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THE WESTERN FILM AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Ben Parker

"Ideas that are treated, depicted, or deliberately advanced by a work of art are not its ideas but materials."

—Theodor W. Adorno

I.

Movies about psychoanalysis have a strange way of being about something else entirely. Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945), for all of its Dali-crafted dream sequences and impromptu therapy sessions, is ultimately a remake of the "innocent man on the lam" premise of his earlier spy thriller *The 39 Steps* (1935). Even the childhood trauma in *Spellbound* is only a Freudian variant of the military secrets of *The 39 Steps*' titular espionage organization: both are vital pieces of knowledge unknown to their bearers (Dr. Edwards and Mr. Memory, respectively). David Mamet's *House of Games* (1987), in which Lindsay Crouse plays the therapist-author of a book on obsessive-compulsive behavior, is actually a con-man picture, in the same genre as George Roy Hill's *The Sting* (1973) or David O. Russell's *American Hustle* (2013). Two movies expressly about the life of Sigmund Freud, John Huston's *Freud: The Secret Passion* (1962) and David Cronenberg's *A Dangerous Method* (2011), are composed along the lines of the standard biopic—although Cronenberg's film also has a touch of Merchant-Ivory fin de siècle sheen. Also deserving of mention is Cronenberg's *The Brood* (1979), a Mad Scientist horror film about a dangerous treatment called "psychoplasmics," a form of primal scream therapy that spawns violent dwarves from a sort of external rage-womb. Needless to say, *The Brood* fails to qualify as a straightforward representation of analysis.

In order to depict psychoanalysis, cinema has always had recourse to nonanalytic cinematic space. The available generic conventions of Hollywood are requisitioned as the formal vehicles for this content—not unlike the role of dreams in Freud's theory, which serve as the "other scene" in which

infantile experience is revived.¹ Psychoanalysis therefore presents a special case with respect to the venerable critical topic of "representations of" any given subject on film. While the psychoanalytic examination of film has produced shelves and shelves of scholarly work, there are few studies of psychoanalysis on film—and these tend to be earnest examinations of how analysis is portrayed (or, usually, misportrayed). The concern of such studies is delimited by how accurately and with what valuation the phenomenon (in this case, psychoanalysis) is depicted.² The focus of these analyses is not film, *per se*, but stereotypes of and cultural attitudes toward psychoanalysis, for which film is only the relevant instantiation. For instance, it might be said of John Huston's *Freud* (1962) that its "main interest today" is that "it shows what the American public wanted to think about Freudian psychoanalysis."³ But to consider representation only in terms of accuracy, stereotypes, positive or negative evaluations, etc., is already to forget everything psychoanalysis has taught about representation: how it works not through resemblance or correspondence, but through distortions, displacements, silences, and screens.

In other words, psychoanalytic critical practice itself lies in implicit opposition to the very premise of "representing psychoanalysis." Already in the first dream Freud interprets, the dream of Irma's injection, wherein Freud examines one of his patients, it is not necessary to be told that psychoanalytic sessions do not take place in a large reception hall in the midst of numerous guests, with friends nearby kibitzing and second-guessing the diagnosis.⁴ This first representation of psychoanalysis is the key to all others: Freud does not compare the dream of his analytic practice to the mundane details of his sessions with Irma. The "distortions" or "inaccuracies" in this representation of psychoanalysis are not subtractions or departures hiding the true object from sight; rather, psychoanalysis and its theory of the unconscious *is* this distance from the empirical "real thing." In film, this means that depictions of psychoanalysis cannot be disengaged from the displacements that dramatize repression and anxiety in the generic vocabularies of the thriller or horror film, or—in this case—the Western.

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Jimmy Picard (Benicio del Toro), in the one acre left of sky, in *Jimmy P.*

2.

Arnaud Desplechin's *Jimmy P.: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian* (2014) certainly seems to aspire to a good-faith "representation of" psychoanalysis.⁵ It is based on the 1951 case history *Reality and Dream: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian*, by anthropologist-turned-"ethnopsychiatrist" George Devereux, and much of the dialogue is taken verbatim from the documented therapy sessions between Devereux and his patient. The film follows the illness of Jimmy Picard (Benicio del Toro), a Montana Blackfoot and World War II veteran, and his treatment by Devereux (Mathieu Amalric) at a military hospital in Topeka, Kansas, where the psychiatric clinic is overseen by Karl Menninger (Larry Pine). Because Devereux is not licensed as an MD, nor approved to practice psychoanalysis—his credentials are tinged by his apparently "exuberant" character and a possibly dodgy past left behind in Europe—Devereux is initially only to provide an anthropological "consultation," to discover whether Jimmy is psychotic or "merely an Indian," whose symptoms and behavior are for that reason inscrutable to science. His conclusion is that Jimmy is neither psychotic nor unreachable by treatment, and Devereux begins a course of psychoanalytic therapy.

The film patiently (and even credulously) defines and dramatizes the premises of Freud's "talking cure" as a way of restoring coherence to a fragmented and painful personal past. Following the book, the film's script (co-authored by Desplechin and Kent Jones) is scrupulous in laying out, in

a clinical environment, all of the expected terminological toolkit of psychoanalysis: castration anxiety, psychic trauma, dream interpretation, transference, a primal scene, childhood seduction, the Oedipus complex, identification, and incestual desires. Especially in its exposition, *Jimmy P.* holds the audience's hand on such concepts as the interminability of treatment, the Greek etymology of "psychic trauma," the physiological genesis of symptoms, and so on. In one scene, where Devereux presents his findings to the clinic's staff, a chalkboard behind him is covered with technical terms; at other times he glosses Freudian thought for Jimmy (and the audience) in nontechnical vocabulary, because "homely words bring things closer."

Amidst all this explanation, however, the characters in the film are meanwhile engaged in disavowing that psychoanalysis is taking place at all. Menninger tells Devereux bluntly: "No psychoanalysis." After first convincing the staff that Jimmy is not psychotic, Devereux's ambiguous official position is euphemized as "counseling" or "research," and *so not* treatment, not psychoanalysis. And if the doctors at the Menninger Clinic are the first to euphemize and mask the position of the analyst, Devereux is complicit in this dissimulation and displacement. When Jimmy dreams about bear-hunting, Devereux interprets it as referring to their therapy sessions, as part of the Freudian transference. Devereux interprets Jimmy's dream as about himself, Devereux, whom

Jimmy is first idealizing and then criticizing under a disguised avatar. Once again, the representation of psychoanalysis is disavowed: "In your dream, I'm just like the animal helpers of the ancient braves. Their protection gave courage."

As Desplechin has noted, it is the *analyst* who is "always using masks to disguise himself," charmingly misrepresenting himself as a French psychoanalyst instead of an Eastern European Jew without a clinical practice.⁶ Devereux even has a "hidden name," his discarded Hungarian birth name, György Dobó. Writing about Devereux's Jewishness, Desplechin explains, "This is the story of a bad Jew who meets a bad Indian. A bad Jew because he represents only himself: Devereux has been baptized, he changed his name, he lies unscrupulously. A bad Indian, because aside from two or three moments where he affirms himself ethnically, he speaks only for himself."⁷ It is fitting that Jimmy, too, have a secret name. His Blackfoot name is "Everybody talks about him," which is hard to hear now without the Lacanian inflection of the *discours de l'autre*—the insight that we try to make sense of our lives in language that is not our own; the language of others speaks us, and not the other way around.⁸

Despite *Jimmy P.*'s theoretical armature—as suggested by its retention of the book's original unwieldy and over-specific subtitle "Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian" as well as by its nominal status as a European-directed art film—reviewers faulted Desplechin for tweaking and disassembling the hoariest of Hollywood genre conventions. Matt Zoller Seitz read *Jimmy P.* as "a fusion of two mainstream genres, the buddy movie and the psychological case study," invoking *Good Will Hunting* (Gus Van Sant, 1997).⁹ Richard Brody observed that "Desplechin's affection for open spaces and the mountains, the conventional settings of classic Westerns—joined with his attention to their forgotten people—evokes an inside-out modern Western."¹⁰ Superficially, this is surely true: many Westerns are set on the geographical terrain of Jimmy's past (the Great Plains of Montana) and depict Native Americans, if not always the Blackfoot.

In the annals of the "psychoanalysis film," *Jimmy P.* may well be the first to assume the generic contours of a Western. This makes it a kind of inversion of Raoul Walsh's *Pursued* (1947), a Robert Mitchum Western draped over a pseudo-Freudian plot of repressed childhood trauma. *Pursued* was not just a Western, but a film noir in disguise, evidence of the tendency of the Western to absorb and repurpose other genres, as noted by André Bazin: "Each influence acts upon the Western like a vaccine. The microbe loses its fatal virulence on contact."¹¹ The difference in the case of *Jimmy P.* is that here it is psychoanalysis that takes apart the Western

and deranges its logic, where in *Pursued* the Western performed this procedure on film noir.

A reading of *Jimmy P.* as a Western is not limited to the film's geographic setting or its Native American title character, however ironically Desplechin courts such a reading. When the anthropologist Devereux arrives in Topeka to begin the analysis sessions that shape the film, he is greeted at the train station with a "Welcome to the Wild West!" When he is introduced to Jimmy P. at the Army hospital, the presiding doctor says, "Behold, our Indian brave!" Insofar as Devereux has a plot of his own, apart from conducting and recording the treatment, it's a story cribbed from John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* (1946). In that film, Doc Holliday (Victor Mature) plays a doctor from "back East"—while Devereux was born in what is today Romania (then part of Austria-Hungary). Doc Holliday is ambivalently estranged not from a country but from his surgical profession—whereas Devereux is not allowed to practice by the American Psychoanalytic Association. Doc Holliday is (again, ambivalently) visited in Tombstone by Clementine (Cathy Downs), a woman from his past whom he cannot or will not marry—while Devereux is visited in Topeka by Madeleine (Gina McKee), a married Englishwoman (who arrives complete with a saddle!).

Lest this John Ford angle appear exaggerated, consider that Devereux and Jimmy, in an entirely wordless scene, go to a screening of Ford's *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939). The scene they watch is one of Henry Fonda speaking to the gravestone of his first love, Ann, debating what path to take in his future. Del Toro's next line of dialogue picks up the thread, expressing the central regret of his adulthood: "I have always been a man who let a woman die."

There is another similarity to *Young Mr. Lincoln*, which is largely a trial film with the probing lawyer Lincoln essentially playing "detective" to solve a murder. For *Jimmy P.*, like all case histories, is also a reconstruction of the past: "The Blackfoot believed that dreams foretold the future; we believe that dreams shed a little light on the past." But it is also a trial film of sorts. Jimmy has been cleared in court of paternity for his child with a woman of his tribe, Jane. But this false innocence has only made Jimmy's guilt more mobile and protean, and his psychoanalytic treatment is essentially a "retrial," scrutinizing all of Jimmy's relationships with women. No matter that Devereux excuses Jimmy's failure to assume paternity of his child by telling him, "You couldn't help it: you were young." Jimmy resists being exonerated: "Everything I do is wrong," but wrong in such a way that he is helpless.

Jimmy describes this helplessness as though he were a puppet whose strings were being pulled—an image that occurs to



For George Devereux (Mathieu Amalric), the analytic transference is a set of ambivalent performances and disguises.

him as he suffers through a puppet performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, one of the film's most magical sequences. This oneiric image of excruciating anxiety and powerlessness is ultimately also a question of correctly assigning blame, as borne out when Devereux locates Jimmy's trauma in another scene of viewing: no longer the theater, but

a primal scene in his childhood when he walked in on his mother having sex with a man not his father. Devereux assigns to this moment the guilt that had become detached from another late-revealed trauma of Jimmy's childhood, this time a seduction scene. Jimmy had been beaten after being made to penetrate an older girl in the barn. Devereux observes about



A puppet performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one of *Jimmy P.*'s most magical sequences.

this scrambling of justice, “You were punished for playing with a girl whose sister died, but this man didn’t get punished.” Jimmy’s trauma compels him to restage this displaced verdict in painful and self-destructive ways.

3•

Jimmy P. has to be a Western in order to be “about” psychoanalysis. An earlier Desplechin film, *Kings and Queen* (2004), takes up much of the same subject matter.¹² It, too, considers the trials of addiction (prescription drugs rather than the alcoholism afflicting Native Americans) and paternity, the aftermath of infantile seduction, and even a psychoanalyst named Devereux! (This earlier “Devereux,” however, is an imposing African American woman and not an effervescent Hungarian Jew.) Indeed, Desplechin has revealed that some of the dialogue in the analysis scenes of *Kings and Queen* consists of “exact transcriptions of an entire passage” of Devereux’s book.¹³ However, where *Kings and Queen* is interested in psychoanalysis only as it allows characters to make explicit their dilemmas, desires, and fears—the scenic equivalent of a voice-over or soliloquy—with every character a beehive of self-destructive neuroses, the film lacks the patience and rigor of *Jimmy P.*, as well as its earnestness. Thus, any interest in mental illness in *Kings and Queen* is redirected into a plausibility-straining melodrama of gunplay, sex, and screaming matches, with psychoanalysis present merely as a dramatic convenience.

In contrast, in *Jimmy P.*, psychoanalysis is a dramatic problem, such that Desplechin’s “entire effort [in adapting Devereux’s *Reality and Dream*] was concerned with dramaturgy.”¹⁴ The dream sequences in *Jimmy P.* are therefore like vignettes or little excursions taking place in some mental theater (or back lot), in the tradition of *Spellbound*, *Freud: The Secret Passion*, and Ingmar Bergman’s dreams in *Wild Strawberries* (1957) and elsewhere.¹⁵ It is as though the dream sequences allow Desplechin to fling open the door to the analytic situation, replacing its cramped *mise-en-scène* with sprawling vistas and dynamic movement. This approach strongly contrasts with *Kings and Queen*’s dream sequences, which are composed of black and white archival and newsreel footage, i.e., ready-made, undramatic. Dreams in the earlier film are merely composites of recycled images, doubled by narration, whereas in *Jimmy P.*, the dreams are vivid actions—butchering meat, hunting, struggling with an assailant—following what Devereux describes, in *Reality and Dream*, as the Plains Indians’ conception of dreams: they are “real events.”¹⁶

How does *Jimmy P.* make use of the Western, specifically, in representing psychoanalysis? The tropes and citations of Western films in *Jimmy P.* serve both as the day’s residues [*Tagesreste*, as per Freud]—the stock images for the dream, i.e., an available vocabulary to be subordinated, moved around, and recoded—and as a condition of representability [*Rücksicht auf Darstellbarkeit*] by which psychoanalysis

becomes filmic. André Bazin describes the Western as “a form in need of a content,” but it is equally true that this content (psychoanalysis) is here in need of a form.¹⁷ The cultural debris of the Western shows up in the movie as “free,” a loose bundle of signifiers; at the same time, this generic overlay is the necessary vehicle for psychoanalysis to become visible onscreen.

4•

This interplay of form and content can be read through three “Western” aspects of *Jimmy P.* as examples of transpositions, distortions, or translations of psychoanalytic material: in Desplechin’s use of John Ford’s *The Searchers* (1956) and Ford’s sense of the “family romance”; in the clinical hermeneutics of landscape by contrast to the classic symbolic-mythical Western landscape; and in the revision of the figure of the Western’s “Indian”.

The last scene of *Jimmy P.*, in which Jimmy reaches out to his estranged daughter, all but announces itself as a paradoxical revision of *The Searchers*’ celebrated image of John Wayne sweeping Natalie Wood up into his arms and restoring her to her home. Nothing could be further from this sublime gesture of reconciliation than Jimmy’s halting and embarrassed meeting with his motherless teenage child (Randi Kennerly), a scene which promises only resentment, many questions, and a long road ahead. The psychoanalytic dimension of this citation and revision reveals the fantasy that is involved in *The Searchers*’ conclusion: the difficult technical problems of the termination of analysis, of the illusions that have to be given up (acceding to castration, for example), are only represented intertextually. In *Jimmy P.*, Desplechin and Jones employ the repetition of a classic Western image to do that work.

As so often in Ford’s movies, *The Searchers* ends with the exclusion of the hero from the domestic space, ringing the bourgeois family with a *cordon sanitaire*. Whether in “Cowboys and Indians” pictures like *The Searchers*, or Westerns oriented around the security of a frontier town, like *My Darling Clementine* or *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), or non-Westerns like *How Green Was My Valley* (1941) and *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940), Ford’s heroes never get to cross over to the promised land of family, democracy, and security.¹⁸ Over and against any such domestic space is the domain of lawless violation and primal satisfactions. In *The Searchers*, the “Indian” family is brutalized in a frenzied domain of rape and miscegenation. In *My Darling Clementine*, Pa Clanton (Walter Brennan) represents one pole of vile, unrestrained pleasure, à la the Primal Father in Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*, who brutally whips his sons into line. Wyatt Earp (Henry Fonda) is excluded from any such form of enjoyment and has no sexual relationship

with Clementine, whom he leaves as virginal and untainted by the West as when she arrived. Ford believes in the gratifications of virtue and the perverse satisfactions of its violations, and in the power of the symbolic exclusions that deny them to his heroes.

Jimmy P.’s most decisive reversal of the Western, and most profound psychoanalytic insight, then, is to cast the family as an unavoidable task, laced with disappointment, banality, and without guarantees. There is no “Other” who has all the enjoyment. No, Jimmy is left without any sustaining fantasy, not even the consolation of being unjustly excluded. As Devereux instructs him, “It feels pleasant to feel unjustly wronged. But you must tear yourself away from the past.” Unlike Ford’s hero, Jimmy will have family, but Desplechin shows the reunion not as closure but as uncertainty, tension, resentment, and a sign of a long road ahead.

5•

For the most literal-minded viewer, *Jimmy P.* might qualify as a Western just because it takes place there—the West. Genres can get blurred in this way, when “best of” lists seek to claim *The Last Picture Show* or *Bad Day at Black Rock* or *Hud* as Westerns, however tendentiously. But *Jimmy P.*’s relationship to its surroundings is far from literal. Co-screenwriter Kent Jones, in an interview, stresses the intimacy of the film’s setting, which is perhaps counterintuitive for a film about a Plains Indian, with all its implicit connotation of sweeping panoramas: *Jimmy P.*’s “relationship to the American landscape is not the wonder of the American landscape in the scenes in Montana. It’s not the largeness—everything is all oriented around these characters and stays strictly in the realm of the interpersonal.”¹⁹

In an early scene, Devereux analyzes a finger-painting made by Jimmy and explains to the hospital staff that the house in the picture must be interpreted as the mother or mother equivalent, while the mountains are the breasts, and so on. This psychoanalytic explanation makes sense only against the background of the Western film, with its symbolic landscapes (overcoded, of course, by an entirely different ideology). It is as though psychoanalysis were drawing upon the “findings” of the Western, which had long since discovered how a “verifiable topography” or “authentic locale” is recast into “fantasy.”²⁰ The landscapes of Westerns are already and unmistakably semiotic constructs: remember that *Red River* (1948) is not named after a river but after a cattle brand, a hieroglyph. What is presented as the contribution of clinical psychoanalysis here—the transformation of a “geographic region” into “psychological terrain”—is, in fact, a founding gesture of the Western as genre.²¹



Landscapes, real and imagined, transform geographic constructs into psychological terrain in *Jimmy P.*

6.

Jimmy P. uses the Western's figure of the "Indian" not only for reparative representation, but as a theoretical site for negotiating psychoanalytic concepts. The entire film, but especially Benicio del Toro's astonishing performance in the title role of Jimmy, is plainly a corrective to the legacy of ignorant and hostile representations of Native Americans (often projected as being ignorant and hostile themselves) in Hollywood Westerns.²² At the same time, though, *Jimmy P.* does not simply put forward a humane and specific image of a marginalized and ill person struggling, with dignity and autonomy, through racism and more quotidian problems. Jimmy's anguish and his cure—in other words the psychoanalytic structure of his characterization—can only be understood starting from the Western's "Indian" and the fantasy-structure that it projects.²³

Furthermore, considering his status as a French art house director, Desplechin's Western and his "Indian" should be situated in the contexts of French auteurist readings of Hollywood directors (especially Ford) and of the history of revisionist European Westerns—rather than in the strictly American context.²⁴ As to the former, for André Bazin, the Western was clearly a fantasy-structure, a *mythic* projection belonging to the "dimensions . . . of the imagination."²⁵ As in dreamwork, the fermentation of myth permits substitutions and displacements rather than strict historical correspondence. Thus, "the Indian menace" could be substituted

for "the war of Secession" or "for cattle rustlers," just as in a myth the trial of the hero can be varied endlessly.²⁶ It is as much this mythic image that is at stake in *Jimmy P.*'s psychoanalytic sessions as is the more immediate (character-specific) etiology of Jimmy's neurosis.

As to the latter context: the European Western film often critically foregrounded the race politics of its Hollywood predecessors. Enzo G. Castellari's *Keoma* (1976) is at once the most forceful and most desolate of the late-period Spaghetti Westerns, even as it takes direct aim at John Ford by casting a recognizable member of Ford's acting company, Woody Strode, in its story of a tormented "half-breed" caught up in the falsehoods of the West's civilizing, paternalistic mission. However distant in style from the bombast of the Spaghetti Western, Desplechin's film and his "Indian" belong to this revisionist tradition.

The fantasy-structure to which the psychic and filmic image of the Indian belongs is carefully delineated in Devereux's *Reality and Dream*. There he notes that the Plains Indian culture "corresponds most closely to the non-anthropologist's stereotype of *the* Indian. It is the world of braves with waving plumes, who, mounted on spotted horses, hunted the buffalo or fought the U.S. Cavalry," and these tribes "were veritable godsend for the movie industry."²⁷ But by 1948, when Jimmy's case history begins, this "ancestral" way of life belongs to a faded "past era of glory."²⁸ It is a past that stands in stark contrast to

the disintegrating, marginalized, materially straitened conditions to which Jimmy returns from his service in World War II.

In a sense, then, the Hollywood image of the Native American (however negative) *overlaps with* and is ambivalently shared by the latter-day Plains Indian. Devereux writes that the historical reality of tribal life becomes imaginatively transmuted into a heroic “past, which the old see through the rosy glasses of nostalgic memories, [and which] is transmitted to the young in a manner which never even hints at the darker side of primitive ways of life. . . . As the present-day Indian sees it, White invasion did not destroy a world compounded of glory, gangrene, thrills and lice. Rather did it obliterate a wondrous earthly version of the ‘Happy Hunting Grounds.’”²⁹ In other words, Jimmy’s treatment has to confront the way in which this disparity between the glory of the ancestral past and the indigence of the present is subjectivized as a psychic loss. In *Jimmy P.*, this structure of melancholia is emphasized by the distance between the Hollywood “Indian” and the lived experience of unaccommodated populations.

For the Plains Indian in particular, the fantasy of unimpeded enjoyment in a long-lost indigenous past (the “Happy Hunting Grounds”) badly matches up with the distorted cinematic image insofar as the Western’s “Indian” tends to be imagined “as intensely sexual.”³⁰ Ford’s films have taken an enormous critical beating for their depiction of Native Americans.³¹ In Ford, though, the role of unrestricted enjoyer is not confined to the “Indian” but is an open slot in an ideological disposition, available also to Lee Marvin in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* or the Clanton clan in *My Darling Clementine*. The psychoanalytic import of this lost enjoyment and its vital role in the cure cannot be represented solely by *Jimmy P.*’s scenes of analysis, even though these scenes are often lifted verbatim from the case history’s interviews; rather, it depends on the revision and citation of the Western and its forms.

Not only in this film, but in the classic Western as well, the figure of the “Indian” is presented only under heavy revision, e.g., in John Ford’s work, where their portrayal is “probably an unconscious impulse.”³² Just as films with psychoanalysis as their ostensible subject (*Spellbound* et al.) are not more or less accurate “representations of” therapeutic practice, but instead go to work upon the raw material of existing generic conventions, so the “Indians” of John Ford’s Westerns are not (more or less racist, more or less sympathetic) portrayals or depictions of Native Americans, but rather are overdetermined elements of an ideological schema of history. To be sure, the “Indian” is imagined and represented with all the coloring of

racist thought, but the function and scale of “Indians” in these films is subordinated to a different ideological sequence or triad, so that their final reference is no longer to nineteenth-century Native Americans, but to a Fordian universe that barely even requires “Indians.” Revision of this sort—the overdetermination of a symbolic schema—is continuous between Ford and *Jimmy P.* Devereux refuses to separate the figures of Jimmy’s ex-wife, sister, and mother. Each question he poses (for instance, whether a Blackfoot is allowed to beat a woman) is pointed toward this series of symbolic women, not toward any discrete biographical persons.

The most vulgar, if hopefully outdated, understanding of the Western is that of a “Cowboys and Indians” picture. By no means is *Jimmy P.* a Western solely because of the Native Americans present, on and off horses, in it. Nor should it be deemed a depiction of psychoanalysis simply because terms like “transference” and “Oedipus complex” get tossed around. Rather, I would argue, *Jimmy P.* had to be a Western precisely because it is about psychoanalysis.

Notes

1. Sigmund Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1955), 546.
2. For example: Janet Walker, “Couching Resistance: Women, Film, and Postwar Psychoanalytic Psychiatry,” in *Psychoanalysis and Cinema*, ed. E. Ann Kaplan (New York: Routledge, 1990); Glen O. Gabbard and Krin Gabbard, *Psychiatry and the Cinema* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Press, 1999); and *Celluloid Couches, Cinematic Clients: Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in the Movies*, ed. Jerrold R. Brandell (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004).
3. Alain de Mijolla, “Freud and the Psychoanalytic Situation on the Screen,” in *Endless Night: Cinema and Psychoanalysis, Parallel Histories*, ed. Janet Bergstrom (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 193.
4. Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*, 107–21.
5. Co-screenwriter Kent Jones laments that, heretofore, “the actual practice of psychoanalysis in movies has been very, very poorly served. It’s been portrayed as a joke. It’s almost uniform.” See “Looking for Jimmy: Kent Jones on Adapting *Jimmy P.: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian*,” interview with Anne-Katrin Titze, in *Eye for Film*, February 14, 2014, www.eyeforfilm.co.uk/feature/2014-02-14-interview-with-kent-jones-about-jimmy-p-psychotherapy-of-a-plains-indian-feature-story-by-anne-katrin-titze.
6. Tom Hall, “A Conversation with Arnaud Desplechin,” *Hammer to Nail*, February 14, 2014, www.hamertonail.com/interviews/a-conversation-with-arnaud-desplechin-jimmy-p-psychotherapy-of-a-plains-indian/.
7. See “Arnaud Desplechin: ‘Jimmy est surtout un humain, un honnête névrosé,’” *Le Monde*, September 5, 2013. Author’s translation.
8. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, vol. 1 (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 518.

9. Matt Zoller Seitz, "Jimmy P," February 14, 2014, www.rogerebert.com/reviews/jimmy-p-2014.
10. Richard Brody, "Arnaud Desplechin's 'Jimmy P,'" *New Yorker* "Front Row" blog, February 17, 2014.
11. André Bazin, "Preface" to Jean-Louis Rieucpeyrou, *Le western; ou, Le cinéma Américain par excellence* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1953), 5. Author's translation.
12. Certain themes in *Jimmy P.* also run through his other films. Desplechin points to "the threatening figure of the older sister" in *Jimmy P.* (also present in *Kings and Queen*) as "a thing I already filmed in *La Sentinelle*—I don't know where it is coming from." See Hall, "Conversation with Arnaud Desplechin."
13. Arnaud Desplechin, "J'ai un rapport d'identification maladif avec mes personnages," *L'Express*, September 13, 2013.
14. *Ibid.*
15. See Michael Koresky's video essay, "Bergman's Dreams," on the Criterion Collection website for the importance of dreams to numerous Bergman films.
16. George Devereux, *Reality and Dream: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian* (New York: New York University Press, 1969), 145.
17. André Bazin, "The Evolution of the Western," in *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 2, ed. and trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 152.
18. "Like Ethan in *The Searchers*, Ringo in *Stagecoach*, Ole in *The Long Voyage Home*, [Tom Joad] is a transitional figure, both prophet and sacrifice, doomed to live shuffling between two necessities, his need for security balanced by the call of history streaming past his door." John Baxter, *The Cinema of John Ford* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1971), 92.
19. See Titze interview, "Looking for Jimmy."
20. Lee Clark Mitchell, *Westerns* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1996), 4.
21. *Ibid.*, 58.
22. Del Toro, who is Puerto Rican, also played a Native American in an earlier film, Sean Penn's *The Pledge* (2001), which led to his casting as Jimmy. Desplechin recounts being "really struck, more deeply than I express here, by the performance Benicio gave in *The Pledge*—where he was playing a Native American. I haven't seen a Native American role in recent American film as deep and as violent as what he gave in *The Pledge*. It's just a stone of pain that you can see on screen. This mumbling that Benicio had, to me he had the ability of being Jimmy." Jonathan Robbins, "Interview: Arnaud Desplechin," *Film Comment*, February 7, 2014, www.filmcomment.com/entry/interview-arnaud-desplechin.
23. Michelle H. Raheja, of Seneca descent, notes that these cinematic "representations have also been key to formulating Indigenous people's own self images." See *Reservation Reelism: Redfacing, Visual Sovereignty, and Representations of Native Americans in Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), ix.
24. For instance, the otherwise informative *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011) by Jacquelyn Kilpatrick, herself of Choctaw and Cherokee descent, makes no mention of European Westerns. In Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor's edited volume, *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), the only mention of European Westerns is in an essay about the curious case of the Finnish Western genre.
25. Bazin, "Preface," 7.
26. *Ibid.*, 9.
27. Devereux, *Reality and Dream*, 8–9.
28. *Ibid.*, 10, 19.
29. *Ibid.*, 97–98.
30. Kilpatrick, *Celluloid Indians*, xvii.
31. See Robin Wood, "Shall We Gather at the River?; The Late Films of John Ford," in *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*, ed. John Caughie (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), and Michael Dempsey, "John Ford: A Reassessment," *Film Quarterly* 28:4 (1975).
32. Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968), 94–5.