

**“Remember, you’re the good guy:”
Hidalgo, American Identity, and
Histories of the Western**

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The Browsing Room in the library basement provided me an escape from the often insufferable daily routine [of boarding school]. . . . I read some of the many sets of American literary classics (Cooper’s *The Leatherstocking Tales*, Twain’s travels and novels, Hawthorne and Poe Stories) with considerable excitement, since they revealed a complete, parallel world to the Anglo-Egyptian one in which I had been immersed in Cairo.

—Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir*¹

In discussing American encounters with the Middle East in contemporary Hollywood cinema, critics often note how the Western has been mobilized as a means of framing these relations. Tim Semmerling’s recent study, “*Evil*” *Arabs in American Popular Film*, examines movies such as *The Exorcist*, *Black Sunday*, and *Three Kings* for the ways these works extend the codes and conventions of the Western to produce an American orientalist discourse that help resolve threats to U.S. national identity.² Orientalism refers to the West’s tradition of representing North Africa and the Middle East as the “other.” Describing the colonial practices of Britain and France, it identifies a complex body of knowledge that operates in the service of European colonial rule. While critics have demonstrated that the practice of orientalism as elaborated by the late cultural critic Edward Said in 1978 is more complicated and contested than he initially proposed, many of his

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observations about the development of orientalist representation offer a useful starting point for understanding how cultural forms such as the Western have been extended and deployed in the United States during times of global crisis and uncertainty.³

The history of the Western in fiction and film gives us numerous instances in which the Indian enemy is figured as an Arab Other. One of the more famous examples may be found in Mark Twain's 1867 narrative of his middle eastern Holy Land tour in *The Innocents Abroad*, where he describes the region's inhabitants as "ill-clad and ill-conditioned savages, much like our Indians" and goes on to dismiss both groups as "dangerous . . . sons of the desert."⁴ In the twentieth century, literary Westerns similarly portray Arabs as one of the genre's established villains. The author of over sixty popular adventure narratives, Zane Grey frequently referenced Arabs in his writings about the American West, with one of his Anglo heroes describing a Navajo as "an Arab of the Painted Desert." In his best-selling Western, *Riders of the Purple Sage*, and its sequel *Rainbow Trail*, Grey also developed a critique of polygamy as anti-American by describing the Mormon custom as the western kin to the harems of the Middle East.⁵ Other writers of the Western likewise located their literary settings in new lands, and their works indicated how the genre constituted part of the larger body of adventure narratives that took place across the globe. Jack London, for instance, wrote a number of short stories and novels set in a variety of locations including the South Seas and the far north of Alaska and the Canadian Yukon. After achieving popularity for his tales of the gold rush days of 1898, London became known in the American press as the "Kipling of the Klondike."⁶

By examining the uses of the Western in the production of an American Orientalist discourse as well as the character types constructed by such cultural production (stereotypical "Indians" and "Arabs"), this essay contributes to a larger project in American studies that thinks beyond the narrow confines of the nation, participating in what Amy Kaplan calls an "effort to remap" the field from "broader international and transnational perspectives."⁷ Such projects recognize how understandings of the United States must be placed within various movements of empire that, as Kaplan argues, "both erect and unsettle the ever-shifting boundaries between the domestic and the foreign, between 'at home' and 'abroad.'"⁸ Although ideologies of American exceptionalism encourage scholars to think of these spaces as distinct and separate, critics such as Kaplan insist that these "domestic and foreign spaces are closer than we think" as the "dynamics of imperial expansion cast them in jarring proximity."⁹

This essay focuses on the film, *Hidalgo*, a twenty-first century Western released in 2004 that stages European American encounters with Native Americans and Arab peoples from various locales across the Middle East.¹⁰ Film scholar Philip French once noted that while the historical background in the Western is often used for larger mythical stories of adventure and intrigue, "the tales [are] as much about the hopes and anxieties of the time in which they were made as the period they were set."¹¹ *Hidalgo* appeared in theaters one year after the U.S.

invasion of Iraq and in the midst of the Bush Administration’s post-9/11 war on terrorism. It should not be a surprise then that the film stages generic Arabs as substitute Indians and potential threat to the cowboy hero.¹² The film features Viggo Mortensen in his first starring role since *The Lord of the Rings* Trilogy (2001-03) and was directed by Joe Johnston, who also directed action/adventure films such as *Jurassic Park III* (2001) and *Jumanji* (1995), and who once served as art director for *Raiders of the Lost Arc* (1981). With a screenplay by John Fusco, *Hidalgo* is based on the autobiography of Frank T. Hopkins, who allegedly spent much of his life as a long-distance horse racer and whose travels took him from the American West to the Middle East in the late-nineteenth century.¹³ The horse race itself is coded as a kind of survival of the fittest, with the region’s future imperial rule showcased in the form of the American hero, Frank T. Hopkins.

While critics such as Kaplan address how the denial of empire operates as a founding element of American nationalism in general, historian Melani McAlister explains that in the post-World War II period, U.S. interventions in places like the Middle East have often been presented through a discourse of “benevolent supremacy,” a framework that supposedly distinguishes American overseas power from that of previous European nations and that justifies U.S. policy in those regions. McAlister contends that the term “postorientalist” best describes the changes in representation that emerged during a time “when American power worked very hard to fracture the old European logic and to install new frameworks.” This particular American postorientalism is “one that revitalizes, in a more subtle form, the insistence that fixed cultural differences must structure the organization of political power.”¹⁴ In staging the race between cowboys and Arabs, *Hidalgo* enters discussions about American national identity and foreign policy, particularly the nation’s post-9/11 role in the Middle East as Americans struggled to make sense of the nation’s new mission in the world.

The Un-American Origins of the Western

By revisiting the origins of the Western—a form often described as the quintessential American film genre, or what Arthur Schlesinger Jr. referred to as the nation’s “distinctive contribution to the cinema”—critics are able to note how the genre has contributed to and been shaped by exceptionalist ideologies.¹⁵ In the typical story of the genre, the filmic Western emerges out of the literary Western, which itself may be traced to the national narratives chronicled by James Fenimore Cooper, who contributed to the production of an American myth and character in the early-nineteenth century. According to this story, the later dime novels with their tales of captivity and rescue along with the melodramas of silent film helped further develop the literary and cinematic Western into the forms and conventions with which we are familiar today.¹⁶ This well-known history tends to emphasize the Western’s difference and distinction from European national narratives, and as such, presents the genre as uniquely American.

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Rick Altman traces a development in American film history that offers a different understanding of the Western. In particular, he examines the early nickelodeon period which saw the growing production of what today might be considered “pre-Westerns,” or what were then called Wild West films, thematically chase films, comedies, melodramas, romances, and epics, that only later became solidified into a genre simply called “the Western.” In the early days of film, the adjective “Western” pointed merely to the usefulness of a specific geography for the setting of a number of different plotlines. Only later did the term “Western” emerge as the name for a series of loosely connected films that played on audience interest in stories set in the region.¹⁷ It was the film industry’s move to southern California around 1908—in an effort to escape the patents laws owned by Thomas Edison in New Jersey where most films previously had been made—that helped solidify the Western as a recognizable genre. The “Americanness” of the genre was further strengthened by other developments. With ready-made sets in which to feature their stories, a landscape that lent itself to a particular storyline, and a large body of trained actors and extras who could play “the cowboy,” “the Indian,” or “the outlaw,” the Western became associated with an American national setting and site of production. It thus became difficult to produce these films in Europe in the early years because of audience expectations surrounding scenery, the absence of proper props, and a lack of appropriate actors who could play these established character types.¹⁸

Richard Slotkin likewise draws attention to the transformations in literary production that occurred in the mid- to late-nineteenth century and that reveal a more complicated history of the Western. With the advent of printing technologies that made production cheaper, a new type of publication emerged which was later called the dime novel. This literature was a key element in the development of the Western because at its inception, it dealt with popular tales of action and adventure. Just as early films set in the American West were not initially regarded as a genre in their own right, the writers of these texts did not understand themselves as creating Westerns per se. Instead they churned out hundreds of books that told the story of American adventure, and their contact zones were both domestic and foreign. Before the Western was a noun then, it was an adjective, part of a larger constellation of the adventure narrative that took place in various colonial geographies across the globe.¹⁹ The tale of far-away adventure eventually split. While it retained its popularity overall, a significant body of writing ultimately became identified as “the Western,” and was distinguished from other forms of borderland adventures, such as the “Oriental” or “African adventure narratives” that took place across different geographies of imperialism.²⁰ This history provides another story of the Western, one that offers a more complicated, transnational understanding of the genre’s development. By recalling these developments, scholars may critically attend to the interchanges of “Indians” with “Arabs” as character types in the Western, a move that appears across various zones of contact and which helps restore to memory forgotten elements in the history of the form.

These frequent interchanges were not isolated to literature or cinema, but appeared in other art forms that also developed American orientalist themes in western U.S. contexts.²¹ By the mid-nineteenth century, American painters influenced by European art movements began to design their own uses for orientalist themes. German-born painter Carl Wimar, for instance, updated the settings and characters of work by the French military artist Horace Vernet, relocating the scene of Vernet’s 1843 painting “Arabs Traveling in the Desert” to the American West in his own 1856 work, “The Lost Trail.”²² As one of the more popular western artists, Charles Russell was inspired by European orientalist painters; his work, “Keeoma” (1896), westernized the classic orientalist pose of the odalisque by replacing the harem girl with an Indian maiden clad in a buckskin dress smoking tobacco as she invited the viewer’s gaze.²³ The western American writer, painter, and sculptor Frederic Remington likewise contributed to what Alex Lubin calls the “archives of Arab-as-Indian comparisons in American Orientalist cultural production.”²⁴ After traveling to Algeria on one of his only two trips abroad, Remington was inspired to produce images of Arab horsemanship in ways that mirror his western art featuring both cowboys and Native Americans.²⁵ It is thus not surprising that some of Remington’s works that feature a North African setting are housed along with his other cowboy art in the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

Much like the colonial stories that pit noble, upright, virile Europeans against degenerate, despotic savage Others, the story of the Western also typically features an upstanding hero, usually in the form of a cowboy or gunman who defeats the brutal, bloodthirsty Indian or the savage outlaw in order to secure freedom, democracy, and justice.²⁶ The primary conflict of the Western—its tale of the struggle between savagery and civilization—also corresponds closely to the larger issues at stake in many European orientalist adventure narratives. While the Western helped circulate ideas about the moral certainty of expansion due in part to the alleged racial superiority and elevated qualities of its hero, scholars have recently noted that in some cases, U.S. nation-building during the late-nineteenth century faced additional racial issues and concerns about whiteness that helped distinguish it from European imperialism in the same time period. American studies scholars have noted that some U.S. expansionists in the late-nineteenth-century wanted to avoid arguments about “racial uplift,” “manifest destiny,” or “the white man’s burden” in order to sidestep a larger racial panic that was developing over empire.

As Eric T. L. Love argues, some expansionists recognized the potential such language might have in hindering imperialist projects, especially as fears circulated that expansionism would increase the nation’s non-white population. Love indicates that even as these expansionists were not themselves anti-racist, some of them tried to avoid using race-based arguments in advancing their cause. In this way, it may be difficult to argue for a simple correspondence between European imperialism or Orientalism and the American versions that also arose.²⁷ Thus, while it may have circulated popularly in U.S. culture in genres such as

the Western, the language of race may not have always served as a politically useful tool for some American expansionist in the nineteenth century.²⁸ In the immediate post-9/11 period, however, there seems to have been little effort to sidestep discourses of national and racial uplift as celebrations of American cultural diversity as well as ideas of “freedom” and “democracy” repositioned the nation as a model that some believe should be implemented across the world.²⁹ The Western in the post- 9/11 period has similarly been useful in this context, with its plot lines taking on new meaning as the epic struggle between savagery and civilization became a useful shorthand and explanation for American forays into the Middle East.³⁰

At the same time, the ironies of the Western morality tale have not been lost on critics of U.S. foreign policy, particularly by those populations directly affected by these projects. During a 2007 visit to Ramallah, for instance, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was greeted by Palestinian protesters dressed as Native Americans who carried signs that read, “Mrs. Rice, The Indian wars are not over. We are still here too.” The promises of mobilizing American Indian history—here presented through the iconography of plains Indians disseminated globally by Hollywood film production—as a means of explaining nation-building practices have also not gone unnoticed by Palestinian writers. Mahmoud Darwish’s well-known poem “Speech of the Red Indian,” for instance, is directed toward different cowboys and interchanges Palestinian Arabs and “Indians” for decidedly different purposes.³¹

In his study of “playing Indian” Phil Deloria offers useful insights into how such performances have historically enabled the negotiation of cultural identity. As he indicates, the act of “playing Indian” allowed mostly non-Indian Americans a means of working through unresolved tensions of national identity that involved an acknowledgement and disavowal of Indian presences in the land. As Deloria explains, “[t]here was, quite simply, no way to conceive an American identity without Indians. At the same time, there was no way to make a complete identity while they remained.” In the instance of recent Palestinian protesters, “Indian” performance makes visible the history of colonial occupation as well as the persistence of survival; rather than accepting the role of the savage enemy and perpetrator of violence, these Palestinian “Indians” situate themselves as a violated and dispossessed people struggling to engage in acts of survivance.³²

“Looking for a Breed Apart”

The film, *Hidalgo*, begins as the main character, Frank T. Hopkins, experiences the massacre of Lakota Indians by troops of the U.S. 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee in 1890. In dealing with the trauma of witnessing the event, he turns to alcohol and joins Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show, which annually toured the United States and Europe, and re-enacted battle scenes from western American history as well as various military excursions overseas, including the famous Battle of San Juan Hill fought during the Spanish-American War. Scholars explain that the actual Wild West show opened with a parade that featured different cultural

groups on horseback. In addition to cowboys and various Native American tribes, the Wild West show included Turks and Arabs, Gauchos and Cossacks, all of whom displayed their own distinctive costumes and horse cultures, and who were pitted against one another alongside the American cowboy.³³ Paul Redding contends that the show's audiences generally understood the group comparisons within a logic of Social Darwinism. A "horse race between a cowboy, a Cossack, a vaquero, a gaucho, and an Indian was a 'race between races,' with 'national pride' and the 'glory' of one's race motivating each contestant. Not surprisingly, in the context of the Wild West shows, the Anglo cowboy usually won the race."³⁴

Known as a gifted horseman by other entertainers in the show, Hopkins is invited to join the "Ocean of Fire," a 3,000-mile horse race across the Arabian Desert, which allegedly had been held annually for centuries. During the horse race, Hopkins faces challenges from treacherous opponents, thwarts the sexual demands of a female British horse owner, and woos the daughter of an overcontrolling father played by Egyptian actor Omar Sharif, whom audiences may remember as the real-life Michel Shalhoub, the childhood bully known for his painful arm twists as well as other brutal punishments fondly described by Edward Said in his memoir, *Out of Place*.³⁵

Born in Alexandria, Egypt in 1932, Omar Sharif first appeared in films during his early 20s when he was cast by well-known Egyptian director Youssef Chahine. While he acted in a number of Egyptian movies from 1954 to 1961, Sharif first gained international recognition in 1962 for his work in David Lean's film, *Lawrence of Arabia*, where he also received an Oscar nomination for Best Supporting Actor. The film later encouraged generations of moviegoers outside North Africa and the Middle East to imagine Sharif as the "archetypal Arab" on screen, even though he was cast in such roles only a few times after his early work in Egyptian cinema. In watching his performance in *Hidalgo*, audiences may experience a certain degree of intertextual interference, as his role in the 2004 Western is similar to the character he played in *Lawrence of Arabia*. In both films, Sharif serves as the hero's enemy who is converted to becoming his ally and whose friendship with the westerner—either T.E. Lawrence or Frank T. Hopkins—grants approval to the colonial presence in the region.³⁶

After *Lawrence of Arabia*, Sharif frequently appeared on screen as a generic Mediterranean type. He once told an interviewer that his identity made him a "foreigner in every film industry in the world" except Egypt.³⁷ Sharif played a surprisingly wide variety of national types; in addition to appearing as a German in more than one film, he was also cast as an Armenian, Yugoslavian, Mexican, Austrian, Italian, Greek, and Russian.³⁸ Sharif's role in *Doctor Zhivago* (1965) ultimately solidified his star appeal, the film's popularity due in part to his strong performance and to the ways the movie screened U.S. Cold War myths of and fantasies for a pre-Soviet Russian past.

Richard Fleischer's 1979 film, *Ashanti*, was one of the few non-Egyptian movies in which Sharif played an Arab character. His work in the film earned him negative press, however, and later led to a general boycott of his work because

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of his role as an oil-rich Arab caught up in a kidnapping scheme involving an American woman. Sharif's earlier performance as Jewish American cardplayer Nick Arnstein in William Wyler's 1968 musical comedy *Funny Girl*, with Barbara Streisand as his love interest, also sparked controversy as filming took place during the Six-Day War, which led to strong criticism of Sharif for appearing on screen with a Jewish actress.³⁹ In 2003, however, the role he played in French director Francois Dupeyron's film, *Monsieur Ibrahim*, gained him critical attention for his performance as an elderly Muslim shopkeeper who becomes a mentor to a young Jewish boy from his neighborhood in 1960s Paris.

For an actor seeking broad international appeal, one's screen name can help or hinder the process, and film stars often take great care in understanding the nuances and subtle meanings a name can have in different national contexts. Over the years, the actor has explained his transformation from "Michel Shalhoub" to "Omar Sharif," offering two versions of the story in interviews and his 1977 autobiography, *The Eternal Male*. In a 1989 interview, the actor explained the circumstances around his choice of names.

I wanted a name that would be easy for the Western world to pronounce, one that was easy to remember. . . . [W]hat name is going to be easy for the Americans, the English, or the Europeans? . . . There was Omar Khayyam, whom everybody knew, and Omar Bradley, the famous American general. And then I thought of the sheriffs, the ones in the Westerns, and I decided Omar Sharif was a good combination.⁴⁰

Aware of how these meanings needed to travel globally with a maximum of ease, he chose a name whose broad significance played into his larger star persona.

In his earlier autobiography, however, the actor recounts a slightly different version of how he came upon his screen name as he deliberately considered how best to position himself for both a Middle Eastern and international audience. Steven C. Caton quotes a passage from the autobiography:

I tried to come up with something that sounded Middle Eastern and could still be spelled in every language. . . . Next, I thought of combining Omar with the Arabic sheriff [i.e., a descendant of the Prophet and considered high-born in most Muslim countries] but I realized that this would evoke the word "sheriff," which was a bit too cowboyish. So I opted for a variant—I became Omar Sharif.⁴¹

In these competing versions of the name change, the actor at one time celebrates the popular associations with the mythic cowboy figure of the filmic Western; in the other version, he emphasizes the larger Arabic connections and a shift of spelling that enables him to bypass references to the law-bringing

hero of the American West whose meanings might be received negatively in a global context.

Just as the actor faced the problems of competing and contradictory meanings in his adopted name, various conflicted elements also tug at the meanings of *Hidalgo* as a Western. By the time *Hidalgo* appeared on screen, the Western had entered a revisionist cycle and could no longer easily demonize Native Americans as savage enemies. Like *Dances with Wolves* (1990), a film commonly cited as helping usher in the recent cycle of revisionist Westerns, *Hidalgo* is positioned as an “Indian sympathy film.”⁴² For instance, *Hidalgo* avoids using broken English to signify the supposed racial and cultural inferiority of the Other and instead employs subtitles to translate the Lakota speakers as well as the Arabic-speaking characters. As a revisionist text with some pro-Indian sympathies, the film divides its loyalties between whites and Native Americans as if to acknowledge the complexities of racial identity in contemporary multicultural U.S. society. This dual allegiance is explained in part by the bicultural identity of the hero, whose mother was a Lakota Indian and whose father was a white army scout. Much of the film is preoccupied with finding a useable American past for the divided hero, whose experiences at the Wounded Knee massacre are framed as both a personal and national trauma. By the end of the film, the shameful experiences at Wounded Knee are alleviated by the successes Hopkins has in the horse race against his Arab rivals.

In the contemporary multicultural United States, Arab Americans have been placed in a complicated, ever-shifting racial category. In the pre-9/11 era, Arab Americans were granted status as “probationary whites,” a term used by philosopher Charles Mills for those groups whose cultural status as whites remains conditional and uncertain as power relations expand and contract racial definitions in different historical periods.⁴³ At various moments, Arab Americans have experienced the privileges of whiteness, yet such privileges proved to be easily revoked in times of national crisis and racial anxiety. The war on terrorism certainly shifted the racial status of Arab Americans. Even before then, however, they recognized problems in their racial status as U.S. citizens and sought ways to address the problem; in the 2000 U.S. census, Arab Americans tried to be counted as a separate category, but their efforts to settle their provisional racial status were not successful.⁴⁴

The complex redefinitions of race in America mirrors the conditional multiculturalism of *Hidalgo*, as the encounter between the United States and the diverse Arab populations of the film is presented within the logics of benevolent supremacy. It is not an outright conflict like the Indian massacre at Wounded Knee, but is framed as a more innocent venture, with the hero, a mixed race American, not just winning a race but liberating Arab people along the way. Audiences have noted the uneasy way in which *Hidalgo* operates as a revisionist text, however, with one film critic calling the movie “Viggo of Arabia,” thus linking it to David Lean’s epic film, *Lawrence of Arabia*, which also received mixed reviews for its largely sympathetic treatment of Britain’s colonial past in the Middle

East. The phrase “Viggo of Arabia,” also calls to mind the name given to Kevin Costner’s attempts at making a revisionist film in *Dances with Wolves*, which likewise sparked controversy and was alternatively titled “Lawrence of South Dakota,” for its colonial representations of racial conflict and nation-building in the nineteenth-century American West.⁴⁵

“A Horse of a Most Unusual Color”

The film takes its name from the horse named “Hidalgo” that Frank Hopkins rides throughout the story, an animal whose purpose and function take on complicated meanings throughout the film. As a cultural text, the film is preoccupied with racial definitions and boundaries. When Hopkins first enters the competition, for instance, an opponent comments on the animal’s pedigree, describing the animal as “a horse of a most unusual color.” Hidalgo, we learn, is a mustang, a free-roaming horse of the American West, an animal whose freedom is meant to mirror that of the western American hero. The early Spanish explorers called the horses “*mesteños*,” which meant “wild,” and later they became known as “mustangs” among the Anglos. Having descended from various breeds—most notably Arabian horses brought earlier to Spain and then to the Americas—mustangs were thought to possess endurance, strength, and speed.⁴⁶

Here the horse’s name and pedigree are significant for a number of reasons. The wildness of the horse may reference aspects of the American West that are frequently lauded in the Western, particularly the possibilities of the wild and the celebration of nature that is central to the promises of the region. Yet the name “Hidalgo” also references other moments of freedom and postcolonial possibility, particularly the Mexican priest and leader, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, who led the 1810 revolt that marked the beginning of what would become the Mexican War of Independence.⁴⁷

As a Spanish term, the name “Hidalgo” is also a reminder that one of the central icons of the American West—the horse—is not actually indigenous to the region. Instead, the animals come from someplace else, just as the Western itself has a complicated transnational history as an offshoot of colonial adventure narratives. Tumbleweed, that ubiquitous symbol in the cinematic landscapes of the Western, is not indigenous to the American West, but is believed to have migrated from Russia on burlap bags that traveled with the railroads.⁴⁸ Cowboys cannot claim their origins in the U.S. West either, but serve as the offspring of the *vaqueros*, the first horsemen of the Americas.⁴⁹ Throughout the nineteenth century, cowboys not only appropriated the land of the southwest, but also as Deborah L. Madsen argues, they took on the lifestyle of the *vaquero*, creating in turn “a mythology and iconography of the Western cowboy to accompany and legitimize the taking-over of what was once Mexican.”⁵⁰

One is reminded too of the un-American origins of another icon of U.S. identity, the Statue of Liberty, which Hopkins gazes at with ambivalence when he boards the ship that will take him to the Middle East. As such, the film con-

tributes to a long history of complicated meanings associated with Lady Liberty. Sometimes understood as symbolic of the American national values of freedom, independence, and emancipation, while at other times positioned ironically by marginalized populations in the United States, the Statue of Liberty has accrued a number of meanings, both nationally and globally. Such transformation emerged in the instance of the Lady Liberty statue, “The Goddess of Democracy,” famously erected in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square for different national purposes.⁵¹ While a common meaning of the statue in the United States may be as the “Mother of Exiles” which maternally welcomes millions of immigrants to the land of freedom, the Statue of Liberty has also acquired less positive associations. The late-nineteenth century saw rising nativism and increased efforts to restrict immigration across the nation. In 1882, for instance, the Chinese Exclusion Act barred entry to Chinese laborers and denied citizenship to the Chinese. Critics have thus noted the irony that just as Lady Liberty was rising in New York Harbor, opportunities to enter the United States were increasingly being foreclosed.⁵²

The Statue of Liberty also carries with it a transnational history that has sometimes been overlooked by Americans and that has unintended meanings for the film as a whole. Those familiar with Egypt’s history, particularly with struggles over the control of the Suez Canal in the context of imperialism, will remember that the Statue of Liberty was initially designed for display in the Middle East and was originally modeled after an Egyptian peasant rather than a European woman. The French artist Frederic Bartholdi, who designed Lady Liberty, was primarily known for his sculpture, but also contributed to the larger body of nineteenth-century European orientalist painting. During a visit to Egypt in 1855, Bartholdi was awed by his tour of the Sphinx and Giza pyramids. “Their kindly and impassive glance seems to ignore the present and to be fixed upon an unlimited future,” he wrote.⁵³

While in Egypt, Bartholdi was a productive orientalist artist, creating more than two hundred drawings and two dozen oil studies, some of which he displayed in salons upon his return to France. Influenced by the Suez Canal project, he was inspired in 1867 to design a giant lighthouse that would stand at the entrance of the canal. His plans for this project included a figure in the tradition of the Roman goddess *Libertas*, this time modeled to represent an Egyptian peasant, or *fallaha*, who would carry a light that beamed through a headband and a torch that was directed to the skies (See figure 1). The plans were presented to Ismail Pasha, Egypt’s ruler from 1863 to 1879, who eventually rejected the commission. First as clay models based on watercolor drawings of women that Bartholdi encountered during his travels to Egypt, the images eventually shifted in their later form. In Lady Liberty’s travels to New York, the figure lost her Egyptian features and instead became what art historian Darcy Grimaldo Grigsby calls a “remote, abstractly chastened and generalized” female icon.⁵⁴

In a similar way, Egypt—the initial national site for the statue—has experienced a shifting identity between East and West throughout history. As a contested



Figure 1: Frederic Bartholdi, “Egypt Carrying the Light into Asia” (1867), Musée Bartholdi, Colmar, reprod. C. Kempf.

geography and terrain located between various worlds, Egypt has at times been claimed as African, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and European. When the Suez Canal opened in 1869, the leader Ismail Pasha famously declared that Egypt was now part of Europe, not Africa. “My country is no longer in Africa; we are now part of Europe. It is therefore natural for us to abandon our former ways and to adopt a new system adapted to our social conditions,” he claimed. In doing so, the leader underscored how Egypt’s position on the map was provisional rather than fixed or determined, an understanding that continues to shape how the nation is regarded by Egyptians themselves as well as others outside the country.⁵⁵

A similar concern about hybridity and identity appears in *Hidalgo* through discussions of Hopkins’ horse, an animal of “impure” origins. In the film, much is made of the thoroughbred horses in the race, which are compared to the mustang with its mixed pedigree and travels through Arabia and Spain to the Americas. On the one hand, the mixed-breed mustang with its impure past can be regarded as a celebration of multicultural America, a nation made up of diverse populations from all over the world. On the other hand, the impure past of the animal parallels the hero’s own troubled identity as a biracial American. It is through both of these figures—the mixed-breed animal and the multicultural American hero—that the film is able to heal the wounds of the nation’s past. In winning the race against the Arabs, both Hopkins and the horse recast the American nation with all of its diversity and complexity as a force to be reckoned with on the international stage. With the prize money from the race, Hopkins buys back land that was stolen from the survivors of Wounded Knee. He also frees his beloved horse, who runs off with a wild herd of other mustangs at the film’s end.

Gender is also mobilized in the narrative. It is a means of defining American national identity through Hopkin’s would-be love interest, the British aristocrat Lady Anne Davenport, who has designs not just on the race and the right to breed her horses with the thoroughbreds, but also on the possibilities of capturing the wild West hero. Davenport appears as an imperial competitor, a symbol of British power in the region, even though as one Egyptian film reviewer pointed out, there are problems in the film’s staging of British presence in the 1890s, an era when the region was still under Ottoman rule.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, Davenport figures as a powerful threat to be reckoned with in the film. Lady Davenport makes much that she is “looking for a breed apart,” as she puts it in reference to both the horses and the western hero.

In the classic Western, the frontier hero is often positioned in a triangulated relationship between eastern American civilization and western American savagery. The Anglo hero must constantly negotiate between the two forces, avoiding the domesticity and exhaustion of the urban American East while also not succumbing to the temptations of “going native” in the Wild West.⁵⁷ In the genre, the West is represented as wild space, the domain of savage nature and unruly Indians, both of which much be tamed by the hero. Meanwhile, the American East is often feminized and racialized, sometimes a force to be contained or controlled and other times represented in the figure of the white woman who is

the hero's love interest. Jane Tompkins makes a case for the ways the Western emerged as a means of countering female cultural power in the domestic sphere in the nineteenth century and that the qualities devalued in the Western are often those associated with women.⁵⁸ Charles Russell's 1907 painting, "When East Meets West," depicts aspects of the gendered and racial logic that constructs the region as a meaningful geography (see figure 2). The triangle between the western hero and the two opposed geographies appears here as the Anglo cowboy ponders with some suspicion and amusement the figure of the domesticated, fashionable white woman from the urban East, while a Native American mother and her children look on in the background, thus suggesting their own distance from the meanings and values embodied by this racialized and gendered figure.

Like the typical Anglo hero in the Western, Hopkins struggles to liberate himself from the corruptions of an overly modernized world, represented here in the form of Lady Davenport. Her sexual as well as political competitiveness make her a poor choice for the hero. Here Lady Davenport serves as the feminized symbol of hypermodernity—the domestic, urbanized Other in the classic Western—a figure that tries to tame and conquer the hero. In addition, Davenport serves anachronistically as a stand-in for British colonial order, a force that has to be defeated—if only symbolically—in order for the American to assert his own national interests.

The film also features Jazira, the daughter of Sheikh Riyadh, who is played by Zuleikha Robinson, a British actress of Burmese, Iranian, Scottish, and Indian heritage. Like Omar Sherif, Robinson has been cast over the years in a number of film roles from diverse ethnic backgrounds in productions.⁵⁹ The love plot between Hopkins and the Sheikh's daughter operates within an orientalist logic as it features the "woman of cover" uncovering, and thus apparently gaining agency and independence from patriarchy and Islam in this line of thinking. "Woman of cover" is a term President George W. Bush used to refer to the Muslim woman who wears the head scarf or covers her face, in a speech he gave one month after 9/11.⁶⁰ The term "woman of cover" connotes difference by playing on and appropriating the multicultural concept of "woman of color." At the same time, it suggests in the post-9/11 culture of security a kind of suspicious behavior, as if Muslim women who cover have something to hide. As the free-thinking and brave Jazira becomes interested in Hopkins and he with her, the film borrows from what Ella Shohat describes as the "colonial rescue fantasy," which relies on the imperial trope of the dark woman "trapped in brutal retrograde societies" in need of rescue.⁶¹ Within the context of what Richard Goldstein calls Bush's "stealth misogyny," the chivalrous imperative to emancipate the nonwestern woman takes place already within a colonial framework.⁶² The orientalist rescue narrative of the film becomes linked to the frontier captivity narrative, with an Arab Muslim replacing the Anglo Puritan female, as Hopkins struggles to free Jazira from her restrictive clothing, family, and community. Jazira eventually uncovers in front of the western hero, defying her father's power and rejecting her role as the so-called oppressed Muslim woman. The uncovering is presented



Figure 2: Charles M. Russell, “When East Meets West,” ca. 1907, watercolor, gouache, and graphite on paper, 12 1/2 x 19 5/8 inches. Amon Carter Museum, Fort Worth, TX, 1961.132.

as a feminist move toward liberation and freedom that also prompts Hopkins’ own delayed racial self-reflection. Having kept his identity as American Indian secret throughout the film, he is now free to uncover and liberate himself racially as a multicultural American.

Jazira’s liberation of Hopkins occurs in other instances throughout the film; far from being a passive or submissive character in the film, she willingly participates in her own uncovering and continually expresses her desires to participate as an active agent in the race. Although Hopkins traces down her kidnapers and eventually restores her to her family, Jazira gets to turn the table on Hopkins in a postfeminist move where she “rescues her rescuer” by helping Hopkins escape. The film’s gender politics follow the complicated and contradictory postfeminism of the Bush administration, the logic being that certain women need help to free themselves, and in doing so, will return the favor by casting their lot with their liberators.

Both Jazira’s name and that of her father, “Sheikh Riyadh,” are also obvious allusions to contemporary geopolitical issues in the Middle East. They serve as strong American touch points, with Al Jazeera being the Arab television network based in Qatar and Riyadh a reference to the Saudi Arabian capital.⁶³ Both references call to mind recent American efforts at bringing democracy and modernization to the region, as debates about Al Jazeera in the western media circulate around issues of press censorship, freedom of speech, and the transparency of the media, while Saudi Arabia figures as a key ally for the United States in the

region, albeit one that American officials believe must open up more fully to U.S. views and lifestyles. Other significant references also abound in the film. As the updated Tonto figure and subordinate figure to the Anglo hero in *Hidalgo*, Sharif's character gives his grudging approval to the cowboy hero after the latter proves his worthiness as a male competitor to the Sheikh even before the race officially begins. The first test comes after Hopkins downs a cup of coffee in the middle of a warning from the Sheikh. "Most foreigners find our coffee to be too potent," he tells Hopkins, who surprises the Sheikh by finishing the drink in one gulp. "Back home, we toss a horseshoe in the pot. Stands up straight, coffee's ready," the laconic cowboy replies.

Hopkins also earns respect from the Sheikh when he displays his Colt pistol, in the film a symbol both of the hero's strength on the American frontier and of U.S. global power past and present. The Sheikh's fascination with western technology functions as an orientalist cliché, an age-old expression of the West's alleged superiority and power over the East. The Colt pistol brings further into focus the theme of modernization and the West's civilizing mission in the region, elements that one reviewer in the Middle East has addressed at some length. Pointing to the ways that Arab history is dismissed throughout the film, Egyptian critic Emad El-Din Aysha highlights what he calls "the satirizing of all things non-American" within *Hidalgo*, as audiences are "constantly presented with symbols of decay, of relics and archaeological remains, of long-gone civilizations, swallowed up by time and the desert." The reviewer goes on to note in the film the

general idea if that the Arabs (may have) had a great past . . . their present is awful; they are lagging behind the rest of the world and the only way to get ahead is to turn their backs on the past. They have to throw themselves wholeheartedly into the hands of the West, with the most Western of all being the Americans.⁶⁴

Ultimately, the film advances the idea of Arabs throughout the world as bereft or "having no future" unless they have the foresight to "work hand in hand with the West, America."⁶⁵

As played out in *Hidalgo*, however, this notion of modernization proves to be complicated. On the one hand, an irony that may be lost involves the use of the Western to impart themes of modernization. As one of the most nostalgic of all film genres, the Western usually expresses ambivalence toward modernization and typically operates as an anti-modern response to the changes the rest of the world is experiencing. A central plot element in the genre involves escape, with the hero retreating from an overly developed and modernized world to the wild, untamed, and celebrated *premodern* landscapes of the American West. The Western may thus be somewhat out of place here in its role as modernizing force in the Middle East. On the other hand, critics have also indicated that modernism always contained a large element of nostalgia and melancholia or what might

be called “anti-modernism,” such that we might be better served by speaking of an anti-modern modernism, a modernism that touches back on a previous world and constantly mourns its loss.⁶⁶

“Remember, You’re the Good Guy”

Film critic Stanley Corkin has argued that in the post-World War II period as the United States sought to secure its role as a world superpower, the project of maintaining U.S. foreign policy “caused untold strains domestically.” In this period, Westerns were made in numbers that rivaled any other moment in American history. Their popularity at the box office might have had to do with how they helped mediate national problems “by grafting the historical onto the mythic” in an effort to help viewers “adjust to new concepts of national definition.”⁶⁷ In the American culture of security following 9/11, Westerns might serve a similar function. Early in *Hidalgo*, for instance, the character Annie Oakley, played by Elizabeth Barridge, yells out to Hopkins just as he is entering the Wild West arena, “remember, you’re the good guy.” Such assurances on the part of the sharp-shooting female character point to national anxieties arising during the United States’ recent war on terrorism, an effort that not all Americans agree is effective or even justified.

Ultimately, *Hidalgo* operates not so much as a historical document of the past then, but as an instance of “benevolent supremacy,” with the American hero appropriately besting what turns out to be an anachronistic British presence in order to take its place in the region. In fact, the source material guiding the plot has been largely discredited as critics have uncovered various deceptions in Hopkins’ version of these events.⁶⁸ It becomes clear then, that the movie is not just about defeating ghosts of the nineteenth-century past. Instead, the film is less about nineteenth-century Indians and more about twenty-first century American encounters with Arabs. As a Western, the film’s setting in the Middle East points to a crisis in confidence following outcry about the treatment of Arabs and Arab Americans, as many viewers question who the real heroes and enemies in the post-9/11 war against terrorism might actually be. In this context, it is not difficult to see the horse race itself as a contest between nations that has global consequences, as the American hero, Frank T. Hopkins, represents the race that should rightfully win the horse competition and the nation that figures as an appropriate model and standard for others to emulate.

Notes

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1. Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Vintage 1999), 232.
2. Tim Semmerling, "Evil" *Arabs in American Popular Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007). For other discussions of Hollywood depictions of the Middle East, see Ella Shohat, *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), Steven C. Caton, *Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), Linda Khatib, *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2006), and Jack Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (Brooklyn: Olive Branch Press, 2001).
3. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (reprint; New York: Penguin, 1995). For representative discussions of this work, see Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (New York and London: Verso Press, 1992) and Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994). Said himself revisited and refined his earlier work; see, for instance, the discussion in *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994).
4. Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress* (1869. reprint; New York: Dover, 2003), 486.
5. Zane Grey, *Wildfire* (1917. reprint; Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2004), 18; *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912. reprint; New York: Modern Library, 2002); *Rainbow Trail* (1915. reprint; Northridge, CA: Aegypan, 2007).
6. For a discussion of Jack London in this context, see Susan Kollin, *Nature's State: Imagining Alaska as the Last Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 64.
7. Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 16.
8. Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 1. Other scholarship on this topic includes Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987. reprint; San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books 2007); Jose David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); John Carlos Rowe, *Post-Nationalist American Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Donald Pease, ed. *National Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); David W. Noble, *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2002); George Lipsitz, *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). Marc Chenetier offers a different model for internationalizing American studies in arguing for more careful consideration of non-American American studies scholarship, or work produced by Americanists who are not from the United States. See Chenetier, "'New' 'American Studies': Exceptionalism Redux?," *European Journal of American Studies* 2008: 2, <http://ejas.revues.org/document/7453.html> (accessed April 4, 2009).
9. Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire*, 1. Other scholars have also examined how the United States used the myth of a "frontier" to obscure empire-building overseas. See David W. Noble, *Death of a Nation* 52; David W. Noble, *The End of American History: Democracy, Capitalism, and the Metaphor of Two Worlds in Anglo-American Historical Writing, 1880-1980* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); Amy Kaplan, "Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993); 3-21. Deborah L. Madsen notes a direct link between the development of the Western and its "mythology of conquest" with efforts to gain U.S. domination of the continent. See her discussion in "Westerns and Westward Expansion," *American Exceptionalism* (Oxford: University Press of Mississippi, 1998), 122-145.
10. *Hidalgo*. Dir. Joe Johnston (Touchstone Films, 2004.)
11. Philip French, "The Western," 14.
12. See, for instance, Emad el-Din Aysha's review of *Hidalgo* in *The Egyptian Gazette*, June 17, 2004, 8. I wish to thank him for providing me a copy of this review. For a discussion of the uses of the Western in the war on terrorism, see Walter Metz, "'Mother Needs You': The Melodramatics of the Post-9/11 Western," forthcoming in *A Family Affair: Cinema Calls Home*, ed. Murray Pomerance (London: Wallflower Press). For a discussion of Hollywood's representations of Islam in the post/9-11 era, see Shirley R. Steinberg, "French Fries, Fezzes, and Minstrels: The Hollywoodization of Islam," in *9/11 in American Culture*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira Press, 2003), 123-9.
13. Hopkins's autobiography was reissued by the Long Riders' Guild Press with supporting materials that document many of its alleged events. See Frank T. Hopkins, *Hidalgo and Other Stories*, ed. Basha O'Reilly (N/A, Long Riders' Guild Press, 2004).
14. Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America,'" 5; McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 11, 30.
15. Quoted in Philip French, "The Western," *The Observer Guide to Film*, ed. Carl Wilkinson (Reading, U.K.: Cox and Wyman Ltd./Observer Books, 2007), 14. Many critics have argued this point. Kim Newman, for instance, contends that the Western is "one of the few art forms native to the United States" in *Wild West Movies: How the West Was Found, Won, Lost, Lied About, Filmed and Forgotten* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990), 2. Richard Etulain notes that the Western may be traced

to the epics of Homer, to medieval romances, and to the historical adventure narratives of authors such as Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. Etulain, however, prefers to see the genre's origins in "the combined influence of a number of occurrences in the years surrounding 1900." See Richard W. Etulain, "Cultural Origins of the Western," in *Focus on the Western*, ed. Jack Nachbar (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974), 19. Here I play on the term "un-American Western," a narrative category that Kim Newman addresses in his study, *Wild West Movies*.

16. Michael Denning, *Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working Class Culture in America* (2nd ed.; London: Verso, 1998), 20. Although John G. Cawelti notes connections between the colonial adventure novels by writers such as H. Rider Haggard, few scholars have extended this observation in studies of the Western. See Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique Sequel* (Bowling Green: The Popular Press, 1999), 25.

17. Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: BFI Press, 1999), 36.

18. *Ibid.*, 37-8. Of course, as Christopher Frayling points out, by the 1960s the "Spaghetti Westerns" helped change the link between the genre's filmic production and American landscapes. For more on this point, see Frayling, *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Westerns from Karl May to Sergio Leone* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2006).

19. I borrow the term "contact zone" from Mary Louise Pratt who uses the term to describe interactions involving power and cultural exchange between different groups of people. See "Arts of the Contact Zone," *Profession* 91 (New York: MLA, 1991), 33-40. Shelley Streeby traces the emergence of what she calls the "Mexican Western" in reading an inter-American popular culture that "invites the rethinking of models of the 'West' that isolate the U.S. nation-state from other imperial, national, and cultural histories." See *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 247.

20. Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (reprint; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 149.

21. For representative studies of the development of an American Orientalism, see Malini Johar Schueller, *U.S. Orientalisms: Race, Nation, and Gender in Literature, 1790-1890* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998); Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East Since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Mari Yoshihara, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and McAlister, *Epic Encounters*.

22. Clyde Milner, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss, eds. *The Oxford History of the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 680-686.

23. *Ibid.*, 685; Holly Edwards, "A Million and One Nights: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930," in *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870-1930*, Holly Edwards, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, in association with the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2000), 35; and Edwards, "A Means to an End," in *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures*, 186-7.

24. Alex Lubin, "'We are all Israelis': The Politics of Colonial Comparisons," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 107 (Fall 2008): 688.

25. Edwards, "A Million and One Nights," 25. For more on Remington, see also Sarah Lyons Watts, *Rough Rider in the White House: Theodore Roosevelt and the Politics of Desire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 227-8.

26. Ella Shohat makes a similar case in "Gender and the Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema," in *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*, 17-69. Amy Kaplan likewise addresses the western novel, *The Virginian*, as an heir to the historical romance narratives of the late nineteenth century in "Romancing the Empire," in *The Anarchy of Empire*, 92-120.

27. Eric T. L. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism and U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), xi-xx, and 120.

28. Gary Gerstle also offers a useful historical analysis of racial discourses in the making of American national identity in *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

29. British American studies scholars Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean offer a useful overview of U.S. imperialism and exceptionalism in their chapter "The Spread of Freedom," in *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture* (2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 2006), 260-286.

30. For further discussion of these points, see Susan Kollin, "Postwestern Cultures, Dead or Alive," in *Postwestern Cultures: Literature, Theory, Space*, ed. Susan Kollin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), ix-xix; and Stephen McVeigh, *The American Western* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), vii, and 213-220.

31. Rice's visit is recounted in "Playing Wild West in West Bank," in *Ynetnews* (January 14, 2007, www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3352236,00.html (accessed April 9, 2008)). Mahmoud Darwish's poem "Speech of the Red Indian" appears in *The Adam of Two Edens*, ed. Munir Akash and Daniel Moore (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 129-145. For a related discussion, see W. J. T. Mitchell, "Holy Landscapes: Israel, Palestine, and the American Wilderness," *Critical Inquiry* 26 (2000), 193-223.

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32. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 37. For a discussion of how nineteenth-century European fascination with Native Americans led to other instances of "playing Indian," see Robert W. Rydell and Rob Kroes, *Buffalo Bill in Bologna: The Americanization of the World, 1869-1922* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 107-117. For more on practices of survivance, see Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Narratives on Postindian Survivance* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

33. See Joy Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory and Popular History* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 4, 190.

34. Paul Reddin, *Wild West Shows* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 128.

35. Said, *Out of Place*, 200-201.

36. Shirley R. Steinberg explains that Hollywood films about the Middle East often introduce an Arab sidekick for the Anglo hero. "Loyal and faithful to death, the Tonto-ized friend is simpler, devoutly Muslim, full of Islamic platitudes and premonitions" see Steinberg, "French Fries, Fezzes, and Minstrels," 127.

37. Yazmin Ghonaim, "From the Golden Crescent of Paris . . . and Back," *Cineaste* 29: 2 (2004), 14-17.

38. Miriam Rosen, "The Making of Omar Sharif: An Interview," *Cineaste* 17: 1 (1989), 20.

39. *Ibid.*, 18.

40. *Ibid.*, 19. For a slightly different discussion of hybridity, see Noël Sturgeon, *Environmentalism is Popular Culture: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and the Politics of the Natural* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2009).

41. Steven C. Caton, *Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 56.

42. For a useful discussion of the "Indian sympathy film," see Ted Jojola, "Absurd Reality II: Hollywood Goes to the Indians," in *Hollywood's Indian: The Portrayal of the Native American in Film*, ed. Peter C. Rollins and John E. O'Connor (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky), 12-26; and Edward Buscombe, *'Injuns!': Native Americans in the Movies* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006), 101-150.

43. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). For a discussion of the racial classification of people of the Middle East in the United States, see also Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 37-9.

44. Stephen Cornell and Douglas Hartman, *Ethnicity and Race: Making Identity in a Changing World* (2nd ed.; London: Pine Forge Press, 2007), 177-8. For a critical and humorous take on the changing racial status of Arab Americans in the post-9/11 period, see *The Axis of Evil Comedy Tour* (Ahmed Ahmed, Aron Kader, Maz Jobrani and Dean Obeidallah, Image Entertainment, 2007).

45. See Joe Morgenstern, "Viggo of Arabia: In Hidalgo Tale of Mideast Horse Race, Mortenson Hits Quicksand," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 5, 2004, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB107844111452346991.html> (accessed April 19, 2010). The always controversial critic Ward Churchill refers to *Dances with Wolves* as "Lawrence of South Dakota" in his book, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2001), 239-242.

46. Martin W. Sandler, *Galloping Across the U.S.A.: Horses in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 8.

47. In another way, the name may call to mind the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican American War in 1848 and that ceded half a million square miles of Mexican land to the United States, which included parts of the current states of Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico, as well as all of present-day states of California, Nevada, and Utah.

48. Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 226.

49. Bill Wittliff, *Vaquero: Genesis of the Texas Cowboy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

50. Madsen, *American Exceptionalism*, 108.

51. The literature on the contested meanings of the Statue of Liberty is vast. For a representative overview, see Marvin Trachtenberg, *The Statue of Liberty* (New York: Penguin, 1976); John Bodnar, "Symbols and Servants: Immigrant American and the Limits of Public History," *The Journal of American History* 73 (June 1986): 137-151; Mike Wallace, "Hijacking History: Ronald Reagan and the Statue of Liberty," *Radical History Review* no. 37 (1987): 119-130; Barbara A. Babcock, "Taking Liberties, Writing from the Margins and Doing it with a Difference," *The Journal of American Folklore* 100 (October-December 1987): 390-411; and Wilton S. Dillon and Neil G. Kotler, eds., *The Statue of Liberty Revisited* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994).

52. Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Lady and the Huddled Masses: The Statue of Liberty as a Symbol of Immigration," in *The Statue of Liberty Revisited*, 39.

53. Barry Moreno, *The Statue of Liberty Encyclopedia* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 32.

54. Darcy Grimaldi Grigsby, "Out of Earth: Egypt's Statue of Liberty," in *Edges of Empire: Orientalism and Visual Culture*, ed. Jocelyn Hackforth-Jones and Mary Roberts (London: Wiley Blackwell, 2005), 44.

55. The quote from Ismail Pasha appears in Matthew Firestone, Rafael Wlodarski, Anthony Sattin, and Zora O'Neil, *Egypt* (Oakland, CA: Lonely Planet, 2008), 40. For a discussion of Egypt as contested geography, see Martin W. Lewis and Karen E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 115-119; and McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, 27-9. For a discussion of the Suez Canal history, see Eve Trout Powell, *A Different Shade of Colonialism: Egypt, Great Britain, and the Mastery of the Sudan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and P. J. Vatikiotis, *A History of Modern Egypt* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

56. Emad El-Din Aysha makes this point in his review of *Hidalgo*, 8.

57. Cawelti, *The Six-Gun Mystique Sequel*, 24.

58. Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14 and 47-67.

59. For Robinson's filmography, see http://www.superiorpics.com/zuleikha_robinson/ (accessed May 25, 2008) and <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0733196/filmography> (accessed May 25, 2008).

60. See www.dubyaspeak.com/repeatoffender.phtml?offense=cover (accessed May 16, 2008). For a discussion of the Bush administration's appropriation of feminism in the post-9/11 era, see Michaele L. Ferguson and Lori Jo Marso, eds., *W Stands for Women: How the George W. Bush Presidency Shaped a New Politics of Gender* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). Emad El-Din Aysha notes the confusion between *hijab* and *naqib* in his review of *Hidalgo*.

61. Ella Shohat, *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*, 11, 39. Mohja Kahf points out that the rescue fantasy can be traced back to the Middle Ages in European representations of Islam in *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

62. Richard Goldstein is quoted in Michaele L. Ferguson and Lori J. Marso, "Introduction: Feminism, Gender, and Security in the Bush Presidency," in *W is for Women*, 3.

63. El-Din Aysha, "*Hidalgo*."

64. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*

66. For a discussion of anti-modern modernism, see T. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Anti-modernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (New York: Pantheon, 1981). For more on modernists as melancholic writers, see Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 3-4.

67. Stanley Corkin, *Cowboys as Cold Warriors*, 3.

68. See supporting material published in Hopkins, *Hidalgo and Other Stories*. For analyses of the historical function of Westerns as well as the interplay between history, ideology, and narrative in the genre, see the essays in Janet Walker, ed., *Westerns: Films Through History* (New York: Routledge, 2001). Although I point out problems in treating the source material for *Hidalgo* as an authoritative historical document, I also agree with William R. Handley and Nathaniel Lewis that efforts focusing solely on exposing myths of the West replay the larger (and futile) search for authenticity that structures regional discourse. For more on this topic, see William R. Handley and Nathaniel Lewis, "Introduction," in *True West: Authenticity and the American West*, ed. William R. Handley and Nathaniel Lewis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 1-20.