

<sup>11</sup>Jack Forbes. *Education of the Culturally Different: A Multi-Cultural Approach*. (San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1969) 51.

## Critique

Perhaps the most valuable contribution that Professors Bataille's and Silet's treatise makes is to connect the images of the American Indian in movies with antecedent images. The scope of their investigation predates Columbus, includes critical American historical imagery production, takes the reader to the very beginnings of the movie industry, and brings us up-to-date on the effects of the "Great Society" outfalls for both image and employment of American Indians in the screen entertainment establishment.

The two modes of exploitation presented as primary, economic and psychic, are solid assumptions on which the article revolves because each is operationally defined to include other dimensions of the human experience, for example, the political and artistic. The text is replete with specifics that contribute to understanding and sustaining interest. For example, the discussion of the idea of "wilderness" is accurate, complete, and continues to be pivotal in American affairs. The idea of the "noble savage" is valuable information not only in the context of this paper, but because of events in South America, the Philippines, and elsewhere as culturally-different peoples are being confronted by the Western industrial world. A discussion of the place of half-bloods reveals that there was never even the hint of a "New American" as there was for a time in Brazil when the mixing of Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans was to lead to a "New Brazilian," better in all ways to the progenitors.

A specific that harkens back to Phineas T. Barnum's adage that "a sucker is born every minute," was the merchandising of medicines and potions because they were "genuine" Indian remedies. The current fad of "natural" is simply that magnified electronically.

Aside from one gratuitous reference to "free" enterprise, a modern ideological phrase, Professors Bataille and Silet have produced a terse, well-documented, and accurate work. It could well be used as a guide to illustrate the treatment of any group in any media by any conquering or dominant people in attempts to cope with its unease in

trying to justify its behavior, past and present.

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## Critique

James Joyce once said that history is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake. This article by Gretchen Bataille and Charles Silet is part of our collective process of awakening. The first portion of this article recounts the psychological and economic consequences to the conquest and domination of American Indians by more recent immigrants from Europe, Africa, and Asia. However, one need not dwell upon the history or the tragic unpleasantness of these post-Columbian events. Instead, the focus here is on present blurry eyed attempts to live in and cope with a multicultural, twentieth century North American society.

The American film industry reflects, consciously and unconsciously, the dynamic, often ambiguous, often contradictory society of which it is a part. Thus, in its own way, Hollywood struggles to cope with the American Indian as part of North America's past and present. Films may be offensive, exploitative, or inaccurate; but the illusions produced for audience entertainment also mirror society. Although the Hollywooden Indian is not authentic and may be insulting, the Hollywooden Indian image is a genuine cultural artifact of the North American experience—good or bad, right or wrong.

The Hollywooden Indian is both real and unreal. This image is "real" in the same sense that the Hollywood Westerns are real. These historical fiction films, like the dime novels before them, represent a synthesis of popular history, a confused nightmare of wagon trains, of gunfighters, and of cowboys and Indians. These myths about ourselves and about nineteenth century western history represent the realities of neither the "cowboys" nor the "Indians." Of course, many modern, real working cowboys in the American West today are Indians. Many more participate in rodeos and in the rural cowboy culture generally. The Hollywooden Indian is an illusion as are the backlot scenery and the false front buildings behind them. Myth builders *use history* rather than write it just as magicians defy physics and common sense.