vietnam was beginning to show a profit, while the media representation of Tet was not only that of destruction and suffering, but also a stunning defeat: proof of failure of the Administration's conduct of the war in Vietnam.[68]

Art Buchwald's analysis in the Washington *Post*, Feb 6, 1968, was widely noted for its biting satire of the American military's optimism in the wake of Tet. I will quote Buchwald's article in its entirety, as its public invocation and subversion of the Custer myth reveals the intrinsic link that was created between Vietnam and America's frontier past, and the equation of the Vietnamese to Indians. Custer's Last Stand was a story that demonstrated the necessity of subordinating savages of all kinds. In myth his death became the assurance that eventual triumph over the savages would reward the brave cavaliers.[69] Buchwald's use of the myth overturns this notion of heroic death:

"We have the enemy on the run" says General Custer at Big Horn

Little Big Horn, Dakota, June 27

General George Armstrong Custer said today in an exclusive interview with the correspondent that the battle of Little Big Horn had just turned the corner and he would see the light at the end of the tunnel.

"We have the Sioux on the run," General Custer told me. "Of course, we still have some clearing up to do but the Redskins are hurting badly and it will only be a matter of time before they give in.

"That's good news General. Of course, there are people who are skeptical about the military briefings about the war and they question if we're getting the entire truth as to what is really happening here."

"I just would like to refer to you these latest body counts. The Sioux lost 5,000 men to our 100. They can't hope to keep up this attrition much longer. We know for a fact Sioux morale is low, and they are ready to throw in the towel.

"Well, if they're hurting so badly, Gen. Custer, how do you explain this massive attack?"

"It's a desperation move on the part of Sitting Bull and his last death rattle. I have here captured documents which show that this is Phase II of Sitting Bull's plan to wrest the Black Hills from the Army. All he's going for is a psychological victory, but the truth is that we expected this all the time and we're not surprised by it."

"What about the fact that 19 Indians managed to penetrate your headquarters? Doesn't that look bad?

"We knew all along they planned to penetrate my headquarters at the Indian lunar new year. The fact that we repulsed them after they held on for only 6 hours is another example of how badly the Sioux are fighting. Besides, they never did get into the sleeping quarters of my tent, so I don't really think they should be credited with penetrating my headquarters."

"You seem surrounded at the moment, General."

"Obviously the enemy plans have gone afoul," Gen. Custer said. "The Sioux are hoping to win a big victory so they'll be able to have something to talk about at the conference table. Look at this latest body count. We've just killed 3,000 more Indians and lost 59 of our men."

"Then according to my figuring, General, you have only 50 men left."

"Exactly. They can't keep up this pressure much longer. The truth of the matter is that their hit-and-run guerilla tactics haven't worked, so they're now resorting to mass attacks against our positions. Thanks to our interdiction of their supply lines, they are not only short of bows and arrows, but gunpowder as well."

An aide came in and handed General Custer a sheet of paper. "I knew it," the General said. "The latest body count shows that they lost 2000 more injuns in the last hour. They should be suing for peace at any time."

"How many did we lose, General?"

"Our losses were light. We only lost 45 men"

"But General, that means you have only 5 men left, including yourself."

"Look, we have to lose some men, but we're taking all precaution to keep our losses to a minimum. Besides, we can always count on the friendly Indians in these hills to turn against the Sioux for starting hostilities during the Indian lunar new year."

The aide staggered back in, an arrow in his chest. He handed General Custer the slip of paper and then dropped at his feet.

"Well, they just lost 500 more. And we only lost 4. It looks as if they've had it."

"But, General, that means you're the only one left."

"Boy," said the General, "would I hate to be in the Sioux shoes right now"[70]

The incriminating effect that media versions of Tet had on the American public's faith in their government could only be augmented after My Lai. US intervention in Vietnam cannot be explained by the mere drive to revivify frontier mythology, but the attempted

revival -- and then failure -- of the mythology was a related event. This is evident, for example, in Buchwald's scathing critique of the American military.

The dismal reception of gung-ho representations of the war such as John Wayne's *The Green Berets* is hardly surprising in the aftermath of this failure. In the movie Wayne's persona as cowboy-hero in Westerns such as *Sands of Iwo Jima* (1949), *Rio Grande* (1950) and *The Searchers* (1956) is faithfully replicated. The moral universe of the Western is also almost completely transferred: "the Americans are good guys, the Vietcong are bad guys, and the peasants are the frightened townsfolk who need protection and the rule of law. The Special Forces compound is very like a fort in Indian territory. The Vietcong give war whoops."[71] Although pro-war films about Vietnam were scarce, anti-war films that blatantly proclaimed American defeat in Vietnam were not produced either. Instead, the Western and War movie genres temporarily lost their relevance and utility as forms of historical explanations that justified the use of violence in attaining victory for America. However, a series of anti-Westerns containing analogies of Vietnam would be made before the eclipse of the Western movie genre that coincided with the withdrawal of American troops in Vietnam. The subversion of frontier mythology occurring in American society found a route of expression in these movies which denied the victory of the frontier hero where it was most crucial -- at the level of the American imagination.

8 Launching Out of the Quagmire
Early Vietnam Analogies and the Sci-Fi Movie

> Mythopathic moment; *Fort Apache*, where Henry Fonda as the new colonel says to John Wayne, the old hand, 'We saw some Apache as we neared the Fort,' and John Wayne says, 'If you saw them, sir, they weren't Apache.' But this colonel is obsessed, brave like a maniac, not very bright, a West Point aristo wounded in his career and his pride, posted out to some Arizona shithole with only marginal consolation: he's a professional and this is a war, the only war we've got. So he gives John Wayne information a pass and he and half his command get wiped out. More a war movie than a Western, Nam paradigm, Vietnam, not a movie, no jive cartoon either where the characters get smacked around and electrocuted and dropped from heights, flattened out and frizzled black and broken like a dish, then up again and whole and back in the game, 'Nobody dies,' as someone said in another war movie.[1]
>
> Michael Herr

The West constructed through the mass media is an imagined West, appealing to national audiences and exerting an influence so powerful that it shapes reality and becomes an accepted version of history. Richard White exemplifies this influence in his account of a ranch foreman on the Texas Panhandle (an account written in the late 1970s by a journalist

for the *New Yorker*, Jane Kramer) whose self-identity, and actions were directed more by a powerful cultural image of the West than the West of his surroundings.[2] In the account, the ranch foreman views the realities of life on a cattle ranch, with its absentee ranchers and agribusinesses with disappointment, comparing it with a "truer" but vanished West that belonged to the past. His "truer" West was, however, a fictional, imagined West, one derived from Westerns starring movie Westerners like John Wayne and Chill Wills. This account attests to the power of myth to construct a new past through the processes of cinematic representation. The communication of myth through the vehicle of popular culture has the power to replace memory with its version of the past, such that the new version substitutes for actual past events. This construction of a new past that substitutes for historical accuracy is a phenomenon that relates to the cultural revisioning that was executed after Vietnam, supplanting the memory of failure via an exploitation of the strength of cinematic influence.

The "Golden Age" of the Western marked the period when the genre was most active in proclaiming its versions of history, with discourses of frontier mythology being affirmed in the public imagination. Though Robert Ray observes that more pessimistic Westerns were being produced, he does concede that "the old pattern of reconciliation was being maintained", giving the examples of *Red River* (1948), *The Searchers* (1956) and *The Far Country* (1955).[3] In the late 1960s, historical events were to exert an influence so strong that popular culture was forced to acknowledge their discourse, albeit obliquely. Robert A. Rosenstone defines this process in films as "true invention": the depiction of historical events where the issues, data, ideas and arguments of the ongoing

discourse of history are either directly or indirectly engaged with, as opposed to his concept of a "false invention": that which ignores the discourse of history.[4] While Rosenstone's "true invention" may seem a contradiction in terms (and "false invention" tautological) -- an "invention" is not usually interpreted as truth -- every construction of the past in either written or visual form is always already at variance with historical actuality. In his pioneering *Analytical Philosophy of History*, A.C. Danto puts forth the "narrative theory of history" which posits that we can only know partially about a historic event, as all history is communicated via narrative and there is a limit to what narrative can communicate.[5] The human knowledge of actual events of history as they elapse, or what may also be called historic actuality, is unattainable. Danto ascribes the privileged knowledge of historic actuality to an "angelic chronicler". Developing upon Danto's theory, and adding to it Rosenstone's concepts of "true invention" and "false invention", we can derive three levels of historic representation in films. At one level, there is historic actuality, that which is impossible to attain. At the next level, there is historic accuracy, that which exists at close proximity to the first level. At the third level, there is historic manipulation, where the version of history presented is aimed not at acquiring historic truth, but is instead deliberately distorted to convey an ideological agenda. Rosenstone's "true invention" would belong to the second level, and his "false invention" to the third. Neither would pertain to the first.

Building upon his work in *Visions of The Past*, Rosenstone asserts in *Revisioning History* that films which seriously deal with the relationship of past and present are more important than traditional costume dramas and documentaries that are more purely

concerned with depictions of the past.[6] From Rosenstone's analysis, it would seem more fruitful to examine a film in relation to the era of its production than the past that it purports to depict. This mode of analysis is particularly relevant to discussions of the movie Westerns made in the 1970's, whose significance derives from the relationship that they manifest between the Vietnam War and the American frontier past of their context. In the Vietnam War era, the vessel in which Rosenstone's "true invention" of history materialized was the movie Western, a genre that was also the primary vehicle for the mythic construction and re-telling of America's frontier past.

As the American conflict with the Vietnamese was regularly equated to an Indian War at the frontier, by politicians and soldiers alike, the Western was not a surprising option for depictions of the Vietnam War. However, the anomaly lay in the phenomenon that the values and attitudes espoused by Westerns were discredited by the historical course of events and revelations associated with Vietnam. Imagining Vietnam as the new wilderness west of the frontier was no longer an acceptable version of history, nor could the mythic influences of the imagined West overpower the actual consequences of the war -- reality now shaped and commanded a re-assessment of the frontier myth. The constructed ideal of white superiority that underlay American histories of the Indian Wars and the narratives of Westerns was superimposed on the Vietnam War, but without a manifest victory and the resultant great loss of lives on both sides, as well as immense damage to the Vietnamese environment, the ideal was invalidated and laid bare to charges of cultural imperialism. *Fort Apache* (1948) is Michael Herr's retrospective "Nam paradigm", but the ending of that movie does not fit the Vietnam analogy. John Wayne

survives to perpetuate the frontier legend through a group of journalists. Wayne glorifies Colonel Thursday and the other men who sacrificed their lives in battling against the Indians, with the implication that their spirits lived on in the regiment. His claim that the men are "not dead", like Herr's other war movie where "nobody dies", affirms the narrative of victory espoused in the frontier myth. In the 1970s this narrative became irrelevant, and this was clear in the frontier discourse that surfaced in the Vietnam Westerns. Thus, and ironically, the ideological message of these Vietnam Westerns would oppose the frontier discourse embodied by the conventional Western. The anti-Western that emerged was a direct reflection of the anti-frontier (or anti-Vietnamese frontier) sentiments that corresponded with the ending of the War: firstly, in their suppression of the narrative of victory, and more crucially, in re-locating the proponents of savagery within white boundaries.

The Quagmire Films

What I have called the "quagmire" films of the 1970s fall into two categories, the Vietnam Westerns (anti-Westerns/ Indian Westerns with a compassionate depiction and elevated status of the Indian that were also allusions to Vietnam) and the first wave of Vietnam War films. These movies are examples of Rosenstone's notion of "true invention", as they engage with the contemporary historical discourse surrounding Vietnam. This engagement manifests itself through the expression of confusion, loss, and a sense that American military policy in relation to the War had been an act of imperialism and

ultimately a mistake. Historically, these sentiments began to emerge under the presidency of Lyndon Johnson, with the widespread recognition by the end of 1967 that every aspect of American policy had been designed to destroy Vietnamese culture. This policy, according to Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton, proceeded with the assumption that "the way to eradicate the Viet Cong is to destroy all the village structures, defoliate all the jungles, and then cover the entire surface of South Viet Nam with asphalt".[7] Increasing numbers of political leaders were in agreement that year with the need to extricate the American effort in Vietnam, and publicizing their views. The high-point of these anti-war sentiments was reached in October, with a movement that mobilized more than 200,000 protesters to march against the war. One month later, a Gallup Poll revealed that more than half of the American public disapproved of Johnson's handling of the war.[8] By 1970, this discourse of protest began to appear in the vessels of popular culture. The movies that I have selected to illustrate my argument were at the time of their release recognized as being not only popular and successful but also culturally significant. It is this cultural significance, coupled with the advantage of a historical perspective that justifies this present re-assessment of their utility.

A. The Vietnam Western

The Western was not the only genre to accommodate analogies of Vietnam in the 1970's. Gilbert Adair recognizes an element of truth in the statement that every American feature made during the decade of 1965-75 directly or indirectly reflects some aspect of

Vietnam's political make-up and must be relevant to the debate about the war -- strengthening Rosenstone's conclusion with further evidence.[9] However, it is interesting and perhaps significant that in trying to make sense of the war, the frontier paradigm initially used to assist a comprehension of Vietnam was inverted. It could only be an act of atonement for the transgression of crypto-racism that motivated a reversal of the traditional view equating the Vietnamese as Indian savages and the whites as proponents of civilized values. Whites and Indians (and by implication the Vietnamese) switched places -- the mythic construction of white victimhood and Indian savagery was now reversed, and the actual victims of America's frontier past surfaced. The anti-Westerns that portrayed whites as savages with references to Vietnam were *Little Big Man*, *Soldier Blue* (1970), and *Ulzana's Raid* (1972).

In *Little Big Man* -- a movie based on Thomas Berger's 1964 picaresque novel -- Dustin Hoffman plays 121 year old Jack Crabb, the only survivor of the battle of Little Bighorn. This was a battle infamous as one of the greatest disasters of American military history, occurring under General Custer's leadership and culminating in his death. The movie engages with contemporary anti-war sentiments by portraying the Indians in a sympathetic light, differing from previous Westerns that employ a similar compassionate attitude to the Indian Other (such as *Broken Arrow* in 1950) with its allusions to Vietnam. The narrative mimics oral tradition with Crabb relating his life story, beginning with the Pawnee attack on his family leaving him and his sister as sole survivors. Jack and Caroline are adopted by the Cheyenne, a community vividly portrayed as having an organic culture in harmony with nature, exhibiting cohesive family ties and a benign code of ethics. Jack's

foster father, Old Lodge Skins (Chief Dan George), is the epitome of unaffected dignity and benevolence. Though he is the object of much humour, the nature of that humour is gentle rather than condescending.

The whites, on the other hand, have almost no redeeming qualities. Mrs. Pendrake (who assumes the role of Jack's foster mother) is an adulteress, Merriweather a remorseless con-man, and General Custer the caricature of an arrogant and merciless psychopath. The Cheyenne tribe are the victims of a massacre led by Custer, and Old Lodge Skins makes the telling remark that their using rifles against his tribe's bows and arrows is a victory won without pride, one that is "humiliating". The background music to the Washita massacre is the regimental march "Gary Owen", the Irish tune of Custer's unit which was also used as a key dramatic motif in *They Died with Their Boots On* (1941). The music acts as a commentary on this other film's noble depiction of Custer (Errol Flynn) and his soldiers. The dramatization of the Washita massacre and its attendant commentary -- American soldiers winning a humiliating victory over their defenceless victims -- follows in the wake of My Lai and situates *Little Big Man* within the context of Vietnam, attesting to its engagement with the discourse surrounding the war. As the white hero of this narrative, Jack Crabb has in all appearances acculturated to Indian ways.

The Sand Creek Massacre is *Soldier Blue*'s My Lai. It occurred on the 29th of November in 1864, when under the command of Colonel John M. Chivington one thousand territorial volunteers attacked the camp of five hundred sleeping Cheyennes.[10] As with the My Lai and Washita massacres, no victory resulted from the battle -- a peace treaty with the Cheyenne leaders was in effect, and the Indians had already turned in their

arms at Fort Lyon. In both the Vietnamese and Cheyenne accounts of violence, men, women and children were indiscriminately slaughtered. A similar narrative thread links this film to *Little Big Man*: Candice Bergen and Peter Strauss are victims of an Indian raid and saved by Cheyenne hospitality, only to witness the massacre of their hosts by the U.S. Army.

In *Ulzana's Raid* the reference to Vietnam is more complex and oblique -- Douglas Pye, in his article on the movie, notes that the early sequences in the film (especially the baseball sequence) establish the cavalry's incongruity and its arbitrariness of command. These traits are later extended to the patrol that sets out to track Ulzana, with their conduct revealing the pure mechanical application of regulations without any conviction or system of belief that will buttress and justify the historical situation of the army. The Vietnam allusion becomes clear in relation to the outcome of embodying such traits -- the army's role in Arizona (and in Vietnam) becomes a "morally empty assertion of white supremacy".[11] As with *Little Big Man* and *Soldier Blue*, the savage tendencies of the whites are made apparent: in reply to Lieutenant DeBuin's comment that the mutilation and torture of Ulzana's son by a man in his group were unacceptable, McIntosh (played by Burt Lancaster) says "What bothers you lieutenant, is you don't like to think of white men behaving like Indians, kind of confuses the issue". Pye sees this moment as evoking Ethan in *The Searchers* shooting out the eyes of the dead Comanche, and the parallel is interesting in a post-Vietnam context.[12] Wayne's mutilation of the Indian observes a set of rules that is recognized by the Indian culture, and is evidence of his knowledge of these rules. DeBuin's soldiers, in contrast, execute an act of mindless,

chaotic savagery. Their act of violence is arbitrary. Within the movie this is an echo of the decisions made by DeBuin in the baseball game, and in relation to Vietnam it is a parallel to the military decisions made by Amerian leaders in the war.

Ke-Ni-Tay, an Indian scout, kills Ulzana, but prior to the killing we see tears in the latter's eyes upon recognizing his son's bugle in the scout's possession. This display of emotion raises him from the stereotype of a heartless murderer, a redeeming characteristic denied *Little Big Man*'s Custer. Any sense of betrayal is absent in this sequence where an Indian kills one of his own kind. Ke-Ni-Tay is to be admired for honouring his pledge to the American soldiers, and Ulzana undergoes a death ritual roughly akin to the death rites of the Japanese samurai -- in both cultures honour is endowed on the warrior who undergoes the ritual. Moreover, we only see the results of the atrocities Ulzana commits (including the gruesome end of Rukeyser who is tortured, blinded, and tied to a tree) while the torture of the Apache is visually experienced -- deliberately foregrounding the brutality of the white characters.

Though the whites are portrayed as savages in all three movies, and the Indians as the victims, it is crucial to point out that no victors emerge in these films. The whites are shown to commit atrocities, but this does not provide the justification for retaliation and even less, an Indian victory. In *Little Big Man* and *Soldier Blue*, the attack is all the more brutal because of the peaceable nature of the Cheyenne tribe, but this gracious characteristic of their society also preempts an act of vengeance against their aggressors. More importantly, the survivors who are capable of such acts at the end of each massacre are the white protagonists of the film (as no Indians possessing the vigour of youth, and

other physical requisites for revenge, survive), themselves also victims, each time only narrowly escaping the slaughter by both Indian and white adversaries.

The roles played out by the white protagonists in these Vietnam Westerns are seminal in comprehending the ideological message of the first wave of Vietnam War films. The spectacle of battle is stripped of honour and ridiculed in *Little Big Man*, abhorrent in *Soldier Blue* and without its requisite justification in *Ulzana's Raid*, arising from the basic logic in Old Lodge Skins' remark: "Rifle against bow and arrow. I never could understand how the white world could be so proud of winnin' with those kinds of odds". The consequence of the massacres in these films, along with My Lai, can only be humiliation. In *Ulzana's Raid*, it is not so much a battle that takes place than the hunting down of a criminal, a hunt denied an explicit victory because the crime is shared by both the hunted and his white hunters. Thus, the spectacle of battle results in an inglorious victimizing rather than an noble victory. The cinematic expression of that result is the focus on victimhood -- a notion that will pave the way for the re-acquisition of white innocence, an innocence made possible because the white protagonists in these films are themselves victims, and not the instruments of savagery. Violence without justification (the prime example being My Lai) is an atrocity, but violence with justification (supported by the rationale of victimhood) facilitates the route to victory. The victimization of the whites in these Vietnam Westerns, as with the inception of the captivity narratives, establish the basis for violence that is affiliated to regeneration.

At this juncture it is important to distinguish between the (diachronic) changes made to the Western formula in reponse to the historical events preceding and surrounding

Vietnam, and the changes that were a response to the Depression. Both variations to the formula affect the frontier myth at its deep structure, but pertain to different components of that level. In the 1930s the narrative of expansion is suppressed to accommodate the historical invalidation of this form of progress, but in the 1970s it is the narrative of victory that has become irrelevant. Thus the Old West becomes an unsuitable setting for movies of the 1930s, but this is not the case for the 1970s: all three Westerns discussed are surfaces of emergence with clear depictions of that period of frontier expansion. This argument holds true for the Vietnam War movies which subscribe to a narrative of expansion in regarding Vietnam as the new wilderness.

B. The First Wave Vietnam War Movies

The Vietnam Westerns were controversial for the notion of white savagery and Indian victimization that they introduced, but it was the victimization of their white protagonists that was carried over and articulated in the Vietnam War films. Though the narrative of the first wave movies still results in loss, it is significant that the idea of white savagery is no longer emphasized -- the focus is replaced by an accentuation on victimhood.

This focus on white victimization in the first wave Vietnam War movies also corresponds to and engages with its contemporary historical discourse. In 1970 President Nixon suggested that because of Vietnam the United States might be diminished to the condition of a "pitiful, helpless giant".[13] In the following years whites began to re-position themselves not as a dominant majority but as dominant victims, with George Wallace's

244

third party presidential campaign in 1972 and the Supreme Court's decision in *Bakke v. University of California* in 1978.[14] In the Vietnam War movies, the ideology of victimhood furnished an opportunity for the expiation of guilt -- the notable movies belonging to the first wave include *The Deer Hunter, Coming Home* (1978), and *Apocalypse Now* (1979).

The Deer Hunter is a film title that recalls Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer* -- an allusion to the novel and Indian mythology is made early on in the movie -- Mike (Robert De Niro) explains to Stanley (John Cazale) the meaning of the "Sun Dogs" in the sky: an old Indian sign of a "blessing on the hunter sent by the Great Wolf to his children." Mike has the traits of the Cooper prototype: living on the periphery of a community from which he is alienated, and embracing nature and a strict personal code to avoid the corruptions of civilization.[15] In addition to this, the forested terrain on which the deer hunt takes place mirrors the wilderness beyond the frontier where the hero purifies and rids himself of the corrupt values of the metropolis. The inter-weaving narrative motifs in the film are those of the hunt, Mike's "one-shot" code, and the game of Russian roulette. Mike, Nick (Christopher Walken) and Steve (John Savage) are drafted and embark off to Vietnam after Steve's Russian-style wedding, and a deer hunt where Mike has the opportunity to uphold his "one-shot" code -- an ability to kill his prey with one attempt (a single bullet) -- because two tries would be a sign of weakness. In the following Vietnam sequences, the Viet Cong force Mike and Nick to play a game of Russian roulette, and with Nick's collaboration Mike utilizes this skill of the "one shot" to annihilate his captors. The prey are now no longer deer, but humans. Steve is rescued but has an arm and both legs

amputated, finding solace in a Veteran's Administration Hospital in America. Mike returns to Saigon in search of Nick and finds him in a gambling den wearing a red headband (a sign of his professional status), voluntarily playing Russian roulette with a Vietnamese man. The motifs of hunting, Russian roulette and the "one-shot" combine in this scene when Mike rouses Nick from his drugged oblivion by reminding him of the hunt. Unfortunately Nick also recalls Mike's signature skill and raises the gun to his temple -- this time the chamber is not empty.

It is clear who the savages are in *The Deer Hunter*. The Vietnamese are dehumanized and given one-dimensional characterisations embellished by a single trait -- their addiction to Russian roulette for the sake of entertainment and monetary gain. Without any evidence of their political or military agendas, or qualities that would morally justify the sequences of the Viet Cong tormenting their American prisoners, the Vietnamese in the movie are gross caricatures similar to *Little Big Man*'s portrayal of Custer. They are represented as devoid of any culture and with a completely incomprehensible language, contrary to the sympathetic depictions of the Indian/ Vietnamese Other in the Vietnam Westerns. *The Deer Hunter*'s portrayal of Otherness is more reminiscent of the Indian caricatures in Westerns prior to *Broken Arrow* in 1950. The characterisations of Custer in *Little Big Man* and the Vietnamese in *The Deer Hunter* diverge slightly on an important premise -- the Vietnamese are proponents of savagery, but they are evil with intent, and they are sane. Custer's savage acts are tempered by his apparent insanity, such that an air of the absurd cushions his character from similar charges of debasement. Two notions that do get carried over from the earlier set of films

are the sense of victimization and loss -- Steve's physical amputation reinforces his psychological malaise, and Mike fails in his rescue mission (a fate Sylvester Stallone is spared in the *Rambo* series).

In the light of these observations, Adair's comments about the final scene of *The Deer Hunter* (where Mike and his friends sing "God Bless America") as an expression of Cimino's faith in the regenerative powers of the United States are slightly premature. He writes that the movie's:

> . . .attempts to reaffirm the viability of a heroic posture in an unheroic age, revivify the frontier myth when it was being most vigorously contested and, above all, salve the nation's uneasy conscience make it a prime exhibit in any dossier of American attitudes to the war.[16]

Though *The Deer Hunter* does endeavour to redress the American nation's damaged conscience, the route undertaken by the film is not through the reaffirmation of heroism -- as with the Vietnam Westerns, no victors or heroes emerge from this film. Mike absents himself from the hero's welcome home party that his friends prepare for him, and more importantly, the "one-shot" motif that had established his heroic posture in the film's beginning (distinguishing and raising him above the other hunters) is undermined: he is unable to kill the deer that he sights in the mountains, firing into the sky instead. The deer is elevated above its status as prey and victim, assuming a majestic air as it calmly moves away. The following extract from Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, describing Hurry Harry's failed attempt to shoot a buck, provides a commentary on Mike's action:

The report of the rifle had the usual sharp, short sound of the rifle, but when a few moments of silence had succeeded the sudden crack, during which the noise was floating in air across the water, it reached the rocks of the opposite mountain, where the vibrations accumulated, and were rolled from cavity to cavity for miles along the hills, seeming to awaken the sleeping thunders of the woods.   The buck merely shook his head at the report of the rifle and the whistling of the bullet. . .[17]

Deerslayer chastens his companion: "the creatur's death could have done neither of us any good and might have done us harm. The echoes are more awful in my ears than your mistake, Hurry, for they sound like the voice of natur' calling out ag'in a wasteful and onthinking action." The reproach of the "wasteful and onthinking" action when situated within the Vietnam War context equates with Mike's deliberate choice of missing the deer: Hurry Harry needs Deerslayer to explain what Mike has personally witnessed through his Vietnam experience. The requisite of violence enforced by the American Frontier Hero as a route to regeneration was exposed as an indictment of false innocence and claim to superiority.

The deer hunt is significant in terms of the Indian and frontier myths, in the second as a route to purification, and in both to regeneration. In the creation myth of the Delaware Indians (and the Mohawks), the hero journeys out of the underworld onto the surface, where he spies a deer, hunts, kills, and eats it, returning with the meat to his people in the underworld. They partake of the meat and emerge onto the surface to "enjoy the light of heaven" and populate the world.[18] The killing of the deer/ beast is the act of violence that the frontier hero must accomplish to complete the cycle of

regeneration, and Mike's inability to do so after Vietnam indicates the inadequacy of the myth in its application to the war, and his being contaminated by the experience. The war denies Mike the recourse to purification that results from an externalization and extermination of the beast within himself. This instance of contamination functions as a block to subsequent applications of the same rite until the Vietnam beast is exorcised. It is also not coincidental that the hint of recognition in Nick's utterance of the "one shot" code immediately precedes his suicide -- almost as if the mere memory of heroism in the American wilderness cannot compensate for the actual experience of the War. The gathering of Mike and his friends at Nick's wake thus mocks the naive patriotism in their hesitant rendition of "God Bless America".

Mike, Nick and Steve are victims, but they are furnished with more than just the rank of victimhood, they are also all ascribed with innocence. The focus of their Vietnam experience is their capture by the Viet Cong, and prior to that they do not display any active aggression against the Vietnamese. We only see Mike and Nick exercising violence against the enemy to break free from their captivity, reacting to their circumstances. They are more often aiming pistols at their own skulls than at other objects. This attribute of innocence is similar to the historical justification implicit in frontier discourse -- though the European settlers were themselves guilty of victimization and theft, they converted that guilt into innocence by aligning their personal interest in the acquisition of property with the national interest in the acquisition of territory. In this latter scenario, however, when the national interest of participation in Vietnam is questioned, it is the innocence of intention at the personal level that is preparing a way out of the guilt at the national level.

The idea of innocence initially materialized through narratives of captivity, and in *The Deer Hunter* it is clear that such narratives are being employed. With the frontier myths the captivity narratives facilitated a reversal of roles whereby the Indian victims could be viewed as savage invaders, and where the white conquerors could be equated with the innocent victims of invasion. In the movie, none of the white protagonists exhibit the behaviour of savage invaders. The traits of savagery and exploitation belong almost completely to the Vietnamese, with the Americans occupying the positions of innocent victims. The question of whether American involvement in Vietnam was beneficial to the Vietnamese is never raised. What is being deliberated is whether involvement in the War was beneficial to America, and an answer is communicated via the unreserved sense of loss the film conveys, particularly at its end.

Coming Home builds upon this sense of loss, concentrating on the physical and emotional price American men paid for their involvement in Vietnam[19]. Most of the scenes take place at a Vietnam War Veteran's hospital, where Sally Hyde (Jane Fonda) volunteers for unpaid nursing when her Marine captain husband Bob (Bruce Dern) goes to fight in the war. The action centres around Luke Martin (John Voight), whose role is just about parallel with Steve in *The Deer Hunter*. The psychological damage of both men after Vietnam is represented by physical crippling: both are paraplegics in wheelchairs. The film focuses on Luke's rehabilitation (aided by Sally), and culminates in Bob's attempts at symbolically cleansing himself from the contamination that inflicted him in Vietnam. This is the section where he strips and plunges naked into the ocean -- a sequence intercut with Luke articulating his anti-war beliefs to an audience of high school

students. The victimization of Luke and Bob (both physically as well as psychologically wounded) portrays at the level of the individual what the film's beginning scenes present: actual hospitalized Vietnam veterans, all in wheelchairs around a pool table, voicing their attitudes about the war and how they were incapacitated by the war experience. The Vietnamese are denied any token presence, and as a result, though the film does engage in the historical discourse of victimization and loss, its representation of the war is incomplete. Such a representation is particularly relevant when America was still coming to terms with its experience of the war. Michael Selig's comments about Hollywood's war films, of which *Coming Home* is included, make this clear:

> What passes for an indictment of war in general, or any specific war, is an imprecise representation of a particular environment, the battlefield (where "life is cheap"), or the war's aftermath, with men who are physically and psychologically crippled. In these films, a nearsighted humanism laments the loss of American (male) lives and, sometimes, their innocence. The visual and narrative distinctions between ally and enemy are generally no different than in the conventional war film. No matter who the "enemy" is in the film's particular war, s/he remains an Other, strange or exotic, generally exhibiting behaviour and belief repugnant to the film's representation of American sensibilities.[20]

Selig's generalizations do not, however, apply to Vietnam War movies starting from and following *Platoon*, where the representation of the Vietnamese environment becomes increasingly precise. The position of the enemy is made even more vague in *Coming Home*, for at the climactic turning point, Luke tells Bob: "The enemy is the fucking war".

The film does partially qualify its own medium of representation, when Sally asks Bob what the war is like, he replies: "TV shows what it's like, sure as hell doesn't show what it is".

Apocalypse Now, a movie labelled in 1981 as "the most successful interpretation of Conrad to date", applies the metaphoric framework of the quest narrative utilized in the author's *Heart of Darkness*.[21] The quest culminates in the person of Kurtz, an ivory trader in Africa in the novel, whom Coppola translates into a Colonel in the American war effort in Vietnam. The film's version of Kurtz mirrors the novel; Kurtz (Marlon Brando) is an exemplary representative of the establishment who has become "unsound" -- like Nick in *The Deer Hunter*, he has been contaminated by his experience of the war. Other significant derivations from the novel are the sense of waste and incongruity (the latter also an echo of *Ulzana's Raid*). Conrad's Marlow encounters rotting machinery and the French frigate firing aimlessly into the jungle, while his movie counterpart Willard (Martin Sheen) witnesses the wreckage of helicopters and the huge-B52 tail littering the Vietnamese landscape.

The character of Colonel Kilgore evokes John Wayne, from his cavalry hat, his gait and mannerisms, to his radio call sign "Big Duke". His role in the movie (much like Wayne does unconsciously in *The Green Berets*) is to reveal that the old frontiersman tradition does not fit the present context of Vietnam.[22] Kilgore exists as an ironic comment on the frontier myth, exposing it as myth in the sense of falsehood, functioning to invalidate it in the same way as the Vietnam Westerns. His apparent invulnerability to bullets and explosives disassociate him from the actual Vietnamese context, locating him

on a surreal plane where heroes are indestructible (a plane occupied also by the likes of John Rambo). The film's use of surrealism extends beyond Kilgore's characterisation. The cameo appearance of Coppola as a movie director on the battlefield telling Willard to "look as if you are fighting" makes a self-reflexive statement on the manipulation involved in the mass media's construction of war images, and a sense of incongruity and the absurd also emanates from the U.S.O. Playboy bunny, beach party, and the helicopter cavalry charge and surfing sequences. The assault on the Viet Cong village is an important case in point. The traditional associations of a cavalry charge evoked by the bugle call at the opening of the scene, the sound-track with Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" arousing the martial spirit, and the proficient editing first establishing the attacking helicopters in perspective, then cutting to inside the machines and finally to an exhibition of massive firepower, all serve to immerse the audience in the exhilaration of the raid. However, the usual heroic connotations attached to such voyeuristic displays are undercut by the juxtaposition of a village school with children dressed in symbolic white, and the lack of any justifying enemy presence. Moreover, Kilgore's rationale for bombing the village -- to watch Lance, one of his "boys", surf at the height of the battle -- can only lead to a questioning of his sanity.

The general movement of the film results in a censure of American participation in Vietnam. It exposes the repercussions that stem from applying an expansionist frontier ideology indiscriminately, and the derangement that concludes the attempt. As with *The Deer Hunter* and *Coming Home*, the question of whether American involvement in Vietnam was beneficial to the Vietnamese is never raised: what is being deliberated yet

again are the consequences of involvement in the War with respect to America, and the answer is consolidated with the object of Willard's quest -- Kurtz. The appearance of Brando as Kurtz, completely shaven and bloated, renders a visual correlative on the degeneration of the character, particularly when placed in contrast to the flattering picture of him that Willard sees earlier. Kilgore's dementia, the degeneration of Kurtz, and the mental instability of Willard suggest the impossibility of retaining one's sanity in or after Vietnam, and that the likeliest route for even the most exemplary of soldiers is to be a victim of contamination. It is thus appropriate that Willard finds Kurtz reading T.S. Eliot's 'The Hollow Men', a poem that ends: "Mistah Kurtz -- he dead", an imputation of his empty spiritual state.

The surreal experience of Vietnam as depicted in these films is significant. With the first set of quagmire movies, the Vietnam war could only appear by analogy. In this latter set surrealism acts as a buffer from direct engagement with the actuality of the War. Michael Cimino's defence in reply to war correspondent Peter Arnett's charge in the Los Angeles Times that the Russian roulette sequences in *The Deer Hunter* were "simply a bloody lie" is telling. When accused of "artistic irresponsibility" in distorting historical truth, he argued that the movie was "surrealistic, not realistic", for they were "not doing newsreels, We're moviemakers".[23] However, the accusation of artistic irresponsibility may be erroneous. Denise J. Youngblood in "*Repentance*: Stalinist Terror and the Realism of Surrealism", claims that the surrealist mode utilized in the film to depict the Stalinist Terror of the thirties is a "true representation of the epoch it depicts *because* of its surrealism, not despite it." She argues against the Sovet critics' explicit rejections of

the film as historical due to its self-conscious surrealism, which they find fundamentally antihistorical. Youngblood writes:

> No period in Soviet history (and perhaps in all of history) was more surrealistic than the Great Terror, a time when black was white and day was night. The transcripts of the show trials demonstrate this -- and so does *Repentance*, as vividly and profoundly as any other source. Abuladze utilizes the tools of a master filmmaker, but he thinks like a historian in this picture. Through the construction of a "metanarrative," he has brought the *mentalite* of the 1930s to life. As one sympathetic and perceptive Russian critic put it, "The historical parallels are not obvious but grasped inwardly."[24]

Similarly, in Youngblood's terms, it is arguable that no period in American history (but not in all of history) was more "surrealistic" than the Vietnam War era, and the incomplete transmission of realism in the first wave Vietnam War films testifies to an inability to normalize that historical event. As with the Soviet experience, the Vietnam War was so horrific for those involved that any attempt to represent it in a purely realistic way could in fact do violence to its meaning by normalizing that which was not normal.[25] Referring back to the three levels of historical representation in films, the surrealistic modes of representing Vietnam in the movies discussed would occupy the second level: that of historical accuracy, and "true invention". The "historical parallels" of Vietnam do exist in these first wave films as true inventions, but when American filmmakers were later able to utilize a realistic mode to represent the war, these second wave films ironically exemplify Rosenstone's concept of "false invention" -- ignoring the historical discourse, past and contemporaneous, about Vietnam.

In denying an endeavour to rewrite history or recreate reality, Cimino's argument is appropriate for a period up to the late 1970s, when the American nation had not yet become reconciled with the memory of Vietnam. The fact that an attempt at reconciliation was in process would surface over a decade later, with the second wave Vietnam War movies that claimed realism. Before this second wave could reach the screens, communism would have to be successfully re-fought in another spatial arena to enable a restoration of confidence in the frontier myth. This was achieved through the other major tenet of Kennedy's New Frontier: space.

The Next Frontier

Kennedy's space programme and the Vietnam War were ostensibly two parts of one ideological project -- a project based on regenerating America's frontier heritage, and a counter-response to fears of a communist takeover. Space achievements particularly in the years following 1957 did not only establish Soviet technological primacy, the rockets were also vehicles for Soviet propaganda designed to promote communism (and the USSR under Krushchev) as the vanguard of universal progress.[26] In his investigation of space-weapon politics and technology, *The Final Frontier*, Dale Carter marks the propaganda that accompanied each Soviet launch: in 1957, *Tass* stressed "how the freed and conscious labour of the people of the new socialist society" was turning "even the most daring of mankind's dreams into reality"; in 1961, Gagarin dedicated his flight "to the people of a communist society, the society which our Soviet people are already

entering, and which, I am convinced, all the people on earth will enter,"; in 1962 the flight

of Nikolaev (a cosmonaut of Chuvash origins) and less than a year later of Valentina

Tereskova served to demonstrate the racial and sexual equality that existed under

socialism.[27]

Soviet space triumphs, in the absence of comparable American achievements,

suggested that the Russians had overtaken the Americans as the world's most advanced

nation. This led to a corresponding validation of their political stance -- originating from

the Soviet abolishment of private enterprise and its replacement with a planned economy

after the Bolshevik Revolution. Accepting the Russian blueprint for progress could only

disqualify notions of American supremacy and development, and this was painfully evident

in the political discourse of the time. In late 1957 the Soviet UN delegation classified the

United States as an underdeveloped nation by offering aid to the Americans under the

Russian technical assistance programme, and four years later in a well-publicized

telephone call, Khrushchev's claims of superiority ("Let the capitalist countries catch up

with our country!") were left undisputed.[28]

The need to restore faith in the American way -- a motive apparent in the decision

to interfere in Vietnam -- was thus the basis for Kennedy's support for the Apollo project,

and this was one frontier war that the Americans would win. The use of frontier discourse

in relation to the space programmes was rampant, so much so that even the Russians

appropriated similar terminology -- from the start astronauts of both nations were firmly

situated in the American pioneering tradition. Lyndon Johnson likened their astronauts to

the American forefathers who "tamed a broad continent and built the mightiest nation in

the history of the world", and "blazed new trails across the untraveled wilderness of space", whilst Gagarin had become the "Columbus of the cosmos" and his successors were "blazing a trail for all mankind". [29] The borrowing of frontier discourse by the Russians was, however, almost tantamount to usurpation, for it inevitably posed a threat to notions of American exceptionalism. This threat was soon dissipated when America managed to forge ahead in the space race.

The American moon shot captured the frontier of scientific and technological achievement from the Russians, and with it a reaffirmation of frontier mythology. This latter connection to the frontier myth is explicit in Dale Carter's observation that both American society and American history were invested in the space programme, such that the astronauts who "pioneered on that final, inexhaustible frontier took with them more than just the hopes of NASA and the Democratic Party: they embodied a nation, a social system, a whole way of life." And like the first pioneers, their mission would "make manifest America's destiny; their achievements would universalize the American century".[30] This extension of the frontier to space occurred in 1961. In 1976, it was utilized in *Star Wars* as the apparatus that launched Hollywood out of the quagmire.

The "cultural instrumentality" of science fiction movies is a consideration emphasised by Annete Kuhn in her introduction to *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*, and utilized as a structuring component in that volume of essays. She identifies five cultural instrumentalities as a basis for organization, and the three most pertinent for a discussion of the Lucas trilogy are that of the science fiction genre as a reflection of social trends and attitudes of the time, as a mediation of

258

ideologies, and for the fantasies they evoke in their spectators. The final tenet is particularly illuminating when combined with the cultural function of fantasy films, of which science fiction films constitute a part -- James Donald in *Fantasy and the Cinema* states that the dominant view of fantasy film is that they are vehicles of "either a coercive or a potentially liberating wish-fulfilment".[31] The acknowledgment that cultural instrumentality is of great importance rescues the Lucas trilogy from such criticism as voiced by Robin Wood in his explication of the films. His critique is also generally problematic for reasons expressed in the earlier chapters of this thesis, in equating value with the ability to disturb:

> What I find worrying about the Spielberg-Lucas syndrome is the enormous importance our society has conferred upon the films, an importance not at all incompatible with their not being taken seriously ("But of course, it's pure fantasy"): indeed, the apparent contradiction is crucial to the phenomenon. The old serials were not taken seriously on *any* level (except perhaps by real children, and then only young ones); their role in popular culture was minor and marginal; they posed no threat to the co-existence of challenging, disturbing or genuinely distinguished Hollywood movies, which they often accompanied in their lowly capacity.[32]

It is Wood's contention that unlike the "old serials" (Buck Rogers, Superman, Batman, etc.) the *Star Wars* films contained a propensity for delivering reassurance that made them responsible for the poor box-office performances of *Heaven's Gate, Blade Runner* and *The King of Comedy*: films lacking the same mode of dispensing reassurance and

belonging to Wood's category of "challenging, disturbing or genuinely distinguished Hollywood movies".

I would not argue with Wood's criticism that *Star Wars* is simplistic -- nor would I totally reject his analysis that the success of the films becomes comprehensible only when a widespread desire for regression to infantilism; an urge to evade responsibility; is assumed.[33] For Wood the crisis in ideological confidence in the 1970s (fuelled by Vietnam and Watergate) which he finds enacted in Hollywood's "incoherent texts" (such as *Taxi Driver*) has not been resolved; "no resolution of the fundamental conflicts is possible", and the *Star Wars* films are evidence that the conflicts have instead been forgotten.[34] In this chapter, however, we see that the *Star Wars* films are part of a larger ideological project that sought to repair what Englehardt has termed "victory culture", and what I identify as the victory narrative that is a component of frontier mythology at its deep level. Space was the one arena that restored the possibility of victory at the frontier to the American popular consciousness, with *Star Wars* reflecting the positive attitudes towards the space race of a not too distant era -- situating the films at the margins of Rosenstone's category of "true invention". The films also communicated ideologies, and evoked fantasies that were potentially liberating wish-fulfilment for their American spectators -- to all other members of the audience (Vietnamese and non-WASP) the effect would more likely be one of coercion.

In Part IV of *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation*; to which this present chapter is heavily indebted; Englehardt provides an enlightening perspective on the "cultural instrumentality" of the

260

Star Wars films. He writes about how Lucas successfully challenged (not, as Wood suggests, simply forgot) the legacy of the 1970s by "decontaminating war of its recent history through a series of inspired cinematic decisions that rescued crucial material from the wreckage of Vietnam" -- the crucial material referred to here being tied to Lucas's use of special effects and of the machines that had not been discredited in the war.[35] The success of the films is surprising considering the very blatant projections of WASP superiority, particularly in an era that was grappling with accusations of crypto-racism and imperialism. Wood's explanation, that Vietnam and the events of the 1970's were simply forgotten, neglects the propensity of films like Lucas's *Star Wars* to (using Englehardt's description) "decontaminate" the past. There are three possible reasons why the notion of WASP superiority, shunned in the quagmire films in great part due to the memory of Vietnam, is celebrated in the trilogy. Firstly, the historicity of the films in question differ. The anti/ Vietnam Westerns dealt with two strains of American history, with America's frontier past, and with the Vietnam War era. The Vietnam War films, logically, dealt more directly with the latter era. These films would have to acknowledge, to some extent, the legacy of those periods, as was discussed in the earlier sections of this chapter. The *Star Wars* movies, on the other hand, are situated not only in our future (even at this present moment we do not possess the technology to build a colossal device like the Death Star, much less in the 1970's), but in another galaxy, and even then "a long time ago" in another galaxy -- safeguarding the ideology embodied in these films from specific historical parallels or specific historical reponsibility. The narrative of expansion becomes ahistorical. The movie does begin on a footing reminiscent of post-Vietnam narratives:

Luke begins in the film as a victim (his sole relatives, an uncle and an aunt, are killed by the imperial storm troopers), and this victimhood would justify revenge. This equation of victimization and a justifiable act of violence was a quality of the captivity narratives, and appropriated by the *Star Wars* films, as well as the quagmire movies. However, as the former movies exist at a further remove from history than the latter, they are unencumbered by Vietnam's heritage of loss, making victory conceivable. In fact, their lack of historicity even allows for visual references (in the conclusion to the first film of the trilogy) that echo Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*. A film that can decontaminate not only the memory of Vietnam but also the memory of the holocaust accomplishes no mean feat. The lack of historicity is linked to another significant factor that enables a guilt-free victory. The enemies of Luke and his heroic counterparts are not Jews, neither are they the Viet Cong, or innocent Vietnamese civilians, or the Indians of America's frontier past. The severed arm that falls onto the floor of the bar belongs to a space creature (who babbles incomprehensibly like the Vietnamese in *The Deer Hunter*), and Ben Kenobi is free to proceed after removing this obstruction to his mission. The sub-text of this scene justifies an extermination of Otherness. If the owner of the appendage had been more directly linked to a Jew, a Vietnamese or an Indian, or any historically non-WASP minority, making that sub-text a surface-text, the reception of such a spectacle would be quite different. As Richard Maltby concludes in "A Better Sense of History: John Ford and the Indians": "In space, at least for the time being, no one can hear you scream about misrepresentation".[36]

The ideology of WASP superiority is sanitized by another feature characteristic of science fiction movies -- the special effects. This third element provides a distraction from the central ethos of the movie, a faculty of sci-fi films noted in John Brosnan's remark that "with most sf (science fiction) films, the special effects are always watchable no matter how boring or silly the films may be."[37] Brosnan is referring to *Logan's Run* (1976), and claiming that the special effects are the sole source of entertainment in the film, for other than that aspect it moves with the "grace and style of an arthritic elephant."[38] The function of the special effects in *Star Wars* is twofold: firstly, as noted by Englehardt and mentioned above, the technology utilized in Vietnam -- the smart bomb, the electronic sensor and the video camera -- appears in the film combined with high-tech weaponry that erased the offensive associations of cruelty that issued from the recent war. The spectacle of war is sanitized. It is "exotic, bloodless and sleekly unrecognizable."[39] The second and more general aspect of these effects is explored by Steve Neale in his critique of John Carpenter's version of *The Thing* (1982). In the essay, Neale writes about the status and role of special effects in science fiction films, making reference to Christian Metz's notion of '*trucage*'.[40] According to Metz, in relation to the special effects of a science fiction film, 'the spectator *ascribes to the diegesis the totality of the visual elements furnished him*'[41]. Neale's choice of *The Thing* and not *E.T.* or *Star Wars* as the subject of his inquiry becomes apparent in his conclusion; "the more interesting films will be those which work not, like *E.T.* (1982), simply to affirm belief (and the cinema's capacity to feed it), but those which, like *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (in particular the 1956 version), work instead to link habitual perceptions, assumptions and judgements to issues and forms

of social conformity -- and in the process offer a challenge to both."[42] It is clear which category the Lucas trilogy falls into. Thus while movies like *The Thing* and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* will be involved in complex processes of persuasion that establish their regimes of credence and authenticate the events they portray simultaneously acknowledging the spectator's awareness of the cinematic fabrication (hence the significance of that line "You've got to be fucking kidding"), the role of the special effects in movies like *Star Wars* and *E.T.* exists solely at the first level of persuasion without subjecting the spectator to judgements of improbability.[43] The totality with which the visual elements are ascribed to the diegesis are in these films complete -- the spectator is encouraged to immerse himself fully into the cinematic world that is before him, and discouraged from the questioning that challenges notions of social conformity and habitual perceptions that arise from a direct engagement to the external world. It is of great consequence that this cinematic world is generically verisimilitudinous to the world of the Western -- the *Star Wars* protagonists are rebels fleeing metropolitan corruption ("the evil empire") and basically enunciate a frontier past. However because this past is dehistoricized, the frontier myth can also be decontaminated, and re-applied.

The impact of *Star Wars* -- breaking numerous international box-office records -- effected a reversal of influence, bringing Rosenstone's concepts of "true" and "false" invention into another dimension. Drawing from the discourse surrounding America's dominance in the space race, the movies restored the notion of a justifiable American victory in the arena of battle, and this second "falsely invented" ideology, would form the basis of not only a series of films that applied the ideology to Vietnam, but also be adopted

in the contemporary political discourse that referred back to the Vietnam War. In a more complex fashion, these developments mirror the account of the ranch foreman described in the beginning of this chapter. The films that joined the *Star Wars* enterprise were the *Rambo* series.

Rambo, Reagan and the Vietnamese Frontier

Victory in the context of Vietnam became a possibility when a simulated battle in space with a major impact on the nation's popular consciousness headed the route out of the quagmire. The fact that this re-visioning of the war was still in its embryonic stages becomes apparent when one considers the nature of the *Rambo* films. The influence of *Star Wars* on this re-visioning of Vietnam in the films was noted not only by Englehardt, but also, and more significantly, by David Morrell, author of the novel *First Blood* (1972), and the initiator of *Rambo II* (1985). In a recent interview, Morrell expressed the opinion that the movie was a constant reminder of 'Star Wars in Vietnam'. According to the author, *Rambo* is an adventure film in the tradition of comic book and fantasy.[44]

Much has already been written about how the *Rambo* (I: 1982, II: 1985, III: 1988) films present a glorified perspective of the Vietnam experience, contrary to the Vietnam War movies that preceded it. There are, however, two aspects of the series that merit special attention in relation to this cultural revisioning of Vietnam: the notion of betrayal, and more briefly, the physique of John Rambo. It is interesting that the idea of betrayal by the American government is closely knitted to the narrative of victory in the films -- it is

reiterated more than once that Rambo rescues the POWs in spite of the machinations of his government. The telling line in *Rambo: First Blood Part II* occurs when Rambo is pulled out of the stockade rock pile and asks Colonel Trautman: "Do we get to win this time?". The answer to that question has already been answered in the advertisement for the movie: "They sent him on a mission and they set him up to fail".[45]   It is obvious that the U.S. government of the Vietnam era is scapegoated in an attempt to exonerate the soldier from culpability. The displacement of blame onto government bureaucracy aligns it with the evil empire that sought to exterminate Luke Skywalker and the other members of the rebellion. This appropriation of a *Star Wars* theme is, however, in direct conflict with the actual level of Government support for American soldiers fighting in Vietnam. Sumiko Higashi in *"Night of the Living Dead*: A Horror Film about the Horrors of the Vietnam War Era"* dispels the myth that Americans fought the war with one hand tied behind their backs, or that politicians constrained military action. She writes:

> . . . .American forces in Vietnam enjoyed the advantage of the most sophisticated technology ever used in modern warfare.   At Khe Sanh, for instance, General William Westmoreland installed an electronic laboratory that transmitted data from seismic sensors to computers in Thailand.   During that siege, the American military employed B-52 bombers, an airborne control plane, C-47 transports, rocket-armed helicopter gunships, starlight scopes enabling night vision, people sniffers detecting troop movements, gravel mines, fragmentation shells containing steel darts, napalm, white phosphorous, chemical defoliants and solvents, and marine artillery.   Short of using nuclear weapons, a tactic that had in fact been debated, U.S. troops in Vietnam were hardly deprived of manpower.[46]

This notion of betrayal is not one that is novel in coming to terms with the memory of military defeat. After W.W.I, the Germans embraced the myth of the "stab in the back", with the defeat of its army explained as a conspiracy concocted by German generals who signed the surrender. The explanation was maintained in spite of numerous facts which exposed its deceit.[47] After W.W.II, the Japanese shifted blame for the war onto wartime leaders who were no longer alive, with the Japanese soldiers regarded as victims of a military government that betrayed the soldiers and the public.[48] It is of some importance, though, that in the cultural process of revisioning Vietnam in the *Rambo* series one cinematically fabricated motif emerges in the political discourse following the release of the movies, and another occurs in the Vietnam War films that are later produced. The first motif is that of betrayal, and is voiced by Reagan. In addition to an oft-quoted comment that revealed his adulation of the *Rambo* films: "Boy, I saw *Rambo* last night; now I know what to do next time", Reagan further exposed the impact of these films in an earlier statement that: "We are just beginning to realize how we were led astray when it came to Vietnam".[49] Reagan did not isolate this tactic of displacing blame to the American experience of Vietnam. At the military cemetery in Bitburg, he told the Germans (with some truth on his side) that their buried German soldiers were victims of the Nazis "just as surely as the victims of the concentration camps".[50]

The motif that appears in Vietnam War films following *Rambo* is the notion that Vietnam was not an instance of an American defeat, cinematically correcting the national humiliation that resulted after the war. The *Guardian*'s view of the movie follows:

SYLVESTER STALLONE'S Rambo II has become more than just a movie. It opened in American cinemas at the right time to profit from the Beirut hijacking. When the White House was impotent with rage, patriotic Americans could watch the muscle of Rambo destroy the Vietnamese and Russian enemies as he rescued GIs from Communist prisons; he won in cinema the war the United States lost on the ground.[51]

The way to a victorious war established in *Star Wars* and adopted by *Rambo* sets a precedent that is applied in Oliver Stone's Vietnam War films (all the movies being box office successes -- with the exception of *Heaven and Earth*). However, one crucial distinguishing factor separates the post-*Rambo* Vietnam War movies from their predecessors. Though restoring the narrative of victory to the frontier myth, the *Rambo* and pre-*Rambo* films mentioned utilized a genre of fantasy and surrealism -- the hypermasculinity of Stallone is a topic much discussed in relation to the films, a sign of over-determination and "a regressive retreat into fantasy."[52] Stallone's physique has also been perceived as a response of muscular over-compensation to the lack of muscular American government policy, and as a result his character is extra-ordinary, and thus surreal. In contrast, Stone's first film would claim realism. This would be the final stage of rewriting the Vietnam War, and thus of repairing the frontier myth -- for the outcome of realism is a naturalization of ideology. This naturalization would stem from a cinematic "false invention" that was in contradiction with the contemporary historical discourse; the Vietnam War was successfully re-written as an American victory. This representation of Vietnam through a realistic mode, that which is traditionally accepted as historical accuracy, exists at the third level of historical manipulation, and therein lies the irony.

9 Recycling Mythologies

Cinematic Regressions and the Post-Revisionist Western

"We have not sought to goose-step the American soul"[1]

Lowell Mellett

In the previous chapter, the genesis of a process of ideological negotiation to repair the mythology of the frontier was discussed in relation to Vietnam Westerns, Science Fiction movies and the *Rambo* series of films. It was argued that in the arena of fantasy, it was possible to extol the ingredients of the dominant American conservative ideology: *Star Wars* championed the values of individualism, elite leadership and white, male superiority, whilst the *Rambo* films reinstated those ideals in relation to Vietnam. The ideological utility of the fantasy film is thus one of its strengths: Norma Pecora's article in Steve Craig's *Men, Masculinity and the Media* explores the socialising effect of comic book heroes, a process not unrelated to the appeal of *Rambo*. Her conclusion follows:

> Young boys are still offered cultural representations that reinforce maleness as machismo. The superheroes are loners, fighting evil in their own way, a way

269

that invokes violence. Technology is used for power and control. Women are elderly and weak or voluptuous and unimportant. And, it would appear, little has changed.[2]

The violence that is invoked is "an institutionalized. . .acceptable means of solving conflicts," with "racism, sexism and heterosexism" being "socially regulated acts of violence."[3] Pecora's analysis of Superman comics in the 1980s has close links with *Rambo* (she perceives that the movie offers ideals and inspiration through the recognition of a fantasy): "The Superman of the eighties supported a fantasy world with Superman acting as a vigilante, solving problems with violence, while maintaining the status quo."[4] Native Americans and black characters are in the comics subjected to racist ideology, while women are portrayed as victims. The popularity of the Superman comics in spite of their political incorrectness is determined largely by the audience that the comics cater to - - boys between the ages of 10 and 15.[5] The acceptance of similar ideals in *Rambo* and *Star Wars* results not only from an identification of their status as fantasy, but also a corresponding desire in American movie audiences for an escape to an era before the cultural dislocation of the 1970s. The outward signs of cinematic regression were an answer to the desire for ideological regression existing in the popular imagination.

As operations at the level of fantasy, these cinematic regressions have greater liberation from the social responsibility that attends films claiming realism. However, films that operate on the level of fantasy have less capacity for a naturalisation of the ideology that is asserted. They are, in Noël Carroll's words, an "assault on the reality principle": the cartoon-like quality of the *Rambo* films is not helped by ludicrous scenes where the

protagonist carries a raw haunch of meat into a cave.[6] John Rambo is barely human; he has godlike powers and a physique to match. Nonetheless when we view the cinematic regressions as part of a process of ideological negotiation, then they can be seen to enable a reiteration of the ideology embraced for films that function at the level of realism. To infer, as Robin Wood does, that the crisis of the 1970s was simply forgotten, would be neglecting the complex cinematic developments that aimed to seal the breaches in American credibility. The final part of this stratagem would utilise the power of the realist narrative.

Ryan and Kellner observe that narrative realism is the governing form of Hollywood film used to reinforce the codes of patriarchal and capitalist life, by replicating the figures that constitute the substance of values, practices and institutions shaping a society of domination. The observation that they make is flawed in two aspects. Firstly, the statement is overly didactic, claiming that Hollywood is in league with institutions that seek to manufacture a society of victims. Secondly their understanding of realism, as explained in the earlier chapters of this thesis, lacks complexity. However, the realization they arrive at in acknowledging the necessity of narrative realism (and here it is cultural verisimilitude that they are discussing) is important.

As critics on the Left, Ryan and Kellner's intention is to disable the outcome of what they notice as a process of replication, whereby "those grounding figures of society (the narrative of individual success, the metaphor of freedom, the synecdocic privileging of efficiency over democracy, the litotic liberal ideal of pluralist neutrality etc.) are transcoded into specifically cinematic forms -- the male quest narrative, the camera

271

positions of individuated identification, the domestic *mise-en-scène*" and so on.[7] The method via which they hope to accomplish their project is significant. They note that the undermining of narrative realism, of the basic film illusion, "misses the mark" -- it is more important to accept the viewing assumptions of narrative realism. The rupturing of narrative realism (through modernist formal revisions) is an obstruction in gaining access to popular audiences, and thus also a barrier to reshaping the dominant figures of patriarchal capitalist social life.[8] If we discard what Ryan and Kellner think they are discussing -- a narrative realism that equates with actuality -- as well as their crude binary oppositions and assumptions about the audience, then what we are left with is the necessity of an element of realist representation for the effective communication of ideology. That this element of realist representation is "ruptured" by "modernist formal revisions" is not of as much consequence as when the cultural verisimilitude in the films cannot be expressed with a firm claim of historical accuracy.

The Hollywood films discussed in the previous chapter do not violate the convention of narrative realism; they contain varying levels of generic and cultural verisimilitude. However, they do exist at one remove away from movies that claim realism as the portrayal of historical accuracy: the first wave Vietnam War films employing surrealism (though as discussed in the last chapter, these films were historically accurate in depicting the sense of confusion and loss surrounding Vietnam) and the *Rambo* and Star Wars movies employing fantasy. This final stage in the procedure of mythological repair, where the ideology appears to be communicated via a direct reflection of actuality, was

facilitated by the contemporary political environment. The resultant verisimilitude shared by popular culture and political culture no doubt manifested a symbiotic relationship.

The revival of conservative social movements, initiated by the "New Right" strengthened under the leadership of Ronald Reagan. The aim of these movements was to restore the traditional values that had been undermined by policies recently introduced in the national agenda, including feminism, the Supreme Court's 1973 decision sanctioning abortion, and bussing. Members of the "New Right" also devoted countless hours and money to those who opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. The collective effort was to reinstate the traditional boundary that existed between American and Other; the ultimate aim was to expel the savage from within. A letter from a New Right group on the issue of busing is a clear expression of these sentiments:

> *I am rushing you this urgent letter because the children in your neighbourhood are in danger.* How would you feel if tomorrow your child. . was taught by a practising homosexual?. . .was bused twenty to thirty miles away to school every morning?. . .was forced to attend classes in a school where all religion is banned? If you think this will never happen. . .you are in for a shock![9]

The argument posed by members of such groups suggested that a conspiracy existed among the liberal elite to sanction a "new morality" of license and excess. The return to a traditional sense of morality corresponded with the renewal of militarism. Reagan proclaimed that the "Vietnam syndrome" was over, aggressively defending and acting upon America's right to combat communist insurgency wherever it surfaced.[10] This

declaration of moral superiority, with a commitment that justified intervention in any part of the world, was a direct echo of the impetus for American participation in Vietnam. The arms race became a symbol of the most elemental and ancient of frontiers: "good versus evil, right against wrong."[11] During Reagan's first administration, a 41 percent increase in defence spending was encouraged, with a pledge to build 17,000 new nuclear weapons. The belief that regeneration through violence was a better possibility with more sophisticated technological implements of war still seemed to be held, though this was clearly invalidated by the experience of Vietnam, where the rudimentary weapons of the Viet Cong overcame the American forces.

With the re-establishment of the boundary between American and Other, the maligned figure of the frontier hero (portrayed as psychotic and blamed for the failure of Vietnam) could now be repaired. The vet could not remain as the savage in the Vietnam War scenario. It was crucial that he assumed the role of the heroic white protagonist in that constructed narrative of victory. Without this requisite, the victory narrative in the deep structure of the myth was not complete, and could not emerge in discourses of the Vietnam War. The 1982 construction of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was significant in prompting the reintegrative phase in which veterans were reconciled with society: this significance is marked in media-generated representations of the vet prior to and following the construction of the memorial. During the 1974 TV season, the vet was seen as a hired killer on *Columbo*, as a drug dealing sadistic murder on *Mannix*, as a shakedown artist in *Cannon*, and as a "returned hero" who blew up himself, his father, and a narcotics lab on *Hawaii Five-O*. In the late 1970's, the vet was depicted as a milder form of a criminal, he

was turned into an always irreverent, slightly crazed eccentric, subject to the occasional flashback.[12] The films made in that period offered comparable representations: in *Tracks* (1975) Dennis Hopper plays a returned vet who after displaying a mass of idiosyncrasies and emotional tics, finally loses his grip on sanity and surrenders to his hallucinations, and in *Black Sunday* (1976) an ex-Vietnam POW (Bruce Dern) is so intensely bitter after the war that he joins the Palestine Liberation Organisation in their attempt to bomb the Superbowl. Others such as *The Deer Hunter*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Who'll Stop the Rain* (1978) complement these images with narrative strategies of rupture and dislocation.[13] This portrayal of the vet was an echo of the treatment that Vietnam War veterans received at their homecoming. They were regarded as social pariahs, treated with a lack of respect or honour, with the antiwar climate relegating his duty for his country in Vietnam to a criminal activity. Vets referred to themselves as "the unwilling working for the unqualified to do the unnecessary for the ungrateful."[14]

The historical marginalization of the vet was useful for the purpose of scapegoating, in the same way that the gangster figure was scapegoated for the failure of the economy in the 1930's. Vindication was crucial after the failure of the economic frontier in the early years of the Depression. That need for exoneration was paralleled fifty years later for the failure at the Vietnamese frontier. The WASP hero of frontier mythology and the Western is also scapegoated for his temporary acculturation of savagery -- he is seldom able to return permanently within the arena of civilization. The Gangster, Vietnam vet and frontier hero have this quality in common. The distinction between the Gangster and the frontier hero has been made evident in previous chapters.

The quality of frontier heroism evades the vet because his descent into savagery is not directly followed by an expulsion of that savagery within himself. This explains the depiction of the vet in the 1970s -- the savage "Other" was not exterminated at Vietnam, but acculturation, the precondition to that act of violence, had already taken place. However, unlike the gangster who failed because he was 'not quite American', the vet had not only sacrificed himself for America in the Vietnam War, he also symbolised the WASP frontier hero, Jefferson's yeoman, who sought to extend the light of civilisation at the Vietnamese frontier. The route to salvaging the war at that frontier carried the precondition that the Vietnam vet must first be honoured, and this was achieved via the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The glorification of war through memorials, monuments and military cemeteries honouring the dead was a procedure that the German nation was familiar with, as a means to reshaping their experience of the two World Wars. George L. Mosse classifies this procedure as the *Myth of the War Experience*, a vision of war that was developed, above all, in defeated nations:

> The Myth of the War Experience was designed to mask war and to legitimise the war experience; *it was meant to displace the reality of war*. The memory of the war was refashioned into a sacred experience which provided the nation with a new depth of religious feeling, putting at its disposal ever-present saints and martyrs, places of worship, and a heritage to emulate. . . .Through the myth which came to surround it the war experience was sanctified. Yet at the same time, the war was confronted and absorbed in a radically different way, by being trivialised through its association with objects of daily life, popular theatre, or battlefield tourism. Here the war experience could be distorted and

276

manipulated at will. Veterans deplored such trivialisation; it was those who stayed at home or were too young to have fought who were apt to indulge in it during and after the war.[15]

My Emphasis

Mosse develops the thesis that having masked the horrors, consecrated the memory and justified the purpose of World War I, the Myth of the War Experience profoundly influenced Germany in the interwar years and ultimately fuelled the aggressive nationalism that led to World War II.[16] The American experience of defeat finds striking parallels -- in addition to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the dead were honoured in *Gardens of Stone* (1987) which featured Francis Coppola's choreographed burial rituals, with the strongest impact of the movie arising when the camera pans over the headstones in the gardens of stone and focuses on the guard of honour folding a ceremonial flag with military precision, handing it over to a grieving widow or parent.[17]

The important difference between the experiences of both nations was that while Germany's Myth of the War Experience was built up mainly through the accounts of war volunteers, popular culture was the main vehicle of America's Myth of the Frontier.[18] Thus instead of trivialising the war, movies were the site of contestation whereby frontier mythology could be re-validated. Popular culture, though not trivialising the war, was a means of sanctifying the memory of defeat at Vietnam and displacing its reality. With the developments in the political environment, and the cinematic strategies discussed in the previous chapter, this recuperation could now be attained. Just as it was the German Right who were able to annex the Myth of the War Experience and to exploit the suffering

of the millions involved for their own political ends, the Myth of the Frontier would also be central to America's political Right.[19] The moment where Slotkin's cycle of regeneration through violence was elevated to its former credibility began with Oliver Stone's *Platoon*.

Platoon was a watershed film in that it did not carry with it any disclaimer, overt or otherwise, of being anything other than the real experience of the Vietnam War -- the 26 January issue of *Time* magazine proclaimed that the movie dramatised "Vietnam as it really was."[20] The movie relates the war experience of a nineteen-year-old volunteer Chris Taylor (the average age of the Vietnam soldier was nineteen unlike the older De Niro and his counterparts in *The Deer Hunter*) who joins Bravo Company of the 25th Infantry Regiment near the Cambodian border. The platoon enters a Vietnamese village where Sergeant Barnes commits an atrocity, when in process of interrogating the head of the village, he murders the Vietnamese man's wife. Barnes is confronted by Sergeant Elias, and the latter is later shot by Barnes and left behind when the platoon is ambushed and lifted out by helicopter. Chris witnesses Elias being pursued and killed by the Viet Cong. Amidst the chaos of a second attack on the 25th infantry near the Cambodian border, Chris shoots Barnes in cold blood, and after the American position is re-established, Chris is lifted out by helicopter.

The seven pages *Time* devoted to its acclamation of the movie included an endorsement from the distinguished political commentator David Halberstam who stated that "*Platoon* is the first real Viet Nam film" in *The New York Times* (8 March 1987):

By nature the movie industry has been a notorious cheat when it comes to confronting serious subjects, and on Vietnam in particular there was a rare schizophrenic attitude on the part of the industry's leaders. . . .Of the serious post-war films that have preceded *Platoon*, none to me ever passed the test of being a true Vietnam War movie. . . .By contrast, *Platoon* is about Vietnam. It exists only, as they say, in-country. *It has no other objective, no other agenda.* To me it is both a great American movie and a great War movie. Its combat scenes are as good as any I have ever seen. . . .*It is painfully realistic. . . .Real it is. This is the ultimate work of witness, something which has the authenticity of documentary* and yet the vibrancy and originality of art.[21]

<div align="right">My Emphasis</div>

Two comments which are particularly significant in the passage above are that *Platoon* is given the official seal of authenticity above the "serious post-war films" preceding it, and that this authenticity is given equal status with documentary -- "the ultimate work of witness". The latter claim, and what Halberstam means by his use of the word "real", are worth unpacking. The clue lies in the last sentence: "the ultimate work of witness" is "something which has the authentictity of documentary" *and yet* "the vibrancy and originality of art". Halberstam is equating "art" here to works existing outside of the documentary form, and in this passage, in relation to fiction films: "great Amerian movie(s)" and "great War movie(s)". In the course of this thesis fiction films have been noted for their mythic investment. It is my contention that *Platoon* is given Halberstam's stamp of approval because it is better able to combine its claim to truth (cultural verisimilitude) with a mythic verisimilitude than the movies that have preceded it. The film passes the test as being "a true Vietnam War Movie" because it fits the version of frontier

mythology that is an intrinsic component of the historical tradition of the American War movie.

The claim to actuality, and the corresponding implications of its status as documentary are thus disconcerting when seen in perspective with the mythological strain that is apparent and endorsed in the film. More disturbing perhaps, is that where a film like *The Green Berets* carried similar connotations of American supremacy and was dismissed as fiction, *Platoon*'s re-enactment of a successful frontier cycle is marketed as a document of the war and manages to attract a mass audience upon its release. The movie superseded the economic performance of *Full Metal Jacket* and *Hamburger Hill* (released in the same year) by reaching the $100 million mark at the box office alone.[22]

Oliver Stone's Vietnamese Frontier

Harold Schecter and Jonna G. Semeiks contend that Slotkin's formula of "regeneration through violence" "precisely matches the action of *Platoon*", but merely read the film as a duplication of the formula rather than a film that adapts the formula to accommodate the Vietnam experience.[23] Theirs is a straightforward application of Slotkin's formula that neglects the differences which make *Platoon* a specific variant of the original paradigm. The two features of Slotkin's paradigm that emerge as significant in this film are the heroic quest and the violent act that takes place in the wilderness.

In accordance with the motif of the individual taking on the frontier quest, Chris, the central protagonist of *Platoon*, is differentiated from the rest of Bravo company as a

literate, middle-class recruit in contrast to the underclass "grunts" and social misfits who constitute the rest of his military unit.[24] He begins by having separated himself from the comforts of his upper-middle class life, from then on his pilgrimage through the cycle of regeneration is structurally similar to Slotkin's model. Chris enters Vietnam a representative of civilised values. His first encounter with the jungles of Vietnam symbolically finds him, in Turner's words, "European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought", and proceeds in stripping off his "garments of civilisation". This encounter is graphically presented in the movie: in a rapid unbroken sequence, Chris is inflicted by cuts on his hands, vomits at the sight of a jungle-rotted corpse, and has his neck infested with biting jungle ants when he rests against a tree. This is historically accurate as the Viet Cong's style of close-quarter fighting had to a large extent made American War technology irrelevant.[25] The film's claim to authenticity is also underscored by the autobiographical nature of Chris Taylor's characterisation. Oliver Stone, the director of the movie, comments that in his own service in the war, he saw himself "as a product -- an East Coast socio-economic product" and he "wanted to break out of the mould". The solution he decided upon was "total anonymity"; he joined the Army because he "had to atone."[26] The movie provides an unmediated echo of these sentiments:

> I guess I've always been sheltered and special. I just want to be anonymous. . .maybe from down here I can start up again and be something I can be proud of, without having to fake it, be a fake human being.[27]

"Down here" in the symbolic wilderness, Chris engages in an act of violence with the "Indian Other/ beast". The mythic qualities of this latter entity are displaced onto American counterparts to facilitate a politically correct fulfilment of the violent act. The wilderness beast is the site of the "anima-id" paradox.[28] As anima, the beast embodies the feminine, passive but essential part of the male consciousness, the "lost half" of the hero with which he needs union to achieve personal salvation. Simultaneously, as id, the beast is to be repressed and destroyed. In the frontier myth, the wilderness beast takes the form of the Indian Other from whom there is much to learn, but one who also carries the threat of annihilation and thus must be slain. In *Platoon*, Chris's relationship with Elias and Barnes functions as the locus of this paradox.

Elias occupies the feminine role associated with the anima. Leader of the underworld where erotic connotations abound in the closeness and shared activity of men, Elias is portrayed as nurturing, emotional and valuing life; he offers to help Taylor with his overloaded backpack, and halts a potential (My Lai) massacre led by Barnes. Elias is also the frontier hunter-hero who has been acculturated into the ways of the Indian.[29] The identification between the hunter and the hunted (where "the hunter is forced to follow in the animal's footsteps, to eat when he eats, sleep when he sleeps, and move when he moves"[30]) is mirrored in Elias's movements. Prasch contends that "No one else among the American troops comes closer to the Viet Cong ideal of invisibility and silence in motion."[31] A third tenet of Elias's characterisation is his adherence to Cooper's synthesis of the 'Saint of the woods', the tragic hero who has acculturated so fully to Indian ways

that he cannot return to the metropolis and is scapegoated for the extension of civilisation.[32]

There is evidence that Elias's heroic qualities are transferred to Chris in two aspects. Firstly, his imitation of the sergeant's actions: immediately after Elias prevents the killing of the child (an action that might have led to a massacre), Chris intervenes to avert the rape of a Vietnamese girl.[33] Secondly, the two are linked by their mutual identification with Christ -- albeit contemptuously, Elias is called "Jesus fucking Christ and "water walker", a connotation sealed by his dying cruciform pose. When Chris is first brought into Elias's underworld, he is introduced as someone "resurrected", and the first six letters of his name (Chris Taylor) literally spell the spiritual parallel.[34]

The battle that Chris engages with Barnes completes the "anima-id" paradox. In accordance with the metaphor of the hunt where:

> . . .the exorcism of the Indian is likened to the hunting down and slaying of rabid beasts embodying all qualities of evil. In the captivity narratives, bestial Indians are seen as the outward type of the beast that is in every man. . .the captive's salvation. . .depends on his ability to see that the "hellish principles" are within himself. He must hunt out the inner beast and slay it before he can be redeemed.[35]

If Elias is identified with Christ, Barnes is associated with the devil and linked with death. Without showing any moral restraint he barbarically kills a Vietnamese woman before burning the village, murders Elias in cold-blood (attempting to do the same with Chris), and bears the testimony of mastery over death. Chris is told that "Barnes been shot seven

times and he ain't dead". Elias's route to death begins with a trinity of bullets in the chest. When Chris avenges Elias's death with the killing of Barnes, three things happen. Firstly, Chris successfully discovers the "hellish principles" (symbolised by Barnes) and releases the dark and violent energies within himself. Secondly, he appropriates qualities associated with the anima from Elias and engages in an act of violence that brings the anima-id paradox to fulfilment. Thirdly, the film echoes history in scapegoating Barnes as the "crazed" veteran who is representative of those soldiers responsible for the American atrocities committed in the Vietnam War. With the death of Barnes, Chris, (and the American public) is thereby absolved of complicity with these war crimes. It is of crucial importance that *Platoon* does not end with the scapegoating of Barnes, nor is Barnes the central protagonist of this Vietnam narrative.

Having purged the inner beast from himself, Chris returns to America a mediator of new knowledge. The attainment of regeneration is signalled through a legitimisation of Chris's experience, as affirmed by the privileging of his voice in a voice-over (separating the hero from other characters whose voices are heard only when they speak), and visually when he transcends from the depths of hell in a helicopter. One of the roles assigned to the frontier hero is that of a prophet who teaches his people from a position of authority and this is the role adopted by Chris. Richard Combs writes that:

> As Chris, in Silhouette, is swallowed in incandescent light, his voice-over also
> becomes preachy: 'Those of us who did make it have an obligation to build
> again, to teach others what we know. . .to find goodness and meaning to this
> life'.[36]

284

Through the interlocking of these transparent signs, *Platoon* renders a sense of closure previously unattainable with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. As perceived by Sturken: "In rejecting the architectural lineage of monuments and contesting the aesthetic codes of previous war memorials, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial also refuses the closure and implied tradition of these structures. . ."[37]. This is reiterated by Mosse, who in concluding *Fallen Soldiers* uses the Vietnam Veterans memorial as evidence of the demise of his Myth of the War Experience:

> Here there is no patriotic inscription, just the over-long list of the names of the dead engraved in the low-lying black wall, names to touch and to honour in private not public grief. . .Near it, at the request of some more conservative veterans, the American government erected a conventional war memorial showing members of each of the military services in uniform, grouped together, symbolising national duty. . .While the wall of mourning is crowded at all times, many fewer people visit the statue nearby. That old symbols have lost their power is not merely a sign of changing tastes, but an expression of attitudes toward war. The Vietnam War Memorial can stand not only as a monument to the fallen of the war, but also, snatching victory from defeat, as a monument to death, however provisional, of the Myth of the War Experience.[38]

As film memorial, however, *Platoon* manages to produce a warrior hero who has undergone a journey of maturation and education. At the beginning of the film, Chris admits his ignorance of the basic needs of survival in Vietnam: "I don't even know what I'm doing. A gook could be standing three feet in front of me and I wouldn't even know it." In the coda of the movie, Chris asserts that "We did not fight the enemy, we fought

ourselves and the enemy was in us". The narrative envelope is enhanced by the visual cycle of the hero being flown in and out of Vietnam both times to the tune of Barber's *Adagio for Strings.*[39] The movie thus carries on where the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial left off -- Chris returns to civilisation as a resurrected frontier hero, showing that the war served as a field of education and character building, and that participation in war is a route to heroic status. In glamorising war, the movie has even been likened to a recruiting advertisement where the carnage of war is made so exciting that it is possible to enjoy it.[40]

The process of naturalising the ideology of the frontier myth is advanced in the same fashion in Stone's *Born on the Fourth of July* (1990) and *Heaven and Earth* (1993). As cinematic adaptations of autobiographies these latter films, like *Platoon,* bear claims of authenticity with affirmations of the frontier paradigm (this is achieved in spite of Ron Kovic's written account in the second film). Though Kovic's autobiography explicitly sets up the American myth of Frontier heroism as the main driving force compelling him to fight in the Vietnam War, and exposes the myth as an ideological cloak which proved inadequate in the actual war experience, Stone's Kovic journeys through the frontier cycle and measures up to the heroic ideal. In both the written account and the movie Kovic separates himself from the metropolis, and enters the wilderness of Vietnam where he is denied a regenerative violent act: though he instructs his squad to hold their fire his command is unheeded and this results in the massacre of innocent Vietnamese civilians. In the second violent act Kovic is blinded by the sun and shoots at the silhouette of a soldier emerging over the crest of a dune above him in self defence. It is significant that he is technically innocent on both accounts. Lacking the requisite victory, Kovic's return to the

metropolis necessitates the undertaking of another journey, with the Mexican wilderness furnishing the site for acculturation and a third violent act.

In Mexico Kovic grows his hair and takes on "the guise of the Indian, the natural man who in popular culture. . . .had been presented as the savage or noble Other confronting the white American on the frontier."[41] It is here that Kovic meets Charlie, played by Willem Dafoe. This is an interesting inter-textual link as Dafoe fulfils the same role in both the communes of the underworld drug den in *Platoon* and in this Long Island village in *Born on the Fourth of July*. The anima-id paradox is once again present, in the verbal exchange between the two ex-patriot veterans:

Charlie: Fuck 'em. Fuck the Mexicans. Fuck the gooks. Fuck em' all. . .
You ever have to kill gook babies? I'll bet you was never ordered to kill little
gook babies.

Kovic: Leave me the fuck alone. Maybe I killed more babies than you did.

The conversation takes place as the two circle closer to one another in their wheelchairs and drag one another down, fighting to exhaustion. It is then that Charlie asks the question: "How are we gonna get out of here?", and Kovic comes to the realisation that there is a way out for him, a way back to the metropolis from the wilderness. This third "Violent Act" does not constitute an actual killing, but language that is replete with notions of killing mixed with sexual obscenities. It proves to be regenerative once again through the ploy of scapegoating. Just as Elias is gunned down in *Platoon* so that his heroic mantle may fall on Chris's shoulders, Charlie delivers to Kovic the crucial advice of

"doing it in the lips" (and is left behind in Mexico), alluding to the dream that Kovic's mother has of him speaking to a large crowd of people.

In the written account, Kovic's failure is determined by his accidental shooting of Lance Corporal Wilson, a fellow marine whose safety he had guaranteed prior to the battle. He does not have the opportunity to eradicate his guilt. In the cinematic adaptation, Kovic redeems his killing of Wilson by telling the latter's family the truth about their son's death. Stone's camera work and editing of the scene is particularly evocative of the idea that Kovic is resurrected by his confession:

> Kovic's departure from Wilson's home is captured in a crane shot which slowly rises above Wilson's front yard littered with generations of cast-off junk and up through brown autumn leaves clinging to a tree in the foreground. A sound overlap of the song "When Johnny comes marching Home," begins and continues as a large American flag is superimposed over the tree. This tree is more like the sun-dappled, green-leaved tree of Kovic's youth than the ravaged battlefield tree in Vietnam: this tree is mature, and although dormant, not dead. Rising from above his guilt, Kovic has begun the process of regaining his manhood, his patriotism, and his life by coming home and admitting the truth of what he did in Vietnam, to take responsibility for it, *and to communicate to fellow Americans who must share that responsibility.*
>
> My Emphasis

The cycle of "Regeneration Through Violence" ultimately reaches full cycle when the cinematic adaptation concludes with Kovic at the 1976 Democratic National Convention in New York City, awakening fellow citizens to the "folly and waste of imposing the

American frontier myth upon an alien culture."[42]   This cycle is mapped out in the

following diagram.

SUPERIMPOSING THE CYCLE OF "REGENERATION THROUGH VIOLENCE" IN *BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY*

(1) SEPARATION: From False Values of Metropolis

METROPOLIS

WILDERNESS
(2) REGRESSION: and Acculturation
(3) THE VIOLENT ACT

VIETNAMESE WILDERNESS
-- Inversion of Frontier Myth

4) RETURN:
) False Values Purged
) Hero as Mediator of New Values

MEXICAN WILDERNESS
(2) ACCULTURATION
(3) THE VIOLENT ACT
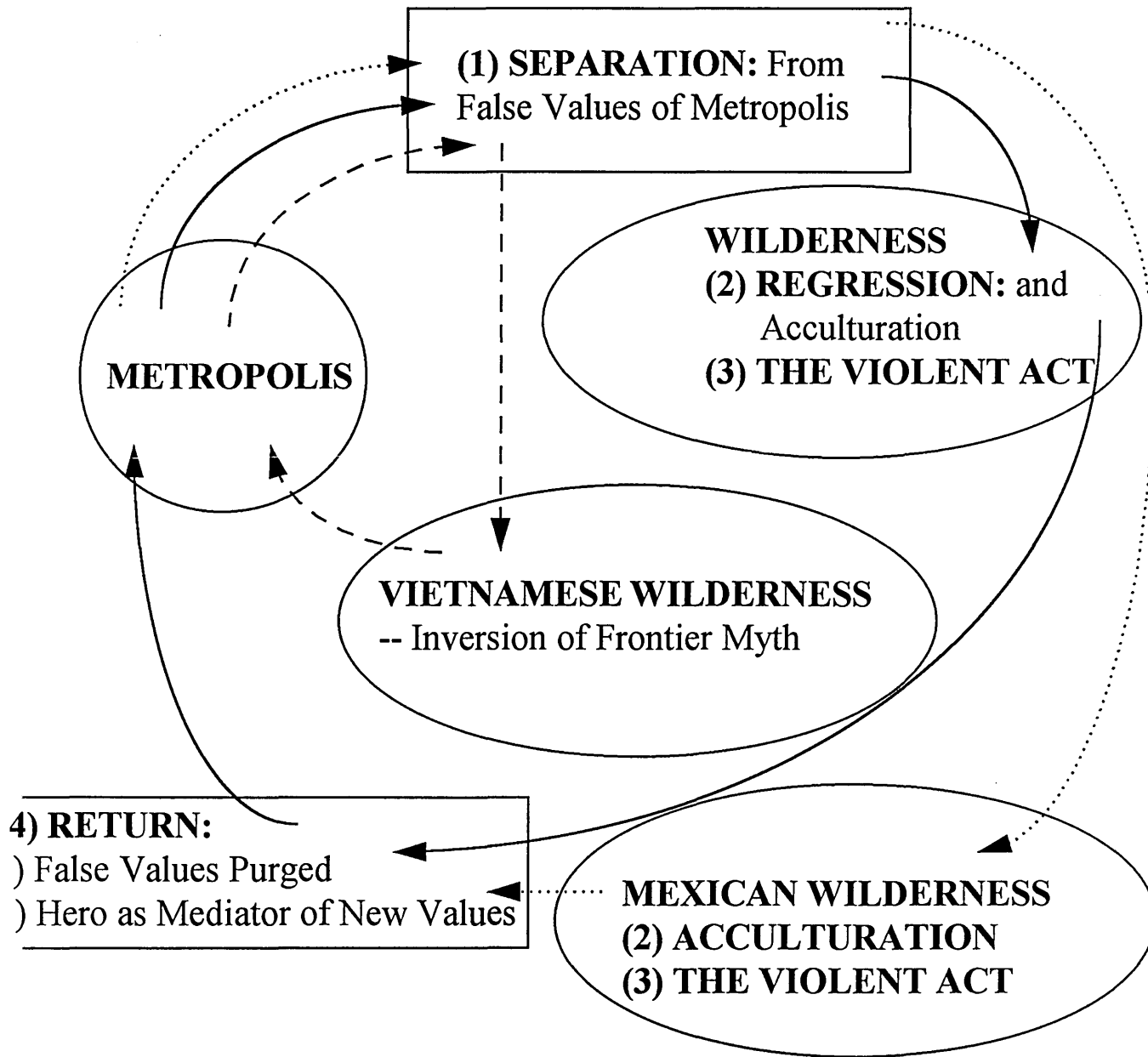
KEY

⟶ Heroic Route (as in Platoon)
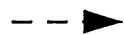
– – ▶ Kovic's Route
-- First Cycle, Non-regnerative

·······▶ -- Second and Successful Attempt

Interesting conclusions can be drawn in comparing the mise-en-scène of this final scene to John Voight's character Luke in the parallel final sequence of *Coming Home*. In *Born on the Fourth of July*, Tom Cruise is made up in the image of Kovic, a transformation so complete that it was "unnerving": when the real Kovic saw him he claimed that with his "long hair and moustache" Cruise looked "just like" him, "it was like looking at a photograph" of himself.[43] For Kovic's speech at the Democratic National Convention, however, Cruise is restored to his former good looks while John Voight retains his long hair and moustache. Moreover, while Cruise is impeccably attired in military uniform and engaging in the reputable task of enlightening "fellow Americans" at a national convention, Voight is informally dressed i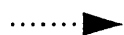n faded T-shirt and denim jeans, addressing a group of school boys in a hall, in front of a stage. This marks a transition from victimised vet in a wheelchair to vet, still in wheelchair, but endowed with conventional qualities of heroism. Cruise is elevated on a stage, above his audience of peers, the focus of their attention and respect.

Heaven and Earth has been lauded as a film that represents Stone's coming to terms with two Others -- the feminine and the Vietnamese experience of war. In contrast with *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July* with their central white male protagonists and neglect of the Vietnamese perspective, this third film has a Vietnamese woman at its centre. The landscape of Vietnam is accorded a proper physical, historical and philosophical identity -- the camera pans across verdant green fields of padi documenting the Vietnamese way of life. The political agenda of the Viet Cong is also relayed, as well as the historical facts of the Japanese and French invasions. The philosophical nature of

291

the relationship between the Vietnamese people and the crop they grow and eat is conveyed in the scene where the heroine's mother (played by Joan Chen) teaches her the sacred communion that is the process of eating rice. The film charts Le Ly's experience of war. After a hapless existence in Vietnam, where she is tortured by both political sides (the Viet Cong and the South Vietnamese government), she is forced into prostitution and in her most desperate moments rummages through the garbage at a military camp, where she sees, to her horror, the remains of Vietnamese prostitutes killed by American soldiers. Le Ly is rescued from her "bad karma" by U.S. Marine Steve Butler (Tommy Lee Jones) to California, where aisles of food lining supermarkets and massive well-stocked refrigerators signify a land of plenty. Haunted by the guilt of his participation in Vietnam, Steve despairs of his sanity, kidnaps their children and commits suicide. Thirteen years later, Le Ly is a successful businesswoman renting houses and owning restaurants.

The underlying ethos of *Heaven and Earth* is strikingly similar to the captivity narratives of the frontier myth. Le Ly fulfils many of the criteria defining the captive:

> In it a single individual, usually a woman, stands passively under the strokes of evil, awaiting rescue by the grace of God. The sufferer represents the whole, chastened body of Puritan society; and the temporary bondage of captive to Indian is a dual paradigm -- of the bondage of the soul to the flesh and to the temptations arising from original sin, and of the self-exile of the English Israel from England. . .The captive's ultimate redemption by the grace of Christ and the efforts of the puritan magistrates is likened to the regeneration of the soul in conversion. The ordeal is at once threatful of pain and evil and promising of ultimate salvation.[44]

She attributes each experience of torture she suffers to "bad karma" -- punishment for the sins of her past lives and not to her oppressor's abuse of authority, with an adulterous affair in Saigon representing "the bondage of the soul to the flesh and to the temptations arising from original sin". Steve facilitates her "ultimate redemption". Though she is not a "self-exile" of an "English Israel from England", this difficulty is resolved by the American conception of South Vietnam as a captive of North Vietnamese forces, and Stone's whitening of his female protagonist.[45] Le Ly is victimised not only by the Viet Cong, but also tortured by the South Vietnamese soldiers. Though this last instance is witnessed by an American soldier it is clear that he is innocent of the atrocities committed on the woman.

A sequence that could pose a problem to this argument is the segment where Le Ly's father is badly beaten by the American soldiers, but this is dissipated by Stone's specific use of a cinematic device. He shoots the sequence in six frames a second and in black and white 35mm to emphasise that it was a "fractured memory". The vague nature of this episode is contrasted with the sequence where Le Ly's mother is almost executed by the Viet Cong, where the sequence is shot with twenty-four frames a second.[46] At the end of the film, Le Ly is "whitened" by her acculturation to the American way, and this is signalled by several incidents. In opposition to a previous section where the behaviour of her parents establishes the patriarchal nature of power relations between the Vietnamese sexes Le Ly loses the submissive and long suffering traits of an "oriental wife" and finds herself behaving "like an American": scowling and speaking back to her husband. When she returns to Vietnam, her mother finds her so changed that she is called ghost -- a direct

Chinese translation of someone with a foreign appearance, in this context Caucasian. The acculturation of Le Ly is not contrary to Stone's intentions, for his aim was to present "a woman's life in a series of stages and transformations; her identity is remade by one person after another until she discovers her true self."[47] The discovery is that her salvation can only be attained in America, an assertion that is also made in Hayslip's autobiography.

Hayslip Americanises her native experience of war by making it an uncanny reflection of the American fight for independence: it was "like the American Revolution."[48] In a subsequent chapter entitled "The Pursuit of Happiness", in the second part "Finding the American Dream" (both terms are employed literally) of *Child of War, Woman of Peace*, Hayslip has no qualms in declaring that this independence, the route to self-discovery, is achieved in America:

> I now owned three houses in and around a major American city and a third of a growing business -- no mean feat for a *meo con* kitten so scrawny at birth that the peasant midwife wanted to choke me and throw me away!. . .And (though I still collected rejection slips) my book was ripening on its vine along with my bank account.
> Was there anything more a woman like me could want?[49]

Hayslip's autobiography offers the possibility of redemptive war via the implementation of a captivity narrative, as a chronicle of the successful attainment of "The American Dream", in which the basis of success finds its improbable source in the American invasion of Vietnam. In the movie, it is also in America that the pivotal act of violence takes place.

Tommy Lee Jones's character is akin to Willem Dafoe's in the first two films of the trilogy. He becomes another 'Saint of the woods', as the tragic hero who is scapegoated for the extension of civilisation -- upon his return to the States, he discloses to Le Ly that he cannot assimilate back into a life of inactivity as the marine corps had made him a "killer", and he did not know how to do anything else. His descent into savagery is marked by the barbaric kidnapping of their children. The mantle of civilisation is passed onto the whitened Le Ly, who emerges as victor in the violent act (the kidnapping and encounter with the savage) and the cycle of "Regeneration Through Violence" is completed. This route through the frontier cycle is traced in the following diagram:

CYCLE OF REGENERATION
THROUGH VIOLENCE IN
HEAVEN AND EARTH

SEPARATION

1

2

METROPOLIS

3

VIETNAMESE
WILDERNESS

6

4

5

RETURN: TRIUMPH OF CIVILIZATION
OVER SAVAGERY
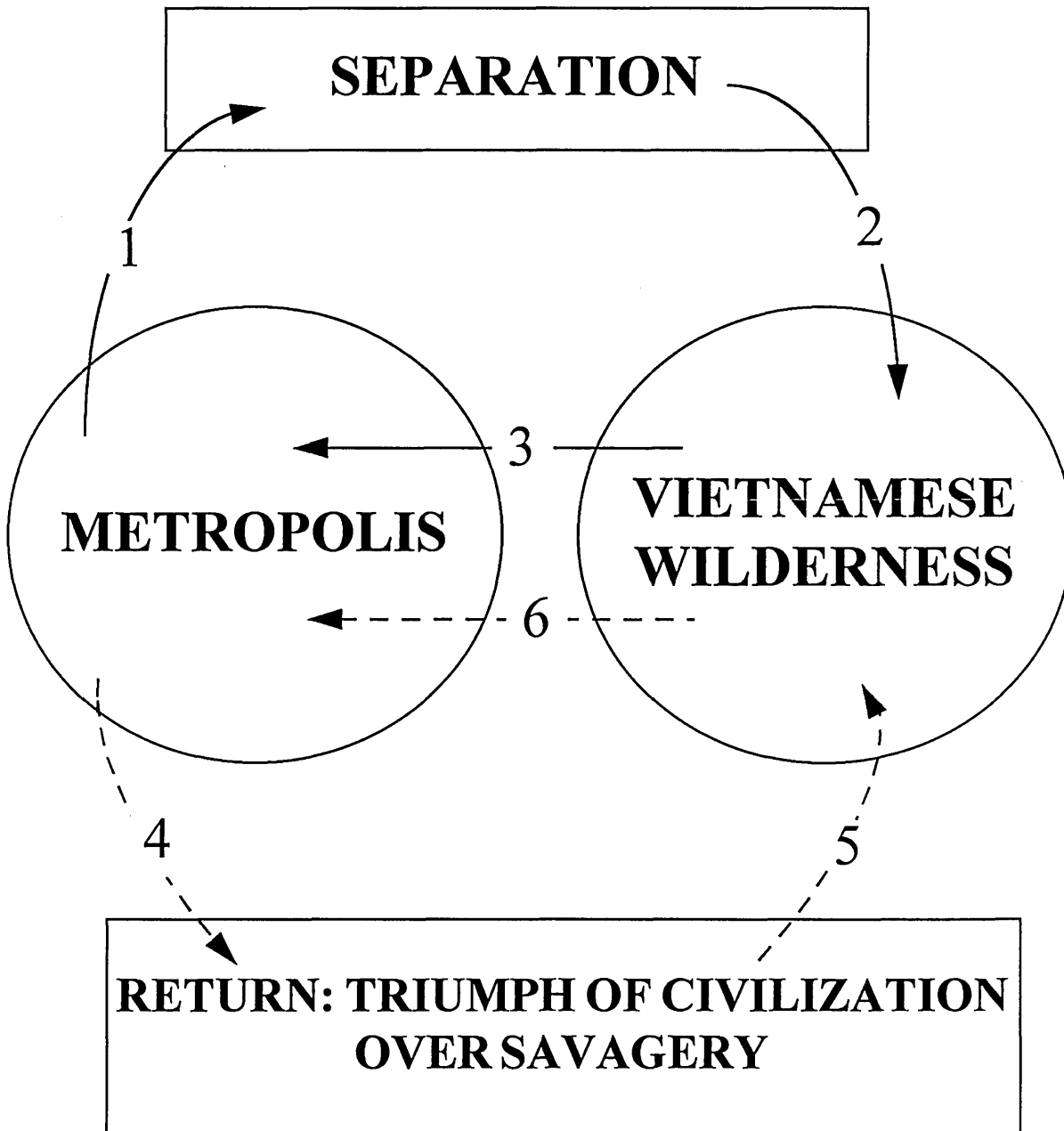
KEY

⟶ First Journey: Rescuing of Female Captive

---▶ Second Journey: Torch of Civilization passed to Le Ly

In all three films the Vietnam War is imagined as a site that produces a frontier hero, with a corresponding acquisition of regeneration through violence. They are surfaces of emergence in which the translation from frontier myth to discourse is intact. The communication of frontier ideology, and manipulation of history to depict not defeat, loss and suffering but victory and regeneration in Vietnam are located within realist narratives that claim authenticity. These second wave Vietnam War films occupy the third level of historic manipulation, while parading as historic accuracy. The ideology of American supremacy -- damaged in the 1960's and shattered after Vietnam -- undergoes a complex process of repair and negotiation within popular culture to the point of attaining naturalisation.

Seen in this context, Auster and Quart's unease as to the only "rhetorical obeisance" that the Reagan administration makes to the Vietnam dead is, in fact, a logical progression of events:

(The Reagan administration) continues to often demonstrate an utter obliviousness to the (Vietnam) war's murderous lessons. Its covert, overt, and illegal support of the contras in Nicaragua *repeats many of the same strategies and arguments that led us into the Vietnam quagmire*. Beyond Nicaragua, the administration offers inflated and ever-escalating military budgets, hard-line posturing on arms control and the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), and in general a penchant for cold-war oratory and confrontational politics that has softened under the spotlight of Gorbachev's *glasnost*.[50]

My Emphasis

297

The implications of a successful masking of the horrors of war, a legitimisation of that experience, and a displacement of its reality with a new constructed past that re-instates the original martial ideology, are sobering. The domestication of war in times of peace -- its acceptance as a natural route to social heroism -- entails an attitude of brutalisation and indifference to individual human life that could perpetuate itself in greater manifestations of mass violence.[51] A frontier myth that is exposed and shattered does not have the ideological power to propel men into action against a political enemy, but when repaired, its ideological utility can once again be exploited. This process was achieved with the tools of popular culture, in a decade when the audience for the movies was unlikely to have been directly involved in the war, or witnessed first-hand its devastating effects of suffering and loss.

The Post-Revisionist Western

The revival of the Western in the late 1980s points to this repair of the frontier myth. Including the two *Young Guns* (1988, 1990), *Lonesome Dove* and *Dances with Wolves* (1990), movies that Slotkin sees as the genesis of a fourth sustained revival of the Western genre, the flood of Westerns consists of *Silverado* (1985), *City Slickers* (1991), *Unforgiven*, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1992), *Geronimo: An American Legend*, *Tombstone* (1993), *Bad Girls*, *Maverick*, *Wyatt Earp*, *The Cowboy Way* (1994), *The Quick and the Dead* (1995), and the Western movie animations of *An American Tail: Fievel Goes West* (1991), *Pocahontas* and *Toy Story* (1995). It is striking that, with some

exceptions (notably *Unforgiven*, but Clint Eastwood has seldom been unexceptional), many of these recent Westerns tend to be "post-revisionist" -- relapsing backward to a stage prior to the generic progression of revisionist Westerns that began with *Broken Arrow*. It would not be possible to analyse all the films mentioned here in any great depth, but a select key group would suffice in explaining the nature of the post-revisionist Western.

The Last of the Mohicans returns the Western to its point of mythic origin -- that of the captivity narrative. The film's retelling of frontier mythology has clearly been facilitated by the process of mythic repair. The frontier myth emerges in its purest form, re-situating the film in a period where that direct representation can once again convey the quality of mythic verisimilitude. *The Last of the Mohicans* contains frontier discourse that explicitly communicates the fundamentals of the myth. While revisionist Westerns seek to elevate the Indian with a sympathetic representation, the post-revisionist Western firmly reinstates the boundary between American and Other, often through a process of dehumanisation. Early on in *The Last of the Mohicans* for example, there is the stereotypical barbaric ambush led by the Hurons on the retreating British forces, replete with scalping and the slashing of throats on a tumultuous killing field. In addition to this, a racist interpretation of acceptable sexuality is perpetuated in the transference of the romantic alliance from the Mohican Uncas and Cora in Cooper's 1826 original rendition onto Hawkeye and Cora, with Uncas and Alice (a secondary alliance consisting not of actualised passion but of smouldering glances) killed off in a move to avoid any blurring of the boundary between the American and the Other.

299

The Last of the Mohicans is followed by no less than two versions of the showdown at the O.K. Corral: *Wyatt Earp* and *Tombstone*. Edward Gallafent writes that the titles of these two recent Westerns would evoke associations that are likely to relate modern audiences to a significant body of Western fact, fiction, and film-making. The films depict incidents and characters that are intrinsic parts of the landscape of the Western, exemplified particularly in *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *Gunfight at the OK Corral* (1957).[52] While *The Last of the Mohicans* brings the Western back to its mythic origins, these Westerns recall the genre's "Golden era", when the Western was a thriving and dominant vehicle of frontier discourse. The following critiques *Wyatt Earp* together with *Silverado* and *Dances with Wolves*, because in each of these Westerns Kevin Costner is cast as the quintessential post-revisionist Westerner.

In *Wyatt Earp*, Kevin Costner is literally John Rambo in cowboy boots, and the frontier hero is reinstated as an invincible super-human -- in the showdown near the OK Corral with the Clantons, Earp walks into point-blank gunfire and is unscathed. Costner is in the centre of the frame, his coat tails lifted in the wind like the cape of superman, while the bodies of his compatriots and the enemy are scattered around him. His second supernatural encounter occurs when he is in pursuit of the same gang of rustlers, this time for the revenge of his brother Morgan. Earp and Doc Holliday are ambushed as they traverse some cliffs, and Earp runs out of ammunition. He turns around, walks to his horse and reaches for his shotgun, turning back to face a member of the Clanton gang who has, all this time, been firing at him with a gun in each hand. The look of incredulity on this man's face as he falls to the ground, barely five metres away, is no doubt a sentiment

shared by the spectator. In general, the movie echoes celebratory treatments of the legend of Wyatt Earp such as in *My Darling Clementine* and *Gunfight at the OK Corral*. A revisionist depiction of the legend would question it, as in *Hour of the Gun* and *Doc*.

The movie's expression of legend and truth is telling. This surfaces in relation to the story of Tommy O'Rourke, whom Earp is reputed to have saved from a lynch mob. Earlier on in the movie, Josie Marcus questions Earp about the incident, and it is clear that this story endears him to her and is a factor that grounds their romantic alliance. Earp's reply is that he cannot remember the man. At the end of the movie, after 17 years have passed, Earp and Josie (now his wife) are on their way to Alaska when a young man recognises him and thanks him for saving his uncle Tommy O'Rourke. As the nephew of O'Rourke relates the story to jog Earp's memory, the audience is provided with a flashback of the incident. No cinematic devices are present that suggest the story is vague, though it is second-hand and passed down from the young man's father. The young man leaves after expressing his respect for Earp. Earp turns around and says: "Some people say it didn't happen that way", but Josie gets the last word -- an echo of the editor in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* -- "Never mind Wyatt, it happened that way". They gaze off into the horizon and then autobiographical details of the various characters in the movie come onto the screen, the ages they lived up to, as well as the claim that Wyatt died without having been so much as grazed by a bullet.

The Costner persona does not vary much in *Dances with Wolves*. The superman image is established in the opening sequences, when Dunbar, played by Costner, attempts suicide. In between two armies fighting in the civil war, Costner rides his horse (with the

letters "U.S." symbolically printed on its side) across the field -- the camera focuses on his hands on the reigns and pans outwards as he lifts his arms in cruciform pose. Barely 20 metres away, a line of soldiers is firing at him, and a total of 27 shots fail even to graze the rider. The voice-over tells us: "In trying to produce my own death I was elevated to the status of a living hero." Michael Walker has written about how this sequence could even be a specific reference to Sgt. Elias in *Platoon*, at his moment of death.[53] While Elias dies in Vietnam, however, Costner is resurrected after his cruxifiction. The translation from vet to frontier hero is here accomplished with ease. The movie also pays homage to captivity narratives found in *Little Big Man* and *Soldier Blue*. Dunbar is posted to an abandoned soldier's fort, and cultivates friendships with the neighbouring Sioux people. He falls in love with Stands with a Fist, a white woman whose family was massacred by the Pawnee and adopted by the Holy Man of the Lakota tribe, Kicking Bird (Graham Greene). Unlike the Vietnam Westerns, Dunbar later fully acculturated as Dances with Wolves -- he eats raw buffalo, wears Indian dress, dances round a fire he builds himself to a background soundtrack of Indian war whoops -- is not a victim. He leaves the tribe attended by a sober and tearful farewell (so that the potential My Lai is circumvented), with his wife by Indian marriage (who is conveniently white to avoid similar racial complications as in *Last of the Mohicans*). There is a suggestive line in the movie said by Kicking Bird's wife about the union of Dunbar and Stands With a Fist: "Noone is angry", "it makes sense" because "they are both white".

In *Silverado* Costner is Jake, the younger brother of Emmet. The strand of humour attached to his character *Dances with Wolves* is also present in this earlier film.

Costner belongs to the group of "good" cowboys -- those who care about dogs and little old ladies (Paden, played by Kevin Kline), who act responsibly towards younger and weaker members of their family (Emmet and Malachi) -- with only the rather precious flaw of kissing girls he shouldn't be kissing. The "bad" cowboys use the number 13 and are mean to little old ladies (Cob), they let their cattle loose on land that is not theirs, victimise old men of a minority race, and kidnap little boys (McKendrick's gang) and gamble (Slick). The movie reads like a morality play with equivalent dialogue. Rosanna Arquette's character warns Paden (Kevin Kline) that her beauty will not last but that the beauty of the earth will, and Estelle doesn't like the fact that "good people are being hurt" because of her. Kevin Kline exhibits the qualities of the post-revisionist hero when he shoots a thief -- the latter is advancing on him, fires four shots (one going through the seat of Kline's long johns but not touching him). Kline is all this while stationary, and loading the gun he has just bought from a store. When he is ready he looks up, fires one shot and kills the horse-rider.

All three movies are explicit versions of frontier mythology, and also engage in idealized, uncomplicated discourses of the myth. The supremacy of the white protagonist bows only to verisimilitude of a generic and mythic nature. Cultural verisimilitude is deemed unecessary when credibility in the frontier discourse is unproblemmatic. In *Wyatt Earp* the glorification of the legend is accompanied with a dismissal of the Native American. Aside from derogatory comments, one made by Sheriff Johnny Behan that Indians who are afraid of their souls being captured by the camera, and another by O'Rourke's nephew that whilst Earp was saving his uncle his brothers were away

"collecting renegade Indians", the sole native American in the movie makes his presence as "Indian Charlie", a member of the Clanton gang. "Indian Charlie" appears in three scenes. The camera provides a fleeting glimpse of him when members of the Clanton gang are tried in court, and if that went by unnoticed, the camera is given an excuse to draw more attention to him when he tries to steady himself after Doc Holliday slaps the horse he is riding, and finally his longest acting segment has him being pursued through the woods before being gunned down by Earp. In *Dances with Wolves* the Lakota are "polite guests", "eager to laugh, devoted to family", with a "familiar humour" and Dunbar has never met a people "so dedicated to each other". The depiction of the Pawnee, however, is where the movie falls short of being pro-Native American. Apart from carrying the responsibility of the flashback massacre on a white family including women and children, they scalp and kill an innocent mule skinner (with unforgivably inequitable odds of four to one), attack the harmonious Lakota tribe without good reason ("Pawnee do not come for horses, they come for blood). The U.S. Army is portrayed as insane, illiterate and corrupt. Costner does, however, emerge as the noble white frontier hero one step above the Lakota in sacrificing himself for their safety. In *Silverado* no native Americans feature at all, though the role of Malachi Johnson does provide a slight balance to the other three WASP heroes.

The re-release of the *Star Wars* trilogy in the wake of *Independence Day* deserves some comment. *Independence Day* is unreservedly a vessel of WASP ideology, where the savage Other, as with *Star Wars*, is alien. The climax of the film occurs when the two male protagonists manage to fly an alien craft into the mothership (acquisition of the skills

of the Other) and implant a computer virus, enabling the American President to fire the disabling shot that saves the world from the alien invasion. The world is saved by the representative of WASP patriarchy, and the fourth of July becomes Independence Day for the entire world. A telling comment is made by one of the non-American troops expressing the gratitude that the rest of the world should be feeling: "I'm glad the Americans are doing something". The conservative backlash of the 1980s relating to the discrediting of American values in the sixties and seventies echoes the attempt to restore status quo in the thirties. A comparison of the instrumentality that genres in popular culture had in reflecting and negotiating the changes in the socio-political environment of these two periods will form the argument of the conclusion.

Epilogue
Generic Interludes and the Reconstruction of Myth

> . . .repression operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to
> silence, an affirmation of non-existence, and, by implication, an admission that
> there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, nothing to know. Such
> was the hypocrisy of our bourgeois society with its halting logic.[1]
>
> Michel Foucault

The Western's "golden era" separates the two periods regularly identified as lapses in the
history of the genre. Gerald D. Nash writes that the reception of the West as myth
between 1945 and 1960 was exceptionally positive -- by 1950 Americans read at least 18
million Westerns annually, tens of millions went to see the frontier myth communicated in
movie Westerns, while audiences of television Westerns such as "Bonanza" and
"Gunsmoke" formed even greater numbers.[2] The occurrence of such a phenomenon was
far from the anticipations of trade papers that predicted the demise of the Western in the
late 1920s.

Similar forecasts of the genre's eclipse were made in the late 1960s. Richard
Maltby suggests that in this latter instance the Western is formulated as a critical object: a
cultural text of masculine seriousness by white male critics. That decade of uncertainty

spawned key works that elevated the Western to a state of classicism -- in 1969 Jim Kitses wrote *Horizons West*, in 1971 John G. Cawelti *Six Gun Mystique*, in 1973 Philip French *Westerns*, in 1974 Jack Nachbar edited the volume *Focus on the Western* and in 1975 Will Wright published *Six Guns and Society*. The exception appears to be *There Must be a Lone Ranger* (1974), written by a woman, Jenni Calder. However, the distinction ends there. Calder's approach to the movie genre is not at variance with the project of her white male counterparts; in fact, *There Must be a Lone Ranger*, as its title suggests, positions itself as a nostalgic construction of the genre. This is exemplified early in her introduction, where she announces her intention "to describe and explain the essential ingredients of the Western in terms of the contribution to the myth and their appeal", with the attendant claim that "the Western defies the limitations of history". Calder's selection of Westerns consists of those screened in the 25 years preceding her work, a corpus ('A' Westerns made between 1945 and the early 1970s) on which importance is also bestowed in the other key works mentioned. The justification she gives for this is significant because of its emphasis on nostalgia: "it is these films that are most likely to have been seen and remembered by those who take pleasure in Westerns."[3] Her conclusion re-enacts the dehistoricizing process that began in her introductory claim:

> It is not necessary to belong to the West to enjoy this submission of the Western heritage. It is not even necessary to be American; millions of non-Americans respond to the re-enactment of the individual facing a gigantic challenge. The sheer scope of challenge in the Western is probably unique. That and the solitariness of the hero make the confrontation both elemental and magnificent. *They are two of the essential qualities of classic myth and*

in one form or another audiences have been responding to them for centuries.[4]

<div align="right">My Emphasis</div>

This granting of classic status and the attribution of timelessness in the form of this nostalgic construction ("the Western") is based on a historically limited body of film texts. In a comparable manner, the frontier myth, though originating from a specific historical period, defies history in its acquisition of a persistant usage that defines a society's way of interpreting its present and recent past.

In the two periods of heightened political and social crisis identified in this thesis, the frontier myth became an anachronism: it reverted back to a series of actual events in the historical past that had no relevance in the present. Moreover, its version of those events were now suspect. A myth can only be persuasive if it can be understood as history, but the frontier myth's interpretation of actual events in the past was in the two periods of crisis regarded as historically inaccurate. As a result, explicit discourses of the myth that impose its version of contemporary events were rejected. In the 1930s this rejection pertained especially to the narrative of expansion, and in the 1970s the narrative of victory. In the 1970s there is a moment when the mythology is reinterpreted, and the Vietnam Western maintains that its revisionist account of history is accurate, but in the telling of that accurate historical account, the mythology is discredited.

The gaps in the Western's popularity were interludes when these components in the deep structure of the myth (the narratives of expansion and victory) were repressed. They represented an act of atonement for the sins of materialism and imperialism

respectively, "an admission that there was nothing to say about such things". However, the migration of frontier discourse to other genres -- sustaining the myth in the 1930s, and repairing it in the 1970s and 1980s -- created a space of ideological negotiation that allowed for a reassertion of the myth's utility. The following diagram charts this process:

MYTHIC REPAIR IN THE
1930s AND 1970s

STRUCTURE
OF MYTH
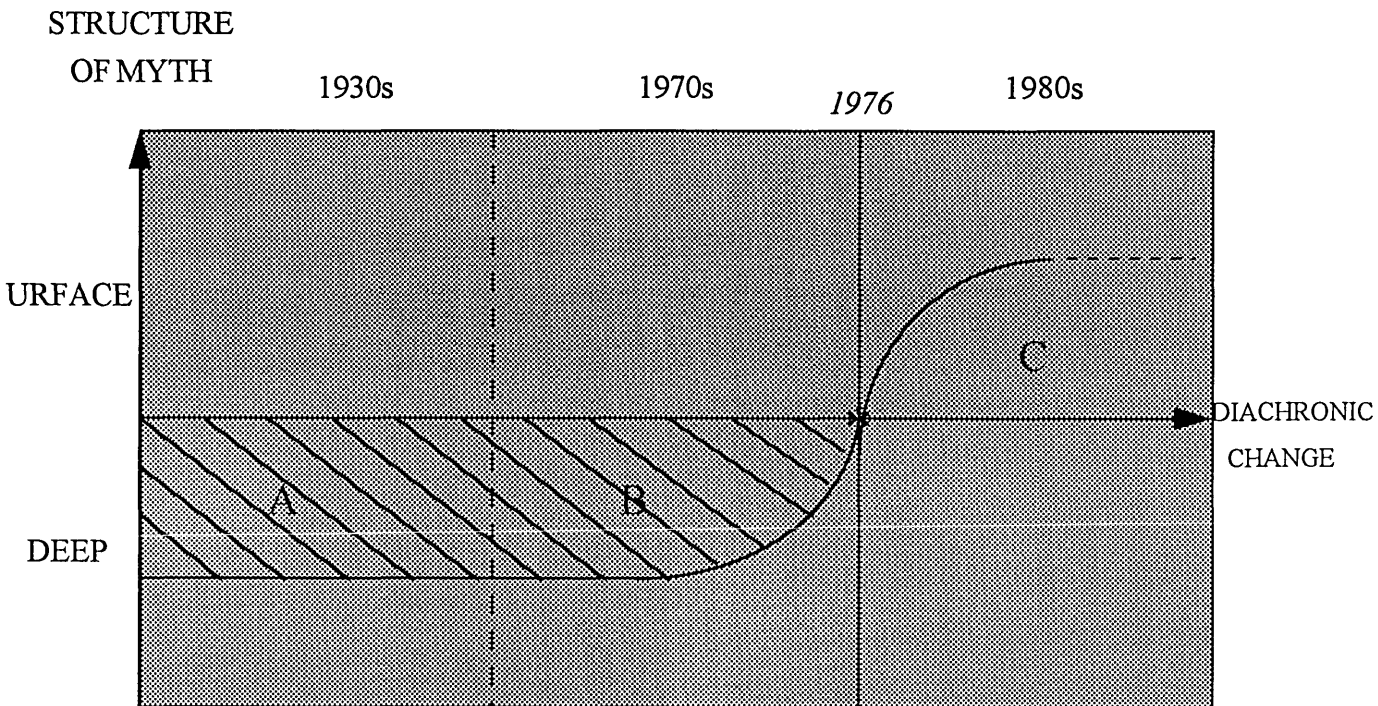
A: Suppression of narrative of expansion
   (Gangster film and 'B' Western)

B: Suppression of narrative of victory
   (Vietnam Western and 1st wave Vietnam War films)

*: Release of *Star Wars*

C: Frontier Myth emerges intact
   (2nd wave Vietnam War films and the Post-revisionist Western)

The argument of this thesis has been to illustrate the cultural instrumentality of movie genres as receptacles for myth: the generic space of the Western remains relevant when diachronic challenges can be accommodated by a binary resolution that offers an overlap between cultural and a mythic verisimilitude. This process of ideological negotiation is more complex in reponse to the 1970s, when the myth is dismantled to its basic constituents such that the original process of myth-making is replicated. The captivity narrative is severed from the triumphalist scenario of the Indian-war story, a disassembling of the historical integration that Slotkin locates as the moment that was the genesis of the Myth of the Frontier "in which the triumph of civilization over savagery is symbolized by the hunter/warrior's rescue of the White woman held captive by savages."[5] The reinstatement of innocence was successfully united with the restoration of a credible, victorious hero-protagonist in the post-Vietnam war era. The post-revisionist Western communicates explicit frontier discourses of an imperialist victory, negating and separating itself from the disabling charges of racism and sexism. This celebration of the frontier resists accusations of hypocrisy. It attests to the provenance of myth in tandem with the instruments of popular culture -- transcending history and substituting a new and guiltless past in the shared memory of the American imagination.

Appendix

The following statistics are selected from tables compiled by Ed Buscombe in the *BFI Companion to the Western* (London: Andre Deutsch/BFI Publishing, 1988), pp. 426-428.

Table 1: Production of Westerns 1930-1940

1930	79
1931	85
1932	108
1933	65
1934	76
1935	145
1936	135
1937	135
1938	112
1939	123
1940	143

Table 2: Production of Westerns / Total Features by Studio 1928-1940

	COL	FOX	MGM	PAR	RKO	UA	U	WB
1930	5/29	4/48	5/47	5/63	3/32	0/15	14/40	6/76
1931	11/31	5/48	2/46	6/61	4/33	0/13	2/23	0/54
1932	16/29	4/40	1/39	2/55	8/46	0/14	9/30	3/55
1933	10/32	5/50	0/42	6/59	4/48	1/16	9/37	3/55
1934	4/43	2/52	1/43	4/53	1/46	0/20	6/44	0/58
1935	13/49	3/52	1/47	8/58	3/40	1/19	9/37	2/49
1936	15/52	4/57	3/45	12/72	5/39	2/17	9/28	4/56
1937	15/52	6/61	2/51	12/64	5/53	0/25	9/37	8/68
1938	19/54	3/56	1/46	10/50	10/43	1/16	11/46	3/52
1939	14/52	5/59	3/49	12/50	8/49	1/19	7/49	2/53
1940	17/51	8/49	4/49	1/37	7/53	2/20	10/55	2/43

Table 3: Major Hollywood Studios' Production of 'A' and 'B' Westerns 1930-1940

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
COL											
All films	29	31	29	32	43	49	52	52	54	52	51
All Westerns	5	11	16	10	4	13	15	15	19	14	17
'A' Westerns	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
FOX											
All films	48	48	40	50	52	52	57	61	56	59	49
All Westerns	4	5	4	5	2	3	4	6	3	5	8
'A' Westerns	2	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	3	3
MGM											
All films	47	46	39	42	43	47	45	51	46	49	49
All Westerns	5	2	1	-	1	1	3	2	1	3	4
'A' Westerns	2	1	-	-	-	1	3	1	1	2	2
PAR											
All films	63	61	55	59	53	58	72	64	50	57	50
All Westerns	5	6	2	6	4	8	12	12	10	8	10
'A' Westerns	2	2	-	-	-	1	2	2	1	1	2
RKO											
All film	32	33	46	48	46	40	39	53	43	49	53
All Westerns	3	4	8	4	1	3	5	5	10	8	7
'A' Westerns	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
UA											
All films	15	13	4	15	20	19	17	24	16	19	20
All Westerns	-	-	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	1	2
'A' Westerns	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
U											
All films	40	23	30	37	44	37	28	37	46	49	55
All Westerns	14	2	9	9	6	9	9	9	11	7	10
'A' Westerns	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
WB											
All films	76	54	55	55	58	49	56	68	52	53	43
All Westerns	6	-	3	3	-	2	4	8	3	2	2
'A' Westerns	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	2
Totals											
All films	350	309	308	339	359	351	366	411	363	387	370
All Westerns	42	30	43	38	18	40	54	57	58	48	60
'A' Westerns	9	5	2	1	-	4	7	3	4	9	13

Notes

Preface

1. John Harkness, *The Academy Awards Handbook* (NY: Pinnacle Books, 1994). At this point I am leaving out *The Deer Hunter* as it falls into the category of war films.

2. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 627.

3. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 628.

4. Richard White, "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill" in James R. Grossman, ed., *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1994), p. 9.

5. White, "Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill", p. 54.

6. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 254.

7. Paul Smith, *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production* (London: UCL Press Limited, 1993), p. 264.

8. Patricia Nelson Limerick, "The Adventures of the Frontier in the Twentieth Century" in James R. Grossman, ed., *The Frontier in American Culture*, p. 74.

Chapter One: The Western and Hollywood's Classic Era

1. Robert Warshow, "Movie Chronicle: The Westerner", in *Focus on The Western*, ed. Jack Nachbar (N.J.: Prentice-hall, Inc., 1974), p. 52.

2. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 234.

3. Richard Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995), p. 107.

4. Steve Neale, "Questions of Genre", *Screen* 31:1 (Spring 1990), p. 46.

5. Neale, "Questions of Genre", p. 56.

6. Dwight Macdonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," in Rosenberg and White, eds.

Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America (New York: Free Press, 1957), quoted in Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema,* p. 28.

7. Richard Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia", *Movie* no. 24 (Spring 1977), pp. 10-1.

8. Dyer, "Entertainment and Utopia", p. 12.

9. John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 5.

10. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance,* p. 5.

11. Richard Dyer, *The Dumb Blonde Stereotype: Documentation for EAS Class-room Materials* (London: Educational Advisory Service, BFI, 1979).

12. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance,* pp. 6-8.

13. Thomas Schatz, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981), p. 4.

14. Robert B. Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 29.

15. Balio, 1976; Schatz, *Hollywood Genres,* p. 4.

16. David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge, 1985), p. 91.

17. Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson, p. 96.

18. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres,* p. 6; Schatz derives his statistics from Christopher H. Sterling and Timothy R. Haight's *The Mass Media: Aspen Institute Guide to Communication Industry Trends* (NY: Praeger Publishers, 1978).

19. Charles Eckbert, "Shirley Temple and the House of Rockerfeller," *Jump Cut2* (July-August 1974), p. 1; Ray, p. 30.

20. Lewis Jacobs, *The Rise of the American Film* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1939), p. 421; Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Social History of the American Movies* (New York: Random House, 1975), pp. 162-167; Tino Balio, *Grand Design: Hollywood as Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939* (California: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 22-25.

21. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres,* p. 30.

22. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres,* p. 31. Donald MacRae suggests that this ideological tension is characteristically American, inevitable for a nation founded on a claim to

perfection, yet still strongly aspiring to progress (Richard Maltby, *Harmless*
Entertainment: Hollywood and the Ideology of the Consensus [London: The
Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1983], p. 160.)

23. Balio, p. 281.

24. Neale, "Questions of Genre", p. 64.

25. Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, p. 110.

26. Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, p. 109.

27. Andre Bazin insisted on the category of "Sur-Western" which stressed the
romanisation of frontier themes. (*Cahiers du Cinema*, Christmas 1995; George N.
Fenin and William K. Everson, *The Western: From Silents to the Seventies*
[Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977], p. 19)

28. Philip French, *Westerns: Aspects of a Movie Genre* (London: Secker & Warburg,
BFI, 1973), p. 18.

29. Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*,
(Cleveland, Ohio: Press of Case Western University, 1973), p. 5.

30. Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p. 16.

31. Kristin Thompson, *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis*
(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 11.

32. Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, p. 18.

33. Carol Clover, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*
(London: BFI, 1992), p. 11.

34. James B. Twitchell, *Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror* (NY and
Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 84; Clover, p. 11.

35. Robin Wood, "Return of the Repressed," *Film Comment* 14 (1978), p. 26; Clover,
p. 12.

36. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 233.

37. Andrew Britton, "Blissing Out: The Politics of Reaganite Entertainment," *Movie*
31/32 (1986), pp. 2-3; Clover, p. 9.

38. Tzvetan Todorov, 'An Introduction to Verisimilitude' in *Introduction to Poetics*
(Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1981), pp 118-119; Neale, "Questions of Genre", p.
47.

39. Richard Maltby, *Harmless Entertainment*, p. 25.

40. Ray, p. 26.

41. Alan Williams, 'Is a Radical Genre Criticism Possible?', *Quarterly Review of Film Studies*, vol. 9, no. 2 (Spring 1984) in Neale, "Questions of Genre", p. 59.

42. Tag Gallagher, 'Shoot-Out at the Genre Corral: Problems in the 'Evolution' of the Western'; Barry Keith Grant, ed., *Film Genre Reader* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), p. 212.

43. Alan Williams, 'Is a Radical Genre Criticism Possible?', p. 123.

44. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, Romance*, p. 252.

45. Schatz, *Hollywood* Genres, pp. 36-38.

46. Todorov, *The Fantastic*, p. 8.

47. Ray, p. 30.

48. Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Social History of American Movies*, (New York, Random House, 1975), pp. 195-96; Ray, p. 31.

49. Balio, pp. 37-72.

50. Maltby, "The Production Code and the Hays Office", p. 71.

51. Charles Eckert "The Anatomy of a Proletarian Film: Warner's *Marked Woman*,"*Film Quarterly* 27 (Winter 1973-1974), pp. 10-24.

52. Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), p. 1.

53. Ryan and Kellner, p. 1.

54. Ryan and Kellner, p. 1.

55. Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, p. 24.

56. Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, New York: Norton, 1978) p. 172; Ray, p. 13

57. David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), p. 31.

58. Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, p. 34.

59. Ryan and Kellner, p. 76.

60. John G. Cawelti, "*Chinatown* and Recent Generic Transformations" in *Film Genre Reader*, p. 192.

61. Cawelti, "*Chinatown* and Recent Generic Transformations", p. 194.

62. Christine Buci-Glucksmann, "Hegemony and Consent: A Political Strategy" in Anne Showstack Sassoon, ed., *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., 1982)

63. Maltby, *Harmless Entertainment*, p. 25.

64. Will Wright, *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 16, 25.

65. Christopher Frayling, *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 46.

66. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 68; Wright, p. 132.

67. Wright, p. 132.

68. Wright, p. 135.

69. Wright, p. 140.

70. Wright, p. 171.

71. C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Will Wright, p. 182.

72. Wright, pp. 182-184.

73. Wright, p. 183.

74. Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: The Penguin Group, 1990), p. 387.

75. Frayling, *Spaghetti Westerns*, p. 57.

Chapter Two: The Western and Frontier Mythology

1. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 6.

2. Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 3.

3. Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, pp. 3, 250.

4. Jim Kitses, *Horizons West: Anthony Mann, Budd Boetticher, Sam Peckinpah: Studies of Authorship within the Western* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd. in association with BFI, 1969), p. 12.

5. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 234.

6. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 5.

7. Theodor H. Gaster, "Myth and Story" in Alan Dundes, ed., *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 133.

8. H. Shärer, "Die Bedeutung des Menschenopfers im dajakischen Totenkult," *Mitteilungsblatt der deutschen Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde* (Hamburg, 1940) 25; Th. P. Van Baaren, "The Flexibility of Myth" in *Sacred Narrative*, p. 219.

9. Eric Dardel, "The Mythic" in *Sacred Narrative*, p. 233.

10. Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1986), pp. 37-38.

11. W.A. Williams, *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: A Study of the Growth and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Society* (London: Anthony Blond Ltd., 1970), p. 277.

12. J.A. Kasson, "The Monroe Declaration," *North American Review* (Sept. 1881), 247-249; W.A. Williams, p. 277-278.

13. Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 94.

14. White, pp. 328-329.

15. Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, pp. 38-39.

16. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 3.

17. Lewis Evans, *Geographical, Historical, Political, Philosophical Essays. The First, Containing an Analysis of a General Map of the Middle British Colonies in America*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1775), p. 31; Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 124.

18. Philip Freneau and High Henry Brackenridge, "The Rising Glory of America," *The Poems of Philip Freneau*, ed. Fred L. Pattee, I, 76n., 77n.-78n.; Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 125.

19. "The Internal State of America; Being a True description of the Interest Policy of That Vast Continent," in *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, ed. Albert H. Smyth, X, 117-118, 121; Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 125.

20. *Letters From an American Farmer* (London, 1782), p. 48 in Nash Smith, *Virgin*

Land, p. 126.

21. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Skethches of Eighteenth-Century America: More Letters from an American Farmer* (N.Y.: The New American Library, 1963), p. 48.

22. Crèvecoeur, p. 66.

23. Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 127.

24. Crèvecoeur, p. 37.

25. Crèvecoeur, p. 195.

26. Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, p. 70

27. Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (N. Carolina: University of N. Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 214-215.

28. *Boston Independent Chronicle*, Dec. 8, 22, 1785, Oct. 18, 1787; Gordon S. Wood, p. 219.

29. "On Hard Times," *American Museum*, I (1787), 462; Cumings, *Sermon Preached May 28, 1783*, 17-18; *Boston Independent Chronicle*, Mar. 23, 1787; Gordon S. Wood, p. 399.

30. Andrew's journey begins when he meets a substantial citizen who is also a prosperous farmer on the dock. He is guided through the process of finding work, finding land to rent as a tenant, and accommodating his tame Indian neighbours to become a man of property.

31. Crèvecoeur, pp. 203-209, 215, 223.

32. Crèvecoeur, p. 84.

33. Crèvecoeur, p. 98.

34. Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, p. 73.

35. William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1963), p. 33.

36. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*; Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment*, p. 73.

37. 31 Cong., 2 Sess. *Congressional Globe*, Appendix, p. 137 (January 29, 1851); Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 171.

38. Slotkin, *Fatal Environment*, pp. 16, 17, 39.

39. Henry Nash Smith, "Rain Follows the Plow: The Notion of Increased Rainfall for the Great Plains, 1844-1880," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, X, 169-193 (February,

1947); ----, *Virgin Land*, p. 174.

40. Helene S. Zahler, *Eastern Working Men and National Land Policy, 1829-1862*, (New York, 1941); Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 169.

41. Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in theGuilded Age* (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1982), p. 21.

42. Nash Smith, *Virgin land*, p. 170.

43. *New York Semi-Weekly Tribune* (May 9, 1862), quoted by Roy M. Robbins, "Horace Greely: Land Reform and Unemployment," *Agricultural History*, VII, 41 (January, 1933); Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 189.

44. *New York Semi-Weekly Tribune* (May 8, 1862), quoted by Joseph G. Rayback, "Land for the Landless. The Contemporary View," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Western Reserve University (1936), p. 89; Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 189.

45. *New York Semi-Weekly Tribune* (May 7, 1862), quoted by Joseph G. Rayback, "Land for the Landless. The Contemporary View," p. 89; Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, pp. 189-190.

46. Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 190. Nash Smith refers to Fred A. Shannon's "The Homestead Act and the Labor surplus," in *American Historical Review*, XLI, 638 (July, 1936) for these statistics.

47. Trachtenberg, p. 22.

48. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 17.

49. For William Gilpin's biography refer to Karnes, Thomas L., *William Gilpin: Western Nationalist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970) and chapter 3 of Nash Smith's *Virgin Land*; Slotkin, *Fatal Environment*, p. 220.

50. William Gilpin, *The Mission of the North American People, Geographical, Pastoral and Gold Regions of North America* (1873), pp. vi, 234; Slotkin, *Fatal Environment*, p. 220.

51. William Gilpin, *Mission of the North American People. . .*(Philadelphia, 1874), p. 130 quoting a letter of 1846); Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 37.

52. Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 38.

53. W.A. Williams, *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: A Study of the Growth and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Society* (New York: Random House, 1969), chs. 1-3; Hofstader, *The American Political Tradition and the Men*

Who Made It, New York: Vintage Books, 1974, ch. 3; Edward Pessen, *Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics,* Revised edition. Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1978, ch. 6; Lawrence I. Friedman, *Inventors of the Promised Land,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975, Pts. II-IV; Slotkin, *Fatal Environment,* p. 112.

54. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (NY: Modern Library Edition, 1937), p. 13; W.A. Williams, pp. 60-61.

55. Adam Smith, pp. 14-15, 355.

56. Adam Smith, pp. 17, 353, 645.

57. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 12.

58. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 13.

59. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History,* ed. George Rogers Taylor, Rev. ed. (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1965), p. 2.

60. Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence,* chs. 4-5; ----, *Fatal Environment,* pp. 63-64, 86-87; ----, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 15.

61. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 15.

62. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 8.

63. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983) esp. chs. 2-4.

64. Benedict Anderson, pp. 34-35, 44.

65. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 8. See Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, Romance,* chapter 1.

66. Trachtenberg, p. 150.

67. Trachtenberg, esp. Preface and chs. 5-6; Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 10.

68. Roger Schank, *Dynamic Memory: a Theory of Reminding and Learning in Computers and People* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 2-3, 26, 40-41.

Chapter Three: The Western Formula and Film Narrative

1. John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 16.

2. F. de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale,* Paris 1971 in *Synchronic or Diachronic?: A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis,* ed. Johnannes C. De Moor (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1995), p. 146.

3. Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 10.

4. John G. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970), p. 27.

5. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance,* pp. 29-30.

6. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 7.

7. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance,* pp. 10-3.

8. Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1964), p. 130.

9. Harry Berger, Jr., "Native Consciousness and Culture Change: An Essay in Historical Structuralism," *Bulletin of Midwest Modern Language Association,* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1973), p. 35; Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance,* p. 16.

10. Tompkins, *West of Everything,* p. 25.

11. Hans Robert Jauss, *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception,* Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982, p. 79; Neale, "Questions of Genre", pp. 56-57.

12. Warshow, *The Immediate Experience,* p. 147.

13. John Hellmann, *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 111.

14. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 231.

15. George N. Fenin and William K. Everson, *The Western: From Silents to Seventies* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd, 1962), p. 47.

16. Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema,* p. 117.

17. Fenin and Everson, pp. 47-49.

18. Fenin and Everson, pp. 47, 50.

19. Fenin and Everson, p. 52.

20. Philip French, *Westerns: Aspects of a Movie Genre* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1973), p. 48.

21. Charles Wagley and Marvin Harris, *Minorities in the New World* (NY: Columbia

University Press, 1958), p. 243 in Virginia Wright Wexman, *Creating the Couple: Love, Marriage and Hollywood Performance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 72.

22. Ellis Cashmere, *Dictionary of Race and Race Relations* (London: Routledge, 1984) 16, quoted in Wexman, p. 71.

23. Wexman, p. 72.

24. Fenin and Everson, p. 38.

25. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique*, p. 37.

26. Michael Walker "The Westerns of Delmer Daves" in Douglas Pye and Ian Cameron, eds, *The Movie Book of The Western* (London: Studio Vista, 1996), p. 124.

27. Douglas Pye, "Double Vision: Miscegenation and Point of View in The Searchers" in *The Movie Book of The Western*, p. 229.

28. Budd Boetticher, quoted in Jon Tuska, *The American West in Film: Critical Approaches to the Western* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), p. 224.

29. Tuska, pp. 224-225.

30. Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, p. 156.

31. Frederick Jackson Turner.

32. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique*, p. 39.

33. Patricia Hills, "Picturing Progress in the Era of Westward Expansion" in William H. Truettner, ed., *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920* (Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 102-112.

34. Tompkins, *West of Everything*, p. 69.

35. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique*, p. 39.

36. Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson, p. 175.

37. Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives", *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana, 1977); Frank Piecarczyk, unpublished doctoral thesis, p. 1.

38. Will Wright, *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 48-9.

39. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 10.

40. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 259.

1. Anthony Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-40* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1989), p. 2.

2. Badger, p. 14.

3. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 6.

4. Bruce Barton, 'How it came to be Written', *The Man Nobody Knows: A Discovery of the Real Jesus* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1924), p. 179, quoted in Richard Maltby, "*The King of Kings* and the Czar of All the Rushes: the propriety of the Christ story", *Screen* 31:2 (Summer 1990), p. 199.

5. T. J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization" pp. 13-14, quoted in Maltby, "*The King of Kings*," p. 199.

6. Tino Balio, *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), p. 13.

7. Ronald Brownstein, *The Power and the Glitter* (New York: 1992), p. 20, in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis*, p. 4.

8. Colin Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis: Cinema and American Society, 1929-1939* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 5.

9. Balio, p. 13.

10. Refer Appendix.

11. According to Paul Seale, though the exact origin of the double feature is obscure, it can be tracked to around 1927, appearing in the *Film Yearbook 1928*. The double bill is discussed further in chapter six.

12. Brian Taves, "The B Film: Hollywood's Other Half" in Balio, pp. 316-7.

13. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 710.

14. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, pp. 255-256.

15. Ed Buscombe, *The BFI Companion to the Western* (London: Andre Deutsch/BFI Publishing, 1988), p. 39.

16. Balio, p. 12.

17. Balio, p. 29; For a more detailed breakdown of budget figures for each sub-category

of the 'B' film refer to Taves's chapter, especially pp. 317-329.

18. Buscombe, *The BFI Companion to the Western*, p. 41.

19. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 255-256.

20. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 30.

21. Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations 1890-1990* (Albuquerque: The University of Mexico Press, 1991), p. 11.

22. Herbert Croly, *The Promise of American Life* (New York, 1909), pp. 7, 16, 18; Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, pp. 11-12.

23. Gerald D. Nash , *Creating the West*, p. 13.

24. Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: The Penguin Group, 1990), p. 457.

25. See p. 21.

26. Frederic Logan Paxson "The Pacific Railroads and the Disappearance of the Frontier in America" (1907), quoted in Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, p. 13.

27. Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, p. 21.

28. Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, pp. 23-27.

29. Charles Beard, quoted in Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, p. 23

30. Charles Beard, "The Myth of Rugged American Individualism", *Harper's* 164 (December 1931), 13-14; quoted in Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, p. 34.

31. John C. Almack, "The Shibboleth of the Frontier," *Historical Outlook* 16 (May 1925), 197, 198, 202; Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, pp. 27-28.

32. Michel Foucault, in Paul Rabinov, ed., *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought, with Major New Unpublished Material* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 301.

33. Foucault, in Rabinov, ed., *The Foucault Reader*, p. 302.

34. Buscombe, *The BFI Companion to the Western*, p. 43.

35. Joel W. Finler, *The Hollywood Story* (London: Pyramid Books, 1989), p. 36.

36. Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 253.

37. Finler, p. 276.

38. Finler, p. 36. The Western was originally budgeted at US$25,000 but was successful enough at the box office to launch Jesse Lasky and Cecil B. Demille's first picture.

39. James Monaco, James Pallot and Baseline, *The Second Virgin Film Guide* (Great Britain: Virgin Books, 1993) 73.

40. *Variety*, Oct 22, 1930, p. 17.

41. Finler, p. 175.

42. *Variety*, Oct 22, 1930, p. 27.

43. Alan Sheridan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1980), pp. 97-8.

44. Ray Allen Billington, *Frederick Jackson Turner: Historian, Scholar, Teacher* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 440-3, 446-51, 462-3; Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, p. 257.

45. Alvin Hansen, *Fiscal Policy and Business Cycles* (New York, 1941), pp. 43, 360; Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West*, p. 43.

46. Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 123.

47. *Variety*, February 18, 1931, p. 5.

48. Graham Barnfield, "Addressing Estrangement: Federal Arts Patronage and National Identity Under the New Deal", Cultural Studies Occasional Papers, Communication, Media and Communities Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University, p. 2.

49. Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, p. 512.

50. Barnfield, "Addressing Estrangement", p. 9.

51. Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, p. 511.

52. Senator Albert Johnson, quoted in Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, p. 512.

53. Hollinger, David A. (1975) "Ethnic Diversity, Cosmopolitanism and the Emergence of American Liberal Intelligentsia", *American Quarterly*, May : 133-134; Barnfield, "Addressing Estrangement," p. 3.

54. *Laws of the State of Illinois Enacted by the Fifty-fifth General Assembly at the Regular Biennial Session* (Springfield: State of Illinois, 1927), pp. 557-90 in Lizbeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 69-70.

55. Lizbeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, p. 95.

56. Barnfield, "Addressing Estrangement," p. 9.

57. Richard Maltby, "The Production Code and the Hays Office" in Tino Balio, *Grand*

Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 45.

58. Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood,* (New York, 1989) 119, in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis,* p. 220.

59. Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis,* pp. 220-221.

60. Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America,* p. 518.

61. The Editors, "Beer, Graft or Politics", *The New Republic,* April 12, 1933: 229-230 in Barnfield, , "Addressing Estrangement," p. 7.

62. Barnfield, "Addressing Estrangement," p. 8.

63. Reverend Moredecai F. Ham, quoted in Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America,* p. 520.

64. Rolf Lunden, *Business and Religion in the American 1920s* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1988), pp. 58, 65 in Maltby, "*The King of Kings* and the Czar of All the Rushes," p. 196.

65. Endnotes 65 to 67 are from Maltby, "*The King of Kings* and the Czar of All the Rushes," pp. 196-8.

66. Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and world, 1929), p. 406.

67. Rolf Lunden, *Business and Religion in the American 1920s,* p. 74.

68. Maltby, "*The King of Kings* and the Czar of All the Rushes," p. 190.

69. W.E. Leuchtenberg, *The Perils of Prosperity* (Chicago, 1958) 188, in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis,* p. 9.

70. Maltby, "*The King of Kings* and the Czar of All the Rushes", p. 212.

71. William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 14.

72. Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America,* p. 62, 68-71.

73. Paula Rabinowitz, *They Must be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 75-104.

74. Richard Maltby, "Tragic Heroes?: Al Capone and The Spectacle of Criminality, 1948-1931", in John Benson, Ken Berryman and Wayne Levy, eds, *Screening the Past: VI Australian History and Film Conference Papers,* (Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 1995), p. 115.

75. "The Gangster Film", Special Film Study Extract Supplement, BFI Education, Jan. 1978 (reprinted Nov. 1988), p. 24.

76. Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*, p. 57.

Chapter Five: Negotiating the Thirties

1. William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 92.

2. Robert B. Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 71.

3. Ray, p. 74.

4. Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: The Penguin Group, 1990), pp. 438, 461, 518.

5. Richard Maltby, "Tragic Heroes?: Al Capone and The Spectacle of Criminality, 1948-1931", in John Benson, Ken Berryman and Wayne Levy, eds, *Screening the Past: VI Australian History and Film Conference Papers*, (Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 1995), p. 116.

6. Maltby, "Tragic Heroes?" p. 115; Michael Woodwiss, *Crime, Crusades and Corruption, 1900-1987* (London: Pinter, 1988), p. 14.

7. Maltby, "Tragic Heroes?" pp. 116, 119.

8. Stephen Louis Karpf, *The Gangster Film: Emergence, Variation and Decay of a Genre 1930-1940* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), p. 43.

9. Jack Shadoian, *Dreams and Dead Ends: The American Gangster/ Crime Film* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1977), p. 23.

10. The ease with which Cagney plays both roles exemplifies this observation.

11. Robert Warshow, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero" in *The Immediate Experience* (New York: Anchor, 1964), pp. 87-88.

12. James Robert Parish and Michael R. Pitts, *The Great Gangster Pictures* (Metuchen, N.J: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1976), pp. 80-81.

13. Maltby, "Tragic Heroes?", p. 117.

14. Eugene Rosow, *Born to Lose: The Gangster Film in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 6.

15. Colin McArthur, *Underworld USA* (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 59.

16. Nash Smith, *Virgin Land*, p. 259.

17. Rosow, *Born to Lose*, p. 154.

18. Colin McArthur, p. 35.

19. Robert Warshow, "Movie Chronicle: The Westerner", in *Focus on The Western*, ed. Jack Nachbar (N.J.: Prentice-hall, Inc., 1974), p. 133.

20. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres*, p. 94.

21. Judith Hess Wright, "Genre Films and the Status Quo," in *The Genre Reader*, p. 49.

22. Shadoian, pp. 10-11.

23. Murray Kempton: *Part of Our Time* (New York, 1967), p. 5, quoted in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis*, p. 15.

24. A description of Hoover in the autumn of 1932, in Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States*, p. 532

25. Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States*, pp. 532-533.

26. *Variety*, 23 February 1932, quoted in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis*, p. 22.

27. *Variety*, 6 September 1932; 25 October 1932, quoted in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis*, p. 23

28. Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History*, ed. George Rogers Taylor, Rev. ed. (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1965), p. 2.

29. Stephen Louis Karpf, *The Gangster Film: Emergence, Variation and Decay of a Genre 1930-1940* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), p. 199.

30. Robert Sklar, *City Boys: Cagney, Bogart, Garfield* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 15.

31. Alice Barker at one point orders her sons to kill a middle-aged man whose blue eyes remind them of their father.

32. Herbert Hoover, quoted in Jack Salzman and Barry Wallenstein, eds, *Years of Protest* (NY: Western Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 10, 14 in Rosow, *Born to Lose*, p. 155. Endnotes 33 through to 36 are from Rosow, pp. 156-8.

33. Robert and Helen S. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (NY: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1937)

34. Letter from F. Clinton Spooner, Brooklyn, NY, *Screenland*, April 1930, p. 8.

35. Letter from Floyd Casebolt, Waxachia, Texas, *Movie Classic*, Mar. 19, 1933, p. 6.

36. Will Hays, *Annual Report* (NY: 1934) p. 2.

37. Maltby, "Tragic Heroes?", pp. 115.

38. Gerald Mast, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst: Documents in the Cultural History of Film in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 345.

39. Henry James Forman, *Our Movie Made Children* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1933), in Mast, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst*, pp. 354-357.

40. Forman, *Our Movie Made Children*, in Mast, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst*, pp. 358

41. Raymond Moley, *Are We Movie Made?* in Mast, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst*, p. 361.

42. Richard Maltby, "*The King of Kings* and the Czar of All the Rushes: the propriety of the Christ story," *Screen*, 31:2 (Summer 1990) pp. 196, 204.

43. Raymond Moley, *The Hays Office* in Mast, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst*, pp. 319-320.

44. Richard Maltby, "The Production Code and the Hays Office" in Tino Balio, *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 49.

45. Raymond Moley, *The Hays Office* in Gerald Mast, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst*, p. 331.

46. Maltby, "The Production Code and the Hays Office", p.49.

47. Olga J. Martin, *Hollywood's Movie Commandments*, in Gerald Mast, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst*, p. 334.

48. Lizbeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 268.

49. Kristi Anderson, *The Creation of a Democratic Majority, 1928-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), pp. 83-120, in Lizbeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, pp. 255-256.

50. Graham Barnfield, "Addressing Estrangement," p. 34.

51. FDR, quoted in William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*, p. 98.

52. Lizbeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal*, pp. 230-233.

53. *Motion Picture Herald*, 21 March 1931, quoted in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis*, p. 99.

54. Franklin Roosevelt, quoted in Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, p. 536.

55. Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United states of America*, p. 539.

56. *Variety* 1 September 1937, quoted in Shindler, *Hollywood in Crisis,* p. 84.

Chapter Six: The New West Hero

1. Gene Autry with M. Herskowitz, *Back in the Saddle again* (NY: Doubleday & Co, 1978), p. 53, quoted in Peter Stanfield, *Dixie Cowboys: Hollywood and the 1930s Western,* (Forthcoming).

2. For Comolli's notions of linear history see "Technique and Ideology: Camera, Perspective, Depth of Field," trans. Diana Matias, *Film Reader* " (January 1997), pp. 128-140, and "Machines of the Visible," *The Cinematic Apparatus,* ed. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), pp. 121-142.

3. Paul Seale, "'A Host of Others': Toward a Nonlinear History of Poverty Row and the Coming of Sound" *Wide Angle*, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1991. 75

4. Douglas Gomery, *The Hollywood Studio System,* pp. 8-9 in Seale, p. 77.

5. Seale, p. 77.

6. Paul Kerr, "Out of What Past: Notes on the B Film Noir," in *The Hollywood Film Industry*, ed. Paul Kerr (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986)

7. Seale, p. 98.

8. Seale, p. 93.

9. "Pictures' Most Sensational Year" *Variety,* (2 January 1929), p. 5.

10. "Inside Stuff -- Pictures," *Variety* (20 February 1929), pp. 11, 28 in Seale "'A Host of Others'", p. 93.

11. In 1928, Pathe recognized the popularity of its western stars in the small towns, and when it had abandoned the genre, it continued to use these actors in serials catered for such audiences. "Pathe's Former Western Names Now in Serials" *Variety* (24th October 1928), p. 5.

12. "Westerns, Not Talkers, Wanted by Small Town Exhibs of Texas" *Variety* (11 September 1929), p. 5.

13. Seale, p. 75.

14. Brian Taves, "The B Film: Hollywood's Other Half" in Tino Balio, *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1993), pp. 316, 318-319.

15. D.W.C., "On the Leasing Lot," *New York Times,* 10 November 1935; "Quickies Not So Hot," *Hollywood Reporter,* 7 November 1935, p. 1 in Taves, "The B Film", p. 321.

16. Taves, p. 322.

17. Todd McCarthy and Charles Flynn, eds, *Kings of the Bs: Working Within the Hollywood System,* (NY: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1975), pp. 18, 23, 25.

18. Taves, p. 322.

19. Wayne J. McMullen, "Reconstruction of the Frontier Myth in Witness", *Southern Communication Journal: Rhetoric, Culture and Community,* No. 1, Vol 62 (Fall 1996), p. 32.

20. Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 4.

21. John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 193.

22. Will Wright, *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. 5.

23. Taves, p. 335.

24. Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 113-114.

25. Tompkins, *West of Everything,* p. 93.

26. Jacqueline Levitkin, *Film Reader* 5, 1982, p. 97 in Ian Cameron and Douglas Pye, eds. *The Movie Book of the Western,* p. 13.

27. Pamela Grundy, "'We Always Tried to be Good People': Respectability, Crazy Water Crystals,and Hillbilly Music on the Air, 1933-1935" *Journal of American History.* March 1995. V.81, #4. P. 1613 in Stanfield, *Dixie Cowboys* (Forthcoming).

28. *Motion Picture Herald,* 5 January 1935, p. 60 in Stanfield, *Dixie Cowboys* (Forthcoming).

29. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 278.

1. Quoted in Gilbert Adair, *Hollywood's Vietnam: From The Green Berets to Full Metal Jacket* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1989), p. 46.

2. Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: The Penguin Group, 1990), p. 673.

3. John G. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 245.

4. Phil Hardy, *The Western* (London: Arum Press, 1983), p. 18.

5. Ed Buscombe, *The BFI Companion to the Western* (London: Andrè Deutsch Ltd., 1988), pp. 13, 247-312.

6. Tom Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995) p. 19.

7. Englehardt, p. 23.

8. William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 337.

9. Englehardt, p. 19.

10. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (US: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 41.

11. Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987), p. 36.

12. *Johnson and Graham's Lessee* v. *William McIntosh*, 21 U.S. Reports 240, 260-261 (1823) quoted in Jennings, p. 60.

13. Jennings, pp. 59-60.

14. Jennings, p. 146.

15. Ernie Pyle, quoted in Clayton R. Kipps and Gregory D. Black, *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1990), p. 248.

16. Allan Nevins, Samuel Eliot Morison and OWI, quoted in Kipps and Black, pp. 253-254.

17. Jennings, p. 15.

18. Englehardt, p. 108.

19. Englehardt, p. 109.

20. "God's Controversy with New England," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society,* XII (1871-1873), 83, 84 in Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950), p. 4.

21. Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 371.

22. Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 580.

23. White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* p. 582.

24. Peter G. Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America.* 2nd ed. (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 193.

25. John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), p. 233-4.

26. Chafe, p. 329.

27. Filene, p. 201-202.

28. U.S. Bureau of Labor Standards, *Perspectives on Working Women: A Databook* (Washington, D.C., 1980), pp. 10-1, in Filene, p. 201.

29. Filene, p. 93.

30. Filene, p. 93

31. *Time,* March 20 1972, p. 24.

32. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 156.

33. Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence,* p. 179.

34. John Hellmann, *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 44.

35. *New York Times,* July 17, 1960; Richard M. Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. 429.

36. John F. Kennedy, quoted in Chafe, p. 187.

37. Quoted in Chafe, p. 188.

38. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century*

America (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 348.

39. Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery, Romance,* p. 252.

40. John Wayne, quoted in Christopher Anderson, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (USA: The Univeristy of Texas Press, 1994), p. 205.

41. Englehardt, p. 171.

42. Ron Kovic, *Born on the Fourth of July* 1976 (London: Corgi Books, 1990), pp. 42-3.

43. This is later discussed in relation to *The Green Berets*, a Vietnam War Film.

44. Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema,* p. 90.

45. Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 105-113.

46. Johnson, quoted in Gordon Hardy, ed. *Words of War: An Anthology of Vietnam War Literature* (Boston, MA: Boston Publishing Co., 1988), p. 174.

47. Hugh Sidey, "The Presidency," *Life,* Oct. 10, 1969, p. 4; Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation,* p. 496.

48. Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (London: Picador, 1979), pp. 55, 65.

49. Quoted in Drinnon, pp. 456-7.

50. Chafe, p. 283-4.

51. Chafe, p. 289.

52. Johnson, quoted in Chafe, p. 233.

53. Englehardt, p. 216-7.

54. March 16, 1968.

55. Englehardt, p. 219

56. Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America,* p. 676.

57. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Rise to Globalism: American Policy Since 1938,* 7th rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1993), p. 216.

58. Robert Stevens, *Vain Hopes, Grim Realities: The Economic Consequences of the Vietnam War,* p. 13; Anthony Woodwiss, *Postmodernity USA: The Crisis of Social Modernism in Postwar America* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1993), p. 91.

59. Rick Berg, "Losing Vietnam: Covering the War in an Age of Technology," in Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, ed.s, *From Hani to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 41.

60.Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, pp. 677, 684-686.

61.Chafe, p. 343.

62.Quoted in Chafe, p. 294.

63.Englehardt, p. 220.

64.Englehardt, p. 217; Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America*, p. 677.

65.Peter Braestrup, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 508.

66.Quoted in Chafe, p. 347.

67."LBJ: 'Time has Come for. . . New, Fresh Look at Dissent,'" the Washington *Post*, Nov. 18, 1967, p. A8 in Braestrup, *Big story*, p. 49.

68.Braestrup, *Big Story*, p. 467.

69.White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own"*, p. 622.

70.Art Buchwald, quoted in Gordon Hardy, ed. *Words of War*, p. 117.

71.Leo Cawley, "The War about the War: Vietnam Films and American Myth" in Dittmar and Michaud, p. 75.

Chapter Eight: Launching Out of the Quagmire

1. Michael Herr, *Dispatches* (London: Picador, 1979), p. 44.

2. Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), p. 614.

3. Robert B. Ray, *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 170-174.

4. Robert A. Rosenstone, *Visions of The Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 72.

5. A.C. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965)

6. In this volume Rosenstone refers to Pierre Sorlin's *The Film in History*, which offers explanations as to why historical films reflect their own periods (of production) rather than representing the past. (*The Film in History: Restaging the Past* [Totowa,

NJ: Barnes & Noble Imports, 1980]; Rosenstone, *Visions of The Past*, p. 7); Robert A. Rosenstone, *Revisioning History; Film and the Construction of a New Past* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995)

7. John McNaughton, quoted in William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 297.

8. Chafe, p. 297.

9. Gilbert Adair, *Hollywood's Vietnam: From "The Green Berets" to "Apopcalypse Now"* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1989), p. 11.

10. Clyde A. Milner II, ed., *Major Problems in the History of the American West* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1989), p. 359.

11. Douglas Pye, "Ulzana's Raid" in Ian Cameron and Douglas Pye, eds, *The Movie Book of the Western* (London: Studio Vista, 1996), p. 265.

12. Pye, "Ulzana's Raid", p. 266.

13. Richard Nixon, quoted Tom Englehardt, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), p. 274.

14. Englehardt, p. 274.

15. Janice Hocker Rushing and Thomas S. Frentz, *Projecting the Shadow: The Cyborg Hero in American Film* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), p. 102.

16. Adair, *Hollywood's Vietnam*, p. 133.

17. James Fenimore Cooper, *The Deerslayer: or The First Warpath* (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1963), p. 48.

18. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 305.

19. Michael Selig, "Boys will be Men: Oedipal Drama in *Coming Home*" in Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, eds *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 191.

20. Selig, p. 189.

21. Jacobs, D. "Coppola films Conrad in Vietnam" in *The English Novel and the Movies* Klein, M. and Parker, G., eds. (NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co. Inc., 1981), p. 217.

22. Adair, *Hollywood's Vietnam*, p. 154.

23. Michael Cimino, in Anthony Holden, *Behind the Oscar: The Secret History of the Academy Awards* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1993), p. 77.

24. Denise J. Youngblood *"Repentance*: Stalinist Terror and the Realism of Surrealism" in Rosenstone, *Revisioning History*, p. 141.

25. Rosenstone, *Revisioning History*, p. 11.

26. Dale Carter, *The Final Frontier* (London: Verso, 1988), p. 155.

27. Nikita S. Khrushchev, *Kruschev Remembers, Volume II: The Last Testament*, trans. and ed. Strobe Talbott (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 70-71, 74-79, 86-90 in Carter, p. 156.

28. Carter, p. 157.

29. Carter, p. 157-159.

30. John Logsden, *The Decision to Go to the Moon: Project Apollo and the National Interest* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1970), p 128, *New York Times*, 14 October 1961, p. 6, in Carter, p. 159.

31. James Donald, *Fantasy and the Cinema* (London: BFI, 1989), 4.

32. Robin Wood, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 165.

33. Robin Wood aligns the trilogy to the "utterly uncreative hack work" exemplified by films like Roy Rogers or Hopalong Cassidy. p. 163.

34. Robin Wood, p. 162.

35. Englehardt, p. 266.

36. Richard Maltby, "A Better Sense of History: John Ford and the Indians" in Cameron and Pye, eds, *The Movie Book of the Western*, p. 49; Richard Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995), p. 132.

37. John Brosnan, *Future Tense: The Cinema of Science Fiction* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1978), p. 243.

38. Brosnan, p. 243.

39. Englehardt, p. 266.

40. Christian Metz, '*Trucage* and the Film', trans. Françoise Meltzer, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1977 in Steve Neale, "'You've Got to be Fucking Kidding!: Knowledge, Belief and Judgement in Science Fiction" in Annete Kuhn, ed. *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema* (London: Verso,

1990).

41.Metz, p. 667.

42.Neale, "'You've Got to be Fucking Kidding!'", p. 168.

43.Neale, "'You've Got to be Fucking Kidding!" pp. 163-165, 160.

44.David Morell, quoted in William Alland, *Knave*, 1986, 18 (6), pp. 60-4; Alf Louvre and Jeffrey Walsh, eds. *Tell Me Lies About Vietnam: Cultural Battles for the Meaning of War* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988), p. 57.

45.Dittmar and Michaud, eds, *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, p. 107.

46.Peter Carroll, "Khe Sanh, Tet, and The War at Home" (Paper delivered at State University of New York College at Brockport, September 1988); Sumiko Higashi, *"Night of the Living Dead: A Horror Film about the Horrors of the Vietnam Era*, in Dittmar and Michaud, eds, *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, p. 179.

47.Alex de Jonge, *The Weimar Chronicle* (London: Paddington Press, 1978), p. 32; William Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1960, 55-56; Galyn Studlar and David Desser, "Never Having To Say You're Sorry: *Rambo's* Rewriting of the Vietnam War" in Dittmar and Michaud, eds, *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, p. 103.

48.Galyn Studlar and David Desser, "Never Having To Say You're Sorry: *Rambo's* Rewriting of the Vietnam War" in Dittmar and Michaud, eds, *From Hanoi to Hollywood*, p. 104.

49.President Ronald Reagan, quoted in *The New York Times*, 1 July, 1985; Michael Klein, "Historical Memory, Film, and the Vietnam Era; President Ronald Reagan, quoted in Studlar and Desser, "Never Having To Say You're Sorry", pp. 23, 107.

50.President Ronald Reagan, quoted in Studlar and Desser, "Never Having To Say You're Sorry", p. 104.

51.Quoted in Yvonne Tasker, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 93.

52.Tasker, p. 95.

Chapter Nine: Recycling Mythologies

1. Lowell Mellett, head of the Office of War Information's Bureau of Motion Pictures,

quoted in Thomas Doherty, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 34.

2. Norma Pecora, "Superman/Superboys/Supermen: the Comic Book Hero as Socializing Agent" in Steve Craig, ed. *Men, Masculinity and the Media* (California: Sage Publications, 1992), p. 63.

3. Kaufman quoted in Pecora, p. 63.

4. Pecora, pp. 62, 68.

5. Pecora, p. 61.

6. Noël Carroll, "Back to Basics" in *American Media,* ed. Philip Cook, Douglas Gomery, and Lawrence Lichty, 111-125 (Washington, D.C.: Wilson street Press, 1989) quoted in Elizabeth G. Traube, *Dreaming Identities: Class, Gender, and Generation in 1980s Hollywood Movies* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992), p. 40.

7. Ryan and Kellner, p. 267.

8. Ryan and Kellner, p. 268.

9. Quoted in William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II,* 3rd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 462.

10. Chafe, p. 476.

11. President Ronald Reagan, quoted in Chafe, p. 477.

12. R. Brewin, "TV's Newest Villain: The Vietnam Veteran," *TV Guide,* 19 July 1975, p. 4 in Rick Berg, "Losing Vietnam: Covering the War in an Age of Technology," in Linda Dittmar and Gene Michaud, eds, *From Hanoi to Hollywood: The Vietnam War in American Film* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), pp. 45-6.

13. Judy Lee Kinney, "*Gardens of Stone, Platoon,* and *Hamburger Hill:* Ritual and Remembrance," in M. Anderegg, ed., *Inventing Vietnam: The War in Film and TV* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), p. 155.

14. Albert Auster and Leonard Quart, *How the War was Remembered: Hollywood and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988), p. 78.

15. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 7.

16. Mosse, pp. 159-181.

17. Auster and Quart, p. 141.

18. Mosse, p. 9.

19. Mosse, p. 161.

20. Thomas Prasch, "*Platoon* and the Mythology of Realism," *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Film of the Vietnam War* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1988), p. 195.

21. David Halberstam, quoted in William J. Palmer, "Symbolic Nihilism in *Platoon*", *America Rediscovered: Critical Essays on Literature and Film of the Vietnam War* (London: Garland Publishing, 1990), p. 263.

22. Harold Schechter and Jonna G. Semeiks, "Leatherstocking in 'Nam: *Rambo, Platoon*, and the American Frontier Myth," *Journal of Popular Culture* 24.4 (Spring 1991), p. 17.

23. Schechter and Semeiks, p. 20.

24. Schechter and Semeiks, p. 20.

25. Leo Cawley, "The War about the War: Vietnam Films and American Myth" in Dittmar and Michaud, p. 74.

26. Oliver Stone, quoted in Richard Combs, "Beating God to the draw: *Salvador* and *Platoon.*" *Sight and Sound* 56.2 (Spring 1987), p. 138.

27. Combs, p. 138.

28. Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 156.

29. According to Stone, Elias was based on an actual person who "was (like) an Apache" (Louise Tanner, "Oliver Stone," *Films in Review* (1987), p. 153)

30. Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, p. 156.

31. Prasch, p. 204.

32. Richard Maltby, "John Ford and the Indians; or, Tom Doniphon's History Lesson," *Representing Others: White Views of Indigenous Peoples*, ed. Mick Gidley (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992), p. 130.

33. These actions are inherently feminine, an equation found, amongst much other critical material, in John Wheeler 's comment: "I consider my commitment [to the military and his country] as a statement that things are worth dying for. It is a masculine statement. I think it is *the* masculine statement. This is why the war has tended to be viewed as a masculine enterprise. . . .Woman expresses the idea that

things are worth living for." (John Wheeler, *Touched With Fire: The Future of the Vietnam Generation* [NY: Avon, 1984], pp. 140-41 in Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinhization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Universwity Press, 1989), p. 88.)

34.Prasch, p. 206.

35.Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, p. 154.

36.Combs, p. 136.

37.Marita Sturken, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Representations* 35 (1991), p. 122.

38.Mosse, p. 224-255.

39.Prasch, p. 200.

40.Prasch, p. 209; Peter Rist, "Standard Hollywood Fare: The World War II Combat Film Revisited", *Cineaction!* (Spring 1988), p. 26.

41.John Hellmann, *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 76.

42.Don. Kunz, "Oliver Stone's Film Adaptation of *Born on the Fourth of July*: Redefining Masculine Heroism," in *War, Literature and The Arts* 2.2 (Fall 1990) p. 23.

43.Kovic, quoted in Robert Seidenberg, "To Hell and Back," *American Film* xv.4 (1990), pp. 30-1.

44.Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, pp. 94-5.

45.This is invoked in President Johnson's Johns Hopkins address of 1965. (Lyndon Baines Johnson, "American Policy in Vietnam," Marcus G. Raskin and Bernard B. Falls, eds., *The Viet-Nam Reader*, p. 344; Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, p. 562)

46.Oliver Stone, quoted in Gavin Smith, "Oliver Stone interviewed by Gavin Smith," *Film Comment* 30.1 (1994): 38.

47.Smith, "Oliver Stone," p. 26.

48.Le Ly Hayslip, *Heaven and Earth Part One: When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* 1989 (London: Pan Books, 1994), p. xvi.

49.Le Ly Hayslip, *Child of War, Woman of Peace: Heaven and Earth Part Two* 1993 (London: Pan Books, 1994), p. 216.

50. Auster and Quart, p. xiii.

51. Mosse, p. 11.

52. Edward Gallafent, "Four Tombstones: 1946-1994" in Ian Cameron and Douglas Pye, eds, *The Movie Book of the Western* (London: Studio Vista, 1996), p. 302.

53. Michael Walker, "Dances with Wolves" in Cameron and Pye, eds, *The Movie Book of the Western*, p. 286.

Epilogue

1. Michel Foucault, "We 'Other Victorians'", *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, in Paul Rabinov, ed, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought, with major new unpublished material* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 293.

2. Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations 1890-1990* (Albuquerque: The University of Mexico Press, 1991), p. 233.

3. Jenni Calder, *There Must Be A Lone Ranger* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1974), p. xiii.

4. Calder, p. 216.

5. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), p. 15.

Bibliography

Adair, Gilbert, *Hollywood's Vietnam: From The Green Berets to Full Metal Jacket* (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1989)

Ambrose, Stephen E., *Rise to Globalism: American Policy Since 1938*, 7th rev. ed. (New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1993)

Anderegg, M., ed., *Inventing Vietnam: The War in Film and TV* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991)

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983)

Anderson, Christopher, *Hollywood TV: The Studio System in the Fifties* (USA: The Univeristy of Texas Press, 1994)

Auster, Albert, and Quart, Leonard, *How the War was Remembered: Hollywood and Vietnam* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988)

Badger, Anthony J., *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-1940* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan Press, 1989)

Balio, Tino, *Grand Design: Hollywood as Modern Business Enterprise, 1930-1939* (California: University of California Press, 1995)

Barnfield, Graham, "Addressing Estrangement: Federal Arts Patronage and National Identity Under the New Deal", Cultural Studies Occasional Papers, Communication, Media and Communities Research Centre, Sheffield Hallam University

Barnouw, Erik, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, 2nd rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993)

Barthes, Roland, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives", *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana, 1977)

Bordwell, David, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985)

Bordwell, David, Staiger, Janet, and Thompson, Kristin, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge and

Kegan Paul, 1985)

Braestrup, Peter, *Big Story: How the American Press and Television Reported and Interpreted the Crisis of Tet 1968 in Vietnam and Washington* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977)

Brogan, Hugh, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (London: The Penguin Group, 1990)

Brosnan, John, *Future Tense: The Cinema of Science Fiction* (London: Macdonald and Jane's, 1978)

Buscombe, Ed, *The BFI Companion to the Western* (London: Andre Deutsch/BFI Publishing, 1988), p. 39.

Calder, Jenni, *There Must Be A Lone Ranger* (London: Hamish Hamilton Ltd, 1974)

Carter, Dale, *The Final Frontier* (London: Verso, 1988)

Cawelti, John G., *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976)

Cawelti, John G., *The Six-Gun Mystique* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970)

Chafe, William H., *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995)

Clover, Carol, *Men, Women and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (London: BFI, 1992)

Cohen, Lizbeth, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Combs, Richard, "Beating God to the draw: *Salvador* and *Platoon.*" *Sight and Sound* 56.2 (Spring 1987), pp. 136-8.

Cooper, James Fenimore, *The Deerslayer: or The First Warpath* (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1963)

Craig, Steve, ed. *Men, Masculinity and the Media* (California: Sage Publications, 1992)

Crèvecoeur, Hector St. John de, *Letters from an American Farmer and Skethches of Eighteenth-Century America: More Letters from an American Farmer* (N.Y.: The New American Library, 1963)

Cameron, Ian, and Pye, Douglas, eds, *The Movie Book of The Western* (London: Studio

Vista, 1996)

Danto, A.C., *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965)

Doherty, Thomas, *Projections of War: Hollywood, American Culture, and World War II* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

Donald, James, *Fantasy and the Cinema* (London: BFI, 1989)

Drinnon, Richard M., *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980)

Dundes, Alan, ed., *Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984)

Dyer, Richard, *The Dumb Blonde Stereotype: Documentation for EAS Class-room Materials* (London: Educational Advisory Service, BFI, 1979)

Dyer, Richard, "Entertainment and Utopia", *Movie* no. 24 (Spring 1977), pp. 2-13.

Eckert, Charles, "The Anatomy of a Proletarian Film: Warner's *Marked Woman*," *Film Quarterly* 27 (Winter 1973-1974), pp. 10-24.

D'Emilio, John and B. Freedman, Estelle, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988)

Englehardt, Tom, *The End of Victory Culture: Cold War America and the Disillusioning of a Generation* (New York: BasicBooks, 1995)

Fenin, George N., and Everson, William K., *The Western: From Silents to the Seventies* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977)

Filene, Peter G., *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America*. 2nd ed. (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974)

Finler, Joel W., *The Hollywood Story* (London: Pyramid Books, 1989)

Foucault, Michel, "We 'Other Victorians'", *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1, in Paul Rabinov, ed, *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought, with major new unpublished material* (London: Penguin Books, 1984)

Frayling, Christopher, *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981)

French, Philip, *Westerns: Aspects of a Movie Genre* (London: Secker & Warburg, BFI, 1973)

"The Gangster Film", Special Film Study Extract Supplement, BFI Education, Jan.

1978 (reprinted Nov. 1988)

Gidley, Mick, ed., *Representing Others: White Views of Indigenous Peoples* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992)

Grant, Barry Keith, ed., *Film Genre Reader* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986)

Grossman, James R., ed., *The Frontier in American Culture* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1994)

Hardy, Gordon, ed. *Words of War: An Anthology of Vietnam War Literature* (Boston, MA: Boston Publishing Co., 1988)

Hardy, Phil, *The Western* (London: Arum Press, 1983)

Harkness, John, *The Academy Awards Handbook* (NY: Pinnacle Books, 1994)

Haley, Alex, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (London: Penguin Books, 1968)

Hayslip, Le Ly, *Heaven and Earth Part One: When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* 1989 (London: Pan Books, 1994)

Hayslip, Le Ly, *Child of War, Woman of Peace: Heaven and Earth Part Two* 1993 (London: Pan Books, 1994)

Hellmann, John, *American Myth and the Legacy of Vietnam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)

Herr, Michael, *Dispatches* (London: Picador, 1979)

Holden, Anthony, *Behind the Oscar: The Secret History of the Academy Awards* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1993)

Jeffords, Susan, *The Remasculinhization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Universwity Press, 1989)

Jennings, Francis, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1975)

Karpf, Stephen Louis, *The Gangster Film: Emergence, Variation and Decay of a Genre 1930-1940* (New York: Arno Press, 1973)

Kerr, Paul, ed., *The Hollywood Film Industry* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986)

Kipps, Clayton R. and Black, Gregory D., *Hollywood Goes to War: How Politics, Profits and Propaganda Shaped World War II Movies* (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1990)

Kitses, Jim, *Horizons West: Anthony Mann, Budd Boetticher, Sam Peckinpah: Studies*

of Authorship within the Western (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd. in association with BFI, 1969)

Klein, M. and Parker, G., eds., *The English Novel and the Movies* (NY: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co. Inc., 1981)

Kovic, Ron, *Born on the Fourth of July* 1976 (London: Corgi Books, 1990)

Kunz, Don, "Oliver Stone's Film Adaptation of *Born on the Fourth of July*: Redefining Masculine Heroism," in *War, Literature and The Arts* 2.2 (Fall 1990)

Limerick, Patricia Nelson, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1987)

Louvre Alf, and Walsh, Jeffrey, eds., *Tell Me Lies About Vietnam: Cultural Battles for the Meaning of War* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1988)

Maltby, Richard, *Hollywood Cinema: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1995)

Maltby, Richard, "*The King of Kings* and the Czar of All the Rushes: the propriety of the Christ story", *Screen* 31:2 (Summer 1990), pp. 188-213.

Maltby, Richard, "Tragic Heroes?: Al Capone and The Spectacle of Criminality, 1948-1931", in John Benson, Ken Berryman and Wayne Levy, eds, *Screening the Past: VI Australian History and Film Conference Papers* (Melbourne: La Trobe University Press, 1995), pp. 112-9.

Mast, Gerald, ed., *The Movies in Our Midst: Documents in the Cultural History of Film in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982)

McCarthy Todd, and Flynn, Charles, eds, *Kings of the Bs: Working Within the Hollywood System* (NY: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1975)

McMullen, Wayne J., "Reconstruction of the Frontier Myth in Witness", *Southern Communication Journal: Rhetoric, Culture and Community*, No. 1, Vol 62 (Fall 1996), pp. 31-41.

Milner II, Clyde A., ed., *Major Problems in the History of the American West* (Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Company, 1989)

Monaco, James, Pallot, James and Baseline, *The Second Virgin Film Guide* (Great Britain: Virgin Books, 1993)

Mosse, George L., *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

Mulvey, Laura, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989)

Nachbar, Jack, ed., *Focus on The Western* (N.J.: Prentice-hall, Inc., 1974)

Nash, Gerald D. *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations 1890-1990* (Albuquerque: The University of Mexico Press, 1991)

Neale, Steve, *Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1980)

Neale, Steve, "Questions of Genre", *Screen* 31:1 (Spring 1990), pp. 45-67.

Neale, Steve, "You've Got to be Fucking Kidding!: Knowledge, Belief and Judgement in Science Fiction" in Kuhn, Annette ed. *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema* (London: Verso, 1990), pp. 160-8.

Palmer, William J., "Symbolic Nihilism in *Platoon*", *America Rediscovered: Critical Essays on Literature and Film of the Vietnam War* (London: Garland Publishing, 1990)

Parish, James Robert and Pitts, Michael R., *The Great Gangster Pictures* (Metuchen, N.J: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1976)

Prasch, Thomas, "*Platoon* and the Mythology of Realism," *Search and Clear: Critical Responses to Selected Literature and Film of the Vietnam War* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Press, 1988)

Rabinov, Paul, ed., *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought, with Major New Unpublished Material* (London: Penguin Books, 1984)

Rabinowitz, Paula, *They Must be Represented: The Politics of Documentary* (London: Verso, 1994)

Ray, Robert B., *A Certain Tendency of the Hollywood Cinema, 1930-1980* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985)

Rist, Peter, "Standard Hollywood Fare: The World War II Combat Film Revisited", *Cineaction!* (Spring 1988)

Roddick, Nick, *A New Deal in Entertainment: Warner Brothers in the 1930s* (London: British Film Institute, 1983)

Rosenstone, Robert A., *Visions of The Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995)

Rosow, Eugene, *Born to Lose: The Gangster Film in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978)

Rushing, Janice Hocker and Frentz, Thomas S., *Projecting the Shadow: The Cyborg*

Hero in American Film (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press)

Ryan, Michael and Kellner, Douglas, *Camera Politica: The Politics and Ideology of Contemporary Hollywood Film* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988)

Saussure, F. de, *Cours de lingguistique générale,* Paris 1971 in Moor, Johannes C. De, ed., *Synchronic or Diachronic?: A Debate on Method in Old Testament Exegesis* (Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1995),

Schank, Roger, *Dynamic Memory: a Theory of Reminding and Learning in Computers and People* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

Schechter, Harold and Semeiks, Jonna G., "Leatherstocking in 'Nam: *Rambo, Platoon,* and the American Frontier Myth," *Journal of Popular Culture* 24.4 (Spring 1991)

Seale, Paul, "'A Host of Others': Toward a Nonlinear History of Poverty Row and the Coming of Sound" *Wide Angle* (Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1991), pp. 73-103.

Seidenberg, Robert, "To Hell and Back," *American Film* xv.4 (1990), pp. 28-31, 56.

Shadoian, Jack, *Dreams and Dead Ends: The American Gangster/ Crime Film* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1977)

Schatz, Thomas, *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1981)

Sheridan, Alan, *Michel Foucault: The Will to Truth* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1980)

Shindler, Colin, *Hollywood in Crisis: Cinema and American Society, 1929-1939* (London: Routledge, 1996)

Sassoon, Anne Showstack, ed., *Approaches to Gramsci* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd., 1982)

Sklar, Robert, *Movie-Made America: A Social History of the American Movies* (New York: Random House, 1975)

Sklar, Robert, *City Boys: Cagney, Bogart, Garfield* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992)

Slotkin, Richard, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992)

Slotkin, Richard, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age*

Industrialization, 1800-1890 (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1986)

Smith, Henry Nash, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1950)

Smith, Paul, *Clint Eastwood: A Cultural Production* (London: UCL Press Limited, 1993)

Stanfield, Peter, *Dixie Cowboys: Hollywood and the 1930s Western* (Forthcoming).

Stott, William, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973)

Sturken, Marita, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Representations* 35 (1991)

Tanner, Louise, "Oliver Stone," *Films in Review* (1987)

Tasker, Yvonne, *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993)

Thompson, Kristin, *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988)

Time (March 20 1972)

Todorov, Tzvetan, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Cleveland, Ohio: Press of Case Western University, 1973)

Tompkins, Jane, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

Trachtenberg, Alan, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Guilded Age* (N.Y.: Hill and Wang, 1982)

Traube, Elizabeth G., *Dreaming Identities: Class, Gender, and Generation in 1980s Hollywood Movies* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1992)

Truettner, William H., ed., *The West as America: Reinterpreting Images of the Frontier, 1820-1920* (Washington: The Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991),

Turner, Frederick Jackson, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," in Taylor, George Rogers, Rev. ed., *The Turner Thesis: Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1965)

Tuska, Jon, *The American West in Film: Critical Approaches to the Western* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985)

Variety (24th October 1928)

Variety, (2 January 1929)

Variety (11 September 1929)

Variety (22 October 1930)

Variety (February 18, 1931)

Warshow, Robert, *The Immediate Experience* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor
Books, 1964)

Wexman, Virginia Wright, *Creating the Couple: Love, Marriage and Hollywood
Performance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993)

White, Richard, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the
American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993)

Williams, W.A., *The Roots of the Modern American Empire: A Study of the Growth
and Shaping of Social Consciousness in a Marketplace Society* (London: Anthony
Blond Ltd., 1970)

Winston, Brian, *Claiming the Real: The Grierson Documentary and Its Legitimations*
(London: BFI, 1995)

Wood, Robin, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* (NY: Columbia University Press,
1986)

Woodwiss, Anthony, *Postmodernity USA: The Crisis of Social Modernism in Postwar
America* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1993)

Woodwiss, Michael, *Crime, Crusades and Corruption, 1900-1987* (London: Pinter,
1988)

Wright, Will, *Sixguns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western* (Berkeley:
University of California Press, 1976)

Select Filmography

Apocalypse Now Omni/ Zoetrope d. Francis Ford Coppola (1979)

The Big Trail Fox d. Raoul Walsh (1930)

Black Sunday Paramount d. John Frankenheimer (1976)

Blazing Saddles Warner/ Crossbow d. Mel Brooks (1974)

Born on the Fourth Of July Universal/ Ixtlan d. Oliver Stone (1989)

Broken Arrow 20th Century Fox d. Delmer Daves (1923)

Casablanca Warner d. Michael Curtiz (1942)

Cheyenne Autumn Warner/ Ford Smith d. John Ford (1964)

Cimarron RKO d. Wesley Ruggles (1931)

Cimarron MGM d. Anthony Mann (1960)

Colorado Sunset Republic d. Joseph Kane (1939)

Coming Home United Artists/ Jerome Hellman d. Hal Ashby (1978)

The Covered Wagon Paramount/ Famous Players-Lasky d. James Cruze (1923)

The Cowboy and the School Marm

Dances With Wolves Guild/ Tig Productions d. Kevin Costner (1990)

The Deer Hunter Universal/ EMI d. Michael Cimino (1978)

Doorway to Hell Warner d. Archie Mayo (1930)

E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial Universal d. Steven Spielberg (1982)

First Blood Carolco d. Ted Kotcheff (1982)

The Great Train Robbery Edison d. Edwin S. Porter (1903)

The Green Berets Warner/ Batjac d. John Wayne and Ray Kellogg (1968)

Heaven and Earth Warner/ Regency Enterprise/ Le Studio Canal +/ Alcor Films
  d. Oliver Stone (1993)

Independence Day 20th Century Fox/ Centropolis d. Roland Emmerich (1996)

The Iron Horse Fox d. John Ford (1924)

In Old Sante Fe Mascot d. David Howard (1934)

Invasion of the Body Snatchers Aliied Artists/ Walter Wanger d. Don Siegel (1956)

It's Always Fair Weather MGM d. Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen (1955)

The King of Kings Pathe d. Cecil B. de Mille (1927)

The Last of the Mohicans Warner/ Morgan Creek d. Michael Mann (1992)

Little Big Man Stockbridge/ Hiller/ Cinema Center d. Arthur Penn (1970)

Little Caeser Warner d. Mervyn Le Roy (1931)

The Man from Music Mountain Republic d. Joseph Kane (1938)

Man of the Frontier Republic d. Joseph Kane (1936)

Mexicali Rose Republic d. George Sherman (1939)

The Old Barn Dance Republic d. Joseph Kane (1938)

The Old Corral Republic d. Joseph Kane (1936)

Platoon Hemdale d. Oliver Stone (1986)

Public Cowboy No. 1 Republic d. Joseph Kane (1937)

The Public Enemy Warner d. William Wellman (1931)

Rambo: First Blood Part II Carolco/ Anabasis Investments NV d. George Pan
   Cosmatos

Rambo III Carolco d. Peter MacDonald (1988)

The Sacrifice

Sands of Iwo Jima Republic d. Allan Dwan (1949)

Scarface Howard Hughes d. Howard Hawks (1932)

Silverado Columbia-Delphi IV d. Lawrence Kasdan (1985)

Soldier Blue Avco d. Ralph Nelson (1970)

Stagecoach United Artists/ Walter Wanger d. John Ford (1939)

Star Wars 20th Century Fox/ Lucasfilm d. George Lucas (1977)

Straight Shooting Universal Butterfly d. John Ford (1917)

The Squaw Man MGM d. Cecil B. de Mille (1931)

The Thing Universal/ Lawrence Turman d. John Carpenter (1982)

Tracks Rainbow Pictures d. Henry Jaglom (1976)

Tumblin' Tumbleweeds Republic d. Joseph Kane (1935)

Ulzana's Raid Universal d. Robert Aldrich (1972)

Washington Masquerade MGM d. Charles Brabin (1932)

Washington Merry Go-Round Columbia d. James Cruze (1932)

Wyatt Earp Warner/ Tig Productions/ Kasdan/ Paragon d. Lawrence Kasdan (1994)