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Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum

Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott & Eric Aoki

Museums, memorials, and other historic places are key sites in the construction of collective memory and national identity. The Plains Indian Museum in Cody, Wyoming is one such space of memory where the (pre)history of "America" and its native peoples is told. Based on the view of texts as experiential landscapes, it is argued that this museum works to absolve Anglo-visitors of the social guilt regarding Western conquest through a rhetoric of reverence. This rhetorical mode invites visitors to adopt a respectful, but distanced observational gaze. A concluding section assesses the social and political consequences of memorializing in this mode.

Keywords: Plains Indian Museum; Collective Memory; Material Rhetoric; Experiential Landscape; Interpretive Eye/I; Reverence

In 1836, the history painter George Catlin embarked on his final journey westward to paint North American Indians in their natural, unspoiled settings. Catlin, who was concerned that the "noble," albeit "uncivilized," Plains Indians were a "vanishing race" soon to be lost to history and to the march of progress, had dedicated his adult life to documenting their customs, ceremonies, and everyday life in his paintings.[1] "His mission," writes western art critic Brian Dippie, "was to preserve a visual record of the western tribes before civilization came calling and ruined them forever."[2] In his lifetime, Catlin traveled more widely in North America than any other artist, generating more than 500 paintings. Today, his self-titled "Catlin's Indian Gallery" is

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regarded as one of the most important "pictorial representations of Indian life made in the era before photography."[3]

Catlin's desire to preserve the rich culture and history of the Plains Indian—to, in his words, "champion" and "speak well" of a people "who have no means of speaking for themselves"[4]—was not without its pitfalls, however. In "speaking for" the Plains Indian, Catlin's art reflected a European bias, fusing classicism and romanticism. In his field notes, Catlin wrote, "The native grace—simplicity, and dignity of these natural people so much resemble the ancient marbles, that one is irresistibly led to believe that the Grecian Sculptors had similar models to study from."[5] More than a century and a half since Catlin undertook his final western expedition, his paintings now seem to embody the crass stereotype of the "noble savage." And though this perspective has fallen out of favor, Catlin's preservationist desire is felt no less strongly.

The role of preserving the past played by history painting in the nineteenth century is today played largely by history museums.[6] In museums throughout the West, Indian artifacts are collected and displayed in an effort to preserve "the story of the survival of the Plains people and their most important traditions."[7] Among the most significant of these sites is the Plains Indian Museum (PIM) located at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming.[8] The PIM is an especially intriguing and important space of memory, but not simply because it houses "one of the country's largest and finest collections of Plains Indian art and artifacts."[9] The PIM is an exemplar of contemporary museal practices, practices principled on a "humanities perspective" and multicultural sensibility.[10] Beginning in 1994, the PIM underwent a multi-year, multi-million dollar renovation and "reinterpretation" process, whose aim was to "position the Center as one of the leaders in the museum field in educating the public about Native peoples of the Great Plains."[11] To achieve this goal, the PIM Advisory Board insisted that "whenever possible the voices of the Plains artists, historians, educators, traditionalists and leaders . . . guide the interpretive process."[12]

Completed in June of 2000, the renovated PIM is a technological marvel, complete with interactive touch screens, automated audio recordings, wall-sized video displays, and fully immersive, living environments. With the aid of "interactive and experimental exhibits," the design team sought to avoid the cultural biases of the past and to allow the Plains Indian people to speak for themselves.[13] The purpose of this essay is not to judge the success or failure of that attempt in any simplistic sense, but to begin to identify the implications of activating memory in such a space. What, for instance, are the contours and consequences of memorializing a premodern culture using postmodern technologies and modes of representation? To answer this question, we begin the essay by exploring *how* visitors experience (i.e., "read") the symbolic and material dimensions of spaces such as museums.

Based on the idea of text as experiential landscape, we argue that the PIM works to absolve Anglo-visitors of the social guilt regarding Western conquest through a rhetoric of *reverence*.[14] Reverence exercises a double articulation, evoking both a profound sense of respect and a distanced, observational gaze. This unique double

articulation, which combines the ideologies of admiration and difference, performs the symbolic function of transcendence.[15] The social guilt associated with the violent colonization of the West is assuaged by a discourse of reverence, which erects a new social hierarchy in which respect for and celebration of difference becomes the valued social virtue.[16] As visitors move through the PIM, they avoid (even forget) the sins of colonization by participating in a discourse of reverence—a discourse that celebrates the Other without identifying with it. In a concluding section of the essay, we consider the social and political implications of memorializing in this mode.

Locating the Interpretive Eye/I: Landscapes of Looking

As official and institutionalized cultural expressions, public museums, memorials, and other historical sites play a crucial role in the construction and maintenance of national mythologies, histories, and identities.[17] Recognizing that appeals to a shared sense of the past as well as to collective identities are rhetorical in character,[18] communication scholars have increasingly begun studying specific sites of memory.[19] Attending to the rhetorical dimensions of such sites poses some unique challenges, however. As Armada observes, it entails analyzing "forms of expression not typically examined by scholars of rhetoric."[20] In particular, it requires paying attention to rhetoric's materiality as well as its symbolicity.[21] Museums engage visitors not only on a symbolic level through the practices of collection, exhibition, and display,[22] but also on a material level by locating visitors' bodies in particular spaces.[23] As such, we advocate viewing "texts" such as museums as experiential landscapes; this perspective is based on three interlocking principles.

First, museums and memorials are better conceptualized and treated as diffuse texts than as discrete texts. "A discrete text is," according to Barry Brummett, "one with clear boundaries in time and space. A diffuse text is one with a perimeter that is not so clear, one that is mixed up with other signs."[24] Whereas traditional objects of rhetorical study such as public speeches have relatively clear beginnings and endings, historical and cultural sites are part of the texture of larger landscapes.[25] The experience of museums and memorials does not begin at their entrances. Visitors must travel to these sites, which are often surrounded by other historical or tourist sites. It is typical, then, for visitors to occupy many sites in the broader context of a family vacation or school fieldtrip. The experiences and meanings of the larger landscape (and of attendant sites) spill over into specific sites.[26] To approach a museum as a discrete text, as one clearly delineated by the structures offered by the designers, reduces the critic's task to decoding the meanings intended by the designers. This mode ignores how visitors experience, understand, and use actual spaces. It also relies on what Meaghan Morris calls the "conventional humanist model of verbal communication," which assumes that designers' intentions can be communicated clearly and unproblematically to audiences.[27]

Second, in addition to being part of a larger physical landscape, historical and cultural sites are also part of a larger cognitive landscape, which is sometimes referred to as a "dreamscape."[28] According to Gaynor Kavanagh, "When we walk through or

around a museum [and its surrounding landscape] we weave both our bodies and our minds through these spaces"—these "dream spaces."[29] In other words, experience of a particular place comprises not just the tangible materials available in that place, but also the full range of memorized images that persons bring with them. The city, notes Victor Burgin, "in *our actual experience* is at the same time an actually existing physical environment, and a city in a novel, a film, a photograph, a city seen on television, a city in a comic strip, a city in a pie chart, and so on."[30] Similarly, the PIM is part of a "western dreamscape" comprising memory images from western art, tourist guidebooks, poetry, and cinematic representations of the West.[31] Just as importantly, the PIM is part of a dreamscape of the 400-year history of non-Native American representations of the continent's indigenous people. From the use of feathers and war paint by the rebels in the Boston Tea Party to New Age communes, "playing Indian" and the creation and dissemination of images of "Indians" are central to US American identity.[32] Like the physical landscape, the dreamscape proffers a set of intertextual relations or "codes" that structure the practices that occur in a space.[33] This principle suggests the need to investigate spaces of memory as intersections of both physical and cognitive landscapes, or what we term *experiential landscapes*.

Third, experiential landscapes invite visitors to assume (to occupy) particular subject positions. These subject positions, in turn, literally shape perceptions;[34] that is, they entail certain ways of looking and exclude others. In John Dorst's words, experiential landscapes create "optical regimes," which he defines as, "the particular historical constellation of components, both material and intangible, through which human visual experience becomes organized at a given moment."[35] Just as oral discourses interpellate individuals as concrete subjects, experiential landscapes hail bodies, interpellating them as concrete subjects.[36] Subjectivity requires precise bodily coordinates, for as Lefebvre notes, "the body is both point of departure and destination."[37] In recognizing and acknowledging the hail, the body locates itself in time and space, and the subject comes to perceive the world.[38] Experiential landscapes, then, offer fully embodied subject positions that direct particular ways of looking.[39] These subject positions suggest the appropriate interpretive eye/I within a landscape.[40]

Our critical analyses of the PIM are guided by these three interconnected principles: that spaces of memory are better thought of as constitutive elements of landscapes than as discrete texts, that landscapes entail both physical and cognitive dimensions, and that such landscapes offer fully embodied subject positions, which literally shape visitors' practices of looking. An investigation of the PIM suggests that the larger landscape consists minimally of the western landscape (including Wyoming, Yellowstone National Park, and their construction in collective imagination) and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (including the five attendant museums). As we illustrate, the PIM both draws on and contributes to the discourses of this larger landscape. All of this reinforces a rhetoric of reverence—a rhetoric that invites visitors to respect and even celebrate Plains Indian culture and traditions, but

without asking them to consider the social and political implications of Western conquest.

Wyoming as Experiential Landscape

Cody, Wyoming is not a particularly easy place to get to. Located in the far northwest corner of the state just east of Yellowstone National Park, Cody is nearly 150 miles from the nearest interstate highway. As the *Cody Country* visitor's guide notes, "Nowhere else in the country is such an important museum located in such a remote location."[41] While the town of 8,000 does have a small, local airport, the vast majority of the 250,000 annual visitors to the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (BBHC) and the PIM travel there by automobile. Since US Route 20, which passes directly through Cody, is the only road into Yellowstone from the East, most visitors to the BBHC are either traveling to or departing from Yellowstone National Park when they visit the PIM.[42] To understand visitors' experiences of the museum, then, it is vital that we first explore the rhetorical codes of the surrounding landscape and the practices of looking they invite.

A visit to the PIM necessitates travel through "the West." The American West is both a material, geographic region and a textual construction—a set of memory images in the collective national imagination.[43] Geographically, the West is, of course, diverse and expansive, stretching North/South from Montana to Texas and East/West from the plains to the Pacific coast. For the purposes of this study, we limit our analysis to the experiential landscape of Wyoming, which is frequently constructed in popular culture as "the real American West."[44] Two essential features mark the Wyoming landscape, spacious plains and spectacular natural wonders.[45] In this section, we explore these features and the ways in which they invite visitors to adopt a reverent eye/I.

Wyoming, as with the West more generally, is often viewed as a landscape of absence[46]—a barren, uninterrupted, untrammeled, and wide-open space.[47] Covering 97,914 square miles, Wyoming is the ninth largest state in the US. But the striking absence of trees, vegetation, water, and people (Wyoming has the smallest population of any state) makes it *appear* even more immense. Spaciousness is a familiar trope of the western landscape in classic Westerns such as *Stagecoach* (1939), *My Darling Clementine* (1946), *Gunfight at the OK Corral* (1957), and *High Plains Drifter* (1973), all of which begin with wide-angle panoramic views of a seemingly endless landscape.[48] Hence, many visitors to the West are prepared to *view* the landscape through a particular lens. They are ready to feel dwarfed by the "sensation of endless space," ready to be awe-struck by its sheer immensity.[49] Vast and empty, the landscape invites a feeling of isolation[50] and awe that, according to one Wyoming guidebook, "sets the spirit soaring."[51] It also reinforces stereotypical images of the people who live and have lived on this wild and untamed land—images of ruggedness, hardness, and individuality.[52]

In the western third of the state, Wyoming's wide-open spaces are abruptly and dramatically met by the snowcapped Rocky Mountains. This region of the state is

home to the country's first and most famous National Park, Yellowstone. "Over three thousand square miles of unparalleled beauty," Yellowstone National Park is, according to one guidebook, the "most spectacular of all the natural features of Wyoming."[53] To enter Yellowstone from the East, visitors must travel along US Route 20 through Shoshone Canyon and Forest, the country's first National Forest.[54] Once in the park, visitors are treated to a visual array of natural wonders—"an embarrassment of riches."[55] "With 10,000 hot springs and two-thirds of all the geysers in the world, to say nothing of bubbling paint spots, thundering waterfalls, and petrified forests, Yellowstone inspires awe."[56] The rhetoric of awe used to describe Yellowstone has a history much older than guidebooks, however. From the survey photographs of Carleton Watkins to the landscape paintings of Thomas Moran and Albert Bierstadt,[57] the language of the sublime, which induces feelings of awe, was applied early to Yellowstone.[58] Thus, park guidebooks as well as historical and popular discourses about the West prepare visitors to see this landscape as a sublime natural space.

Sublimity mixes awe with sacredness, inviting both wonder and veneration. In traveling to Cody and to the PIM, then, visitors are embedded in an experiential landscape of immensity and sublimity. Both are humbling; one is humbling in scope and size; the other is humbling in awe-inspiring beauty. These "natural" spaces, in their overwhelming vastness and splendor, position visitors to *look* in particular ways. They construct a reverent eye/I, for it is precisely the "sense that there is something larger than a human being, accompanied by capacities for awe, respect" that defines the virtue of reverence.[59] By the time one arrives at the PIM, one has been trained to look reverently—to look with respect from a distance.

The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum

The PIM is one of five museums that comprise the BBHC. Entering the Center, visitors find themselves in a tall, spacious, and light-filled atrium. The entrances to the five museums are all off of this atrium. Moving from left to right, visitors can enter the Draper Museum of Natural History, which narrates the productive relation between humans and the natural resources of the West; the Buffalo Bill Museum, which extols the individualism and heroism of the American cowboy; the PIM; the Whitney Gallery of Western Art, which features a world class collection of art by Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, and others; and the Cody Firearms Museum, which artistically displays firearms from nearly every period in history. This description is misleading, however, as only four of these museums—the Draper Museum of Natural History, the Buffalo Bill Museum, the Whitney Gallery of Western Art, and the Cody Firearms Museum—have their entrances immediately off the atrium. These four museums are plainly visible from the atrium and present images and artifacts to draw in visitors.

The PIM is located differently, however. When standing in the center of the BBHC, it is impossible to see the PIM. Rather, visitors must proceed down a long hallway that physically and visually separates the museum dedicated to Plains Indians from

the rest of the "Center." And so, in this atrium, there already exists crucial rules for reading the PIM. The Plains Indian people are, at once, celebrated in their own museum and distanced by a long hallway. The spatial relation among the atrium, the other museums, and the PIM combines the conflicted logics of reverence. The presence of a special museum dedicated to "Plains Indian cultures, traditions and contemporary lives" fosters an attitude of respect, admiration, and appreciation.[60] But the location of the PIM in its own building, separate from the quite literally Anglo-centered museums immediately off the atrium invites a sense of distance. Through our analysis, we illustrate that this sense of distance operates along the axes of culture, nature, and history. When understood within the larger landscape, the visitor is encouraged to embody an anthropological, technological, and amnesiatic mode of looking that sees the Plains Indians as culturally, naturally, and historically distant—as Other. These modes of looking reassure the visitor that while the Plains Indian is to be revered, such reverence will not also disrupt the stable and centered identity of White US Americans.

Cultural Distance and Anthropological Looking

The Wyoming landscape positions the visitor as a passive observer of a sublime and awe-inspiring nature. The PIM draws on but revises this subjectivity, inviting visitors to become anthropologists—the professionals who specialize in studying, understanding, and explaining Others.[61] This subject position is offered before visitors ever enter the museum.[62] As visitors traverse the passageway, they come to embody an anthropological way of looking. The special claim of anthropology is to travel to other parts of the world, investigate the Others there, and bring the knowledge back home.[63] The passageway works analogously by having visitors "journey" to the PIM. In its physical relation to the rest of the BBHC, the PIM works to situate Plains Indian experience as the distant and distinct Other of US national memory and identity. This Other serves as the margin necessary for centering "White" American identity. Even before entering the museum itself, the visitor is led through spatial, visual, and embodied rhetorics to an understanding that Plains Indian culture is peripheral to the meaning of the "West" and, in turn, to "America."

Prepared by their passage through the hallway to the museum, visitors are already imagining the PIM as distinctly different from the other museums. Their expectations are not disappointed. The visitor arrives in the museum to discover a technologically and visually sophisticated space that embeds one in an all-encompassing experience. The use of light, sound, interactive displays, and explanatory material makes the museum the most engrossing space in the BBHC. Lighting and sound are crucial to creating the experience of the museum. The lighting of the space is low and warm, and indeed the PIM is the darkest of the BBHC's five museums. The flooring is dark, the high and open ceiling is painted black, and the ambient lighting is low. In contrast with this generalized darkness, streams of bright light focus on specific displays, drawing the attention of the visitor to the highlighted foreground. At the same time, the larger darkness hides the rest of the museum, its visitors, and displays. This

effectively reduces the experience to the individual visitor (i.e., isolated anthropologist) and to a visitor's interaction with the (high)lighted display. This reduction is also an intensification of experience. By visually limiting distractions, the museum intensifies the visual force of each element a visitor encounters.

The second crucial element in engaging visitors is the use of sound. Upon entering the museum, visitors can hear the sound of recorded voices at a low murmur. At each of the major displays (with the exception of the wall display that details the nineteenth century), native voices provide oral histories of the elements on display. At the teepee immediately to the right of the entrance, for instance, a woman's voice describes the traditional home, explaining the basic and clearly differentiated gender roles of Plains Indian families. Similarly, in a display regarding Plains Indian migration, voices explain the importance and difficulties of migration.[64] In another display concerning buffalo, men's voices detail the rituals of the buffalo hunt and the sacred stories that tell of the relationship between humans and buffalo. The disembodied voices emanating from the displays function to create the appearance of direct evidence about the traditional life of Plains Indians. These recorded voices, unintelligible from a distance, draw visitors into close contact with the displays. Taken together, the lighting and the sound foster an intimate, but "foreign" experience.

The museum constructs a world that is culturally distinct from the world inhabited by most visitors. This sense of difference manifests itself in a number of ways. The dwellings represented bear little resemblance to contemporary homes or architecture. The domestic, hunting, and clothing artifacts displayed appear "primitive" and consist of "natural" materials. Even more important, the accent of the voices in the recordings sounds foreign, while the ways of life and religious myths that the voices narrate feel historically distant. Thus, the PIM locates Plains Indians in a radically different place and time. This difference, however, is framed as one that can be understood and studied using the tools of anthropology. The narratives, with their native voices, play a central role in creating the anthropological positioning. As visitors listen to the voices, they become ethnographers interacting with an interlocutor. The stories the interlocutor tells reveal to the visitor/anthropologist the intricacies of lost traditions.

As visitors gaze into the museum's first teepee, for instance, a woman's voice describes the roles of women in the home. The voice details the practices of cooking, cleaning, childcare, and everyday life that occurred in this domestic space. The teepee is a familiar image in popular culture; so, most visitors immediately recognize it as a symbol of "Plains Indian" life. Seeing an actual teepee—its naturalistic setting, sand-like floor, and casual arrangement of domestic utensils—reinforces an anthropological mode of looking. The ubiquity of teepees in the collective imagination affirms the exhibit's "authenticity," while the "accented" voice invites visitors to imagine they are gathering first-hand knowledge about Plains Indians. Visitors who arrive at this exhibit having previously toured the Buffalo Bill Museum (BBM) may bring with them an additional understanding of the teepee—one based on the images of teepees in films of Buffalo Bill's Wild West arena show. In these short films, which play

continuously in the BBM, the teepee serves to signify an uncivilized Other. In an all-too-familiar scene, Indians kidnap a white woman, and Buffalo Bill must ride into the Indian village to rescue her. To the extent that the teepee in the PIM activates this memory image, it potentially contributes to the image of a "savage" Other. But even if this memory is not at play, the space invites visitors to listen to and gaze upon the Other as an object of knowledge.

This anthropological vision is reinforced when visitors move from the teepee to the display cases along the wall. Here, the site looks most like a traditional museum. Artifacts representative of the culture are displayed behind glass. These artifacts are named and interpreted. This interpretation emphasizes anthropological vision, as the main interpretative tool looks like an anthropologist's notes. To the right of each wall-mounted display is a book with laminated pages. The visitor can turn through this book and read about the items on display. All the design elements—the arrows, writing, illustrations, and layout—appear to be created by hand. The apparent spontaneity of the notes emphasizes that an observer created these notes as part of a research project whose purpose is to understand and explain native life. The title page of each book tells the visitor that these are "curator notes" for the displays. This would suggest that reading the notebooks as part of an anthropological vision is incorrect. However, the curator and the anthropologist work hand in hand. The curator, using the knowledge and materials of the anthropologist, designs the museum displays for the public. Both curator and anthropologist are professionals at interpreting the "exotic."

Most important is that these notes invite the visitor to identify with the anthropologist or the curator instead of with the culture under examination. In flipping the pages and reading the notes, the visitor is asked to become the professional analyst. Notes are not the explanation itself, but rather present the data from which the analyst produces the final explanation. These books augment the voices and the artifacts. As visitors turn the pages, they engage additional parts of themselves. They touch the pages and move them, reading the information on the pages. They shift their attention to the display cases to which the pages refer, moving eyes and bodies. The interpellation of the visitor in this space is not only a mental operation. It also engages the body, shifts its attention, and does its work visually, aurally, and haptically.

Visitors are invited to generate their own knowledge of distant Others from the notes in the books, the artifacts on display, and the voices in the recordings. This knowledge allows the visitor to gain a reverential appreciation of the past and its Others, all the while maintaining a nuanced distance from those studied. Creating and maintaining US national identity demands an acknowledgment and a concurrent denial of our colonizing past.[65] The presence of Plains Indians is acknowledged—even celebrated—in the museum, but is done so from an almost insurmountable distance. The museum invites the visitor first and foremost to identify with (even become) the scientist and the curator. Identifying with the professional (read: White) analyst helps the visitor keep the native Other at a distance and thereby hold the tragedy of colonization at a distance as well.

Further, by making Plains Indians into Others whose way of life is so clearly premodern in belief and practice, the "colonizing" of the West is refigured as the "civilizing" of the West and Plains Indians. While the museum never makes this argument explicitly, this civilizing discourse remains at least an option for visitors. In her critical analysis of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, Victoria Gallagher argues that that museum uses a rhetoric of progress to mute the contestatory potential of representations of civil rights.[66] The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is not the only museum to use this discourse. In his magisterial analysis of memory in US American culture, Michael Kammen argues that the ideology of progress underlies much of the struggle with memory in this country.[67] What is more, the discourse of progress articulates with the larger discourse of manifest destiny, a discourse that underlies the Buffalo Bill Museum.[68] In short, visitors are primed to fill in the narrative gaps in the PIM with a rhetoric of progress. As we argue below, the museum does little to disrupt the predisposition to read the history of Plains Indians through the lens of progress. In fact, the rhetoric of progress is most strongly reinforced by the consistent depiction of Plains Indians as a "simple people," tied to the land and embedded in the rhythms of nature.

Natural Distance and Technological Looking

Visitors are already conditioned by the arduous journey that brought them to Cody and by their sojourns through the sublime landscape of Yellowstone to imagine their journey through the PIM as one that will engage them in the mysteries of a natural people. Likewise, as visitors move from the atrium through the sunlit hallway to the PIM, they can see (on both the left and the right) sculptures of Native Americans situated within gardens of grass, shrubs, and trees. Beyond the sculptures, the rising, empty slopes of the Rockies visually associate Plains Indians with a rugged, untamed western landscape. Large, glass doors on both sides of the passage allow visitors to enter the gardens and relax in the "natural" surroundings. Nowhere else in the BBHC—not even in the Draper Natural History Museum—is the outside landscape as visible or accessible as it is during the passageway to the PIM.

While the representations of Plains Indians embedded in nature abound in the PIM, the rhetoric is perhaps most explicit in the ultra-high-tech, multi-media "Seasons of Life Gallery" that dominates the apex of the museum. Visitors can enter on either the left or the right of this three-level gallery. They are surrounded by images of Plains Indian life, but the most arresting vision lies before them. In the center of the display is a teepee like that which has already been interpreted for them; on the right are two female figures engaged in domestic activities; on the left, a man crouches on the cliffs above the teepee. He appears to be hunting. The wall behind this scene is lit to suggest the last remnants of sunlight as day falls into night. Opposite the display is a horse and rider, perhaps returning from hunting or gathering, or perhaps finishing a migratory journey—both narratives already told in the other galleries of the museum.

Running on a continuous loop is a multi-media presentation composed of slides, video, and voiceover. The visuals are projected onto the wall behind the teepee and rock formations. During the presentation, lights brighten and dim on particular elements of the display as the narrative highlights aspects of the Plains Indian life. The narrative formally moves visitors through the "seasons of life" as experienced by Plains Indians before the arrival of Euro-Americans. It connects Plains Indian life to that of nature, explaining the different activities that people engaged in during the different seasons—hunting, gathering, preserving, migrating, playing, learning domestic crafts, engaging in vision quests, and the like.[69] Structurally, the multi-media presentation embeds Plains Indians not only into nature but also into cyclical time. Randall Lake argues that there are fundamental differences in Native American and Euro-American conceptualizations of time.[70] While many Native American cultures assert that time is cyclical like the seasons, Euro-American culture emphasizes that time is linear and, more particularly, progressive. This display privileges cyclical time, emphasizing Native American visions of history. In material ways, this display attempts to tell the stories of Plains Indians from a Native American perspective.

Yet the narrative itself undermines the cyclical time as an adequate theory of history. Indeed, as winter approaches, the lights in the gallery dim, and the images on the wall turn to snow and ice, the narrative obliquely refers to the invasion of the West by Euro-Americans. A woman's voice intones, "We were not prepared for the tribulation to come. We thought we would be on the land forever." This language is rich in rhetorical implications. The coming of Euro-Americans to the West is named as a "tribulation," euphemizing the violence and conflict that will mark the encounters between Plains Indians and Euro-Americans. Further, the narrative points to the competition between linear and cyclical time in which cyclical time ("we thought we would be on the land forever") is overrun by linear time. Thus, while the gallery privileges cyclical time in explaining Plains Indian culture *before* the coming of Euro-Americans, it also emphasizes the inevitability of Euro-American invasion of the West. The gallery enacts the discourse of the vanishing red man analyzed by Lake. He writes,

> to a degree, the theme of the vanishing red man, like its cousin the noble savage, romanticizes native people and martyrs them to Euramerican greed and racism. Yet, the portrayal of their inevitable doom almost absolves whites of culpability, fixing blame instead on the inexorable march of abstract forces like "progress."[71]

Embedding Plains Indians in nature, then, is not a simple claim that Plains Indians are *closer* to nature than are Euro-Americans. Instead, it positions Plains Indians as distinctly Other than Euro-Americans. Plains Indians are "natural," caught up in cyclical seasons over which they have no control. Euro-Americans, by contrast, are "cultured," "civilized," embedded in a progressive history—a progressiveness that is inexorable and will necessarily overrun the "naturalness" of Plains Indians and at the same time is controlled by human actors. The inexorability of history's progress is crucial, for it absolves Euro-Americans of guilt over the violence done to Plains

Indians. The controlled progressiveness is crucial for it is on this ground that Euro-Americans can claim civilization for their own and, again, justify the violence of conquest.

This discourse is further reinforced in an exhibit of the low, river homes typical of the Plains Indians living along the Missouri River in the twentieth century. While sitting around a fake, but convincing fire, visitors watch and listen to a video and slide presentation digitally embedded in the home's walls that informs them about the loss of tradition and culture caused by the building of a dam on the Missouri.[72] Although the dam radically disrupted agriculture and fishing, the narrative informs visitors that despite this challenge, Plains Indians have not been and cannot be eradicated. "We've always been here," a voice says, "we'll always be here." The appeal to cyclical time in the narrative suggests that Plains Indians will survive even as their ways of being are destroyed by the technological needs of modernity. Even in the face of tribulation (read: progress), Plains Indians will endure, for as the voice continues, "this is our land." This assertion of survival functions to mitigate the guilt of Euro-Americans by assuring visitors that progress has not resulted in eradication. In asserting survival through connection to the land, the narrative creates a false sense of triumphalism.

That the Plains Indians' relationship with nature and cyclical time is represented through postmodern visual technologies is central to this exhibit's rhetorical force. The same technology that preserves and promotes visitors' reverential respect for Plains Indian culture is also directly opposed to that culture. The destruction of the Plains Indian relationship with nature came at the hands of Euro-Americans and their technology (an argument made most explicitly in The Cody Firearms Museum). At the same time, these technologies are offered as the best way to preserve and (re)present that which has been lost. The technology of the presentation itself, then, serves as further proof of Euro-American superiority and distance from these "natural" people of the Plains.

Historical Distance and Amnesiatic Looking

The passageway from the Buffalo Bill Historical Center to the PIM, which works to foster cultural distance, also enacts a rhetoric of historical distance. As visitors travel through the passageway, they also travel experientially through time, ultimately arriving at the museum's entrance. Once there, visitors confront a large wall, stenciled with a black-and-white photographic montage of Plains Indian warriors astride horses, stampeding buffalo, a wood framed house, and a small inset of text and color pictures of contemporary Plains Indians. The composition of the montage situates the *past* of the Plains Indians as more dramatic and compelling than the *present* of the "People of the Plains." With its explicit emphasis on the past, one might expect the museum also to acknowledge the violence of that past. And, indeed, it is acknowledged in various places throughout the museum. In the exhibits on the buffalo and on native ceremonies, there is an implicit recognition of conquest through a discourse of recovery. Contemporary powwows (like the one held each year

at the BBHC) are represented within the PIM as ways of recovering traditions nearly lost to colonization. Likewise, images of recent buffalo hunts serve as a connection to the nearly lost tradition of buffalo hunting that was central to Plains Indian life and culture.

But perhaps the most transparent place in which the violence of conquest is simultaneously acknowledged and denied is in the least interesting, least compelling exhibit in the museum. The exhibit is euphemistically titled "Encounters." It is simply a long wall with a time line covering the nineteenth century. This is the only direct representation of the century—the one most deeply damaging to Plains Indians. This is also the only exhibit without multi-media, without interactive displays, without an attempt to create realistic settings, without the Plains Indian voices to tell the story. Every effort is made to make this one exhibit *un*interesting. Using print and uninspired displays of artifacts, the wall (re)presents the history of conquest during the long nineteenth-century. The flat, beige wall outlines historical events, including the killing of the buffalo, the coming of the missionaries with their message of God's saving grace and their small pox, the boarding schools to which Plains Indian children were sent and in which they were beaten for speaking their native languages. And here is noted the battle of Wounded Knee—the battle that symbolically and materially ended nineteenth-century Plains Indian resistance to Euro-American conquest.

At last, this shameful story is summarized. Yet, it is told in the visual, aural, and material equivalent of a passive voice. Take, for instance, the rifle displayed at the very beginning of the wall. The placard tells us that the rifle is not special. Instead, it is typical of the weapons used in the West. Further, it is the sort of weapon used by both Euro-Americans and Plains Indians. The placard acknowledges, though grudgingly, that it is also the sort of weapon that helped the US Cavalry defeat Plains Indians again and again, though it does so by naming the rifle as the weapon of choice in the "Plains wars." If visitors come to this exhibit in the PIM having toured the Cody Firearms Museum first, then the rifle may not be read as a "weapon" at all. In that museum, guns are arrayed in elaborate artistic patterns and celebrated as aesthetic objects. "Awe and admiration are," according to Tompkins, "the attitudes the [Cody Firearms] museum invites."[73] Perhaps most important visually, however, is that the long "Encounters" wall is confined to a narrow space. As such, it is impossible to see the whole wall at once, limiting the ability of visitors to fully grasp the horrors of those hundred years. The visual design of the display ineffectually narrates the conquest.

The wall is particularly tedious when viewed in the context of the technological sophistication of the rest of the PIM. The reverential relation between visitors and Plains Indians in the rest of the museum is created through stirring narratives, told in "native" voice, with moving images, all embedded within fully embodied displays. At this wall, however, no voices engage the visitor, and no touch-screen displays beckon; there are no books to read and no movies to watch. This wall works hard to *not* interrupt the reverence the PIM has fostered in every other exhibit. Visitors are invited by the absence of technological sophistication to disengage from this

(non)exhibit; and, in ignoring this exhibit, visitors may also ignore the history told here. By providing the barest acknowledgement of conquest in the least interesting way, the wall privileges forgetting over remembering.

The exhibit seems all the less significant within the larger landscape of looking created by the BBHC, with its great western art (including the landscape paintings of Albert Bierstadt and Thomas Moran), its artistic gun displays, its colorful representation of Buffalo Bill Cody, and its engaging display of western natural history. Finally, looking at the wall through the eyes of those who have just traveled to Cody from the sublimity of Yellowstone National Park, the wall is almost nonsensical. The narrative, visual, aural, and haptic force of the rest of the landscape undermines the likelihood of this exhibit compellingly conveying the pain and loss of the nineteenth century. The wall is not so much a gesture toward memory as it is an amnesiatic mode of looking—a mode that is often central to political reconciliation.[74]

This amnesia intersects with the larger discourses about the internal colonization of the US continent. Colonization within the boundaries of its territories allowed the US to represent its "expansionist motives . . . as essential to nation-building, denying the imperial."[75] This nation-building impulse was justified, in part, by the rhetoric of manifest destiny, which claimed that Westward expansion was not simply necessary for political or economic reasons, but was instead a moral or even religious duty of the nation.[76] Colonization figured in this way carried with it difficult contradictions. Anderson and Domosh argue that "the experiences of colonizing internally brings to the fore . . . contradictions inherent in national identities forged from positioning the colonized as both them and us; and from national identities requiring an imagined past, place and people, and yet denying that place and people a presence."[77]

Creating and maintaining US national identity depends on creating stories that negotiate contradictions, "stories that deny and assert the presence and significance of internal 'others'."[78] These narrative contradictions about US colonization of native peoples intersect with larger issues of national memory. Some individuals want to forget the past, and in particular those parts that are painful and self-indicting. Others want to remember the past, and in particular those parts that contest dominant discourses of the nation.[79] The PIM is fraught with these contradictions, which it "resolves" through a rhetoric of reverence. In celebrating the culture and life of the Plains Indian, the museum demonstrates respect and appreciation for a fragile past. But through its telling of the story, the museum downplays the violent conquest of the nineteenth century and ignores the ongoing struggles of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In forgetting these histories, the museum (re)constructs a Plains Indian culture useful to the creation of a complacent national identity.

The PIM and National Memory

The PIM presents a prehistory of and for White US America. Nations depend upon such histories to ground national identity. Internal colonization, however, makes this history particularly difficult to tell. On the one hand, Plains Indians' tenure on the

land is longer than that of the invading Euro-Americans and can therefore provide a deep historical grounding for the nation. On the other hand, the history of conflict is one that, when measured by contemporary standards, is shameful. The PIM negotiates this tension through a reverential rhetoric. It preserves and celebrates Plains Indian culture by invoking conceptualizations of time, nature, culture, social relations, and cosmologies that are profoundly different from that of many visitors. In this sense, the museum provides the nation a deep history.

But while the museum recounts the rich culture of premodern Plains Indians, it absolves Euro-Americans of the violence of conquest. The museum creates a space of memory in which distant Plains Indian history and culture are placed on view, honored, and valued. It provides this deep past as a part of what it means to be "American." This is a past that does not contradict the present; nor does it serve as a critique of US American national identity. Instead, it narrates a "mythical," nostalgic past. According to Renato Rosaldo, agents of colonization often yearn "for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed."[80] "Imperialist nostalgia," he adds, "uses a pose of 'innocent yearning' both to capture people's imagination and to conceal its complicity with often brutal domination."[81] As Euro-Americans celebrate this deep past, they are cleansed of their sins for the immediate past and present. In celebrating the distant past of Others, Euro-Americans can avoid present-day racism and forget the ways the nation is built on the very oppressions it constantly denies. This combined and conflicted sense of both respect and distance is realized most fully in the reverent eye/I.

Our critical analysis of the PIM does not simply rest, however, on an investigation of the space as a discrete and bounded text. Instead, we have suggested that the PIM is meaningful as one of the constitutive elements of a larger landscape. This landscape includes, but is not limited to, the vast Western landscape, the sublime natural spaces of Yellowstone National Park, the visual and material rhetorics of the BBHC as a whole, as well as discourses of national identity and colonization. Visitors, themselves crucial elements in the landscape, arrive at the PIM having already experienced some, if not all, of these elements of the landscape. The PIM, we suggest, is not separate or separable from these elements. Nor are these elements simply the "context" that surrounds the "text" that is the museum. Rather, the museum's boundaries blend with the rest of the landscape, and the rest of the landscape is constituted, in part, by this museum. This landscape creates embodied subject positions that entail particular modes of looking. The emphasis in the museum on anthropological, technological, and amnesiatic looking encode Euro-American values as the grounding for positive national identity.

Our understanding of the PIM and, we would suggest, other visual and material rhetorical sites/sights depends on our localizing the analysis in the particularities of the landscape. The PIM itself, were it located in Los Angeles or Denver, would not be completely different; but the differences in the experiential landscapes visitors bring to the museum significantly alter their experience of the space. Indeed, the PIM and the BBHC draw much of their rhetorical force from their placement within its particular landscape. It would be simply inadequate to try to think of the

meaningfulness of the PIM as bounded by its doors, bordered by its walls, and determined by its artifacts. As rhetorical and cultural critics, we must increasingly attend to the experiential landscapes in which all discourses occur.

Notes

[1] Quoted in Robert J. Moore, *Native Americans: The Art and Travels of Charles Bird King, George Catlin and Karl Bodmer* (Edison, NJ: Chartwell Books, 2002), 125.

[2] Brian W. Dippie, "The Visual West," in *The Oxford History of the American West*, ed. Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press), 682.

[3] Moore, *Native Americans*, 8.

[4] Quoted in Moore, *Native Americans*, 147.

[5] Quoted in Dippie, "The Visual West," 685.

[6] Museums have not always been viewed as protectors of history. In France in the nineteenth century, for instance, early museums were accused of threatening history rather than preserving it because they removed artifacts from their original, "living" contexts and promoted passive modes of observation. Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories: History, Technology, Art* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 1. By the turn of the twentieth century, however, museums were increasingly understood as "educational institutions with important and far-reaching social roles." See Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 2. Historical and cultural preservation is now considered to be among a museum's most important social roles. See Bernard J. Armada, "Memorial Agon: An Interpretive Tour of the National Civil Rights Museum," *Southern Communication Journal* 63 (1998): 235; Susan A. Crane, "Of Museums and Memory," in *Museums and Memory*, ed. Susan A. Crane (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 3–5; Tamar Katriel, "Sites of Memory: Discourses of the Past in Israeli Pioneering Settlement Museums," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80 (1994): 1; and Gaynor Kavanagh, "Making Histories, Making Memories," in *Making Histories in Museums*, ed. Gaynor Kavanagh (New York: Leicester University Press, 1996), 1–3. Indeed, social scientific research suggests that history museums are considered by the American public to be the most trustworthy source of history, ranking above conversation with witnesses, college history professors, high school teachers, and non-fiction books. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 21.

[7] *Treasures From Our West* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1992), 34.

[8] The Buffalo Bill Historical Center is a non-profit organization whose funding comes from three main sources: admission fees, endowments/grants, and donations. The central mission of the Center according to Marketing Assistant Josie Hedderman is to "educate the public by advancing knowledge about the American West through acquiring, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting collections" (Josie Hedderman, E-mail interview, 8 March 2004). For an historical account of the Buffalo Bill Historical Center, see Richard A. Bartlett, *From Cody to the World: The First Seventy-Five Years of the Buffalo Bill Memorial Association* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1992).

[9] *Visitor's Guide: Buffalo Bill Historical Center* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2000).

[10] According to museum curators, "Most visitors to the Plains Indian Museum come with little or no knowledge about Plains Indian cultures; if anything, they come with familiar and erroneous stereotypes of American Indians." See *Plains Indian Museum Buffalo Bill Historical Center: A Reinterpretation* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 2002), 5. While the

original 1979 installation did little to challenge these views, the "reinterpretation" represents a "major shift in interpretive focus by providing a significantly greater humanities interpretation" (*Plains Indian Museum,* 7).

[11] *Plains Indian Museum*, 5.

[12] *Plains Indian Museum*, 9. The PIM advisory board consisted of Arthur Amiotte (Lakota), Custer, South Dakota; Silas S. Cathcart, Lake Forest, Illinois; Mrs. Henry H. R. Coe, Cody, Wyoming; Dr. Michael D. Coe, New Haven, Connecticut; Robert D. Coe, II, Cody, Wyoming; Garrett E. Goggles (Northern Arapaho), Fort Washakie, Wyoming; Joe Medicine Crow (Crow), Lodge Grass, Montana; Lloyd K. New (Cherokee), Santa Fe, New Mexico; Harold Ramser, Jr., Murrieta, California; Kenneth Ryan (Assiniboine), Box Elder, Montana; Harriet Stuart Spencer, Long Lake, Minnesota; Abraham Spotted Elk (Northern Cheyenne), Ethete, Wyoming; Darwin J. St. Clair (Shoshone), Fort Washakie, Wyoming; Curly Bear Wagner (Blackfeet), Browning, Montana; Margo Grant Walsh (Chippewa), New York, New York.

[13] *Plains Indian Museum*, 9.

[14] Recognizing that "interpretation is always contingent upon . . . the audience," we have limited our critical claim to the experience of Anglo-visitors. See Helene A. Shugart, "Reinventing Privilege: The New (Gay) Man in Contemporary Popular Media," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 20 (2003): 68; see also Stanley E. Fish, "Interpreting the *Variorum*," *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism,* ed. Jane P. Tompkins (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1980), 182. While it would certainly be interesting and informative to know how American Indians understand the PIM, our concern in this study is with how the museum addresses Anglo-visitors. Located as it is in a state that, according to the US Census Bureau, is 92.1 percent "White," the PIM is a key site in constructing memory of Western settlement in the "White imagination." Although the BBHC maintains geographic data about visitors to the museum, they do not maintain specific demographics regarding ethnicity (Hedderman, E-mail interview).

[15] According to Kenneth Burke, human beings can (symbolically) address guilt in one of three ways—mortification, victimage, or transcendence. The first two ways stress punishment of either the self (through atonement) or someone else (through scapegoating). Transcendence, by contrast, is a strategy of avoidance, in which public discourse (such as a museum) shifts the "terms" of a conflict or debate, erecting a new, nobler social hierarchy. In the new hierarchy, the guilt-producing actions are no longer sources of guilt. Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History,* 3rd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 80–105.

[16] The guilt to which we are referring is, in many cases, deeply repressed. We see its return in the "imperialist nostalgia" about which Renato Rosaldo writes. See Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1989), 69. Laurie Anne Whitt argues that the marketing of Native American spirituality in particular serves to assuage this Anglo American guilt for destroying the life world of Native Americans. See Laurie Anne Whitt, "Cultural Imperialism and the Marketing of Native America," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 19 (1995): 7. Richard Drinnon asserts that the making of US American identity depends on metaphysics of Indian hating, a metaphysics that the PIM attempts to ignore through its rhetoric of transcendence. See Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), 463–64. Philip Deloria argues that the violence against Indians so central to US American identity continues to influence "a long night of American dreams." See Philip Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 191.

[17] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991); John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 3–15; John R. Gillis, "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship," *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis

(Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 9–11, 16–17; Liza Nicholas, "Wyoming as America: Celebrations, A Museum, and Yale," *American Quarterly* 54 (2002): 448–49; and James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 1–15.

[18] See Stephen H. Browne, "Reading Public Memory in Daniel Webster's *Plymouth Rock* Oration," *Western Journal of Communication* 57 (1993): 464; Stephen H. Browne, "Remembering Crispus Attucks: Race, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Commemoration," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 85 (1999): 169; M. Lane Bruner, *Strategies of Remembrance: The Rhetorical Dimensions of National Identity Construction* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002); and Marouf Hasian, Jr. and Robert E. Frank, "Rhetoric, History, and Collective Memory: Decoding the Goldhagen Debates," *Western Journal of Communication* 63 (1999): 98.

[19] See Armada, "Memorial Agon," 235–43; Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," *Rhetorical Bodies,* ed. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999); Carole Blair, Marsha Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263–88; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Commemorating in the Theme Park Zone: Reading the Astronauts Memorial," *At the Intersection: Cultural Studies and Rhetorical Studies*, ed. Thomas Rosteck (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 29–83; Greg Dickinson, "Memories for Sale: Nostalgia and the Construction of Identity in Old Pasadena," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83 (1997): 1–27; Marouf Hasian, Jr., "Remembering and Forgetting the 'Final Solution': A Rhetorical Pilgrimage through the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 21 (2004): 64–92; Victoria J. Gallagher, "Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2 (1999): 303–20; Victoria J. Gallagher, "Remembering Together: Rhetorical Integration and the Case of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial," *Southern Communication Journal* 60 (1995): 109–19; and Tamar Katriel, "Sites of Memory," 1–20.

[20] Armada, "Memorial Agon," 235.

[21] Blair, "Contemporary," 18.

[22] See Crane, "Of Museums and Memory," 5; Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation*, 3.

[23] Carole Blair, "Reflections on Criticism and Bodies: Parables from Public Places," *Western Journal of Communication* 65 (2001): 274–78.

[24] Barry Brummett, *Rhetoric in Popular Culture* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 80.

[25] Henri Lefebvre, *The Social Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1991), 222, writes: "A spatial work (monument or architectural project) attains a complexity fundamentally different from the complexity of a text, whether prose or poetry. As I pointed out earlier, what we are concerned with here is not texts but texture. We already know that a texture is made up of a usually rather large space covered by networks or webs; monuments constitute the strong points, nexuses, or anchors of such webs. The actions of social practice are expressible but not explicable through discourse; they are, precisely, acted—and not read. A monumental work, like a musical one, does not have a 'signified' (or 'signifieds'); rather, it has a horizon of meaning: a specific or indefinite multiplicity of meanings, a shifting hierarchy in which now one, now another meaning comes momentarily to the fore, by means of—and for the sake of—a particular action."

[26] Blair and Michel, "Commemorating," 58–59.

[27] Meaghan Morris, "Things to Do with Shopping Centres," *Grafts: Feminist Cultural Criticism,* ed. Susan Sheridan (New York: Verso, 1988), 224, no. 17.

[28] Blair and Michel, "Commemorating," 58.

[29] Kavanagh, "Making Histories," 4, 3.

[30] Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces: Places and Memory in Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 28.

[31] William Deverell, "Fighting Words: The Significance of the American West in the History of the United States," *A New Significance: Re-Envisioning the History of the American West*, ed. Clyde A. Milner II, Allan G. Boque, and Clyde A. Milner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 37.

[32] Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 4–7. The literature on non-Native American uses of images of Indianness is vast. See, for example, S. Elizabeth Bird "Introduction: Constructing the Indian, 1830s–1990s," *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture*, ed. S. Elizabeth Bird (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 1–12; Martin Barker and Roger Sabin, *The Lasting of the Mohicans: History of an American Myth* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1995); Drinnon, *Facing West*; Rennard Strickland, *Tonto's Revenge: Reflections on American Indian Culture and Policy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 17–45, 63–75.

[33] See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1984), 82–90; Morris, "Things," 206.

[34] Blair and Michel, "Commemorating," 67, 71.

[35] John Darwin Dorst, *Looking West* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 96.

[36] Maurice Charland, "Constitutive Rhetoric: The Case of the '*Peuple Québécois*'," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987): 138.

[37] Lefebvre, *The Social Production*, 194.

[38] Ian Buchanan, "Heterophenomenology, or de Certeau's Theory of Space," *Social Semiotics* 6 (1996): 126.

[39] Dorst, *Looking West*, 167.

[40] Our locution eye/I is meant to maintain the relationship between seeing and subjectivity, location and identity. We are arguing that subjectivities are constituted in part by perspective, that is to say by angles of view created through the subject's position in the landscape. This is simply an extension of W. J. T. Mitchell's argument that human subjectivity is "constituted by both language and imaging" (W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation,* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995], 4). Also see, Burgin, *In/Different Spaces,* 226; James Elkins, *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing* (New York: Harcourt, 1996), 11–12.

[41] "Buffalo Bill Historical Center: Five Museums in One," *Cody Country: Gateway to Yellowstone Park* (Cody, WY: Cody Enterprise, 2003), 4.

[42] *Buffalo Bill Museum* (Cody, WY: Buffalo Bill Historical Center, 1995), 4.

[43] Dorst, *Looking West*, 97.

[44] "A Glimpse of the Real West," *Explore Cody,* 24 May 2003: Advertising Section 1,4; See also Nicholas, "Wyoming," 437–65.

[45] "The beauties of Wyoming are largely scenic. . . . The essential and specific beauty of Wyoming, then, is one of open spaces culminating in mountain ranges. . . . There are not many places in Wyoming from which you can't see a mountain. . . . From most of the mountains, in turn, you get expansive views of the plains or wide valleys" (Nathaniel Burt, *Compass American Guides: Wyoming*, 4th ed. [New York: Fodor's Travel Publications, 2002], 15–6).

[46] Jane Tompkins, *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 71.

[47] Burt, *Compass*, 16; Candy Moulton, *Roadside History of Wyoming* (Missoula, MT: Mountain Press, 1995), 1; Robert W. Righter, "A Mosaic of Different Environments," *A New Significance: Re-envisioning the History of the American West,* ed. Clyde A. Milner II, Allan G. Boque, and Clyde A. Milner (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 127; William M.

Savage, Jr., *The Cowboy Hero: His Image in American History and Culture* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), 61.

[48] Tompkins, *West of Everything*, 69–70.

[49] Moulton, *Roadside*, 1.

[50] Savage, *The Cowboy*, 61.

[51] Burt, *Compass*, 16.

[52] Popular images (i.e., literature, art, cinema, and tourist books) of a vast and barren western landscape have played a central role in constructing the heroic image of the American cowboy. See Anne Butler, "Selling the Popular Myth," *The Oxford History of the American West,* ed. Clyde A. Milner II, Carol A. O'Connor, and Martha A. Sandweiss (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 790; Moulton, *Roadside*, 1; Janice Hocker Rushing, "The Rhetoric of the American Western Myth," *Communication Monographs* 50 (1983): 15; Savage, *The Cowboy*, 61–2; Tompkins, *West of Everything*, 71–3).

[53] Craig Sodaro and Randy Adams, *Frontier Spirit: The Story of Wyoming,* Revised and updated (Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 1996), 3.

[54] Traveling up the canyon, explains another travel guide, "it would be hard to exaggerate the effect of the pinnacles, especially when seen against an intense, blue Wyoming sky" (Burt, *Compass*, 195).

[55] Burt, *Compass*, 196.

[56] Jerry Camarillo Dunn, Jr., *The Smithsonian Guides to Historic America: The Rocky Mountain States*, Revised and updated (New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang, 1998), 225.

[57] Albert Bierstadt "gave Americans a western Eden just a little grander than reality. Miniature bear, deer, and Indians cavorted in the foreground while behind them, glimmer-glass lakes, shafts of light, and silver threads of plunging water carried the eye up peaks that soared to extravagant, cloud-piercing heights. He made unspoiled western nature his equivalent of [George] Catlin's unspoiled western natives" (Dippie, "The Visual West," 689).

[58] See Kevin Michael DeLuca and Anne Teresa Demo, "Imagining Nature: Watkins, Yosemite, and the Birth of Environmentalism," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17 (2000): 254; See also Dorst, *Looking West*, 101.

[59] Paul Woodruff, *Reverence: Renewing a Forgotten Virtue* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 63.

[60] Plains Indian Museum, 9.

[61] Micaela di Leonardo, *Exotics at Home: Anthropologies, Others, American Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 8.

[62] Vine Deloria, writing about the relationship between American Indians and anthropologists writes: "Into each life, it is said, some rain must fall. . . . But Indians have been cursed above all people. Indians have anthropologists". See Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: Avon, 1969), 87.

[63] di Leonardo, *Exotics*, 33–4.

[64] This migration display is set up in a sort of migratory pattern in the museum that leads the visitor from the display of the traditional house to the display honoring the hunting of the buffalo. Here, the voices start only when the visitor pauses under the speaker to view the display.

[65] Kay Anderson and Mona Domosh, "North American Spaces/Postcolonial Stories," *Cultural Geographies* 9 (2002): 125–29.

[66] Gallagher, "Memory," 314.

[67] Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 6.

[68] The discourse of progress underlies the rhetoric of at least two of the other museums in the BBHC, the Draper Natural History Museum and the Cody Firearms Museum.

[69] As is the case in other parts of the museum, the narrative and the visuals work to reinforce familiar gender stereotypes. Young men go on vision quests and hunt, while women teach

girls domestic arts that will make them desirable marriage partners. As contrast to the gender stereotypes motivated by the museum, the lived experiences and voices of Plains Indian women are far more complex. See, for example, the work of Joy Harjo, a member of the Creek (Muscogee) tribe. Joy Harjo, *How We Became Human: New and Selected Poems*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002); Joy Harjo, *The Spiral of Memory: Interviews*, ed. Laura Coltelli (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1996); Joy Harjo, *In Mad Love and War* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1990); Joy Harjo and Stephen Strom, *Secrets from the Center of the World* (Tucson: Sun Tracks and The University of Arizona Press, 1989).

[70] Randall Lake, "Between Myth and History: Enacting Time in Native American Protest Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 127.

[71] Lake, "Between Myth," 126. As Michael Kammen argues, this emphasis on progress is fundamental to American culture and is also crucial to understanding the contours of memory in the United States. Kammen further argues that discourses of progress are often also discourses of amnesia, or at least deeply selective memory. All pasts that conflict with the larger ideology of progress are shunted aside (Kammen, *Mystic Chords*, 13, 704).

[72] The fire is convincing enough that nearly all the visitors we observed approached it and held out their hands to determine whether or not it was giving off any heat. The fire is made compelling through a combination of technological devices. The wood looks partially burned, the light from the fire flickers realistically, and the river home is filled with soft, crackling sounds.

[73] Tompkins, *West of Everything*, 194.

[74] Kammen, *Mystic Chords,* 13.

[75] Anderson and Domosh, "North American," 126.

[76] John Belohlavek, "Race, Progress, and Destiny: Caleb Cushing and the Quest for American Empire," *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism*, ed. Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris (Arlington: University of Texas Press, 1997), 24.

[77] Anderson and Domosh, "North American," 126.

[78] Anderson and Domosh, "North American," 126.

[79] See Gallagher, "Memory," 307–8; See also Kammen, *Mystic Chords*, 704.

[80] Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*. 69.

[81] Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth*, 70.