ARTICLE *JoAnn Conrad*

Consuming Subjects: Making Sense of Post–World War II Westerns[1]

Introduction

The American Western, a popular film genre from the earliest days of cinema well into the 1960s, has been linked to the story of America more insistently than any other genre. Set in the American West, that most mythic of spaces, conventional wisdom has these films embodying "the spirit, the struggle and the demise of the new frontier" (American Film Institute) even as the concepts of American "spirit" and of the "frontier" are taken for granted and thus seemingly self-evident. This article is a revisitation of the so-called Golden Age of the Western[2]—roughly 1946 to 1962—a period in which moviegoing[3] as well as the production of Westerns peaked,[4] with both dropping off precipitously by the 1960s. This Golden Age coincided with major social and cultural shifts in the United States, and this project takes the particular convergences of history in America in the postwar period as significant influences on the nature and reception of the Western. It integrates cultural events and phenomena of the 1950s in America with an understanding of the ways in which the Western shaped and appealed to the popular imagination in order to better understand how Westerns made sense in the post–World War II period. The ubiquity

of the Western during this time and its normalized rendering of a very particular narrative of America that was projected onto a mythic past interpellated viewers into a contemporary consumerist ideology while developing a Western version of the Family Romance that was consistent with economic, social, and political goals of configuring the nuclear family as the bulwark against the insecurities of the age. The Westerns of the 1950s, in their representation of <u>the</u> American story and values provided the model for how to be an American, which, in the 1950s, was to be a consumer for whom the market was the "final frontier."

The West of the Imagination—History and Myth in the Western

> This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend.
> —*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (John Ford, dir. 1962)

The Western emerges out of the nexus of signifying practices that has come to be called the Myth of the West. This West of the imagination has, since the time of Columbus, been integral to the story of America, proving a "natural image" to the "historical reality" (Barthes 142). That is, the west and the events and people in it have, through the process of *mythologization*, been emptied of their specific historicity and refilled with meaning—resignified—to appear as if natural. In the Western, this naturalization is overdetermined: filmed "on location" (even if simulated in the studio), the landscape registers immediately as the West, and locates that meaning in nature.[5] Scholars of the Western are beholden to this Barthesian logic: the 1950s Westerns "transform history into a species of narrative which we know to be fiction, but which we nevertheless take to have some important element of truth" (Cortese 124). "Myths are stories drawn from a society's history that have acquired through persistent usage the power of symbolizing that society's ideology . . . their identification with venerable tradition makes them appear to be products of 'nature' rather than history—expressions of a trans-historical consciousness" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 5–6). This dehistoricization pertains to the narrative level—the mythic—in contrast to the background, which has often been characterized as historically accurate. But in film, every aspect of the mise-en-scène is intentional. The apparent attention to historical detail is an authenticating gesture, itself a fiction that provides the ground, the unquestioned routine of the insistently recurring that the audience apprehends to be that which anchors the storyline to a

historical context. Throughout, history maintains some kind of ontological reality, with events in the past retrievable in some unmediated form: "one of the things which distinguishes bourgeois myth from history is [the] silent and continuous intrusion of the present into what ought to be an inviolable past" (Cortese 124). This "inviolable past" can thus be held distinct from an equally clear fictional realm. The problem, however, with this oversimplified application of the notion of de-historicization is that it places myth in opposition to history, whereas the history of the West is *already always* mythologized, shaped by ideological assumptions in the very selection of significant events and actors to record and narrativize.[6] This naturalized resignification of the past in the Western is reified and itself becomes the story of the West. Richard Maltby develops this idea at great length: "the 'legend' of Western expansion has become the 'fact' of the various print and film texts that it takes as its source material. Those texts themselves have a history, but they also contain an idea of history, and of the West as history, which is itself 'legend' rather than 'fact.' . . . The corrective, revisionist history can never be free of the legend because historically the only consequential element in those events is their legendary status" (Maltby 38–39).

What then is this Myth of the West that is so perfectly articulated in the postwar Western? It is the story of European-American expansion into an open wilderness full of literal and figurative resources through which the body politic could renew, replenish, and reenergize. The story enacts Manifest Destiny—the conquest of the wilderness and the subjugation and displacement of the indigenous peoples who populated those territories, shaped in the apocalyptic language of violence and annihilation, which ultimately delivered this Promised Land to its rightful heirs who would develop the wilderness to its potential and usher in progress and civilization. It is the story of westward expansion consistently defined by the "frontier"—that boundary between civilization and savagery—and embodied in the figure of the lone hero who, in vanquishing savagery opened the frontier for its ultimate civilizing agents—settlers. It is the story of economic expansion and of liberty in that economy for some, at the expense of others. This grand narrative had been replayed in countless forms for centuries prior to the advent of film, and yet, when reduced to their ideological essence all such stories are "tales of progress, a justification of violent conquest and untrammeled development" (Hine and Faragher 475). Frederick Jackson Turner echoed this sentiment when he presented his metanarrative "The Significance of the Frontier in America History" at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 to the American Historical Society. His

thesis—that the presence of the ever-westward-moving frontier was the defining aspect of the American psyche—has provided the basis of for most historiography of the United States in the twentieth century (see H. Smith). The field of history thus became part of the ideological apparatus. The Myth of the West and by extension the Western is also an explicitly gendered and racist ideology whereby American identity is coded white, male, aggressive, and violent; one in which racial superiority is not only normalized but also provides the justification of conquest.

Many analyses place the Western at the end of an historical continuum, the legacy of previous incarnations of the Myth: the frontier novels of James Fenimore Cooper,[7] the Wild West of Buffalo Bill Cody, the dime novels of the nineteenth century, and later, Western authors like Zane Grey, whose novels were often serialized in popular magazines. But this kind of historical compression is inadequate for understanding the phenomenal rise of the Western film in the period from roughly 1946 to 1962. For one, the Western is not consistent across time, with thematic, geographic, gender, and political issues varying with contemporary discourses. More importantly, the narrative aspect of film is only one of a complex set of signifying practices the movie audience experiences. A focus on the shared lineage of narrative genres that have elaborated the Myth of the West without the inclusion of other mediations sidesteps the differences in how these different media are comprehended and apprehended.[8] The construction of the West has in fact been built on the scaffolding of many different mediated sources that circulated in and shaped the popular imagination: Lincoln projected the hopes for a unified nation after the Civil War onto the West, literalized in the First Transcontinental Railroad; Teddy Roosevelt reimaged himself as a Western man, then a Rough Rider, and finally the "Cowboy President" using the new photographic technology to leverage an international expansionist policy; artists as diverse as Frederic Remington and Albert Bierstadt recreated an image of the West in their studios that galvanized the public in a common ideological premise while obfuscating the Eastern corporate interests (Hine and Faragher 494–98); real historical figures engaged in their own self-mythologization with the help of new forms of communication and print technologies (Jesse James used the telegraph to wire his exaggerated exploits to an East Coast newspaper-reading audience (Zwonitzer), and Wyatt Earp consulted in Hollywood with a young John Ford and John Wayne, shaping his legacy and history simultaneously (Gallagher 234); Buffalo Bill Cody and others staged historical reenactments and Wild West shows as entertainment for economic gain; John Lomax collected "cowboy songs" that

were subsequently published, recorded, and distributed on the radio and taught in classrooms as "American folk music"; and popular Western-themed dime novels circulated widely in an emerging consumer middle class. What unites these agents of the Myth is their spatial and temporal distance from the West, underscoring the simulacra. Thus the Western of the postwar era derives from and depends on a complicated system of meaning that has a long historical presence from many different, and yet convergent, sources.

The Western as a Post–World War II Cultural Phenomenon

Motion pictures and Westerns have a continuous and intertwined history. Born to capture time and motion, early *motion pictures* were action based. The Western, with its horse chases, train robberies, and physical violence, was one of the most natural of cinematic matches. The new medium also served as ethnographic documentary, although the distance between ethnography and entertainment and spectacle was collapsed in early films (for example, many of Buffalo Bill's Wild West cast were also the subjects of Thomas Edison's early studio films). But what had originally seemed marvelous—the capturing of motion and time—quickly became routine, and attempts at longer, more sustained plot-based movies in the absence of any cinematic conventions were initially incoherent. The nascent film industry was in crisis.[9] At issue was the problem of conveying plot shifts and complicated story lines without dialogue. In the Silent Era, editing, scene changes, camera work, lighting, and the physicality of the actors themselves all were developed to drive the plot as well as to establish an emotional and psychological mood, resulting in new conventions that audiences learned to make *sense* of.[10] This new way of representation was incorporated into new ways of seeing and new ways of being in space (Berger) or, as Sobchack indicates, "the forms of our culture's previous consciousness and of our own bodily sense of existential 'presence' to the world, to ourselves, and to others" was altered (Sobchack, "Scene of the Screen" 136). Ironically, with the advent of sound technology movie plots became more dependent on dialogue and voice-overs, privileging narrative over nonnarrative aspects of film.

Although the Western genre was a favorite of early filmmakers in the United States, Westerns were not continuously popular throughout the twentieth century. During the Depression, for example, when many millions were dislocated and displaced west in abject poverty, the glorification of western migration and its

association with progress and social mobility was hardly resonant. Those that were produced in the run-up to the war (1939–41) were mostly epic, self-congratulatory productions celebrating the winning of the West in the contemporary context of the recovery from the Depression and the reaffirmation of American exceptionalism.[11] The war effectively ended Western production. Hollywood's attention was redirected to propaganda, and many filmmakers and actors themselves engaged in the wartime effort so that the Western, by 1945, was "dead on its feet" (Coyne 30). And yet in the postwar period, not only were more Westerns produced than in any time before or since, but also the genre itself reached its apotheosis. The comparative lack of feature Westerns prior to the 1950s in contrast to their dominance after is thus notable because it suggests a cultural change that can be charted and interrogated in cultural forms. What reemerged as the Western in the postwar period was significantly reworked—more reflexive, more critical, and historically coincident with the rise of the United States as a superpower during the Cold War and the expansion of US interests in the global economy and international politics. There are many who argue that the Western provided a screen on which to project contemporary political discourse onto its well-established generic surface, using its credentials as an indigenous form to make sense of the new world in which Americans were finding themselves.[12] These analyses suggest that the appeal of the Western at this time was based in the similarities between post–Civil War national rebuilding and expansion and those of post–World War II—that the concerns of the 1950s could metaphorically be portrayed in terms of the safe and identifiably American form as well as projected onto a distant, mythic time.

In order to read the socio-economic-political terrain of postwar America through the cultural medium of the Western, a brief rehearsal of significant issues is important, as is the recognition that the period 1946–62, the period under consideration, can also be broken into smaller historical configurations. At the end of World War II, the United States emerged victorious—the sole superpower, armed with the atomic bomb. But the prewar clarity of American progress and exceptionalism was shattered in the paradoxical and ambiguous nature of achieving freedom through overwhelming might. Likewise, the defeat of totalitarian dictatorships and their racist ideologies was somewhat compromised in the lingering structural racism at home. In 1949, the Soviets shook the nuclear bubble by developing their own bomb and initiating the arms race. This, coupled with the "fall" of China and the onset of the Korean War, not only formalized the Cold War, it also set the tone for cultural politics in Cold War America.[13] Communist paranoia and

nuclear anxiety had a stabilizing effect on popular support for international and domestic containment policy.

Three key works address the Golden Age of the Western in terms of the Western's utility as a screen on which to project the political concerns of the Cold War: Richard Slotkin's *Gunfighter Nation*, in particular part 5, "Democracy and Force: The Western and the Cold War, 1946–1960," plots the parallel histories of the Western and the Cold War and the "continual exchange of symbols, themes, and concerns between the discourses of politics and movie production. The genre provided a frame in which alternative approaches to the political and ideological problems of the Cold War era could be imaginatively entertained" (347). Michael Coyne's *The Crowded Prairie* tracks Cold War Westerns based on data derived not only from movies and history but also from movie reviews, and thus is a cultural as well as political history. More recently, Corkin also takes a historically contextualized look at the postwar Western, metaphorically relating the story of the nation's settlement of western territories to the economic relationship of twentieth-century United States to the global economy. In the changing role of the United States after World War II, Corkin asserts that the Westerns "helped to mediate such shifts by grafting the historical onto the mythic to help audiences adjust to new concepts of national definition" (Corkin 3). That is, these Westerns "built on antecedents within the genre and provided a conceptual bridge between frontier mythology and Cold War imperatives" (23). Although these analyses cannot be denied, they also cannot be read as comprehensive or complete as they reiterate the problematic divide between mythic and historical while generalizing the formulaic aspects of the Western. Furthermore, Corkin's analysis is based on data from only top-grossing feature films to the exclusion of all others, and as such his sample of Westerns is shallow and misrepresentative of what audiences were seeing, as box office figures cannot account for B-Westerns or second features. It also seems odd that in a survey of Westerns that span from 1946 to 1962 director Sergio Leone is anachronistically included, and yet Anthony Mann and Budd Boetticher, whose works figure so prominently in the 1950s, are not mentioned. In the end, because of these shortcomings, such analyses become part of the "story"—examples of mythologizing and metanarrative passing as analysis, in part a result of the self-selection of data to fit preconceptions.[14] We are, again, in Jameson's conundrum (*Prison-House of Language*), prisoners of the narrative, not only focusing on narrative itself (and synchronicity) to the exclusion of extradiegetic aspects but also trapped by those narratives.[15]

The Golden Age of Westerns and America's Gilded Age— Educations in Consumerism

The post–World War II Western thus exists in mythic time and place, its semiotic potency elaborated in the metaphoric and metonymic relationships to real places and real time periods. The Romantic Western landscapes of Albert Bierstadt become the point of reference for understanding John Ford's iconic use of Monument Valley in his Westerns—a real place with no real historical significance. Similarly, the historical time period in which the postwar Westerns are situated is between the end of the Civil War and the mid-1890s. Here the West provides the open range for the realization of Lincoln's Second Republic: turning West, post–Civil War America could regenerate in those wide and wild open spaces, seemingly putting the trauma of war behind. This is also the period in which the short-lived but disproportionately reenacted Cattle Drive took place, roughly 1866–86, giving birth to the Western hero—the Cowboy.[16] By the time of the Hollywood Western, this period has already been mythologized in a nostalgic reappropriation by (Eastern) ideologues such as Theodore Roosevelt and Frederic Remington, made even more urgent in Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 proclamation that the frontier itself, the defining aspect of the American psyche, had closed. But this period also corresponds to America's Gilded Age—one of phenomenal industrial and economic growth and expansion, the institutionalization of a national system of distribution in the railroads, and the beginnings of corporate America. Significantly, the Gilded Age ended with a stock market crash in 1893, the same year that Turner presented his "Frontier Thesis." In the West of the 1950s movies, however, in the mythic, nostalgia-laden simulacrum of the "Wild West" that is somehow authenticated in the references to real events and real people and places (however reconfigured) there is scant direct reference to the Eastern-controlled business enterprises that were expanding national markets and creating a consumer class. And yet, in the extradiegetic, nonnarrative aspects of the Western, an insistent consumerist imperative emerges.

American consumerism, the compulsion to purchase beyond need, and corporate capitalism had been driving social forces in the 1910s and 1920s. All of this came to an abrupt (if temporary) halt in the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and was significantly diminished during the Depression and World War II. In the aftermath of World War II, threatened by overproduction, American business quickly sought to expand markets and stimulate consumer demand both internationally and domestically, and consumerism again emerged as a dominant ideology. Internationally,

the United States was opening markets in anticipation of the New World Order of globalization—establishing the link between free markets and the free world. At home, consumerist values were enshrined in the family, secured in the suburbs with all the modern conveniences, and increasingly mediated. This link to a consumerist ideology is present in the Western of the Cold War period as well, if not directly, then subliminally, diffused through extradiegetic elements.

Of the A-Westerns of the postwar period, two of the first and most iconic were John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and Howard Hawks's *Red River* (1948). Both films are overtly situated in a specific historical moment and a named location, thus authenticating them as part of the history of the United States. Both also feature standard Western plots: *Clementine* is that of the "town tamer," with new marshal Wyatt Earp (Henry Fonda) vanquishing (violently) the bad elements of the rough frontier to make way for the civilized church-going families. *Red River* reiterates the Jeffersonian agrarian model, Texas style, in which Tom Dunson's (John Wayne) dream of a cattle ranch obtains through hard work and determination (and land grabbing). Both feature stars who had a long screen presence as agents of a moral code, engaging the audience in an already-in-place emotional relationship, an intertext, that allowed them to understand the actors immediately through and in this layered history. Audiences knew that John Wayne and Henry Fonda were making the West safe and good, and arguably, the blurring between actor and role was essential for the intertextual signification.

In *Clementine*, a fictionalized account of the historical Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, Wyatt Earp and his brothers come into Tombstone while driving some cattle up from Mexico in 1882. In *Clementine* Tombstone is a small, lawless town in search of order so that the good people might settle and build. The townspeople implore Wyatt to take the job of marshal after he demonstrates his fitness for the job by ejecting a drunk Indian from the saloon, but he refuses, saying his lawman days are over. While they are in town, however, their cattle are rustled by the Clantons, who also kill the youngest Earp, James, who has been left behind with the cattle. After this, Wyatt signs on as marshal to avenge his brother's death and to make the country a place where "young kids [. . .] will be able to grow up and live safe."[17] The movie moves visually from the dark, claustrophobic nighttime streets and saloon in Tombstone when the brothers arrive, into the flat light of day viscerally apprehended through the long shots of Wyatt's lanky silhouette against the stark, empty sky, or, most famously, in the church-dedication scene, with only the framework of the church steeple contrasting sharply against the bright midday sky. Wyatt here

is the moral agent of order and progress, and the history of the West (and of Wyatt Earp and the shootout at the O.K. Corral) has forever been incorporated into this vision/version.

Tombstone, however, by 1881, two years after its founding, was a silver boom-town that not only had four churches, but also a bowling alley, an ice house, a school, two banks, three newspapers, and an ice cream parlor, alongside 110 saloons, fourteen gambling halls, and numerous dance halls and brothels, which were open twenty-four hours a day. In 1881 the population was 6,000 (white, adult males), with at least as many women and Chinese and Mexican laborers, and at the height of the town's growth (ca. 1885) it was perhaps 10,000, making it the largest town in the territory.[18] Eastern mining interests owned the mines, and the population was made up not of individual settlers or miners with stakes, but mine workers / wage earners and those who supported the operations of the mines. Thus this is the story of the extension of a corporate system into the west, or rather the incorporation of the west into a larger, global economic system whose center was in the eastern capitals, rather than a story of individual triumph. The story of Tombstone is, rather than one of progress and settlement thus one of unsustainable extraction (with the inevitable bust in 1890), in which those resisting this corporate exploitation are the cowboys who, in *Clementine* are the corrupt forces of chaos. The historical Earps, coming into Tombstone in 1879, were in fact speculators whose interests in town taming aligned with those of the Eastern establishment. Ironically, then, in this light, Wyatt Earp[19] was making the west safe for a particular and pervasive economic system—not that of the individual entrepreneur or local cattle driver, but rather those interests of industrial capitalism. Tombstone's businesses—silver mining that was tied to national monetary policy and the international speculation in precious metals, as well as gambling, saloons, and prostitution—*were* the interests that Earp was protecting, in the name of the law. In other words, while *My Darling Clementine* is the story of an individual hero's vanquishing the forces of chaos, Wyatt Earp was more likely an agent who, in attempting to advantage his own economic position, reinscribed a national economic system that was in the hands of Eastern big businesses. Thus, as Corkin discusses, the ideological imperative of US global economic domination, made possible by the continuous expansion of markets and the incorporation of peripheral areas in the post–World War II era is mirrored in the expansion of industrial capitalism in the west of the 1880s, but is naturalized in the imagery and familiar narratives of individual heroism and honor in the West of the imagination.

Similarly the apparent storyline of *Red River*[20] is that of the cattle drive—the free and romantic life of the cowboy on the open range, with men of independent spirit and vision like Tom Dunson, who open new cattle trails while building their personal empires. The movie opens up with a series of historicizing/authenticating moves. As the credits fade, a written introduction explains that, "Among the annals of the great state of Texas may be found the story of the first drive on the famous Chisholm Trail. A story of one of the great cattle herds of the world, of a man and a boy—Thomas Dunson and Matthew Garth, the story of the Red River D." Here, anachronistically and promiscuously, the fictional Dunson becomes the creator of the historical Chisholm Trail.[21] Fade to a leather-bound, hand-written "Early Tales of Texas," and as the pages turn, we read: "In the year 1851, Thomas Dunson accompanied by a friend, Nadine Groot, left St. Louis and joined a wagon train headed for California." Returning to the action of the film, Dunson leaves the wagon train north of Texas to start his own herd.[22] En route to Texas, Dunson and Groot kill several Indians who have just ambushed the wagon train and subsequently are joined by Matthew Garth, the lone survivor of the ambush. The narrative voice-over explains: "And that was the meeting of a boy with a cow and a man with a bull and the beginning of a great herd." As Dunson begins to brand his cattle, two envoys of Don Diego, the Mexican landowner who owns the land that Dunson is now claiming, approach. Dunson kills one and sends the other back to Don Diego with the message that he's taking the land. As Dunson has appropriated land, so too does he appropriate Garth's cow, branding her along with his bull.[23] Through a series of montages, we see the three men cross the Red River and settle. As Dunson narrates his prophecy for the future, we see it unfold on film: "We're here and we're gonna stay here. I'll have the brand on enough beef to feed the whole country. Good beef for hungry people. Beef to make 'em strong, make 'em grow." Of course, Dunson's prediction of feeding the *whole country* begs the question of the country divided by the Civil War and the anti-Union Confederate sentiments in Texas. His statement also anticipates the postwar economic speculation that originated not with ranchers like Dunson, but with Joseph McCoy, a livestock trader from Chicago who realized that the demand for beef in the East could be profitable if he could get surplus Texas cattle to Eastern markets. He set up a stockyard along the new railroad line in Abilene, Kansas, and actively advertised for Texans to drive their herds north for shipment to Chicago. Thus the motivation of the cattle drive along the Chisholm and other trails derived from the entrepreneurial speculation of an Easterner with ties to railroads and packing industries, rather than from the determination of an individual like Tom Dunson.

The cattle drive's origins thus lie in the penetration of the railroads into the west—the establishing of cities along these rail lines, the rise of meat-packing industries, the creation of a demand for beef in the East, and thus on a nationally based commodity market.

> The railroad linked the western range to new consumer markets. Traditionally pork had been the most common meat on the American table, but faced with this new and abundant supply of beef, Chicago meat packers Philip Armour and Gustavus Swift quickly transformed the national diet. Rather than follow the standard practice of sending live cattle east to local slaughterhouses, they pioneered the practice of killing and butchering the animals on "disassembly" lines, then used refrigerated railroad cars to ship great quantities of dressed beef to eastern markets. Because salable meat constituted only about half a steer's body weight, this method produced dramatic savings in shipping costs and allowed the packers to undercut the price of locally butchered beef. Packers made their biggest profits, however, on the "waste": dried blood packaged as fertilizer, hooves and feet boiled into glue, bone carved for knife handles, and fat converted into margarine. Nearly everything else was ground up for sausage and stuffed into the entrail casings. (Hine and Faragher 304)

These were large industrial complexes, in which cowboys, packers, and stockyard and slaughterhouse workers were being absorbed into the workforce, and this, as well as the economic integration of the peripheral regions, is the fundamental story of progress that undergirds *Red River*, one that resonates with a post–World War II national economic policy that sought to resolve postwar overproduction by expanding into new markets while maintaining hegemony and thwarting the spread of global communism by incorporating more peripheral states into the sphere of global capitalism. *Red River* in particular naturalizes an unsustainable version of progress based on excess—the huge herds that not only anticipate modern agri-business industries, but also for which a demand must constantly be created.[24] In *Red River* and in *Clementine*, expansive capitalism is made equivalent to expansive territorial settlement and American nation building.

Psychoanalysis and the 1950s Westerns

Photography, cinema, and psychoanalysis were all revolutionary technologies that came about in the second half of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century. All held a similar promise: to reveal that which was unseen, to make the invisible visible, and to thus demystify that which had been occulted.[25] Psychoanalysis and cinema, in particular, both coming out of late 1890s Europe, expressed metaphorically similar goals—projection in order to render visible or knowable. The expressionist filmmakers of Weimar Germany experimented with exteriorizing interiorized psychological states through graphic images and lighting that evoked feelings of anxiety and dread in viewers parallel to and mirroring those emotions the characters felt. These filmmakers (many of them in exile in Hollywood after fleeing the Nazis) would spearhead the emergent film noir of the 1940s and 1950s in the United States. Their techniques included dark and claustrophobic scenes dripping with anxiety and conveying a sense of suspense, paranoia, and melodrama. These techniques were often used in the black-and-white Westerns of the 1940s and 1950s to create not only a nostalgic mood but also an environment of emotional excess, for example, John Ford's use of light and shadow in *Clementine* to emphasize Tombstone's delivery from decadence, and, similarly in *Stagecoach* (1939) to juxtapose the towns of Tonto and Lordsburg. In addition to appealing to psychological moods, movies of the 1950s in general served to normalize the *idea* of psychoanalysis and were part of the means by which America embraced a vernacularized Freudianism. The films of Hitchcock are well known for this—his 1945 *Spellbound* takes place in a mental institution and deals with the gradual recovery of memory repressed as a result of a traumatic experience; his 1958 *Vertigo* recounts the source of the protagonist's acrophobia through the interpretation of dreams.[26]

In a few films, the West provides a minimal backdrop for psychological themes and melodrama. In these hybrid Westerns, the mythic landscape is replaced by interiors, reflecting interiorized mental states, and the Myth of the West is sublimated to family tragedy. In a few of these, such as King Vidor's *Duel in the Sun* (1946) or Anthony Mann's *The Furies* (1950), the west bears little resemblance to the Myth, but instead is the backdrop for Oedipal violence and dysfunction that obliterates any chance of a conventional family. Anthony Mann's 1958 *Man of the West* locates the Oedipal conflict in a deviant all-male "family" of bandits and thieves. In *Pursued* (Raoul Walsh, dir. 1947), Jeb Callum (Robert Mitchum) suffers from repressed memory that stems from the traumatic witnessing, at an early age,

of his father's murder. He is haunted by fragmentary dreams and feels that without resolving and understanding "what the dreams mean" he cannot fully engage in his adult life. Extremely claustrophobic interiors, harsh black-and-white techniques, scenes in which "bones jut out of the dirt and bare twisted tree branches offer a hold for hanging-ropes" (I. Smith), flashback dream sequences with flashing lights and omnipresent spur imagery along with the fact that the entire movie is a flashback[27] all contribute to the psychological mood, normalizing the simplified Freudian notion that "a twisted psyche can be explained by a single traumatic childhood event" (I. Smith). The film is filled with Freudian overtones, but what is remarkable here is the taken-for-granted nature in which repressed memory, Oedipal logic, and interpretation of dreams are presented. Similarly, in Anthony Mann's 1955 *The Man from Laramie*[28] the local cattle baron Alec Waggoman (Donald Crisp) relates his recurrent nightmare of his son's being pursued and killed by a tall stranger to Will Lockhart (James Stewart), a stranger who has come into the town of Coronado and whom Waggoman believes to be the man in the dream. While prophetic dreams of murder are the stuff of Greek tragedy where they serve not only to initiate the plot but are also the fulfillment of (external) fate, here, the nightmare originates within the psyche of the haunted character, triggered, presumably, by the death of Waggoman's wife.

Despite these exaggeratedly psychoanalytic Westerns, the psychological turn in the postwar Western[29] less overtly is part of the more generalized inward-looking tendency in postwar American society, which was "driven by the culmination of two quintessentially American trends: the promise of individual salvation through liberation of the self and a twentieth-century strategy based on the avoidance of economic stagnation" (Cushman 210–11). Psychoanalysts saw a dramatic rise in numbers, as did family and marriage counselors and psychologists in public health offices, all seeking, through the "talking cure" to regulate the individual into the structures of modern family life. Furthermore, Freudian premises and practice were developed and used in government propaganda, the military, and, above all, in marketing and advertising. Freud's nephew, Edward Bernays, credited as the founder of public relations, Americanized Freud's theories on the unconscious. Rather than advocating the exercise of overt control over the destructive impulses of the un-conscious, Bernays turned to advertising, appealing to the desires of individuals for self-fulfillment and self-realization through consumption. Thus the Americanized Freudian message became naturalized into daily life in the most mundane and ordinary forms. This would insinuate Freudian psychology into everyday life and

would provide the motivation for capitalist expansion in a peacetime economy while redirecting the focus from society to the individual and the family (Curtis). "The Cold War era generation, in the wake of the disruption of World War II and the uncertainty of the new, nuclear age, looked 'homeward' to the isolated, stable, sexually charged safe haven of the home and family" (Conrad, "The Docile Bodies" 145). The effect was ultimately to normalize the heterosexual nuclear family, an economic unit fine tuned to maximize consumption in that the sexual desire and tension of that union became sublimated, controlled, and internalized through the act of consumption. In the postwar Westerns these trends were reflected in three interwoven phenomena: the demise of the town-tamer hero; the normalization of the isolated, nuclear family (with a corresponding effeminization of the male head of the family); and the extradiegetic extravagance of consumption—of alcohol, food, coffee, store-bought clothes, guns.

Making *Sense* of Westerns

"Going to the movies" in the 1950s came close to being a national ritual: national because of the sheer numbers in attendance, ritual in that it was a patterned, repetitive, symbolic, and embodied experience. Every Saturday, millions of viewers sat through double features, clearly sharing in a topsy-turvy liminal environment in which the rules of everyday were suspended. There, in the dark, surrounded by like-minded viewers who were all engaged in the same activity, filled with the sounds and music of the movie, viewers were able to not only suspend disbelief and enter into the story world, but in doing so also with the entire sensorium were drawn into a social and emotional experience. Viewers also built up relationships with stars, which transcended the specifics of any individual film and that pulled the audience into each film at an emotional level, provoking interaction with the projected images and imitative behavior. Kids could dress up and play "cowboys and Indians," mimicking the world portrayed and projected onto thousands of screens for millions of viewings, incorporating this into their real lives (fig. 1), while their fathers and older brothers mimicked the movie-cowboy's exaggerated costume by sporting Stetson hats, neckerchiefs, cowboy boots, and jeans, and even taking up chew, or rolling their own cigarettes. Secondary merchandise and promotional gimmicks furthered the ritualized engagement with films and stars long after the movie was over, effecting a bridge of anticipation to the next moviegoing adventure.

Consumerism was embedded in the promotions and tie-ins to products through which kids not only were able to bring a material presence of their filmic fantasies into their own lives, but which also inculcated kids into the consumerist enterprise.[30] Clearly, the notion of "inserting oneself into the tale world" does not take into consideration the way that the tale world intersects with and enters into the "real world," and how we continue to live and embody aspects of the tale world in our day-to-day lives.

In a sociological sense, Durkheim has described this type of group ritualistic behavior as serving to sustain the vitality of belief systems, as revivifying "the most essential element of the collective consciousness," and as strengthening individuals in their social natures (Durkheim 375), and this functionalist approach clearly resonates with the notion that Westerns of this time served as socializing, pedagogical instruments, shaping a citizenry in accord with the ideological imperatives of post–World War II America.[31] More recent work on ritual, however, suggests that belief emerges from embodied practice, suggesting our engagement with movies is only partly at the narrative surface:

> Ritual works by sending messages through symbols to those who perform and those who receive or observe it. The message contained in a symbol will be felt holistically through the body and the emotions, not decoded analytically by the intellect, so that no conceptual distance exists between message and recipient, and the recipient cannot consciously choose to accept or reject the symbol's message. Thus the ultimate effect of the repetitive series of symbolic messages sent through ritual can be extremely powerful, acting to map the recipient, thereby aligning the individual cognitive system with that of the larger society. (Munn 606)

Thus immediately, the rituals of moviegoing—standing in line for the ticket, purchasing from the ticket window, entering the doors single file and handing the ticket to the ticket collector, hanging onto the ticket stub, passing along the velvet rope dividers, buying snacks, picking out a good seat, watching previews and anticipating the feature, and finally, settling into movie-viewing mode—all draw the entire audience into a physically and emotionally different space and time, one that literally sets the stage for the movie experience, for which our bodies "sit in readiness as both [ ] sensual and sense-making potentialit[ies]" (Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew" [2004] 76).

Engaging with the movie itself, the audience is emotionally drawn in by the

FIGURE 1. Mike and George, ca. 1950. Photograph of the author.

sleight-of-hand effects of lighting, editing, sound, and symbolic messages felt "holistically through the body." Here Munn's work on ritual as a kind of preconscious embodied practice can be expanded to include the cinematic experience by way of Richard Cytowic's research on synesthesia—cross-modal sensory perception: "Synaesthesia, is the most immediate and direct kind of experience. . . . It is sensual and concrete, not some intellectualized concept pregnant with meaning. It emphasizes limbic processes [over higher cortical functions of the brain] which break through to consciousness. It's about feeling and being, something more immediate than analyzing what is happening and talking about it" (Cytowic 52). Most analyses of the Western, however, have not taken into account these "carnal foundations of cinematic intelligibility" (Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew" [2000]); the level of flesh, the role of the senses in such an embodied response. And yet at this level the Western differs qualitatively from its literary antecedents. The Western is noted for its minimalist dialogue, and this is often cited as evidence of the genre's inherent shallowness. But this aspect of the Western exaggerates the

use of mimesis over narrative—the complex body language of John Wayne and James Stewart for example—and the power of such extradiegetic aspects lies in their ability to elicit emotional responses and set a general tone. Our bodies respond to the bodies on screen in immediate and visceral ways. Particularly useful here, and resonant with Munn's work on ritual engagement, is Sobchack's articulation of a *cinesthetic subject*[32] which attempts to foreground the "general bodily experience that grounds our particular experience of cinema and . . . [the] ways in which the cinema uses our dominant senses of vision and hearing to speak comprehensibly to our other senses" (Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew" [2004] 67). The cinesthetic subject apprehends not only visually but also through cross-sensory modalities, an embodied engagement of the entire sensorium which then *makes sense* of the cinematic experience *without a thought.* This precognitive and prelinguistic sensory involvement of our bodies with the bodies on the screen is with the extradiegetic, nonnarrative, mimetic elements, which occurs simultaneously and yet unremarkably with our processing of the manifest narrative line.

> As a lived body and a film viewer, the cinesthetic subject subverts the prevalent objectification of vision that would reduce sensorial experience at the movies to an impoverished "cinematic sight" or posit anorexic theories of identification that have no flesh on them, that cannot stomach "a feast for the eyes." (Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew" [2004] 71)

This understanding of the reciprocal, reversible, embodied moviegoing subject who "makes sense of matter" not only cinesthically but also ritually is critical to an understanding of the ways in which the messages of the Western became incorporated into belief and sensibility.[33]

In much of our film experience, symbolic information that is not part of the narrative—landscape, sounds, music, lighting, close-ups, scenes and props, costumes, body language—is apprehended and made sense of holistically, with apparent effortlessness, appealing not only to sense but also to *common sense*—that naturalized, learned body of knowledge. The intent of the remainder of this article is to suggest that the unremarkable and usually unremarked-upon aspects of the Western—those extradiegetic elements that constitute the mise-en-scène—are apprehended by the cinesthetic subject and incorporated as second nature. That is, the ideological work of the Western operates secondarily at the narrative level and primarily at the affective, extradiegetic level. This runs contrary to the majority

of analyses, which focus on the narrative, and by extension political discourses of the Western. In contrast, the subjective, emoting, reversible subjects who are interpellated into the world of the film, who are open to cinesthetic, cross-sensory modalities, who apprehend and internalize the metaphors of everyday life at a pre-linguistic level, are responding less immediately to the notions of Manifest Destiny, national expansion, and Cold War ideology, and more to issues of consumption, food, romance, and melodrama—those background, sometimes unremarked-upon subtexts that fill out the scene. If belief systems are incorporated through embodiment and apprehended without cognitive distance, then those messages received by the cinesthetic subject that are extradiegetic and that are perceived and *made sense of* as the *natural* (authentic) background are those that may be constitutive and reflective of the beliefs of the period in which a film was made/released. Post–World War II Westerns are typically analyzed as mythic in structure and yet accurate in period background detail. In assuming that background detail in the Western is authentic, it is rendered no longer available for analysis—it is naturalized. Paying attention to these details, that is, analyzing them as significant and intentional as they are presented as natural, can begin to unravel the ideological processes involved. The cinesthetic subject, apprehending this background information that was not only extra to the storyline but that also made a claim on historical accuracy and authenticity and was thus doubly naturalized, became interpellated into the larger cultural belief system—incorporated through the collapsing of critical distance.

Extraordinary Consumption of the Ordinary Things of Everyday Life

In the small, unremarkable routines of everyday life in the Western, in the simple and everyday acts of eating, drinking, and shopping, we see the transition to and normalization of a consumerist ideology that was essential to the new economy of postwar America in the 1950s. Postwar consumerism was seated in the family and was configured as self-actualizing and equated with personal liberty. Thus self-realization through acts of consumption was linked to individualism and blended into the fantasy landscape of the Western in the service of the American Dream.

Coffee is ordinary in the Western: as ready on the trail campfire as in the kitchens and at the dinner tables of the most remote and isolated sodbusters' cabins. In *Red River*, the trail hands complain because the coffee is so bad, unaware that

Groot, now the cook, has had to turn to coffee substitutes after losing much of his supplies, including coffee and sugar, in a stampede. After Lin McAdams (James Stewart) joins a small army unit pinned down by Indians in *Winchester '73* (Anthony Mann, dir. 1950), he and the sergeant discuss strategy over a cup of coffee. In *The Man from Laramie*, after Will Lockhart's (James Stewart) severely wounded hand is bandaged up by Kate Canady (Aline MacMahon), she immediately moves from the kitchen to the parlor to have coffee—served on a tray with china cups and saucers. In *The Searchers* (John Ford, dir. 1956) the Edwards family home is in an isolated part of North Texas. Three years after the end of the Civil War (in which Texas was with the Confederacy), and in the midst of Indian Wars, the area is not only tenuously and ambiguously reincorporated into the Union, but is also situated at the edge of human habitation. And yet food, china, and coffee are critical to the domestic scene. Early in the film, when Rev. Capt. Samuel Johnson Clayton (Ward Bond) comes to the Edwards homestead to recruit deputies, he interrupts the morning meal into which he is immediately integrated. Although the scene is critical to the overall plot—the deputized Rangers are drawn away to pursue alleged rustlers while a Comanche raid massacres the remaining Edwards family—it is mixed into a busy, domestic scene of coffee serving and comedic banter. When Clayton, Rangers in tow, first enters into the main room from the threshold, greeting everyone, he clearly begins to smell the coffee. Martha Edwards suggests: "Coffee's ready." Clayton: "Oh, coffee'd be just fine, sister." He sits down at the head of the table with the kids already seated, and Martha brings a large pot to the table and puts it beside him. Clayton: "Oh, thank you sister. Could sure use that coffee. . . . Pass the sugar, son. Ah, fine, fine." A few minutes later, teenaged daughter Lucy begins to take the coffee pot back. Clayton: "Wait a minute sister. I didn't get any coffee yet!" The scene continues with background drinking and eating doughnuts, but what is remarkable is that this comic discussion of coffee is foregrounded in the conversation for a full minute. Its ordinariness is contrasted with the fact that this is the last meal for the Edwards family, and soon Martha, husband Aaron, and their son Ben will be brutally massacred while daughters Lucy and Debbie are abducted. The apparently benign domestic scene, played with exaggerated comedic effect, deepens the anxious and tragic overtones.

The abundance and ubiquity of coffee in the Western suggests that coffee was a staple in frontier life. Rather than reflecting conditions immediately following the Civil War, however, these scenes confirm a twentieth-century sensibility while they seem to anticipate the rapid spread of commodities in the west during the Gilded

Age. What is effaced in the quickly proffered and copiously consumed coffee in the movies is the complicated industrialized processes of production, distribution, and promotion that effected coffee's "winning of the West" (Fugate). Prior to the end of the Civil War, because the technology to roast coffee that would not lose its flavor or spoil was not available, all coffee was sold green—unroasted—and was unevenly roasted and ground before each pot was brewed. In 1865 John Arbuckle introduced preroasted coffee that would not spoil, and that sold in one-pound packages, eliminating the need for pan roasting.[34] However, coffee in the west after the Civil War, especially in the broken Confederate states, was still not so easily obtained, nor was it cheap. A Texan family of the time relates that "coffee was then a dollar a pound and lots of people parched meal bran and sweet potato peelings for coffee" (Brite 684). A similar observation comes from a Kansas homesteader in 1877: "Most people out here don't drink real coffee, because it is too expensive. Green coffee berries sell at anywhere from 40 to 60 cents a pound . . . [e]ven Arbuckles Ariosa at 35 cents a pound takes too much out of the trade . . . so rye coffee is used . . . [or sometimes] wheat" (Reude 99–100). But these statements illustrate the already-in-place *desire* for real coffee, one Arbuckle's Ariosa was soon to fill. Arbuckle not only revolutionized the industry in terms of coffee roasting and packaging, but also owned the coffee at the point of origin, and thus had a fully integrated multinational venture. Furthermore, as production became more industrialized and markets and distribution centers continuously moved westward thanks to the massive growth of the railroads, Arbuckle began to expand and establish market dominance through marketing (in mail order catalogs such as Sears and Roebuck) and promotions such as package labels redeemable for other merchandise. The presence of coffee suggests a global network of production and distribution, mass production, and its requisite consumption. But in the mythical landscape of the Western, coffee is depicted anachronistically as part of regular, day-to-day life, effecting its symbolic indigenization—making it American.

The isolated homestead, exposed and dwarfed in an enormous natural setting, is a well-established trope in the Western, serving as a visual enactment of the conquest of the West through the sheer determination and pluck of individual homesteaders despite great odds—a grand national narrative of independence and destiny. A scene repeated so frequently as to go unremarked is the family meal, which despite the meager living conditions, is usually an abundant spread with the table set with (Eastern) china and linens. These scenes are unquestioningly accepted as authentic and link the family narrative with the national, and yet they

more accurately reflect a 1950s family values system in which family consumption is linked to family integrity. Post–World War II sensibilities turned inward, toward reintegration and consolidation, and this return to domesticity is reflected not only in a focus on the family but also on that family's indoor life centered on the quintessential ritual of American family togetherness as well as consumption—the family meal. The family meal became a moral imperative as well as a marker of a "good" and "right" family, modeled in movies, TV, magazines, and in the national imaginary.[35] An abundantly varied display of food, the regularization of shared meal time, and the order imposed by place settings with matching china are thus more in accord with 1950s acts of display and consumption, displays of the markers of the desired good life, than with the conditions in the late 1800s.

In *Shane* (George Stevens, dir. 1953), after the eponymous and mysterious stranger (Alan Ladd) arrives at the Starrett homestead, Marian Starrett (Jean Arthur) serves up a huge dinner on blue china, finishing up with large slices of apple pie. This is especially interesting since there is no evidence of where all this food comes from—their meager garden is plundered by grazing elk in the first scene, and Joe Starrett seems more intent on taking out the stump in front of their cabin than farming. In *The Searchers*, the initial dinner welcoming home the long-absent Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) back from the Civil War into the Edwards household is similarly abundant, without a corresponding field, orchard, or chicken coop. In *The Man from Laramie*,[36] Will Lockhart (James Stewart) sits down to have tea with shop owner Barbara Waggoner, to whom he has delivered three large wagonloads of supplies. Although her store is empty, her apartment above the store is well stocked with a stove, blue teacups and saucers, tea and sugar, and a full bowl of red apples, despite the fact that this is the remote town of Coronado in the New Mexico Territory. Again, in *The Unforgiven* (John Huston, dir. 1960),[37] set in Oklahoma or North Texas, the cattle-driving family of five sits down to a huge breakfast with fried eggs, bacon, coffee, and a bowl of apples, even though at that very moment the home is surrounded by threatening Kiowa (echoing the breakfast scene in *The Searchers*). Earlier, there are scenes of the women preparing food—baking bread and churning butter, but in a generally relaxed manner. Later, when neighboring cattlemen come courting, the table is again generously spread.

The background information here can be seen as indicative of technological changes and the increasing penetration of mass-produced products into the more permanent domestic sphere—the stove replacing the hearth; or as displays of class (and taste) distinction—the heavy, Eastern furniture; or as evidence of the

regularization of the consumption of national commodities—the apples in the bowl on the table.[38] But this last display is out of place. It registers symbolically with a twentieth-century viewer as ordinary, unremarkable, and yet it is not—the attention to minute detail passing as authentic in its apparent ordinariness. Its ordinariness allows for our loose apprehension of its presence without conscious attentiveness, enabling the full symbolic weight of the bowl of apples to bear. Symbolically, apples are desire—their sweetness and beauty lodged in associations with the fall from Eden, and their presence in the household signifying abundance, consumption, accumulation, and the fulfillment of desire. Apples, like coffee, are not native, and their presence in western households can be seen as symbolic of the importation, hybridization, and indigenization of European stock, and the cultivation and enculturation of the Wild West. On display in these movies, however, their presence is an anachronism. Apples were part of the story of the homesteading and westward settlement of the United States, but those homesteaders who planted apple trees were in the Midwest—Ohio, Indiana, or the Northwest—Oregon, not New Mexico. Refrigeration required for long distance transport and storage was also far in the future, making their presence in general stores, unlike that of potatoes and onions, unlikely. Furthermore, the now commonplace and iconic red delicious (which seems to be the apples in the bowls), so ubiquitous now as to be synonymous with apple itself, had not yet been developed nor named in the 1880s, when apples themselves were not, as now, eaten, but drunk as hard cider (Pollan 3–58). The unlikely presentation of a bowl of red apples is too conspicuous on the frontier in which food was more likely put up or in a root cellar to prolong its life than displayed. And yet it makes sense in the context of the twentieth century— signaling abundance, health, and wholesomeness within the family, and marking that family as the site of fulfillment. This naturalized conspicuous consumption needs to be seen in the context of both the family and the nostalgia for the past as sites of a desire that can be satisfied by objects—lavishly displayed. We understand these scenes as the locus of nurturance, abundance, and satisfaction through the techniques of accumulation, consumption, and display. Through these images we are interpellated into a common-sense relationship with consumption as defining of who we are and historically have been.

In the West of the imagination, saloons were sites of male social gathering—of whiskey, cards, loose women, and often, at the bar, of a shoot-out. In this world, drinking was a man's activity, and a manly drink was whiskey. This makes the initial meeting of Doc Holliday (Victor Mature) and Wyatt Earp so tense in *My Darling*

Clementine: Doc: "Have a drink?" Wyatt: "Thanks, I believe I will." Doc: "Mac, a glass of champagne for the Marshal." Wyatt: "Make it whiskey." Doc: "You're my guest, Marshal. [He sends the shot glasses back down to the bartender.] Champagne!" Wyatt: "Champagne it is, Mac." In *The Gunfighter* (Henry King, dir. 1950), almost the entire movie is in saloons. The initial sequence has a weary Ringo (Gregory Peck) entering into the Gem Saloon and Cantina and immediately being taunted by a young punk, Eddie (Richard Jaeckel), who challenges Ringo. Although Ringo tries to diffuse the situation, he inevitably has to draw, and kills the boy. The pursuit by the boy's three brothers, bent on revenge, is the context of rest of the action in the movie. Ringo leaves this saloon and heads to Cayenne, where he wants to reunite with his estranged wife and son. He comes into town in the early morning and goes straight to the bar, where he stays, sitting at a table with his back to the wall. In part, his inability to leave the world of the saloon is parallel to his inability to enter into the domestic sphere and reunite with his family—his fame and instant recognizability preclude his quietly being absorbed into the community. The separation of the world of the saloon from the domestic sphere is made emphatic by Ringo's encounter at the bar with a newlywed who comes in for his one-drink allotment and talks glowingly to Ringo about his little ranch, and then leaves for home. But the naturalness with which this local saloon world is portrayed belies an Eastern, corporate presence, which is obliquely indicated in the picture above Ringo's head as he sits at the table—the Anheuser-Busch print of Custer's last stand (1876). This is anachronistic, as the movie takes place in 1881 and the widespread distribution of the Anheuser-Busch print was not until 1896. However, the reconfiguration of defeat into victory in visual representation occurred almost immediately after the 1876 Battle of Little Bighorn, and thus was, by 1881, already part of the public imagination. Buffalo Bill "reenacted" it in his shows from 1887 through 1905 (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 76–86), Frederic Remington painted his *Last Stand* in 1890, and after the battle there were countless other renditions (Taft). Eventually the Anheuser-Busch print was commissioned and put into bars around the country: "Some 150,000 copies of the large print have been distributed by Anheuser-Busch since the lithograph was first published in 1896, and in 1942, copies were being mailed out to servicemen and others at the rate of 2,000 a month" (St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, November 26, 1942, and letter to Taft from F. W. Webber of the advertising department of Anheuser-Busch, Inc., July 18, 1946).

The Anheuser-Busch engraving in the film, although anachronistic in its specificity, is not generally. Its presence signals the commonplace nature of the

distribution and consumption of mass-produced products, and with them, the naturalization of a mythologized version of the West. Lager beer replaced whiskey as the working-class beverage after the Civil War. Breweries, with Anheuser-Busch the largest, were very powerful and distributed their beer across the country: "Whereas in 1860 there had been 1,269 breweries in the United States, with a total output of one million barrels, by 1867 output had risen to six million barrels, and by 1873, 4,131 brewers produced nine million barrels of beer" (Gately 315). By 1880 beer production and consumption was coast to coast. In fact, between 1880 and 1910 the rate of beer production was double that of the rate of population increase (Gately 346). New industrial processes, new technologies in cooling and preservation, and the transcontinental railway for distribution hastened the rise in beer consumption, as did the vertical integration of the brewers owning not only the means of production and distribution but also owning the bars and saloons as well and everything in them—the booze, the artwork, the furniture, and the girls. Thus the rise of large, corporate breweries was facilitated by new industrialized processes of brewing, distribution, and marketing, which were thereby insinuated into the landscape, becoming not only naturalized, but also identified with a particular (masculine) way of being in space—one that worked directly against the family.[39]

The country store is one of the ubiquitous markers of the arrival of settled society in the Western—a clear improvement over the more rudimentary trading post on the frontier. The country store and later the related mail-order catalog "functioned in collective and competitive ways as agents of modernization. In their interaction and interconnection, they sanctioned and spread a consumer ethic that equated 'new' with better and 'modern' with improvement" (Schlereth 373). The changes they brought to the newly incorporated rural areas effected a national unity—"each demanded a fairly high degree of literacy . . . [e]ach required a national postal delivery system and a continental railway network . . . [and e]ach nurtured urbanity among rurality" (Schlereth 372). The unremarkable presence of the country store in the 1950s Western suggests the insinuation of a cash-based, consuming frontier folk into the regularizing mechanisms of packaging, distribution, advertising, credit, and display, motivated by centralized mass production, but offered as convenience, progress, luxury, markers of sophistication, even happiness in the late 1800s. Only rarely, however, are the complicated processes of distribution revealed, as they are in *The Man from Laramie*. Will Lockhart, temporarily on leave from his post at Fort Laramie, has come to the remote town of Coronado in the New Mexico Territory to investigate the death of his younger brother who, along with

his cavalry unit, has been massacred by Apache who were sold repeater rifles by an unscrupulous trader. Lockhart has come to Coronado with three mule teams to bring supplies to the local general store. A moral standard of consumerist practice is explicit—there is the right kind, located in the store, whose profits loop back into the national system of supply and production, and the wrong kind, selling stolen guns to "savages" who will presumably use them to kill the military protection behind the capitalist network. When Lockhart first gets to town, he finds the store virtually empty, but the shop owner, who lives upstairs over the store has a nicely furnished apartment full of things from "back East"—heavy furniture, china displayed in a hutch, a stove. She immediately offers Lockhart tea in china cups, further exaggerating her maintenance of an Eastern lifestyle despite being so remote. Later on, we see her doing an inventory of bolts of cloth that have been part of Lockhart's shipment, fabric presumably imported from the textile mills in the East, and there are a lot of them, all displayed for sale. Consumption is routinized.

A consumerist logic thus threatens to break the narrative surface in many Westerns, and the ease with which these consumerist interludes are insinuated into vignettes of everyday life is more remarkable because of the ways in which they are suffused with desire and longing. The country store and the mail-order catalog were already, in the nineteenth century, agents of desire—a "secular hope for salvation from want" (Schlereth 364), which is the basis of modern consumerism. The common presence of these stores and the related mail-order catalogs in the Western is again a move that claims an attention to historicity, to authenticity, and yet in configuring the consumer goods so directly as objects of desire, they have been merged into contemporary 1950s discourses on gender roles, sexuality, and family organization and values. Cold War rhetoric emphasized domestic containment with its pervasive connections between political and family values: containment of the spread of communism, and, by extension other socially disruptive forces at *home*, was effected through a return to domesticity (May). In the new suburban home, the isolated, stable, heteronormative, consumer-oriented family unit was a bulwark against the anxieties of the age (Conrad, "The Docile Bodies of (Im) Material Girls" 145). But the stability of that nuclear family was threatened by uncontrolled sexual desires, which were thus appropriately redirected to other objects of desire—consumer goods. This linking of (sexual) desire and consumption operates in the Western at the apparently historical level of the mundane, the commonplace—the country store.

By 1953, with the release of *Shane*, the nuclear family as the model social unit

and the locus of redirected desire is insistent. Shane, an enigmatic man with a gunfighter past, comes onto the screen and into the Starrett family's compound in the opening sequences. Shane is the fetishized object of desire for all three members of the Starrett family (and because of Alan Ladd's star status and his role in the movie, this desire is shared by the audience), and yet the qualities that make him desirable—his heroic, masculine-coded, gunfighter status—make him unsuitable and thus disruptive to the nuclear family's internal coherence. In a series of moves this desire for Shane is channeled and thus diffused by acts of consumption, particularly by Marian Starrett (Jean Arthur) and son Joey (Brandon De Wilde). In *Shane* the center of commercial activity as well as the apparent headquarters of the cattle baron's thugs who threaten the existence of the sodbusters like the Starretts is Grafton's General Mercantile Sundries and Saloon. The country store operates here as the agent of incorporation into a consumerist regime, even as the sodbusters in the main narrative are resisting incorporation and absorption by the larger cattle-ranching interests. These settlers are already integrated into a cash economy: ready-made pants—$1; work shirt—60 cents. Grafton's also displays (Eastern) manufactured consumer goods—fabric, ready-made dresses, bales of wire, kerosene lamps, tobacco, candy, soda pop. Early in the film Shane comes into Grafton's alone to buy some ready-made clothes—jeans and a work shirt—transforming him from buckskin-clad gunslinger to working hand, the first suggestion of the magical, transformative power of consumer goods. The background scenes in the store are telling: filled with packaged and manufactured merchandise, notably ready-made clothes, bolts of fabric, and women's hats, those in the store shopping and browsing are women and children, while the men are in the adjacent saloon. While there, Shane picks up a bottle of soda for Joey, which he has specifically asked for. The next Saturday, all the sodbusters and their families come in to Grafton's together, to prevent any clash with the cattlemen. Joey promptly returns his empty bottle, and in exchange receives "the usual"—a large candy cane. Joey is not only hooked on consumer items, they are "usual" or expected, and thus he represents the next generation of spenders. Meanwhile, Joe Starrett is leafing through a Sears and Roebuck catalog, looking with apparent curiosity at pages featuring a variety of men's hats and women's long-john underwear. The fantastical aspect of this scene is heightened by the background discussion of a Fourth of July party, a celebration that necessitates the purchase of extra gunpowder for fireworks. Despite the sodbusters' inability to use firearms for their own defense, they are happy to consume gunpowder in a surrogate display of firepower.

Consumerism, desire, and wonder come together in Marian's and Joey's experiences during the shopping excursion. As she looks with pleasure at the canning jars, she asks the clerk: "My jars come in yet?" As she continues looking at the jars, she muses with wonder: "What will they think of next?"—with the implication that through such objects Marian can find alternate avenues for her desire. Ultimately they buy white flour and four pounds of coffee before the shopping expedition is broken up by the barroom brawl in which Shane and Joe Starrett take on the cattle baron's thugs (redirecting desire onto homoerotic male bonding through fighting). Joey watches the fight with intense fascination while chomping down on his candy cane, melding (masculine) spectacle and consumption. The cuts between the fight and Joey chomping on his candy cane as he watches the fight from the doorway between the saloon and the store are so abrupt as to make the substitution of consumer goods for (desirable but destructive) manly behavior explicit. Those in the Starrett household who desire Shane are those who are the consumers of nonutilitarian goods—Joey and Marian—and the stability of the Starrett nuclear family is thus enabled by the redirection of their destabilizing desire for Shane to consumer goods. The extent to which the Starretts have already entered this consumerist world is also evidenced in their house. As rudimentary as it appears, it has a stove (with an oven large enough to bake two pies), a display of photos on the wall, a rocking chair, a settee, and the obligatory blue china.

Yellow Sky (William Wellman, dir. 1948) presents one of the most startling examples of the role of consumption in shaping and affirming (gender) identity while reinscribing heteronormative relations in its explicit linking of sexual and consumerist desire. The film opens in 1867 in "the West." Chased by a posse to the edge of a large salt flat, a band of robbers is left to die. As the band literally and figuratively begins to fall apart in the sunbaked terrain, they are loosely held together by their leader, "Stretch" (Gregory Peck). It is important to the plot that Stretch is a thief only because of the hard times onto which he and his family have fallen in the course of the Civil War and at the hands of the pro-Confederate Missouri Raiders.[40] Stretch is at heart good, whereas for his band of thieves there is no redemptive backstory, they are innately and singularly bad. The audience understands this distinction because of the semiotic potency in the star, Peck, who is rendered moral and good. Eventually the band comes into Yellow Sky, an abandoned silver mine town, inhabited only by an old miner and his granddaughter, "Mike" (Anne Baxter). Mike's anomalous living condition is mirrored in her name as well as her ambiguous markers of sexuality: jeans-wearing, rifle-toting, no-nonsense,

FIGURE 2. Picture on "Mike's" (Anne Baxter) wall from a women's magazine or catalog in *Yellow Sky* (1948).

straight-shooting Mike, who "acts like a man, fights like a tigress, but responds to a kiss like a woman,"[41] with the implication that female sexuality is not only innate (primitive) but also singular, and that undisciplined female passion redirects to deviant behavior—"manly" girls. Corralled into a heteronormative relationship (marked by violence), however, Mike's true (feminine) destiny can be fulfilled. Stretch and Mike are clearly destined to be lovers, but Stretch must first break Mike of her unfeminine ways and bring out her true desires: Stretch: "Women got no business carrying guns. They're apt to shoot somebody they don't mean to." Mike: "Not me." Stretch: "You know if you was prettied up a bit, you might look almost like a female." Initially Mike stands her ground, but her desire for Stretch, sealed with a rough kiss, initiates a crisis of gender identity: "He made me feel . . . I don't know." This ambivalence is a turning point in Mike's character, the beginnings of her gradual awakening to her "true" and "feminine" self, marked significantly by the revelation of her given name—Constance Mae. Stretch's presumption of privilege and access, backed up by his use of force, is a normalization of the relationship of sex and violence and the romanticization and confusion of rape with sexual attraction. Audiences share in Mike's confusion and arousal in part because it has been regularized in popular culture, but also because of the visceral power of a

star of the magnitude of Gregory Peck, who was not only coded as good but also as the ultimate romantic leading man.

Back in the house, Mike, upset (because of this surge of new emotions, not because of the violence of Stretch's acts), looks in tears at a picture she has pinned on her wall of a lady's dress, possibly torn from the pages of a mail-order catalog (fig. 2). Through her tears, she rips it off the wall, crumples it up, and throws it away. This dress, and her desire to have this dress, her desire to be more "feminine/pretty" through having/wearing it, projects her inner desires to be "female" (conflated with her sexual desire for Stretch) onto an exterior consumer product while "buying into" the terms of that femininity—terms that clearly Stretch has voiced in his taunt (if she'd pretty up a bit, she'd almost look female). The resolution is inevitable—Stretch's nobler side emerges and he and Mike fall in love. Heteronormativity is reaffirmed as are proper gender roles in the final scenes: Stretch buys a floral bonnet for Mike, presents it to her, and Mike, beaming, puts it on, and they all ride away to their new family life, with their moral and gender identities sorted out. This exteriorization of desire (already normalized) anticipates a scene in Grafton's store in *Shane* in which the teenage daughter of one of the sodbusters idly spends (pleasurable) time in front of a mirror, trying on hats and holding up dresses that are irrelevant to the realities of her life but that catch the eye of the cowboy Chris—desire and desirability are thus jumbled up in this notion of how to "look" and how to be seen. The mail-order image, so incongruous in a ghost town, like the luxury goods in Grafton's store, are sleights of hand that incorporated late 1940s and early 1950s audiences into the conceit of an in-place postal, manufacturing, and distribution system and that thus reaffirmed, in the popular imagination, the association between gender performance (as well as class aspirations) and consumption.

As mail-order fancy dresses and bonnets are emblematic of femininity and the locus of female consumerist desire (and the displacement and sublimation of female sexual desire), so guns and rifles are not only emblematic of a thematized masculinity, they are also the objects of male desire. Stretch's confrontation with Mike on the inappropriate, unfeminine nature of her gun use in *Yellow Sky* not only serves to discipline Mike into a proper heteronormative configuration, it also fits a generalized logic in which guns and rifles are essential, exteriorized emblems of masculinity and surrogates for masculine prowess.[42] Essential to masculinity, guns are anathema to femininity. Men without guns are similarly symbolically diminished; "naked," exposed and feminized (Pumphrey 55).[43] Guns also represent

the fetishized objects of male desire,[44] serving to doubly displace male desire from the female to the gun, and (for the audience) from the hero to his surrogate, his gun. In *Winchester '73*, the highly coveted and named repeating rifle[45] is a character in the movie, desired by both whites and Indians. The opening scene has a group of young boys peering into a shop window in which the Winchester '73, a "one in a thousand" repeating rifle, is the prize of an upcoming shooting competition—confusing the object of desire and the instrument by which it is obtained. In *The Man from Laramie* the plot motivation and the quest of the hero is the retrieval of a shipment of repeater rifles that has been stolen and that is in danger of falling into Indian hands. The rifles themselves are the unquestioned object of the quest, and obtaining them will restore order and resolve the hero's conflict.

As with coffee, beer, apples, and mail-order dresses, guns and rifles are ubiquitous, in fact essential, elements of the Western. But their ubiquity again obfuscates the presence of a complex network of commercial distribution and Eastern industrial production that was behind these emblems of the West. The Winchester Repeating Arms Company in New Haven, Connecticut, was famous for its repeating rifles, and after the Civil War there were several models produced and distributed in great quantities.[46] Of interest here is the saturation of the market with guns from Eastern competitors: The Springfield Armory in Springfield Massachusetts; Remington in New York; and Winchester in New Haven, Connecticut. And they were all were heavily advertised. An illustrated advertisement in the *American Monthly Review of Reviews* (1898) has the following copy: "Winchester Rifles, Shotguns, and Ammunition. Used by the most successful hunters the world over. Guns for all kinds of shooting and ammunition for all kinds of guns. FREE: send address on a postal card for a 152 page illustrated catalog"[47] (fig. 3). Again, Eastern arms manufacturers that depended on new industrialized processes in production, distribution, and advertising were unremarkably insinuated into the portrayal of everyday life, incorporating the post–Civil War West into national consumer networks, while their products were narrativized and popularized as a means of individual self-expression and as the object of desire—regulating twentieth-century viewers into a gendered and consumerist regime.

The expansionist "land hunger" that so typified the pre–World War II Western thus gave way to the post–World War II "durable goods hunger"—dealing less with conquest and more with settling in (Nugent 114–16), which resonated with postwar discourses on domesticity and consumption. The US cultural web of consumption was based and dependent on mass production, but consumption is driven by
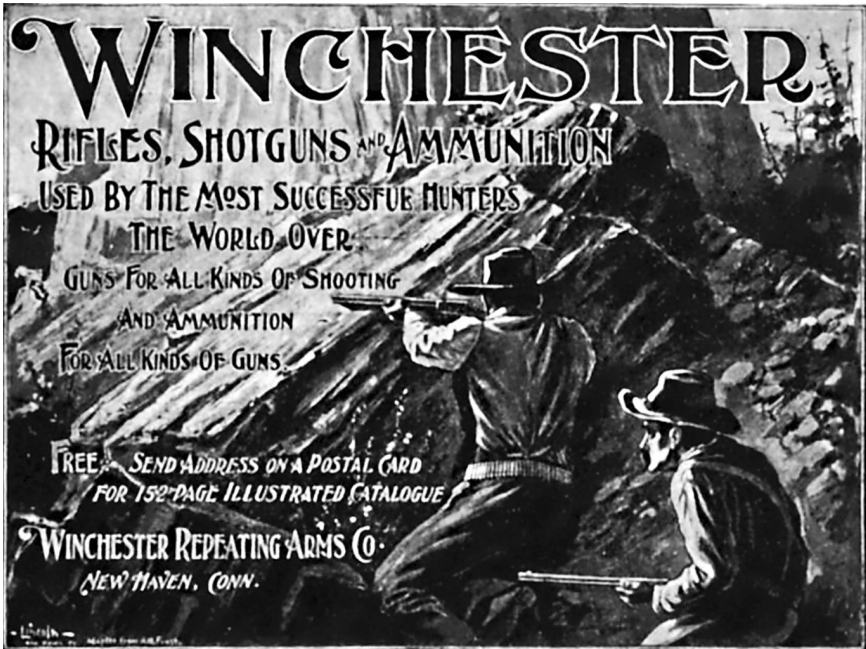
FIGURE 3. Winchester Rifle ad (1898).

demand—a product of marketing and advertising and their construction of de-
sire. Consumption of goods that are dependent on an already-in-place system of
industrialized production and national distribution is a highly visible element of the
Western in the post–World War II period, normalizing consumerism as an American
value in moviegoing subjects when postwar industries were seeking to expand
their markets and avoid overproduction. But even more profoundly, consumer
goods were seamlessly introduced as objects of desire themselves—their display
and desirability fulfilling the notion of the perfect commodity fetish—Marian
Starrett's amazement at the canning jars; Mike's desire for the fancy dress, and
her excitement at getting the bonnet; the fetishization of repeater rifles in many
movies, made manifest in the display of the coveted Winchester '73 in the movie
of the same name; the common display of apples in domestic scenes.

Conclusion—A Return to Narrative

Cinema as a medium functions in multivalent ways, invoking the entire sensorium and appealing at both the emotional and cognitive levels to the cinesthetic subject who not only has a body but also is a body and thus "makes sense" of what it is to "see" a movie, both "in the flesh" and as it "matters" (Sobchack "What My Fingers Knew" [2000]). Embodiment, apprehension, and understanding through the senses reopen the discussion of the relationship between film, ritual engagement, and popular beliefs. An embodied engagement also tends to naturalize not only the apparent directness of the filmic experience but also the themes—obfuscating the underlying ideological messages. But ideology must be *acted out*—that is, lived, embodied, and repeated in such a way as to deny its ideological nature. This is the crux of Althusser's *material ideological apparatus*: that the system of ideas from the economy are represented and reproduced by individuals as necessary and in fact part of everyday life (Althusser).

In this article, emphasis has been on the nonnarrative, nondiegetic elements of the Western that engage the sensorium. However, this final section argues that engagement with the narrative itself is embodied and ritualistic, and that the dichotomy of narrative/nonnarrative in film is a false one. The very perception of the narrative sequence of a movie is a physical act. Research in cognitive science indicates that mirror neurons respond, or "fire up," identically to imagined, perceived, or directly experienced acts: "all mental simulation is embodied, since it uses the same neural substrate used for action, perception, emotion, etc." (Lakoff). Additionally, Westerns are not only intertextually related to an existing body of knowledge, but also those traditional intertexts invoke and interrelate with memory. Traditional narratives are the repositories of collective memory, and yet in each performance embodied, personal memories interact, effecting an emotional inhabitation of the narrative (Conrad, "Storied Time of Folklore" 338). The repetitive, patterned, *formulaic* nature of many Westerns, particularly the maligned B-Westerns, is also analogous to the structure of ritual, and this repetition has physical responses in the brain. Repetition streamlines and "strengthens" the flow of neural activity across synapses, reducing the number of connections, and thus increasing the speed of the response. The faster and more immediate the response, the more automatic (Lakoff). This parallels Munn's observation that ritual acts holistically through the body and emotions and disallows cognitive distance. Watching the formulaic, repetitive, patterned narratives in the Western thus itself constitutes ritualistic,

embodied practice. Finally, the Western and ritual both use metaphor in mediating "the exchange between the sensorium and language" (Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew" [2004] 68), picking up on Lakoff and Johnson's prescient claim that "figural language emerges and takes its meaning from our physical experience" (*Metaphors We Live By*, quoted in Sobchack). Richard Slotkin, specifically addressing the Western, advances the similar notion that the "logic of myth" is an embodied response: "Metaphor and narrative . . . [elicit] an instant and intuitive understanding [whose] operation is masked by the traditional form of narrative, its conformity to habits of thought, generic conventions, and literary expectations so deeply engrained that we are unconscious of them" (Slotkin, *Fatal Environment* 22), and thus these symbols become "active constituents . . . of the belief and value structures of a national audience" (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 9). The analytic convenience by which movies are discussed as "texts" to be "read" underemphasizes these affective and embodied aspects of the film experience and how film itself is constitutive of new experiential modalities.

It is in this embodiment that the true power of Myth resides—the power in naturalizing the historical (Barthes). But as Jameson has insisted, history is everything, and by complexifying the histories of the West, by demythologizing them, we can reveal the political unconscious and the ideological work that motivates the telling of any narrative at any particular time. The Westerns of the postwar period, in their insistence on historical verisimilitude and detail, were in fact reflecting a twentieth-century consumerist ideology while valorizing the heroic trappings of the Myth of the West. But myths are not static, "not eternal verities, but historical compounds" (Warner xx), and there is irony in the fact that by the time of the postwar feature-length Western—the Golden Age—not only had the Western reached its apotheosis, but also many of the classic A-westerns had already begun to significantly deviate from the conventions of the Myth of the West. And yet generalized assumptions about the meaning of the Western persist. By the 1950s it is significant that the whole meaning of the Myth of the West could be evoked by fragments—icons that revealed a belief system that has been naturalized through ritualized, embodied practices—that had become so common as to be "second nature."

JoAnn Conrad is a scholar and an adjunct professor in the San Francisco Bay Area. She teaches Anthropology, Folklore, and History at several universities. Conrad was raised in the

West–the West of her immigrant father's imagination that was the product of his having read Karl May's novels as a kid.

■ NOTES

1. This article was only possible because of the UC Berkeley Media Library and its excellent holdings and helpful librarian Gary Handman, to whom I owe a great debt.

2. This is a general consensus. The 1930s were the period of the low-budget B-Westerns, cheap to produce and formulaic. When World War II was over, movie studios began to produce A-Westerns, feature films with larger budgets, big names, and the result was the Golden Age. Typical of this kind of information is http://cinemawesterns.com/goldenage/goldenage.html.

3. For example, in 1946, there were 18,700 four-walled cinemas and approximately three hundred drive-ins. Eighty-two million Americans per week went to the movies (total 1946 population: 141,388,566), with annual revenues of $1,692,000,000 (Coyne 33). By comparison, the National Association of Theater Owners (http://www.natoonline.org/statisticssites.htm) lists 5,561 movie theaters and 381 drive-ins in 2009, with a corresponding 1.414 billion in annual admissions (translating to twenty-seven million tickets per week), while the total population by 2009 is 305 million.

4. The decade of the 1950s was clearly the high-water mark for the Western, after a drop off in popularity throughout the 1930s and during World War II. In 1950, for example, the eight big studios produced fifty-eight Westerns—constituting 34 percent of all features produced. By 1961, this had dropped off to sixteen percent (Coyne 71). Slotkin, similarly, shows the early 1940s as having a spike in the production of A-Westerns: thirty-eight features in 1950, forty in 1952, thirty-six in 1954, and forty-six in 1956 (Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation* 347). (The difference in numbers reflects the problems in defining "feature," or A-Westerns, and Slotkin's criterion is length—80+ minutes.) However, there is no disagreement on the significant decline in the production of all Westerns by the 1960s or about the general high quality of feature Westerns in this period from 1948 to 1962.

5. The repeated use of Monument Valley as a backdrop for the classic Westerns illustrates this point. Iconic of the West, Monument Valley is in fact remote from any frontier towns, any railways, any cattle trains. It does signify the wilderness, that harsh environment with monumental landscape in which the struggle

between civilization and barbarism is mirrored in the struggle between man and wilderness. Through its repeated use in films however, it has become the singular image of the West.

6. By the 1960s filmmakers are aware of this, and include ironic references such as the quote from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, or the reporter who is disappointed that the legend of Billy the Kid bears small resemblance to the man in *The Left Handed Gun* (dir. Arthur Penn), 1958.

7. Simmon effectively demonstrates that whereas Cooper provided the model for the early Western from 1908 to 1910, the model became what he calls that of the "Plains War" from 1911 onward, which was based on a "public history" that derived from the narrative imagery of Frederic Remington and showman Buffalo Bill Cody (Simmon 47–50).

8. In this generic history, what is usually left out is the important Western-themed radio shows and characters in the period prior to World War II: *The Lone Ranger*, *Red Ryder*, *Cisco Kid*, and others. This was brought to my attention by my colleague Jessie Edminster Lawson in an e-mail from January 22, 2012, in which she mentioned that such Western "radio dramas were constant companions in many households and because of advertising, the radio cowboys were further connected to the nuclear family/consumption scene." The "Golden Age" of radio, in which radio served as the primary home/family entertainment, like movies, was displaced by TV, but preceded and informed these movies and subsequent TV shows. Radio show stars and characters from the *Lone Ranger* (1933–55), *Roy Rogers* (1944–55), and many others made the transition to their eventual TV adaptations, and many Western movie stars also repeated their on-screen roles on the radio. Thus there was an interpenetration and overlapping of radio listenership with moviegoing and TV-viewing audiences. It is also critical to note that radio shows, movies, and TV were social/family events in the 1950s and '60s, not individual acts, thus underscoring their ritual aspect. However, it is also important to note that most of the crossover was between radio characters and their parallels in B-movies, those movies that saturated the theaters and were cheap and fast to produce, as they relied not only on narrative formulas, but on conventional notions about the cowboy. These made very little attempt to either replicate history or authenticity, and yet, because they were so widespread, they arguably created a very particular knowledge of the West and cowboys (and Indians) for the generations for whom this kind of media made sense.

9. One of the distortions of hindsight is to categorize film as an unqualified and

ever-progressing success, immediately embraced by the public. Simmon's well-researched discussion reveals the troubled beginnings of film, demonstrating that only after various attempts did the Western ultimately find narrative coherence through the trope of the "vanishing American" (Simmon 7–10).

10. Filmmakers such as John Ford, who not only spanned the silent and sound periods of film but who also did so much to set the standards of modern filmmaking, in particular the Western, were not unaware of the extradiegetic elements of film. Ford's use of lighting and shadow took inspiration from the German expressionists (Ford was particularly impressed by the work of F. W. Murnau) and their goal of expressing inner emotional states through staging and lighting. Ford consistently worked with certain cinematographers and with black and white in his films to enhance certain "structures of feeling"—often a melancholia that befits the nostalgia that inheres in an always retrospective genre (Redman).

11. The exception to this trend is, ironically, the most famous Western of this era, and arguably one of the classics of all time, John Ford's *Stagecoach*. In what can only be read as a critique, Ford casts his hero Ringo (John Wayne) as a "good-hearted" escaped prisoner seeking revenge for his brothers' deaths, his love interest as an outcast prostitute, and the "upstanding citizens" of the community as corrupt and hypocritical. The happy ending sees the couple leave the west, headed for a happier life in Mexico.

12. In particular the works of Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation;* Corkin; and Coyne read the postwar Western as an element in the cultural fabric of the Cold War.

13. In Hollywood this was evident in the McCarthy witch hunts, which ultimately led to the imprisonment of the "Hollywood ten," which included many writers and directors of Westerns. The paranoia of this moment made the Western a more likely genre in which to hide criticisms. The writer (Carl Foreman) and director (Fred Zinnemann) of *High Noon* state that the movie is a direct criticism of the purges in Hollywood (Byman 71–97).

14. The most extreme example of this is Jane Tompkins's *West of Everything*, which has no method whatsoever, her selection and *analysis* being exclusively personal preference.

15. The argument of this article—that the reception of the Western is based not only on those synchronic, narrative elements apprehended cognitively, but also on extradiegetic elements which are precognitive and prelinguistic parallels Jameson's "political unconscious," and yet the method of analysis, emphasizing embodied, ritual practice, is different.

16. The independent cowboy was always fictional, as most cowboys on the trail were wage earners. The short-lived cattle drive was also always motivated by Eastern corporate interests, and was quickly made redundant by more efficient production and distribution systems.

17. Ford deviates from the historical record with abandon: The events that have come to be referred to as the "Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" happened in 1881, Wyatt Earp was never marshal, and the Earps were never cowboys. Rendering them such, and making them sympathetic cowboys in contrast to the outlaw Clantons, has the effect of obscuring the real links between the Earps and business interests, making them, ironically, the good guys as well as representing the common man.

18. Retrieved from "National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form." United States Department of the Interior National Park Service. http://pdfhost.focus.nps.gov/docs/NHLS/Text/66000171.pdf, accessed April, 12, 2015.

19. Wyatt Earp was the marshal in *Clementine*—itself a director's adjustment of historical events, possibly the result of Wyatt Earp's own self-promotion in the twentieth century. In Tombstone, at the time of the gunfight, brother Virgil was the US Marshall, and Morgan was deputized, Wyatt was not.

20. Screenplay by Borden Chase and Charles Schree, from the *Saturday Evening Post* serialized story by Borden Chase. This is important not only because of the intertextual relationship between magazine readership and moviegoers, but also because Borden Chase was an important contributor to the story of the West in movies of this period. His screenplay credits include not only *Red River*, but also *Winchester '73*, *Bend of the River*, *The Far Country*, *Vera Cruz*, and writing for TV westerns such as *Bonanza*, *The Roy Rogers Show*, and *The Virginian*.

21. According to the film, the drive begins fourteen years after Dunson begins his ranch, and thus in 1865. The Chisholm Trail for driving cattle to Abilene was initiated, in contrast, in 1867.

22. The California Trail(s) of history began in Missouri and stayed well north of Texas. If Dunson had intended all along to head for Texas, it would not have been along this route. Geographical accuracy is not the point. The context is Westward expansion.

23. Fourteen years later, as Dunson is preparing his huge herd for the cattle drive, we see this appropriation again with other herds. Dunson rationalizes this as the only way to realize any profit—thus capitalism, or the pursuit of profit, justifies theft, murder, and destruction.

24. The 1963 "anti-Western" *Hud* (dir. Martin Ritt) criticizes the excesses of capital

accumulation, most grotesquely in the scene in which the entire herd is corralled into a pit and shot. Ironically, the eponymous lead in the movie, played by Paul Newman, was an arrogant, self-serving lout, the antithesis or possibly the apotheosis of the cowboy hero. The inertia of the type effected an audience response quite unintended by the director or the actor—Hud was a (counter) cultural hero.

25. Early films literalized this in the many burlesque shorts that emphasized the striptease, thus highlighting the voyeuristic aspect of film, watched in the dark, in either a nickelodeon or later in a darkened theater.

26. The stars of these two films and of other Hitchcock films were Gregory Peck and James Stewart, who were also in many Westerns, mostly of a psychological bent, during this period.

27. The story unfolds as a recounting of events by Jeb, presented as if a memory, but there are many scenes within his "memory" that he cannot have had access to. Nonetheless, it pretends to be a memory.

28. Mann's Westerns have been categorized as "psychological Westerns" because the hero's outward quest is paralleled by his inward, psychological turmoil. However, this incorrectly suggests that others films of this period did not have deep psychological overtones. John Ford's films, from *My Darling Clementine* to *The Searchers*, are filled not only with the imagery so clearly referencing the expressionists but also with overt psychological themes.

29. As is common, psychological themes spawn a host of psychological (and hopelessly circular) psychological readings. Indick's is representative—seeking to reduce all westerns to universal archetypal themes (Jungian), he does little to shed any light on the specifics either of the films or the periods in which they were made. Important to note, in this context, is the very outdated use of "ritual" that differs significantly from its use in this article. Indick sees ritual (as tied to narrative) as rites of passage, primarily to manhood, and sees the Westerns of the 1950s as providing vicarious rites of passage for that generation of boys who were otherwise deprived of initiating rituals! (Indick 141).

30. Although not part of this analysis, these market promotions to Westerns on the radio, on TV, and in the movies, provided a saturated sphere of experience into which the audience was interpellated into the world of the Western and into the consumerist regime. In an extended series of e-mails in February 2012 with my older brother, I asked about his childhood recollections of radio Westerns, as well as his experiences later in Saturday matinees. His responses are an insight into

the pervasive influence on a generation: "There were always deals on decoder rings and junk like that for a dime or a quarter and a box top from one of the cold cereals. . . . As far as my cultural development viz. radio westerns, I would say they had a profound influence on my sense of right and wrong and fair play . . . and modesty. No question in my mind that the radio westerns as well as the cinema ones were major influences on me. It was, for instance, unthinkable that I would ever take the part of a bad guy whenever we played cowboys (unless, of course, it involved taking some of the neighborhood girls 'prisoner')."

31.   Coyne and Corkin are both good examples.

32.   A neologism that Sobchack has coined by combining "synaesthesia," an "involuntary experience in which the stimulation of one sense cause[s] a perception in another" (Cytowic 50), and "coenaesthesia, the perception of one's whole bodily state as the sum of its somatic perceptions; a certain pre-logical unity of the sensorium that exists as the carnal foundation of that hierarchical arrangement of the senses achieved through cultural immersion and practice" (Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew" [2000]), but which also suggests a cinema viewing subject.

33.   Corkin, who has tried to analyze the culturally specific analogies of the Western in history in the context of the historical discourses at the time they were made, tries, for example, to suggest that Westerns attempt "to touch audiences *beneath* [emphasis added] their explicit engagement with the world, offering narratives that resonate at some symbolic or allegorical level" (Corkin 6), but his use of a spatial metaphor is still tied to the text, and thus to the linguistic level. He is alluding to something beyond, or beneath, but does not invoke the embodied or emotional response.

34.   In many Westerns there is a vertical coffee grinder on the counter of the general store—a gesture of authenticity that prematurely indicates the switch to packaged, roasted coffee beans.

35.   Cf. Norman Rockwell's iconic *Freedom from Want* (1943), in which grandparents at the head of the table present a Thanksgiving turkey to the family seated at the table. In this image, family, consumption, tradition, and prosperity are brought together as American values and the replication of this image in family portraits for decades speaks to its normalizing power.

36.   This provides a good example of the interpenetration of genres and media: *The Man from Laramie* was initially a story in the *Saturday Evening Post* (1954), which was then turned into a novel (1955). Neither of the authors wrote the eventual

screenplay to the movie, but Frank Burt, who cowrote the screenplay, was also the writer of the radio Western the *Six Shooter* (1953–54), which starred James Stewart.

37.   This obscure western, directed by John Huston, was written by Alan le May, and describes a family of three boys and one girl. The girl, unbeknownst to the other children, was kidnapped as a baby from a tribe of Kiowa and raised as their own. Thus it is a reverse of the situation in *The Searchers*, made four years earlier, which Alan le May also wrote.

38.   Apples also play a role in Anthony Mann's *Bend of the River* (1952), which portrays settlers to Oregon going upriver from Portland by steamer. Featured in their supplies are a barrel of apples and apple seedlings. The seedlings are part of the conditions of the Homestead Act—"improving" the land. Fresh apples were not part of the supplies, however, as apples were not eaten, and fresh fruit was too bulky and perishable. A representative list of supplies on the Oregon Trail: flour, sugar, bacon, coffee, tea, dried fruit, salt, and beans.

39.   As saloons became increasingly male spaces for drinking, sapping family health and economies in the process, a militant women's movement arose—the Temperance Movement, specifically to reclaim the family. This was then enlarged to eventually embrace suffrage, but it was initiated by a reaction against alcohol and its corrosive effect on the stability of the family. There is an irony in the fictionalized image of the town tamer, like Wyatt Earp, making the West safe for future generations, who lives most of his life in a saloon. It is also ironic that in *Stagecoach* as well as *The Gunfighter*, this type of women's group is ridiculed as an example of an excess of societal rules, portraying these women as prudish, whereas the gunfighter and the saloon girl are seen as having some kind of innate morality.

40.   In the moral code of the Hollywood Western ex-Union is good, ex-Confederate is ambiguous at best (Ethan Edwards, for example).

41.   *Yellow Sky* trailer. Accessed at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFBDuBE-MG8.

42.   In *Yellow Sky* this is contested and ambiguous: initially Mike takes control through her deft rifle skills and forces Stretch to clean up and take a bath. She (and the audience) also takes scopophilic pleasure in Stretch's body as she watches him through the scope of her rifle (as she takes aim at him). This inversion of gender relations and Mike's appropriation of the terms of masculinity are eventually resolved and rectified in the movie, however. In the end, moral and gender order is restored, and the reformed Stretch and Mike make the perfect couple.

43.   Pumphrey cites as examples the characters of James Stewart in *The Man from*

Laramie (Anthony Mann, 1955), *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (John Ford, 1962), and *Destry Rides Again* (George Marshall, 1939). In the last two, Stewart, rather than wearing guns, wears an apron and wields a mop.

44. The gunslinger himself is the focus of both male and female desire and thus is a very destabilizing force in terms of gender normativity. For example, in *Shane*, the entire Starrett family's desire for the buckskinned, six-shooter-bearing Shane threatens to rupture the family and thus social fabric, and it is never fully resolved.

45. The subtext in many movies that feature these repeater rifles is that they are instruments of good in the right (white) hands, but are instruments of terror in Indian hands. Many movies have quite pointed references to the Battle of the Little Bighorn (1876), in which Custer's defeat and the decimation of the Seventh Cavalry is singularly attributed to the repeater rifles used by the Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho (see, e.g., *Winchester '73*, and *The Man from Laramie*).

46. For example, new Winchester rifle models were produced in 1866, '73, '76, '86, '92, '94 and '95. As a representative year, in 1873 720,000 rifles were produced.

47. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Winchester_Repeating_Arms_Company_ advertisement,_1898.jpg.

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Disruptive Voices: The Minor Characters of Musical Narrative

In this article I build on recent work that has brought increased attention to vocal texture in popular music analysis, focusing specifically on dynamics of listener experience as they are informed by one often-undertheorized element of vocal texture in pop songs—namely, "background vocals." I am particularly interested in the ways in which background vocals can shape listeners' narrative experiences and behaviors. Drawing on several brief analytical case studies from various popular genres, I explore a variety of interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks based in poststructuralist narrative theory. I argue that, like the presence of minor characters in literary or filmic narrative, background vocals in pop songs can serve a variety of narrative functions in listeners' active engagement with pop songs. I suggest that closer attention to these often-overlooked voices might illuminate aspects of listener experience that can otherwise be difficult to articulate and that these behaviors and experiences can be usefully described in theoretical language borrowed from recent studies of literary narrative.

Consuming Subjects: Making Sense of Post–World War II Westerns

The American Western, a popular film genre from the earliest days of cinema well into the 1960s, has been linked to the story of America more insistently than any other genre. This article is a revisitation of the so-called Golden Age of the Western—roughly 1946 to 1962—which coincided with major social and cultural shifts in the United States. It is an attempt to integrate cultural events and phenomena of the 1950s in America with an understanding of the ways in which the Western film shaped and appealed to the popular imagination in order to better understand how Westerns made sense in post–World War II America. It argues, furthermore, that this sense making obtains through an embodied cinematic engagement of the senses, and it is at this level that the ideological messages that inhere in the form are internalized and naturalized.

Voicelessness and the Limits of Agency in Early Modern Finnish Narratives on Magic and the Supernatural

Drawing from over 1,750 recollected narratives and descriptions dealing with magic and the supernatural that were collected in Finland and neighboring Karelia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, I examine the relationship between self and narrative culture. I ask whether an examination of past stories displaying premodern narrative conventions can provide insights into both the relationship between self and