People and Place: A Journey Through Film, Tourism, and Heritage

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People and Place: A Journey Through Film, Tourism, and Heritage

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

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Master of Arts

by

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Abstract

Old Tucson Studios is a theme park where film, tourism, and heritage all converge through the American Western genre. During national social change, Westerns increase in number to reflect national values and identity. Westerns that ally with landscapes and people are potentially the most powerful storytelling tool in mainstream media. My research shows that this paring of people and place creates a prevailing image in the audience’s memory. The results suggest that the current image of the West comes from films made between 1951-1970, despite there being newer Westerns. John Wayne and saguaro cactus are enduring images with historic, cultural, and pilgrimage-like importance. Through national identity/history/film, film-induced tourism, decolonization, and intersectionality. I explore the cycle of expectations between storytellers and the audience, the importance of building new Westerns for modern times, especially where audiences can experience it in person at Old Tucson Studios.
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Chapter One: Introduction

*Plenty of ways to say hello don’t involve words.*

- Merritt Weaver as Mary Agnes McNue in *Godless*, 2017

Every chapter of this paper opens with a Western film quote. I selected Westerns from 2005-2019 because recently released Westerns are incorporating more diverse characters and landscapes than their predecessors. Heroes are no longer limited to straight, White, men like John Wayne or Clint Eastwood. Landscapes stretch beyond the desert to show other regions of North America. In short, these Westerns are portraying a different and more diverse representation of Americans and America. Heroes and landscapes do not belong to one group, because everyone deserves to see their story and their background validated by the national, cultural collection that is the Western. These newer Westerns justify the relevancy of a genre that may seem racist, sexist, homophobic, and antiquated. Each quote is discussed and then linked to the greater content of the chapter, beginning with *Godless*.

*Godless* is the “gory but glorious” story of a community of women teaming together to protect their town from outlaws in 1884 New Mexico (Stuever 2017). Interestingly, Netflix released *Godless* the same year as the largest protest in American history: the 2017 Women’s March opposing the inauguration of America’s 45th president,
Donald Trump (Wrenn 2019). The Women’s March did not cause *Godless*, but they are a mirror of each other. This is because popular culture and political culture do not exist independently of each other in the United States. Westerns, like *Godless*, are a particularly reflective of the political state due to their connection to the American people and the land on which they live. To study the people and place through the Western, I traveled to Arizona.

The American Western film genre tries to answer these questions with every production. Through film, we try to better understand ourselves, the land, how we came together, and how much further we have to go.

Creeping colonization spread throughout Western North America, and that period is often romanticized in the Western genre. The Western time period typically begins in the 1850s and ends around the turn of the century (Woodard 2011; “Western | Narrative Genre” n.d.). The genre ranges only 50 years because the United States fought many nations in order to settle the West and then declared in 1890, “so many pockets of settled area that a frontier line could no longer be said to exist” (“Following the Frontier Line, 1790 to 1890” 2012). Therefore, the Spirit of the West, or the freedom and uncertainty, may have dissipated for certain Americans when the United States conquered the last of the land. The spirit and conflict live on in Western films, over 400 of which were filmed at Old Tucson Studios (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.).

Imagine America’s Southwestern desert: no visible water, critters play hide-and-seek with plants and rocks, dust hangs in the air, and the only thing perfectly adapted for this climate is a 12-foot tall saguaro cactus. The sun is rising over the mountain, but it has not yet heated
the land. There are no words, just a slow wind. It is a romanticized landscape that effortlessly evokes the classic imagery of a cowboy on his horse in the Old West.

The city of Tucson is home to the University of Arizona, and neighbors Saguaro National Park. A paved road through desert mountains leads from a bustling city to the wilderness in 20 minutes. This wilderness is home to the film-set-turned-theme-park Old Tucson Studios, “Where the spirit of the Old West comes alive” (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.).

What is the spirit of the Old West? Did it die? Did it only live in this one area? What draws people to a place that is literally trying to kill them?

My research is based in Arizona’s Old Tucson Studios, a full-sized film set built in 1939 to resemble a town in the American Southwest during western expansion (Lawton 2008). Old Tucson has been the backdrop for stars like John Wayne, Maureen O’Hara, Ronald Regan, Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, Marie Osmond, and Big Bird (Lawton 2008). The familiar buildings and landscape can be seen in films like Rio Bravo (1959), Gunfight at the OK Corral (1957), Bonanza (1966, 1971-72), A Star is Born (1976), Little House on the Prairie (1977-1983), Tombstone (1993), and The Three Amigos (1986) (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.). Opened to the public on January 29, 1960 as an attraction, Old Tucson effectively blurs the lines of reality and makebelieve as it contains real structures built for a fictitious purpose (Lawton 2008). Old Tucson provides entertainment and education; it holds heritage and possibility. Old Tucson incorporates elements of film-induced tourism and cultural tourism in order to attract their audience. Film-induced tourism is “visitation to sites where movies and television programs have
been filmed as well as tours to production studios, including film-related theme parks” (Beeton 2016). While culture are “never fixed, enclosed units or homogenous, integrated entities,” cultural tourism is a way to contain culture for outside visitation (Brunner 2005). I saw visitors from all over the world while I was onsite, and so these strategies are somewhat affective.

These kinds of tourism are potentially dangerous with their performances, especially since Old Tucson portrays the lives of individuals and groups, both living and passed on. Performances in cultural tourism can recreate “idealized colonial images and… manipulate the past to serve the expectations of the tourists and to perform… the stories already in place before they begin their sojourns” (Brunner 2005). Both film-induced and cultural tourism shaped the surveys, interview, and observations during my time at Old Tucson. Old Tucson also seems to be aware of the responsibility in that they host multiple events celebrating heritage. These groups could be Buffalo Soldiers, engineers, watercolor painters, Civil War reenactors, or the steampunk fandom, and they all find intersecting pathways at Old Tucson Studios.

**Defining Terms**

Certain term throughout this paper mean many things to many groups. For the purposes of this paper, I am defining the following terms as I understand them now for this paper.

Westerns: AMC (formerly American Movie Classic) defines Westerns as “a return to the bygone frontier: wide-open spaces, sturdy individualists, gunfighters, shoot-outs, larger-than-life good guys and bad guys, institutions such as the saloon (with bad girls),
horse chases, cattle, and lawmen” (S. Davis 2011). For this paper, there is flexibility than the restrictions associated with “guys,” “girls,” “horse,” and “cattle.” I also will emphasize Westerns that are made in western North America or by Americans.

Decolonization: When research and history are recorded by a singular, imperial group, it likely is missing key elements from the other groups present at the time. But rather than overcorrect and reject Western research and history, in this context, decolonization “is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” (L. T. Smith 2012).

White supremacy: The complete white supremist ideology is more dangerous than typical racism and bigotry because it is comprised of “1) whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; 2) whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; 3) white people have their own "culture" that is superior to other cultures; 4) white people are genetically superior to other people” (“White Supremacy” n.d.). It is unfounded, untrue, and deeply damaging.

Heteropatriarchy: Often linked with white supremacy in settler colonialism, the heteropatriarchy is “the social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural, and in which other configurations are perceived as abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 2013). Likewise, heteropaternalism is “the presumption that heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements, in which the father is both center and leader/boss, should serve as the
model for social arrangements of the state and its institutions” (Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill 2013). These systems limit and rank to the genders, ultimately harming everyone

Intangible heritage: The concept of intangible heritage is similar to culture; in that it is the ideas or non-physical parts of heritage. Common examples in literature include arts, skills, and customs (Ito 2003). There are cases of protecting atmospheric intangible heritage regarding light pollution, the sound of the wind, and water sacredness (King 2012; Civiltà dell’Acqu 2012). For this paper, I include landscapes and film as intangible heritage. Landscapes roll into each other and are too big for our minds to comprehend, but they hold a significant source of identity for people. Film is experienced through sight and sound and often consumed in a group setting, however, very little about film is physical to the viewer unless they visit the sets, props, costumes.

Staged Authenticity: True authenticity is often elusive and therefore hotly debated in academic research. This paper discusses tourism, which is an entire subgenre of the authenticity debate. Luckily, the term “staged authenticity” sufficiently defines the realness within cultural and film-induced tourism. Staged authenticity is the balance created by the tourism site between reality and predictability, and the audience accepts the necessary preparedness in order to receive the experience (Urry and Larsen 2011). For example, employees at Old Tucson wear costumes that are “real enough” to evoke the Wild West atmosphere, but retain modern conveniences like zippers. And regardless of the pure authenticity associated with a tourist location, the socially authentic production and experience “are worthy subjects of serious anthropological inquiry” (Buchmann, Moore, and Fisher 2010; Brunner 2005).
Pilgrimage: Though typically associated with religious travel, tourists use the term “pilgrimage” to describe their journey to a film location. Pilgrimage is a ritual, or traveling “with purpose, travel undertaken as an act of devotions to places considered by the community of believers to be holy” (Wheeler 1999). Pilgrimage is a community ritual celebrating movement to, from, and around a sacred place (Wheeler 1999).

Westerns Through Time

Culture and popular culture exist within communities, whether they be nations or fandoms. If we accept culture to be information, it can mean many things. We can narrow it down to “the set of ideas that dictate how you see and act in the world” (C. M. Smith and Davies 2008). Popular culture is something that is liked by many people, inferior work, work created to be liked by many people, or culture made by the people for themselves (Storey 2009). At some point, Westerns have fallen into each of these definitions for culture and popular culture.

“In 1959, there were 26 western shows on primetime US TV,” compared to the very few that air today (Bernstein 2018). In 1959, there was significant political unrest surrounding the civil rights movement, the second wave of feminism, the American Indian Movement, and the inevitability of the Vietnam War. What Hollywood made, and what audiences readily consumed, were the “uncomplicated stories of good guys triumphing against threats to civility” (Bernstein 2018). Westerns from the 1950s and 1960s remain popular, due in part to John Wayne’s career and the sheer number of Westerns produced during that time.
After the civil rights movement, the second wave of feminism, the American Indian Movement, and the Vietnam War, the United States had a dramatic shift in its sense of self, or its culture. All of these ideas challenged the cowboy hero archetype, and the Western genre declined in popularity.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a brief resurgence of Westerns appeared most likely due to Ronald Reagan’s presidency and the end of the Cold War. Reagan, was an actor in Westerns and is still a favorite President for conservatives in America (Broussard 2014). And though the Cold War ended, it “ended without a formal surrender, treaty, or celebration” (Fink 2016). Westerns may have helped Americans process that Reagan was leaving office, or that a war had ended without official conflict. Americans seemed to be entering a new age by returning to a comfortable age nestled within the Western.

More recently, filmmakers and audiences have been expanding Westerns to include a more holistic picture of America, and this is because communication changed entirely with the internet, especially with social media. Social media and the internet amplify many opinions on publicly accessible platforms. One study found that 69% of American believe that social media helps raise issues to their politicians, and 67% believe that social media is important for creating sustained movements for social change (Anderson et al. 2018). Marketing research groups specialize in gleaning information from social media for their clients, clients that produce and distribute movies and television ("Services | National Research Group '(NRG)' Entertainment Market Research" n.d.; "MarketCast” n.d.).
Stories and culture will continue to change with America throughout the years. Analyzing films and television within the context of national or international events provide clues for interpreting the art, especially art like the Western which is steeped in American history and values.

**Anthropology**

Anthropology’s four main subfields are physical anthropology, archaeology, cultural anthropology, and linguistics. This study falls under cultural anthropology because it studies a living culture. Culture is “the set of ideas that dictate how you see and act in the world,” but it is more specifically the information passed down for generations and guides behaviors more than instinct or reflexes (C. M. Smith and Davies 2008). I am specifically looking at Westerns as part of American popular culture. I am studying how these Westerns have dwelled, adapted, and conflicted with the greater American culture.

This study includes a museum that contains cultural artifacts. The artifacts belong to an American subculture, and they usually are not as old as they look. However, this does not negate that people come to the museum to see and interact with these artifacts.

Due to the nature of mainstream film, much of the cited source material is from entertainment magazines, social media, and other non-academic sources. Popular culture has been studied through the academic lens (Storey 2009; Parker 2011; “PCA/ACA | Popular Culture Association · American Culture Association” n.d.), and it is important to include sources from the culture itself, not just academics.
Research Questions

Research questions help to narrow the scope of the research, ensuring that the study accomplishes the original goals. These research questions shaped the literature reviewed, the survey design, and the results’ presentation. The primary questions I tried to answer are:

1) What role, if any, do American Western films play in establishing historical and geographical perceptions of Americans and their landscapes?
2) What attracts guests to Old Tucson year after year?
3) What insights from Old Tucson can be applied to museums and heritage sites communities struggling to increase guest visitation?
4) What constitutes a museum and/or a heritage site?

My secondary questions are:

1) What narrative or story is Old Tucson producing on an individual level to visitors to encourage repeat visitation?
2) Do visitors recognize and/or appreciate non-classical landscapes and storytelling in new American Western films?
3) Is there a story guests and employees want to see on screen and experience in the park, or what is the next step in American Westerns?
Chapter Summaries

To begin that exploration, Chapter One will outline this study. The chapter will define major concepts, explain where Westerns parallel American politics, state the study’s contribution to anthropology, and the research questions and main takeaways from this study.

Chapter Two provides my research questions and the background research on recurring elements throughout the paper such as storytelling, Westerns and the West, and Old Tucson itself. American politics will be explained through four films, each released at a different period in Western popularity.

Chapter Three holds the theoretical framework. The theories include national identity/history/film, film-induced tourism, decolonization, and intersectionality. These theories explain the cycle of expectations between storytellers and the audience, in the Western and at Old Tucson. The theories also explain how this cycle broke, given the shift in American values. Finally, I explain why it is important to continue breaking down that cyclic, classic Western, while building up a new model for modern times.

Chapter Four describes how I prepared and conducted research in the field. I describe my actions in detail and cite Media Research Methods (Bertrand and Hughes 2018) heavily in order for someone to recreate the study if necessary. I layout the design for a mixed methods study, and I present the questions I asked every participant. These survey and interview guides can also be found in the appendix. I also outline my standards for maintaining an ethical study. This research, while low risk, did employ rigorous methods to protect participants and present a fair conclusion.
Chapter Five contains the results of guest survey and employee interviews. Survey responses are presented in charts and maps, while interviews are presented in block text format. Both sets of results are enhanced with my observations, and there is an additional map representing the breadth of Old Tucson visitation from across North America.

Chapter Six explores the results within the surveys and interviews. Themes and literature are linked to the data. I restate the research questions along with their answers. The chapter offers ideas for future research related to this paper, and provides suggestions to Old Tucson Studios based on my findings, I also explain how Old Tucson is uniquely situated to explore heritage, and why the applied anthropological approach is important to the field.

Chapter Seven concludes the paper while incorporating current events into the timeliness of this research. Chapter Eight illustrates the importance of the Western and Old Tucson, and how their futures are absolutely vital to America and anthropology. This is because people and places are finding and claiming their representation in a genre that historically ignored or insulted them.

Key Points

By the end of this paper, I hope to have provided four, key thoughts for the reader. These conclusions are the most important part of this research: 1) Westerns reflect evolving, mainstream, American values; 2) American identity is in the people and their places; 3) Old Tucson’s audience doesn’t strongly identify with newer Westerns; and 4)
Old Tucson Studios is a uniquely designed location to explore American identity through the Western.

I created this project based on things I enjoy, but did not fully understand. My hope is that the reader will both enjoy and understand this blend of American film, tourism, and heritage, and why the Western is important for the next 100 years of filmmaking.
Chapter Two: Background

If someone like him is willing to die for someone like you, then you’re certainly not from around here, are you?

- Karina Lombard as Nonhelema in *Timeless*, 2016

NBC’s short-lived adventure *Timeless*, explored the glaring privilege of time traveling while White. Of the three main characters, the historian and soldier are White, and the pilot is Black. In season one, episode seven, entitled *Stranded* (2016), Shawnee warriors capture the trio during the American colonial period, and the pilot is assumed to be a slave. Nonhelema, a chief, frees the pilot but plans to execute the others until he pleads for their lives. Nonhelema is shocked and states the quote above.

At the time, I was shocked to see a non-Black character assume that enslaved people hated their enslavers. I specifically remember school teachers telling the class that slavery was not as bad as we might think, thereby minimizing the effects of slavery and dismissing the uncomfortable discussions necessary to remedy those effects. This show reminded me that despite what K-12 said, slavery is always, very bad. Similarly, this chapter presents knowledge that may challenge previous knowledge.

We are stories. Everything we do, everything we will do, and everything that could and could never happen lie within a story. I like when stories engage multiple senses,
hence, my first degree in digital filmmaking. My true passion is when a story engages all the senses as a form of entertainment. Companies can create places for tourists to visit the movies and participate with the story they already know. This chapter outlines why we need to increase diverse and decolonizing storytelling in mainstream media, what the Western genre means, and why I selected Old Tucson Studios as my research site.

This research is personal, and I will be using personal pronouns to describe my story because, “the inseparability of narrative and self is grounded in the phenomenological assumptions that entities are given meaning through being experiences and the notion that narrative is an essential resource in the struggle to bring experiences to conscious awareness” (Ochs and Capps 1996). This paper is my narrative, which is especially important in tourism. In tourism, the visitor experience is highly valuable data within the industry. Sue Beeton, a tourism professor, opens her book stating that anthropology’s development of autoethnography, though resisted by her area of academia, is the method that she applied successfully in her tourism studies. Thought this is not an autoethnography, it is my narrative. I am creating this thesis by picking through other stories and channeling them through myself. It would be disingenuous to pretend that I am objective and that my research is the version of this story.

The story I am telling is not a new one, but it is the first time that I am telling it. My hope is that with this thesis, I can encourage and defend the kind of stories we need on screen and in tourism.
**Storytelling, or #RepresentationMatters**

In *Decolonization is not a metaphor*, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang write, “settler colonialism has shaped schooling and educational research in the United States and other settler colonial nation-states,” and “decolonization has been superficially adopted into education and other social sciences” (Tuck and Yang 2012). Similarly, in film, we see settler colonialism narratives in the White Savior trope, and superficial tokenization when people of color are only seen in cast, but are not reflected in the crew or creative team.

In entertainment, decolonization begins with eliminating stereotyped characters. Patricia Hill Collins describes stereotypes as, “controlling images [that] are designed to make racism, sexism, poverty, and other forms of social injustice appear to be natural, normal, and inevitable parts of everyday life” (Hill Collins 2002). Examples of these stereotypes are the Magical Negro, the Latin Lover, the Noble Savage, and the Kung Fu Master. I am using gender neutral stereotypes for these examples, but these stereotypes are often strictly gendered into cis-male and cis-female characters. Magical Negros are racist because they lack agency and are written explicitly to support White characters achieve their plot goals (Jardim 2016). The Latin Lovers are racist and sexist because their “primal sexuality” is “insatiable and unrestrained,” and many characters are “irrevocably attracted” the Lover (Pérez 2012). The Noble Savage is “a mythic personification of natural goodness by a romantic glorification of savage life,” again robbing a group of their agency (Ellingson 2001). Kung Fu Masters are highly skilled protectors, but are also emasculated, asexual, and aggressive, often while tolerating racist actions or language (Zhu 2013; De Leon 2018). Seeing these and other racist stereotypes
in media normalize racism to the settler majority, but it also creates internal, psychological damage within the group being portrayed (Speight 2007; Hill Collins 2002; Jardim 2016). To decolonize entertainment, filmmakers are expanding their stories beyond where audiences expect people to live, when they are there, and what they are doing.

Current movements like #RepresentationMatters would indicate that I am not alone, and box office revenue would indicate that audiences support the shift in storytelling. We are in a pop cultural zeitgeist where in 2019 two superhero films starring characters of color won Oscars (Black Panther, 2019 and Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse, 2018), two superhero films starring women have surpassed box office records (Wonder Woman, 2017 and Captain Marvel, 2019), and Crazy Rich Asians (2018), a film boasting an entirely Asian cast, earned a Certified Fresh rating on Rotten Tomatoes and became the highest grossing, American, romantic comedy in nearly a decade (“The 91st Academy Awards | 2019, Winners & Nominees” 2019; Hughes 2017; Mendelson 2019; Fang 2018). The influence also includes more women and people of color directing, producing, and writing these successful films. Though fictional, “fiction often let us experience the lifelong journeys of people from the backgrounds and identity groups quite different from our own,” introducing us to what “we may not otherwise have the opportunity or inclination to encounter in our daily lives” (Kauffman and Libby 2012). Responsible and inclusive fiction is how we can begin to see, understand, and heal before moving into the deeper challenges of actual events. In this study, Westerns often blur between history and historically inspired, making them a perfect place to practice decolonizing storytelling.
A runaway example of decolonizing storytelling would be Lin-Manuel Miranda’s
*Hamilton*, a musical that, like many retellings, blurs the line between history and
historically inspired regarding the United States’ revolution and foundation in the
colonial era. In 2015, *Hamilton* premiered on Broadway winning 11 out of a record-
breaking 16 Tony nominations (Paulson 2016). Five years later the popularity continues
with five semi-permanent productions in three countries, two North American tours, and
a standalone exhibit (“Ham Exhibition” n.d.). Collins described the brilliance of
*Hamilton* by saying, “This is not just multiracial casting of the same old story… Instead,
what Lin-Manuel Miranda in *Hamilton* had the nerve to do was write a hip-hop opera
about the founding myth of America… you get this really different story about America
being an immigrant story. And being a multiethnic story and a multigendered story” (Hill
Collins 2017). *Hamilton* is grounded in New York City, referred to repeatedly as “the
greatest city in the world” (Miranda and McCarter 2016). By bringing familiar characters
into a known location, *Hamilton* brought the Revolutionary mythology to a ready
audience in 2015. As groundbreaking as *Hamilton* is, the show still expresses themes of
heteropatriarchy and White supremacy in that most characters are male, most speaking
lines are male, there is no Indigenous presence in the founding of the United States, and
only antagonistic, slave-owning characters are confronted for enslaving people.

Solange Knowles and Lil Nas X brought the Black cowboy into 2019 with their
music. Knowles’ album and music video *When I Get Home* illustrates her experience
with Houston architecture and culture. In an interview she said, “I did a fashion campaign
and I remember it was supposed to be about Americana and American Western culture,
and it was all White men. And I was like, ‘That don’t look like the cowboys that I grew up seeing in Houston, Texas.’ Like my uncles, and the thousands of men who get on horses from Houston to Louisiana and do trail rides” (Solange Knowles - Expressing a Sense of Belonging on “When I Get Home” | The Daily Show n.d.). Old Town Road by Lil Nas X challenged country music to include cowboys of color, leading Billboard to remove the popular single from the Country chart, trying to force established Black American identities out of country and into urban categories (Nittle 2019; Anonymous 2019). Popular films and music imply that cowboy equals White, though nearly 25% of cowboys were Black (Manzoor 2013), and today the Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo occurs in six cities nationwide annually to highlight and celebrate “Black Western Heritage and the significance of Black Cowboys and Cowgirls” (“BPIR | Celebrating Our 35th Anniversary” n.d.).

Hamilton, When I Get Home, and Old Town Road create little ecosystems of ideas. For a few minutes or a few hours, these stories exist for an audience as an experience. They exemplify diversity in Collins’ words, conscience and not convenience. Collins specifies conscience and convenience as the difference between allyship and exploitation (Hill Collins 2017). Allyship is when non-oppressed people dig into the struggles of their peers and risk similar discrimination, exploitation is borrowing their struggles for personal use without risking anything. It is not enough to cast a Black character, and writing a Black stereotype normalizes racism, classism, and other damaging ideas (Hill Collins 2002). The consequences of, “portraying African-American women as stereotypical mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, and hot mommas” are that these
widespread image “[help] justify U.S. Black women’s oppression” outside of the story’s world and into ours (Hill Collins 2002). Casting and writing characters with agency takes work, input, and discussion. The effort is necessary for musicals, music, film, and television to reflect our values as people intersecting in a physical place.

Audiences are smart and vocal. Convenience and exploitation face consequences on social media, with actress Scarlett Johansson as an example. Johansson was cast in *Ghost in the Shell* (2017) and *Rub & Tug*. *Ghost in the Shell* is a Japanese manga, and when accused of whitewashing the characters, the production company explained that they had done computer generated imaging (CGI) tests to make the character appear more Asian, which further exacerbates their racist actions (Berman 2017). *Rub & Tug*, based on historical events and people, cast Johansson as a known transgender man. This time, Johansson responded to social media protests by withdrawing from the film and apologizing in *Out*, an LGBTQ magazine (Hicklin 2018). Unfortunately, there are still comparatively fewer roles for Asian and transgender actors in mainstream Hollywood, and for Johansson, the highest paid actress of 2018 (Berg 2019), to accept roles she cannot physically or culturally understand, continues the erasure and ignorance of these people.

When mainstream work is reserved exclusively for White, cis actors, this is inaccurate to past, present, and future American stories. It suppresses the stories that are people, events, and identities.

Limiting stories to singular races is not inclusive, and we must recognize the settler-native-slave relationship and multi-racial groups. Settlers are the foreign people who
bring or allow slaves, and conquer natives. Natives are the people currently living where the settlers arrive, and the natives are forced to move off of their land to accommodate the settlers. Slaves are either forced or allowed into a country to do free or cheap labor with little to no opportunity for upward movement in the relationship. In settler-native-slave relationship, the settler holds most of the power. They can place certain minorities above others when they are more desirable, preventing them from attaining true equality as they fight to remain favorable (Tuck and Yang 2012). It is impossible for a native or a slave to attain true settler power, and whatever status a native or slave attains can be revoked. This dynamic is especially visible in Asian Americans, the “model minority” designed as a successful, unattainable standard for other minorities (Wu 2013; Nguyen 2020). However, Asian American success is not immune to racism as seen in Japanese internment camps and Coronavirus hate crimes (Tuck and Yang 2012; Wu 2013; Cheung, Feng, and Deng 2020; Rogin and Nawaz 2020; Mizes-Tan 2020). Decolonization is necessary because we live in a settler-native-slave state, where people are encouraged to tear down others based on their inherent differences. Decolonization also requires the settlers, the natives, and the slaves to join and change the narrative together.

In a settler-native-slave country, there will be generations of mixed-race descent. In 2000, the United States Census offered the option “two or more races” for the first time, and 6.8 million people identified as such (Jones and Bullock 2012). In 2010, 9 million identified with two or more racial backgrounds (Jones and Bullock 2012), and I think the 2020 Census is likely to show more growth of that population. Historically, the early 1700’s saw mixed-race decedents as a population majority in the present day Mexico and
the Southwestern United States, and White, Southern enslavers often impregnated enslaved women (Woodard 2011). These stories are suppressed due to white supremacy, white washing, and settler nativism. White supremacy suppressed mixed-race people by refusing to see them as equals; white washing removes the other races involved creating a false presentation; and settler nativism deflects complicated aspects of settler identity by claiming to have native lineage (Tuck and Yang 2012).

These suppressive acts complicate mixed-race people’s identities, and they are always balancing at least two cultures at any given time. Rena Ramirez writes about Julia Sanchez (a pseudonym), a woman living as a Native American and a Chicana in 1995. Sanchez details how she doesn’t belong entirely to the United States, Mexico, Aztlán, or her tribal community, physically or culturally (Ramirez 2002). She suffered prejudice from her mother’s and father’s families, and the overall racism from her community (Ramirez 2002). Her grandmother told her to only be Mexican because it was more desirable than being Indian, causing a deep shame in Sanchez’s identity as child (Ramirez 2002). Sanchez worked hard to recreate her sense of self for her and her children, and her story is not uncommon for the American West.

Poet and activist Gloria Anzaldúa described her complicated, Chicana identity as, “She has this fear/that she has no names/that she has many names/that she doesn’t know her names…She has this fear that if she digs into herself/she won’t find anyone/She has this fear that she won’t find the way back” (Alarcón 1990). To hold, care for, and reaffirm multiple intersecting identities can be frightening and exhausting, especially if one feels alone.
“Cultural citizenship includes the right for people to be different and still belong to the nation” (Ramirez 2002), and storytelling is a powerful tools for telling audiences that intersectionality is okay. Gene Roddenberry and Dr. Martin Luther King knew this power when they asked Nichelle Nichols to stay on *Star Trek* (1966-1969) after the first season (Martin 2011). Nichols’ character Lieutenant Commander Uhura is a leading officer on a starship in the 23rd century, and even though she is not a main character, her regular leadership role normalized a working, Black woman that was not one of the “mammies, matriarchs, welfare recipients, [or] hot mommas” (Martin 2011; Hill Collins 2002).

Roddenberry, King, Nichols, and other *Star Trek* creatives worked to create an image of the future within the science fiction genre. Nightly episodic adventures brought this image into American homes across the nation. The future is one place to present that image, but another is within the past.

**Westerns and the West**

Land is a primary character in Westerns. Land is part of the intangible idealism in the West. Western land spans from the plains to deserts to forests to mountains and to oceans. The land is either working with or against the human characters, and without land to ground the plot, the story would be completely different.

Borders are fluid and layered, and the West does not fall neatly into one set of states, countries, tribal nations, or natural landmarks. Instead, the West is more like a group of people with similar thoughts about the rest of North America (Woodard 2011). These thoughts can be traced through settler migration whether from eastern United States or
Colin Woodard studied and traced these migrations and beliefs onto a map of North America, which extends into Canada and Mexico (see fig 1). This paper focuses primarily on land labeled as El Norte and the Far West. Europeans first entered North America from the South in the late sixteenth century, bringing Catholic missionaries (Woodard 2011). The missionary sites harbored genocide against Indigenous populations, and Indigenous populations resisted and rebelled against the colonizing missionaries (Woodard 2011; Pico and Risling Baldy 2015). This tension, and the encroaching migration for the East, shaped El Norte into the complicated border situation that exists today. Unlike El Norte, the Far West was the last place to be colonized because people migrated over it for California’s gold rush (Woodard 2011). Railroad companies essentially lied to settlers by promising favorable environments for water-dependent
animals and crops familiar to Euro-American culture (Woodard 2011). Once stranded and unable to grow those animals or crops, the settlers were dependent on the railroad (Woodard 2011). The Far West is defined as the nation that works hard, resents the East, and wishes to be left alone (Woodard 2011).

These borders and American Nations are not permanent or tangible, but they are real and contain real histories. Apache place names are stories told in the present tense, grounding ancestral presence into the land, and “knowledge of places is therefore closely linked to knowledge of the self” (Basso 1996). Identifying with a place distinguishes it as a home, and due to colonialism, many of us identify the American West as home in different ways.

The presentation of American land is particularly important because of the way it and its peoples were colonized during expansion.

“Indigenous people across the world share a common experience—namely, intrusion on their lands and culture by an exterior, hostile outsider. Rape victims experience the same dynamic, but it is played out on their bodies and souls rather than on the land” (Deer 2015).

The way we treat land is directly proportionate to how we treat Indigenous peoples on the land. The land in Westerns is predominantly stolen (Marcellino 2018; Lewis 2017; L. T. Smith 2012), and the occupation of Indigenous lands should be addressed rather than ignored. This is because decolonization cannot happen if people do not know the extent of the colonization, which includes where we live and our preferred entertainment. Explaining decolonization through mainstream media, especially Westerns, is “one of the most important functions of narrative… to situate particular events against a larger
horizon of what we consider to be human” (Ochs and Capps 1996). Westerns have the potential to broadly reconceptualize Americans and America, and are already doing so.

For example, the titular location in *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) is a “free zone” (Todd 2009) where “setting a saga of same-sex love in the American wilderness both naturalizes and nationalizes it” (Kitses 2007). Another example is the subgenre called border Westerns or border cinema, where the film takes place between Mexico and the United States, in the El Norte nation according to Woodard’s map. Border Westerns are often complicated and dystopian because of the historical tension, but now asylum-seeking refugees are facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis at the United States Mexican border (Fojas 2011; “Border Crisis: CBP’s Response | U.S. Customs and Border Protection” n.d.). Stories like *The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada* (2005) and *No Country for Old Men* (2007) are tools to “[reimagine] the role of the United States… warning of one of the possible futures of the continued imperious course” of the United States (Fojas 2011).

While explaining the parallels between 2016 America in his *The Magnificent Seven* reboot, director Antoine Fuqua said, “The Western really tells you where the world is” (Bernstein 2018). Fuqua’s *The Magnificent Seven* presents a racially diverse group fighting a rich, land-grabbing villain. Movements like Occupy Wallstreet, the Dakota Access Pipeline protests, and Black Lives Matter suggests that this is an accurate, though fictional, reflection of current politics.

Unfortunately, the reflective genre has lost popularity in recent decades. Up to 140 Westerns were released annually between 1940-1960, but the 1990’s and 2000’s barely
saw 140 Westerns released for each decade (Gittell 2014). The Western was popular because of the “compelling nationalistic homages that communicated an under-standable and desirable interpretation of American social liberties and moral truths” (MacDonald 2009). However, these ideals changed significantly in the 1960’s-1970’s with the civil rights movement, second-wave feminism, the American Indian Movement (Clayton 2018; Buchanan 2018; Riches and Palmowski 2019). The Vietnam War saw unprecedented opposition from Americans recognizing the perpetually invasive colonial loop (Zimmerman 2017). Rather than fully embrace these audiences and address the harmful settler narrative, Westerns continued to portray damaging stereotypes until the genre significantly lost popularity. As a professor, film archivist, and historian wrote, the Western is dead “because it is no longer relevant or tasteful” (MacDonald 2009).

Fortunately, newer Western films and television shows seem to be restructuring their stories, casts, and landscapes to include a broader portrayal of Americans and America. The classic imagery of a John-Wayne-type character, on horseback, in the American Southwest in no longer the default option. This imagery is an incredibly limited view of what the land and people look like. The genre is not even limited to its own category as Westerns can be comedies (Blazing Saddles, 1974), science fiction (Westworld, 2016-), and horror (30 Days of Night, 2007). Westerns have the ability to embrace different people, feature different lands, and transcend the organizational schema that labels them as Westerns.

Since the land is an important character in American Westerns, I decided to conduct this study in a location that has been filming Westerns for 80 years. Generations of
families have visited the studio-turned-theme-park, including my own. It is a place that is much older than its 80 years, and yet, not as old as it would lead you to believe.

**Old Tucson Studios**

In 2018 while exploring graduate programs, I visited the 320-acre park 10 miles from Tucson (Lawton 2008). Old Tucson is separated from the city of Tucson by a small set of mountains, and therefore an immersive experience physically distanced from the current, Western world. Old Tucson is an example of film-induced tourism, locations featured in films and television that invite fans to visit. It has been compared to pilgrimages, seeing as guests are following in the footsteps of 80 years’ worth of Hollywood stars and family vacations. I am fascinated by fun, educational, theatre-like environments, also known as themed entertainment which can be applied to zoos, aquariums, theme parks, and museums.

Old Tucson self identifies as old. When scouting film locations for the film adaptation of *Arizona* (1940), Columbia Studios wanted to film in authentically in Tucson where the book takes place. However, Tucson in 1939 looked nothing like 1864 Tucson. Columbia Studios took an antique map, $2.3 million, 300 laborers, 180 carpenters, and 120 adobe brick makers to build an older version of Tucson in 40 days (Lawton 2008). Filming did not begin until 1940 because of World War II, but when *Arizona* premiered in November 1940 all of Tucson came out to celebrate the film (Lawton 2008). In 1960, Old Tucson opened to tourism with the business model that guests could play in the park, learn history, and observe filmmaking in progress (Lawton 2008). In 1995 an arsonist destroyed 40% of Old Tucson’s sets and storage (Lawton
2008). It took Old Tucson two years to rebuild the current portion since Americans were reevaluating themselves as a nation and the demand for Westerns was low (Lawton 2008).

The park layout (see fig 2) slightly resembles a spoke wheel, with major attractions sitting on the outer rim. This technique is designed to efficiently distribute crowds in theme parks (Zhang, Li, and Su 2017), but the buildings also serve to block unwanted sets from cameras while filming. For example, Town Hall is not necessarily visible from the Grand Palace, thus, a crew can film one without the other.

Main Street runs the length of the Old Tucson, featuring McLintock’s, Olsen’s Mercantile, Phoebe’s Sweet Shoppe, and The Last Outpost. These locations are significant because they are on the primary walking path, they are revenue generating, and they are named for some of Old Tucson’s most successful films. McLintock! (1963) stars John Wayne in a comedic retelling of William Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew (“BBC Two - McLintock!” n.d.). Olsen’s Mercantile is named for Nels and Harriet Oleson, the mercantile proprietors from Little House on the Prairie (1974-1983). Phoebe’s Sweet Shoppe welcome’s guests near the entrance, and is named for Jean Arthur’s character in Arizona (1940), the first film made at Old Tucson. The Last Outpost is Ronald Reagan’s 1951 civil war drama, and is also the gift shop guests exit through in order to leave the park. Big Jake (1971) is the John Wayne film that inspired Big Jake’s BBQ & More, but it was not filmed in Old Tucson (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.). All of these places are in strategically important locations for guests to purchase items, and they are named for important stories or characters from the past. This is significant because
the emotional connection to specific Westerns is rooted in monetary decisions, or Old Tucson’s food and merchandise locations.

Figure 2-2: Old Tucson Studios map (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.)
Figure 2-3: Old Tucson Studios sample schedule ("Old Tucson Studios" n.d.)
Old Tucson’s schedule can entertain guests from park open to park close with shows, education, and tours (see fig 3). The shows include a repeating short video recapping John Wayne’s career, a traveling salesman providing fictional elixir, an abbreviated theatrical performance of *September Gun* (1983), indoor singing and dancing performances, a comedic stunt show, and an original drama about a corrupt sheriff. Educational programs include presentations on professions in general stores, saloons, trail drives, and law. Three tours depart daily, and the tours provide context for the films created at Old Tucson. The tours include the history of Old Tucson Studios, provide a brief introduction to filmmaking, and align visitors with sets and scenes from specific films. All of these activities (excluding the repeating John Wayne video) flow from one event to the next without overlap, gently guiding guests through the park.

Guests can explore other places too. For example, a train circles the park traveling to places inaccessible on foot. There are burros for petting and horses for riding. Recently, Old Tucson added a zipline and an escape room as repeatable, revenue generating activities (Litto 2019; Brennan 2019). The zipline incorporates target shooting, and the escape room contains challenging puzzles. Old Tucson included these new activities guests to return and try to improve on their previous experience. Returning guests are important to tourism in order to sustain a business centered in leisure.

To begin understanding Old Tucson, we will need to understand museums, tourism, and why this old place means so many things to so many people. Generally, these categories fall under the heritage portion of my university’s anthropology concentration. Heritage is usually defined as a physical possession or information-as-
thing (H. Davis 2014), but Westerns and tourism, are more like information-as-knowledge or information-as-process (Buckland 1991). Museums traditionally combine information-as-thing with information-as-knowledge, or tangible heritage with intangible heritage, or artifacts with experience.

Museums

Museums, like Westerns, have a complicated, colonial history. In his book Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums, Michael Ames says, “what some call appropriation, others see as inspiration; while some view glass boxes as a form of cultural imprisonment, others see them as a way of preserving heritage for future generations” (Ames 1992). Here we see the eternal struggle decolonization and institutionalized colonialism. This makes museums and film a prime and fair platform for criticism and discussion, “attempting to locate them... within their social, political, and economic context” (Ames 1992). Ultimately, I believe that a museum’s purpose is to educate the public through its collections: Old Tucson curates both historical and cinematic collections in the forms of buildings and memorabilia. Ongoing discussions in the museum world “really concern what kind of society we wish to live in, how much diversity a society can tolerate and how much uniformity it dares to impose” (Ames 1992). This parallels the changes I see within Western themed media, the difference being that film can spread to a wider audience while museums are physically located in the community.

Physical locations do not mean that museums are necessarily wedged into their historic, colonial origins. Museums have changed so much in the last 20 years that The
International Council of Museums wrote an entirely new definition. I am including the full definition as evidence that Old Tucson is undeniably a museum. The International Council of Museums redefined museums in 2019 as:

“Museums are democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures. Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people. Museums are not for profit. They are participatory and transparent, and work in active partnership with and for diverse communities to collect, preserve, research, interpret, exhibit, and enhance understandings of the world, aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.” (“Museum Definition” n.d.)

This new, broad, inclusive definition recognizes the many modern settings and stories were a museum is an effective platform. They do this by 1) hosting critical dialogue, 2) holding artifacts future generations, 3) providing equal access to heritage for all people, 4) being a non-profit, 5) working in active partnerships, and 6) aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing.

Old Tucson does have a museum on property, and it is filled with historical costumes, movie posters, and vintage camera equipment (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.). However, the main artifact collection at Old Tucson is their buildings. The buildings are informative objects that “simply do not lend themselves to being collected, stored, or retrieved” and must stay outside, in place, at all times (Buckland 1991). Due to their material and size, Old Tucson’s buildings were susceptible to a devastating arsonist’s fire in 1995. Many buildings were rebuilt in the same location and are now protected with sprinklers (Lawton 2008; Vinyard 2015).
Old Tucson’s equal access to heritage is limited by physical location and an admission fee. However, they do provide educational programs for children and adults year round (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.). They have heritage festivals spaced throughout the year, including a steampunk themed weekend (“Old Tucson Studios” n.d.; Gay 2020). Renowned museum specialist Nina Simon suggests the core and doors model to build accessibility and relevancy within the community (Simon 2016). Cores are where institutions concentrate on a singular vision, and doors then provide multiple opportunities for guests to investigate and grow with the mission (Simon 2016). The core and doors Old Tucson repeats their mission throughout the park, on their website, and after every program, “Where the spirit of the Old West comes alive.” The Old West is then presented through buildings, costumes, and shows.

In 2014, Old Tucson committed to becoming a multi-cultural, living history, educational center by transferring their land lease from the Old Tucson Company the non-profit Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation and forming partnerships with the University of Arizona and the Arizona Historical Society (H. Davis 2014). This decision was strategic because Western film productions have been declining for decades (Gittell 2014), but it was also an investment in the stories typically marginalized in mainstream Westerns. By committing to the shared heritage within the area and allowing me to conduct anthropological research on Western identities, Old Tucson is actively participating in decolonization as a museum.

Old Tucson closed temporarily for the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. The park values the safety of their guests and employees, and turned to social media. On their
Facebook page, Old Tucson posted videos and promotions to remain in touch with their audience. During the Black Lives Matter protest, they shared resources on anti-racist media and Black owned businesses in Tucson (Old Tucson 2020c; 2020b). They also issued a statement on “the importance of film in its ability to teach, engage and foster empathy for those whose experiences are different from ourselves” (Old Tucson 2020a). Old Tucson acknowledged the power they have and the role they played in misrepresenting the people who live in southern Arizona, and they seem ready to take the next step in allyship.

**Tourism**

Old Tucson is strongly associated with the film industry, but tourists also come for their cultural, historic, and heritage events. Old Tucson balances cultural tourism with film-induced tourism every day, creating an interesting site to study the American tourist.

John Urry’s tourist gaze theory says that the tourist wants an authentic but pleasurable experience and the host controls variables and elements to ensure that pleasure, authenticity, and experience occur, more-or-less, on demand. There is an understood “staged authenticity” that both the tourist and destination silently agree upon, therefore allowing for a specific subgenre of authenticity during film-induced tourism and themed entertainment (Urry 1990). Staged authenticity in cultural tourism is interesting because there are discussions on power dynamics of those being toured, which stories are told and how, and what the tourists actually come to see.

On the surface, anthropology and tourism are similar in that one group travels to see another group, and then the first groups share their experiences. Some tourist experiences
are even presented as ethnographies, written with anthropological terms to provide an authentic experience (Brunner 2005). Conscious audiences, however, are re-evaluating their tourism experiences opting to avoid “commercial and shallow” exploitations of culture (Brunner 2005). In order to survive, heritage tourism sites must balance scholarly information with popular information, and they must balance the need for tourism income with the cost of their heritage.

At these living history museums, guests “play with time frames and experiment with alternative realities; it is a good way to learn about the past” (Brunner 2005). Approaching these complicated time periods with a playful mindset is a constant discussion in the museum world, but ultimately, I think fun-themed gateways lure in more guests who can then be educated. Learning from Museums centers on three overlapping contexts necessary for museum learning: personal, sociocultural, and physical (Falk and Dierking 2000). These three contexts grant the guest agency over their own experience, ensure awareness within the exhibit design team, and provide multiple accessibility points for the educational material. At a living history museum, this means creating a comfortable environment to explore the past without leaving behind essential modern conveniences.

As great as museums are, guests are limited to the museums that are physically in their proximity. More than museums, film “leads us to the ends of the earth and beyond” (Roesch 2009). An audience can watch a Western anywhere in the world, but actively deciding to book, embark, and explore a Western location is the second subgenre of tourism Old Tucson excels in providing. Film-induced tourism is “visitation to sites
where movies and television programs have been filmed as well as tours to production
studios, including film-related theme parks” (Beeton 2016). Old Tucson’s presence since
1939 provides the backdrop to many Westerns, offering a physical place to visit for
generations. Film-induced tourism is discussed more thoroughly in the theory chapter as
it strongly supports why Old Tucson guests and employees were ideal participants for
this study.

Old Places

Anthropologist Keith Basso worked with the Western Apache tribe to create a map
with Apache place names. While working on the project, he wrote a book about how
Western Apache use places in their storytelling. Place is critically important to identity
because, “what people make of their places is closely connected to what they make of
themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth” (Basso 1996). Landscapes
stretch far beyond the human conception of time, and therefore, how we treat it is very
much a reflection of ourselves. When places are incorporated into stories, “we are, in a
sense, the place-worlds we imagine” (Basso 1996). Empathizing with land as a character
within ourselves connects us to other people sharing the land. Further, Western Apache
place-names can provide such a strong anchor in place and time, that simply speaking the
place-name conveys the entire story (Basso 1996). Old places ground us storing our
intangible heritage.

In the name, Old Tucson is old. Old Tucson is 80 years old, but a saguaro cactus ages
75 years before growing its first branch (“Saguaro Cactus - Organ Pipe Cactus National
Monument” 2016). Old Tucson is supposed to look 156 years old, but it is nearly half of
that age. The Tohono O’odham Nation lived on the land for thousands of years before foreign governments occupied and divided the tribe to create the United States-Mexico border. In a larger timeline, Old Tucson just arrived.

Old Tucson is firmly in a physical place, but it exists without time or physical boundaries thanks to film. It is aged, but not aging. For generations, Old Tucson has visually represented the West to American audiences, and “places serve as mnemonic aids—they remind us of our memories, both individual…and collective—but they also spur people to investigate broader societal memories they don’t yet fully know” (Mayers 2018). The societal memories I want to share are the ones not typically featured in an American Western, and I do it through old places.

“Old places… are like the air we breathe: surrounding us, sustaining us, influencing us, and even a part of us” (Mayers 2018). Mayers’ book speaks mostly to old buildings built by Europeans and Euro-American settlers, but land, water, and sky are older than buildings. Westerns that consciously ally with landscapes and people are potentially the most powerful storytelling tool in mainstream media. My research shows that this paring of people and place creates a prevailing image in the audience’s memory, even if it is a fractured memory. Film started that incomplete memory, but film and tourism can strengthen our shared heritage.
Chapter Three: Theory

*IGs are all hunters.*

*Not this one. I was reprogrammed.*

- Pedro Pascal and Taika Waititi as the Mandalorian and IG-11 in *The Mandalorian*, 2019

*The Mandalorian* is an episodic adventure in the Star Wars universe exclusively on the Disney+ streaming platform. In 2019, the show began streaming weekly rather than all at once in a bingable format, made popular by Netflix (Jenner 2018). Eight episodes of an all-ages show created this “shared, communal moment,” that burned continuously for two months (Crotty 2019). *The Mandalorian*, though set in outer space with multiple planetary locations, has more in common with Westerns than Science Fiction. Rather than science, exploration, or technology, The Star Wars universe gravitates towards themes of power, survival, and the environment. The Mandalorian especially mirrors iconic Westerns and their themes in that it: 1) takes place after a major war, e.g. the American Civil War and the Spanish-American War; 2) the primary antihero wears a mask, e.g. *The Lone Ranger*, 1949-1957; 3) the primary antihero operates with skilled violence and no name, e.g. *The Man with No Name Trilogy*, 1964-1966; and 4) the final assembly of antiheroes protect a small group from an overwhelming onslaught, e.g. *The Seven Samurai*, 1954 and *The Magnificent Seven* 1960
Taika Waititi is of TeWhanau-a-Apanui descent from New Zealand (“Boy Press Kit” 2010), and he acted in and directed episodes of The Mandalorian. His character IG-11 is a droid bounty hunter programmed to kidnap a child. However, he is captured and reprogrammed to protect the child as their nurse. Understandably, the Mandalorian doubts the extent of IG-11’s updated software, and repeatedly refuses to trust the droid.

Like IG-11, I feel that I began this project with a destructive, colonizer code written into my theory and methodology, simply from living and learning in a colonized environment. I also know that despite my best efforts to grow, elements of colonial theory and methodology remain. This is also the case with mainstream Westerns. Mainstream Westerns are inherently colonial and riddled with problematic imagery and themes. However, the solution is not to stop making Westerns. We need to stop making those kinds of Westerns.

To see if newer Westerns were connecting with Old Tucson’s audience, I created this project. In this thesis, I focus on personal identity and landscape identity as portrayed in the American Western film genre. I did this through film analysis, surveys, and interviews at Old Tucson Studios during their Western Heritage Festival.

Under the theoretical framework of the following women, I was able to create my project. I am studying national film by Ina Bertrand, film-induced tourism by Sue Beeton, intersectionality by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, J.D., and decolonizing methods by Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith of Māori and Indigenous studies.
I had to see how persistent is the classic, Western imagery. I needed to speak with people who were more likely to have seen a Western recently. And I had to ask if they saw themselves in the Westerns they saw. This section explains that White supremacy and heteropatriarchy are harmful remnants of colonization that feed the national identity and push out different identities. However, this theory section also explains how decolonization is possible through film.

**National Identity/History/Film**

In preparation for this thesis, I borrowed *Cat Ballou* (1965) from a friend. While watching it, I recognized the type of forest near my grandparents’ home. One internet query later, I asked my friend if she knew it had been filmed in Colorado. Both Hollywood and my friend had validated Colorado as a beloved and classic landscape. The Colorado landscape is my immediate, physical surrounding and it has remained constant throughout my life, my parents’ lives, and my grandparents’ lives. Colorado land holds a shared sense of identity with me and my family, but highlighting the landscapes in a mainstream film leads a nation to “acquire a shared sense of identity” (Bertrand 1984). The nationally shared sense of identity is created through recognizable landscapes and retelling of historically inspired events.

Westerns take place in various time periods like the recent past in *Brokeback Mountain*’s 1963-1980’s, present day in *Wind River* during 2017, and the near future in *Westworld*’s interpretation of 2052. Westerns also span a variety of locations such as *North to Alaska* (1960) and *The Mandalorian* (2019-) in a galaxy far, far away. Defining Westerns within firm time and place boundaries constricts the genre, and in turn, our
national perception of ourselves. Therefore, I will define Westerns thematically while acknowledging that there are established and stereotypical expectations. Western themes include: 1) agency (rugged individualism) and a moral code within the characters to administer justice, though they often ignore or circumnavigate the law; 2) settler colonial laws that are physically distant and/or difficult to enforce; and 3) the landscape is a character that typically challenges the human characters.

These themes continue into more recent Westerns. In opposition to what I thought I would find in my primary research, I failed to prove that audiences identified with newer, diverse, and decolonizing Westerns. I surveyed guests at Old Tucson asking them with which Western character do they relate, and which natural, North American landscapes were appropriate settings for a Western. Overwhelmingly, people related to white, male figures and preferred the Sonoran Desert landscape.

Westerns are the perfect tool for dismantling white supremacy and heteropatriarchy because they were crafted by and with those ideals (Bernstein 2018). Due to their deep association with America and American imagery, Westerns are the best mirror “when the United States is facing a crisis” (Bernstein 2018). In most cases, the classic Westerns mirror white supremacy and heteropatriarchy by marginalizing non-White and non-male characters. In Bertrand’s theory, the national identity/history/film is a self-fulfilling cycle where 1) we make movies about us; 2) movies become the collective image of our country, and; 3) we make more movies in that collective image (Bertrand 1984).
Storytelling, especially the stories within our reflective national film genre of the Western, can start a new cycle by dismantling elitist structures like white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. Westerns gain popularity during times of political unrest, but typically to comfort the audiences that look like the main actors, which included Black-audience Westerns from the late 1930s (Gittell 2014; Bernstein 2018; Leyda 2002). Black Westerns were low budget and made for Black audiences to watch positive images of Black characters as a brief distraction from life in a segregated country (Leyda 2002). Recently, Denzel Washington starred in Antoine Fugua’s *The Magnificent Seven* (2016) which made $35 million in its first week (Lang 2016); both are professional Black men, backed by a major production company, creating a space for themselves in the cycle of national identity/history/film.

To see if our national film was increasing Americans’ shared sense of identity, I decided to speak with people about Westerns. Interviewing and surveying participants employs the theoretical cycle of national identity/history/film as described by Ina Bertrand. Bertrand is an Australian film scholar, and I felt her phrasing best explained the significance of Westerns as a national film and mirror. Bertrand wrote about Australian national identity through film saying, “…film and history constantly work to reinforce each other” contributing to a “communal memory” (Bertrand 1984). A nation’s communal memory lives in the overlap where history stops and film begins, therefore history and film have an obligation to include more representation for the sake of our nation’s communal memory. Overwhelmingly the participants in this study clung to John Wayne and desert imagery, though neither represents the American West as everything it
was or continues to be. Since John Wayne’s last film was in 1976, or 43 years before the study commenced, John Wayne is firmly lodged in our communal memory as an image of America long after he died.

My results suggest a growing need for decolonization and responsible portrayal in media. Films like *Blazing Saddles* (1974) or *The Great Silence* (1968) were an exception to the rule, in that they feature a non-White main character or a non-desert landscape, but they still operate within the confines of the classic, Western genre. Recent releases will more often broaden the landscape and characters beyond classic imagery, offering a diverse view of the American West, such as *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) featuring a gay relationship, *The Hateful Eight* (2015) with people of color in the winter, HBO’s *Westworld* (2016-) starring people of color in the future, and *Wind River* (2017) portraying Indigenous people during present day and in the winter. However, classic Western audiences may not be as receptive to a recent Western because they are not seeing the expected imagery associated with classic Westerns. Instead, audiences formerly excluded from the genre would suddenly see themselves in mainstream representation.

**Film-Induced Tourism**

In David Lowenthal’s *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, he writes about how compared to the uncertainty of the future, “the past is tangible and secure; people think of it as fixed, unalterable, indelibly recorded… it is our home – the past is where we come from” (Lowenthal 1985). The idea that the past is a foreign country is that the past is something we will never truly understand, but desperately and continuously yearn to see.
Yet, we are forever in the present and “can no more slip back to the past that leap forward to the future. Save in imaginative reconstruction…” (Lowenthal 1985). Tourism thrives in imaginative reconstruction, and tourism excels in packaging up the past.

Tourism defines the modern individual in that “if people do no travel, they lose status: travel is the marker of status” (Urry 1990). Potential tourists decide their itinerary “via advertising and the media, the images generated of different tourist gazes come to constitute a closed self-perpetuating system of illusions” (Urry 1990). Tourism serves as modern pilgrimages where tourists “quest for authenticity” rather than something “sacred,” and leading sites create “staged authenticity” (Urry 1990).

Societies approach leisure and religion in different ways, but the language used to describe them are strikingly similar. Pilgrimages are “a social process, not just a spiritual quest…socially enacted not just for internal reasons but for external ones too” (Tagliacozzo 2013). Most people participate in religious or tourist activities with other people and the social interactions create an emotional memory. One main difference is that religious leaders control a pilgrimage site. Staged authenticity in tourism is more spread out because “unlike the religious pilgrim who pays homage to a single scared centre, the tourist pays homage to a large array of centres and attractions” (Urry and Larsen 2011). Heritage centers, authentically staged or otherwise, can appear without a singular, unified authority increasing the chance of an exploitative program.

Old Tucson’s performative authenticity is strongest in their living history presentations, and surprisingly, their stunt show. The living history presentations are intimate gatherings, throughout the day, in various locations where a park historian
explains an Old West occupation in costume. The stunt show is a scripted comedy with pyrotechnics, but the premise is that the actors are demonstrating Hollywood stunts for the audience. In this show, they slip in and out of the fourth wall deciding when to engage with audience, even teaching volunteers how to perform the stunts. The show is very staged, but also authentic to the cinematic history at Old Tucson.

Staged authenticity is also seen in the 400+ projects created at Old Tucson. Every film, television show, music video, commercial, or family vacation see by a potential visitor is focuses the tourist gaze on this location. Old Tucson is historically, subtly advertised in a targeted form of media, and provides extensive performance experiences for their guests. Urry’s tourist gaze contains a branch called family gaze, which describes why Old Tucson attracts visitors generation after generation. Family gaze is partially fueled by photography, specifically “around producing loving family photographs set within distinct visual environments” (Urry and Larsen 2011). Old Tucson provides several, repeatable photographic opportunities that are subliminally advertised in 400+ projects over the last 80 years. Old Tucson has been in the tourist gaze for generations. It is likely that guests are visiting because they have already seen a piece of it in film or online, thereby increasing the chances of a population that is already interested and informed about Westerns. Additionally, “film landscapes identify with and represent actual landscapes, so that tourism destinations in part become fantasylands or mediaworlds” (Urry and Larsen 2011). Once the landscape becomes a set, a specific story is attached to it. The land and the story are then distributed widely as an intertwined set.
As, Sangkyun Kim’s research on film-induced tourism strongly suggests, tourists are more likely to visit a film location with which they have a personal attachment (Kim 2012). The personal attachment meaning that the audience has seen the film, and they liked the film enough to see experience it again during vacation. This time, the audience is not watching the film, they will be moving through it.

Sue Beeton is a professor of tourism in Australia, and she has written extensively on film-induced tourism. She defines film-induced tourism to include all visual media such as television, and “relates to on-location tourism that follows the success of a movie made (or set) in a particular region” (Beeton 2016). Film-induced tourism can be sudden and sustainable, like in the case of Starz’ *Outlander* (2015). Scottish film locations reported up to a 200% increase in visitor activity since the show premiered, and this is because *Outlander* binds an emotional story to a visual landscape that is accessible to a loyal fanbase (*BBC News* 2020). *Outlander*, like a Western, is historically based fiction. These stories are grounded in a historical time and place, without being historical themselves. The balance between history and historically inspired suggest that guests are less interested in authentic tourism, and are now looking for “the staged authenticity of a society focused on infotainment,” or how to have learn in the most fun way possible (Beeton 2016). Old Tucson offers levels of entertainment and education. The levels span age and presentation style, so that the park is able to meet visitors at their educational interest level.
Decolonization

Anthropology consistently challenges my world view, primarily because I was educated in a colonized system. Every day in graduate school feels like I am rewiring my brain to think in a more holistic way towards people, myself, and the time we have together. By consciously incorporating decolonization methodologies, I hope to provide lasting research that helps people marginalized by the lingering effects of colonization, rather than perpetuating the destructive cycle.

Decolonization, as I learned about it, came from an Indigenous feminist perspective, including the works of Dr. Kathryn Shanley and Dr. Haunani-Kay Trask. I did not focus singularly on Indigenous representation or the representation of women in Westerns because that research has been done (McDonald 2018; Peek 2010; Telotte 2018; Wildermuth 2018; Wilmsen 2006). The general conclusion is that Westerns portray these groups unfavorably and inaccurately, contributing to damaging stereotypes such as the Magical Negro, the Noble Savage, the Latin Lover, and the Kung Fu Master.

The Magical Negro possesses magical powers or profound wisdom, and instead of a backstory or goals, The Magical Negro “focus[es] their abilities toward assisting their White lead counterparts” (Glenn and Cunningham 2009). An example in a science-fiction Western would be Ron Glass as Shepherd Derrial Book from Firefly (2002-2003) and Serenity (2005). Book was one of the “least revealed” characters of the series and “his history was left largely unexplored, save for the occasional cryptic hits or comments,” and, as a pastor, he largely acts as a spiritual and moral guide for the team (Firefly: A Celebration 2012).
The Noble Savage is embodied in The Lone Ranger’s (2013) Tanto. Noble Savages are in the past, in a paradise, and they bring the White character around to their way of thinking (Sheehan 1973). Tanto speaks in pidgin, wears a taxidermized crow, wears war paint in every scene, and he is secondary to the titular Lone Ranger.

An example of the Latin Lover in a Border Western is Zorro/Alejandro Murrietta in The Mask of Zorro (1998) when the studio cast an Hispanic actor in the lead role for the first time in since the films began in 1920 (Kearley, n.d.). The 1998 version of Zorro is heavily sexualized with his body and actions, specifically with his chest exposed during fights and him undressing the female lead with his sword. Lead actor Antonio Banderas falls into a complicated area where he identifies and works with Latinx people, but he is a European from Spain who has embodied the stereotype of the Latin Lover (Benavides 2020).

The Kung Fu Master is seen in the Western comedy Shanghai Noon (2000) starring Jackie Chan as Chon Wang (a near homophone to John Wayne). The Kung Fu Master limits Asian actors to a “narrow range of roles, all circulating around a similar code of honor, tradition, and family obligation” (Gallagher 2006). The rigid, asexual, Kung Fu Master stereotype left a very small number of roles for Asian-American actors, leading to the self-filling Hollywood myth that “movies by and about people of color ‘don’t sell’” (Fang 2018). As Filipino-American actor Jordan De Leon wrote:

“I am no one’s Kung Fu master, so I was deprived of a role model in the media growing up. (Sorry, Jackie Chan. I respect the hell out of you, but I just don’t see myself in you.) … [Asian people are] here, we’re proud as we are, our people and faces can make money in mainstream media — and we’re not going anywhere… Asian people
aren’t punchlines. We’re sexy, we’re sassy, we’re heartthrobs, we’re hysterical, we’re bitches, we’re jerks, we’re friends, we’re mothers, we’re fathers, we’re brothers, we’re sisters, we’re humans.” (De Leon 2018)

The complexity of human kind cannot and should not be reduced to stereotypes in film because then everyone misses the richness within ourselves. Unfortunately, just as in film, academia is known for streamlining people and culture in order to fit them into a study. This is especially true in Western research when the study involves a colonized or otherwise marginalized group.

Dr. Linda Tuhiwai Smith challenges western scholarship parameters in her work. Smith describes imperial research coding and suppressing Indigenous knowledge into a Western way of knowing, rather than letting Indigenous knowledge be (L. T. Smith 2012). Decolonization methodology demands that those studied are treated as intricate, individual humans while questioning traditional methods of Western research and ways-of-knowing (L. T. Smith 2012). Smith suggests methods like, testimonies, storytelling, remembering, revitalizing and regenerating, connecting, critical rereading of Western history and Indigenous presence in the making of that history, representing, gendering, envisioning, creating, and sharing (L. T. Smith 2012).

The ways that I have decolonized my research were by challenging stereotypes, connecting the stories with the land, and by finding evidence that persistent, colonizer imagery lingers in the American psyche. This paper embraces the Westerns that do not fit the classic model with John Wayne in the Sonoran Desert because there is so much more to the West. The land has been here far longer than any living person, and it will continue after we are gone, which is why rooting our stories in the land is critical to their survival.
We know this unified and deep-rooted storytelling is possible because, according to my research results, it already worked with John Wayne and the Sonoran Desert.

By actively decolonizing my research, I reduce the risk of continuing the “unrelenting research of a profoundly exploitative nature” (L. T. Smith 2012). Smith explains that decolonizing research methods “should be conceived of as containing multiple traditions of knowledge and ways of knowing. Some knowledges are more dominant than others… [or] are actively in competition with each other and some can only be formed in association with others” (L. T. Smith 2012). I accommodated every participant to the best of my ability, respecting their time and boundaries, allowing them to elaborate or disengage.

Though my project is considered low-risk, “research is not an innocent or distant academic exercise but an activity that has something at stake and that occurs in a set of political and social conditions” (L. T. Smith 2012). Researchers must acknowledge that people and projects exist on multiple planes, rather than within stereotypes. By definition, it is impossible for a stereotype to exist on the multiple planes necessary to understand people. When stereotypes are broken and the complexity of a character is revealed, audiences can meet them at the intersection of themselves and the character.

**Intersectionality**

During my hiring process at an entertainment company, I was asked to select my race. There was no option for “mixed race” or “select all that apply.” The Human Resources representative said that I had to choose one and that it should be the identity of my mother. I argued that I liked my father, and would not ignore his heritage. The
representative rolled his eyes as I stubbornly selected the only applicable racial option left: Unknown.

All of my identities live loudly inside of me every day, and they worked together to design my master’s thesis. Intersectionality appeals to me and my research because we exist at every layer within ourselves. I am a mixed race Black and White woman, artist, and academic, among other things. My research includes people, places, entertainment, education, and experience. My identity creates and informs my research, and my research stimulates growth and validation in my identity. And I am a singular person, the Western is meant to validate many peoples’ identities.

The Western, is a genre for every American as we figure out what it means to be in the American settler-native-slave nation with mixed-race decedents. Settler colonialism needs unsettling, native populations need to be included in decolonizing discussions, and slavery must be eradicated (Tuck and Yang 2012). The Western is a genre were filmmakers and audiences can explore what that decolonizing process would look like, especially if they employ intersectional theory.

Intersectionality is the idea that a person exist as multiple social identities, and that typical research methodologies condense people into a singular, digestible identity disregarding the complexity of humanity (Hill Collins 2002). The lack of intersectionality is why stereotypes exist and why they are so limiting. When introducing the intersectionality, Kimberlé Crenshaw says that there is a “problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis” (Crenshaw, 1989). These mutually exclusive categories mean that people of
color are seen as men, and women are seen as women, but the legal system, where Crenshaw specializes, is not designed to accommodate discrimination faced by a woman of color. This can be seen in my earlier examples of Western stereotypes (Shepherd Book, Tanto, Zorro/Alejandro Murrietta, and Chon Wang) who were all men of color. Any system built by a white supremacist, heteropatriarchy would be ill-equipped for those not also white and male.

Dr. Patricia Hill Collins clarifies that diversity’s strength is in the disagreements and challenges. Homogeneity is the enemy of progress, so acknowledging that there are many kinds of Blackness, Whiteness, and feminism is crucial (Hill Collins 2002). Rejecting toxic white supremacy and heteropatriarchy while working towards a more accepting society should unify people at many intersections, and fictional works provide an accessible entry point for different ways of thinking (Kauffman and Libby 2012). For this thesis, I see the Western genre as massive intersection with multiple voices. Westerns are an ideal format for our national perception to change, explore, and grow into the next century. Even more so, experiences in Western theme parks can shift our culture.

In 2018 at the SXSW conference, HBO’s Westworld (2016-) sought to “reignite the show’s fanbase” for season two by “cutting through the noise” at a very loud, techy, attention grabbing conference with a very low-tech experience (Forjindam 2020). HBO staged Westworld at a local ghost town and transported conference attendees to the location (Forjindam 2020; J. Robinson 2018; Feuerbacher 2018). Once there, guests interacted with Westworld’s 60 actors, 6 stunt actors, and 444 pages of script to unravel clues from season 2 (Forjindam 2020; J. Robinson 2018). Westworld was the standout
exhibit at SXSW because their core mission centers on people and place rather than technology (Miller 2018; J. Robinson 2018; T. Robinson 2018). As this Westworld exhibit unfolded, Fri Forjindam, one of the Chief Creative Officers on the project, urged that the same collaborative and immersive could be used to inspire social change. She asks, “If this works in the commercial space, how do we translate that into more traditional experiential spaces, and how do we use that as a platform to shift culture” (Forjindam 2020).

Old Tucson is beginning to shift culture with their Western Heritage Festival. There was no single or right way to celebrate Western heritage including with engineering, watercolors, Buffalo Soldiers, fashion, and more. The three-day event is produced yearly with the Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation, which is based in the same offices as Old Tucson. Heavy rain closed the park canceling Friday’s events, but Saturday and Sunday proceeded as planned. The park was more crowded this weekend than any other day I visited, and the atmosphere changed. Old Tucson typically felt calm and casual to me, but the festival created an underlying and vibrating energy. It is one thing to see heritage on stage or screen, but it is entirely different to enter physical world through where the audience can walk, play, and interact with the story.

Collins emphasizes that politics and socio-economic status are critically important intersections to be considered during research (Hill Collins 2017). Given the environment and design of my research, asking these questions was inappropriate. I can say that I selected the visitors and employees of Old Tucson because they were probably interested in Westerns and would have informed answers for my survey. However, these visitors
also had the time and money to visit a theme park far from walkable or public transportation to Tucson. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that I interacted primarily with guests who had disposable income. However, the park lives at the intersection of both the guest and employee experience: one cannot exist without the other. Employees and volunteers mentioned repeatedly that Old Tucson did not pay competitive wages, but they believed in the bigger story associated with Old Tucson.

Though land is not officially a component of Crenshaw and Collins’ intersectionality, I think it is as important as gender and race for identity. The land and structures on which I live, greatly impact my sense of self. Knowing that this land is stolen haunts me. I could not ignore the significance of land for this study, and I hope that my research aids in a future solution rather than continuing ignorance and empty promises.

Practicing intersectionality is an act of decolonization. By respecting, supporting, and including people from different races and genders, we continue to dismantle white supremacist and heteropatriarchal structures. Westerns are a valuable tool in the dismantling process because they act as our national film and therefore our national memory. They can also carry our goals of what kind of country we wish to be in the future.

**Conclusion**

National identity/history/film is about seeing ourselves represented in the films about ourselves. There are long term affects because we use national, historically themed films to supplement our education and our memories. The American national film is the
Western, and newer Westerns are reinforcing different images from classical Western imagery to reflect the shift American have had in their self-perception and understanding.

Film-induced tourism not only instills an emotional longing for a location, but also the ability to visit. Historical tourism offers the closest substitution for time travel, to known places and events that are more comforting than the unknown future. Old Tucson provides both film-induced and historical tourism that has been advertised in 400+ projects over 80 years, and is therefore it a place to find answers to my research questions.

Decolonization requires us to listen rather than speak, and continuously affirm that our work is helping in the way people need to be helped. Stereotypes are a result of colonization and the settler-native-slave relationship, therefore stereotypes designed to keep natives and slaves in limiting, predetermined categories. Breaking these stereotypes gives Americans more room to create the future they wish to live in together.

Intersectionality acknowledges that many lives and identities can live in a single person, that they are valid, and cannot be ignored. Westerns hold unlimited potential with intersectionality because all of these stories will be connected to the land upon where we live.

Westerns have disenfranchised so many people and where they live, but filmmakers are working to change the exclusionary narrative. Our stories are complex, intricate, and alive. It will take all of us to change the white supremist, heteropatriarchal narrative, and Westerns are a great place to continue that work.
Chapter Four: Methodology

“Is it difficult?”

“Impossible.”

- Chris Pratt and Denzel Washington as Josh Faraday and Sam Chisolm in The Magnificent Seven, 2016

*The Magnificent Seven* first released in 1960 as an adaptation of *Seven Samurai* (1954), the Japanese original. The core story endures and opens different doors depending on the time and space. Hollywood reboots have a negative reputation for unoriginality, but “each telling of a narrative situated in time and space engages only… certain memories, concerns, and expectations… In this sense, narratives are apprehended by *partial selves*… access[ing] only fragments of experience” (Ochs and Capps 1996). In other words, each retelling holds a different reflection of who we are.

The 2016 version *Magnificent Seven* stars Denzel Washington as Sam Chisolm, a U.S. Marshal in Texas, hired to save a town from a violent, land-grabbing villain. Antoine Fuqua directed the film, and he had worked with Washington in *The Equalizer* (2014) and *Training Day* (2001). In an interview, Fuqua spoke about Washington’s professionalism and dedication to character, specifically citing how Chisolm would carry himself and his gun while walking and riding a horse, asking the audience to think, “is it
because he’s Black, or because he’s a gunslinger” (Good Morning Britain 2016). Fuqua also addressed a relationship between two men with, “We didn’t say anything, but it’s all there…” (Good Morning Britain 2016). With this, *The Magnificent Seven* says that in 2016, it is safer for a mainstream Western to show men of different races than to show a queer relationship. The topic of race is not directly addressed either, but the characters are not suppressing that aspect of their identities. In this case, the character’s partial selves and fragments of experience are limited to 2016 rules, and therefore not a complete picture of representation.

*The Magnificent Seven* is a mainstream Western that is directed by a Black man and stars another Black man, which is not something seen in previous decades. Fuqua ended that 2016 interview with the film’s mission statement: “…we all gotta come together, everybody, to stop tyranny… but it’s not going to be one race or one country that’s going to fix it” (Good Morning Britain 2016). Just as this research is not limited to one race, gender, or landscape, it utilizes more than one methodology. I wanted to collect information from both guests and employees, both qualitative and quantitative, both efficiently and in depth. Therefore, the collection methods are broken into two main parts: a survey, and an interview. There are two surveys that are seven questions long, five of which are the same on both surveys. The interview is semi-structured with nine questions, designed to be more conversational than quizzical. Old Tucson managers read and approved the surveys and interview before I arrived.
Guest Surveys

I contacted Old Tucson Studios with my research inquiry in March of 2019, and from their own data, they were able to recommend the winter months over the summer months due to the guest population. According to them, the summer is usually dominated by European tourists rather than American tourists. My thesis is specifically focusing on American heritage and identity, and therefore I preferred a primarily American audience. Both guest surveys are identical except for two questions that are related either to Western characters or Western landscapes.

I collected data between November 22 and December 10, 2019 at Old Tucson Studios in Tucson, Arizona. Thanksgiving (United States) and the Western Heritage Festival both occurred during my visit. The Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation hosts the Western Heritage Festival annually at Old Tucson. The Festival is usually scheduled Friday through Sunday, but heavy rains closed the park on Friday.

Since I was familiar with the program, the survey, and tablet, I asked the guests for their answers while I entered their responses. I administered and collected surveys with the offline Qualtrics app for iPad. Once the results were synched with my Qualtrics account, I downloaded them into .csv format. In Excel, I coded applicable responses into binary, numeric items for PSPP. The free PSPP program read the results and calculated bivariate correlations for both surveys. The surveys are best for exiting guests who have already experienced the park, and so I positioned myself near the park exit. Guests were overwhelmingly supportive and enjoyed the survey, one guest even calling it “painless.”

Davis and Litwicki asked that I be careful to remove myself from Old Tucson and make
it clear that I was a student from the University of Denver. Every day I wore my student ID on a lanyard, and on the colder days, I wore a University of Denver sweatshirt as well.

Earlier I cite Bertrand for her theory on national identity/history/film, and so I have chosen to follow her advice on methodology as well. For audience sampling, the researcher must account for accessibility, cost, generalizability, and appropriate sampling procedures for the research questions (Bertrand and Hughes 2018). Access to the survey is limited to guests at Old Tucson, exiting the park, who opted in to speak with me between November 22 and December 10, 2019. The University of Denver reimbursed much of my research cost, but to be a part of this research the guest likely purchased a park ticket. Of the 101 responses, most of the responses included groups of two or more people as Old Tucson is a family park. I practiced decolonizing methodology while including the group participation or allowing participant refusal. All participants in the sample population were in a Western-themed park, and therefore I increased the likelihood of encountering Western fans, and creating a sample population more likely to have answers for these surveys.

Because the survey requires the guest to have participated in park programming, I arrived after park opening at noon every day. I tended to collect my 10 responses before park closing, which allowed for more time to organize the data and casually speak with the Old Tucson staff and Arizona Sonora Heritage Foundation docents.

On the third day of data collection, I had the most success standing near the bottlenecked park exit, in the shade of the Phoebe's Sweet Shop. There, I was able to tell the difference between guests who were entering and leaving. Also, by standing in the
shade, guests were more likely to head in my direction or stop completely. I stood within the park on Main Street where the atmosphere still utilized the buildings, music, animals, and other elements missing from the gift shop and parking lot. Phoebe’s Porch is named for the main character *Arizona* (1940), the first film made at Old Tucson.

I chose my participants by asking if they were willing to participate in a graduate survey. The factors in choosing a participant were not random, but convenience and voluntary. For me to approach the participant, they had to be 1) walking towards the exit 2) not on the phone 3) not accompanied by children I judged to be under 18 years of age 4) not speaking a language other than English within their group. By avoiding families with children, I probably missed data relevant to people in the parental age group of people in their 30s-40s. I also did not learn anything quantifiable about how children identify with Westerns. This study was limited to English-speaking guests due to a lack of translation services.

**Survey**

The surveys are short, simple, clear, logical, and provide for all possible answers (Bertrand and Hughes 2018). I wrote the surveys to learn about tourism, identity, and current Western trends. By asking about Old Tucson’s environment, preconceptions, and motivations for visiting, guests shared where they were in their tourism journey. I was interested to see which features impressed guests the most in a park that covers history and entertainment. It is important to know some guests arrived looking for a historic, town center like Albuquerque’s Old Town or the Fort Worth Stockyards, rather than planning to visit a replica. When guests established which Westerns they had recently
seen, I was able to see if they were engaging with Westerns less than 20 years old. Both surveys included the following questions:

- What about Old Tucson’s environment has had the greatest impact on your visit?
- What did you come to learn about?
- Was Old Tucson what you expected?
- What were you expecting?
- What was the last Western you saw?
- If different from above, what was the most recently produced Western you saw?

Guest ages were not recorded, though the people I surveyed appeared to be 65+ in age, and therefore the data may be skewed towards a certain age demographic. The reason I asked people who appeared older is because younger guests were often accompanied by children, and my IRB specifically states that I would not speak to minors. As such, participants referred to older Westerns as “the good ones,” sometimes looking puzzled when I asked about a recently produced Western. Participants would say things like, “nothing has come out recently.” If most of my demographic came of age during classic Westerns, it would make more sense for their heritage to be contained in classic Westerns.

**Character Survey**

Half of the surveys were character based. These answers show whether or not a person’s race or identity matches with the character they selected, and test the reflection theory of national identity/history/film. Intersectionality and decolonization are present in
that most questions have an open-ended option, including the participant’s race and gender identity. I did not provide character examples, but one participant asked if they could simply provide their favorite character. The character survey’s specific questions are:

The character survey’s specific questions are:

- Which Western character do you relate to the most?
- Please input your race and gender identity.

**Landscape Survey**

Half of the surveys were land-based. Answers revealed how people visualize the West, and where they themselves are from. I especially wanted to see if people from the West would identify all the landscapes as appropriate settings for Westerns. The images are limited to rural areas with no manmade buildings, to show a variety of natural climates found in the American West. In theory, guests would absolutely select their current surroundings in the Sonoran Desert due to national identity/history/film and film-induced tourism, and I hoped all of them would be selected. Intersectionality and decolonization are present in that most questions have an open-ended option, including the participant’s place of origin.

The landscape survey’s specific questions are:

- Which landscapes do you associate with Westerns? Select all that apply.
- Where are you visiting from? State/Province, Country

Figure 4-1: A) Big Bend National Park, Texas

Figure 4-2: B) Kodiak, Alaska

Figure 4-3: C) Grand Tetons National Park, Wyoming, winter
Figure 4-4: D) Saguaro National Park, Arizona

Figure 4-5: E) Grand Tetons National Park, Wyoming, summer

Figure 4-6: F) North Cascades National Park, Washington

Figure 0-7: G) a summer wheat field in North Dakota
For additional information, car license plates in the parking lot were recorded by their state or province. No plate numbers or car details were recorded. I could not differentiate rentals from personally owned vehicles, or how many people belong with each car.

**Employee Interviews**

Interviews are “purposive conversation” and a standard method in ethnography (Bertrand and Hughes 2018). Old Tucson employees are bursting with years (sometimes decades) of observational data in tourism, film, and heritage. By recording their stories on their terms, I found the rich, “personal responses without taking as much time as much time as informal conversation” (Bertrand and Hughes 2018). I am a part of these conversations, continuing the use of self-narrative and autoethnography.

I relied on Litwicki to arrange meeting times that worked within the employees’ schedules. When describing the employees I wished to interview, I stressed that I wanted them to be customer facing, at least one manager, and to have worked at Old Tucson for at least a year. She scheduled me with a front gate operations employee, a film manager, a stunt actor, and two historians.

Both historians were unavailable, one had a medical emergency and the other declined after reading the interview questions. The historian that declined asked a third historian to speak with me instead. The third historian introduced me to a stunt actor/ supervisor, who also agreed to participate. This took place over a day, and during that day a volunteer docent from the Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation also offered to interview. I will use the term “employees” to include the volunteer docents unless stated otherwise.
I provided and explained informed consent forms and I recorded our conversation both on my phone and my LiveScribe pen. I explained that I would not be addressing them by name in the recording for their privacy. The employees were not compensated for their time by me or the University of Denver, but to my knowledge, they did not lose money or clock out to speak with me. I asked both the university and Old Tucson about compensation, and on-the-clock interviews were the best solution.

The first interview was on December 1, 2019, and interviews concluded by December 7, 2019. The interviews were specifically after the Western Heritage Festival when there were fewer crowds.

I asked the employees to pick a place where they felt comfortable speaking, and they typically chose to sit outside, away from guests, but still in the park. For this reason, most of my audio includes background music and non-diegetic sounds associated with a Western atmosphere.

Additionally, some of my audio includes guest interruptions. Their voices are not identifiable, but on my fifth interview, I brought up the occurrence with my subject. To me, it said that the employees of Old Tucson valued the community built within the park.

The historian and docent agreed to interview partially because I had been in the park for two weeks explaining my project to them. The docents would even send guests to me for my survey. The length of time I spent in Tucson was critical because of these connections; a shorter time frame may have led to fewer interviews.
The employees are unnamed in this study. Reducing people’s identities is not a decolonizing method, but after observing and studying the Old Tucson community, I feel that any further information would easily reveal their identities.

I used the service Trint to transcribe the interviews. It is a trusted, secure AI service that operates on a monthly subscription. The audio and transcripts are saved and password protected both locally and on my University of Denver Office 365 cloud.

**Ethics**

While designing, conducting, and reporting this research, I have tried my best to remain ethical in accordance to myself, the University of Denver, and Old Tucson Studios.

I acknowledge that my background includes undergraduate studies in filmmaking and theatre, and I have three years of experience in themed entertainment. I am a mixed-race woman from the American West, and I volunteered at Denver’s Black American West Museum for a year.

I did not seek employment at Old Tucson Studios, and they did not offer employment to me. My thesis qualified for an expedited review because it did involve more than a minimal risk to the participants or myself. I did not seek vulnerable populations for this study, though they may appear because I did not actively filter participants besides their presence at Old Tucson, and if they were speaking a language other than English. Since I did not identify participants or interview minors, and I only have minimal contact information for Old Tucson Studio and the Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation, I meet criterions six and seven for the DU IRB expedited guide:
6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes and

7) research on individual or group characteristics or behavior… or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies (“Research Integrity & Education, Human Subjects Research (IRB),” n.d.)

I think the minimal risk is a real benefit to my project and why it will span other fields of study including at Old Tucson, museums, and tourism management. Old Tucson will see and benefit from the research since the population comes from within their gates. All interviews were as anonymous as possible to protect the identities of the sic Old Tucson employees. I worked closely with Megan Litwicki, Old Tucson’s marketing research coordinator, recently promoted to marketing manager.

Visitors paid to have a vacation, and employees are paid to work. The visitor surveys were minimal and efficient. Both guests and employees refused to participate, but guests were not able to opt out of the license plate data collection from the parking lot. I interviewed employees while they are on the clock. Employees were not given the opportunity to review their statements before transcription.

Both employees and visitors opted out of my research. My research depended on other people and their willing participation. I had no control over that aspect of my project. One employee declined to be interviewed after reading the questions and stating specifically they did not have an opinion on the gender roles portrayed at Old Tucson. Another employee agreed to participate, but also stated that they did not have an opinion
on the gender roles. One employee agreed, then withdrew due to a medical emergency. By allowing all of these people a choice, I maintained my promise to the IRB resisting knowledge for the sake of knowledge.

In the case of two employee interviews, they mention identifiable names for themselves or their family. At this point, they are included in results section. Both cases are included because of how they told their stories, and that they stressed the importance of these names to their identity.

I also made the choice to describe the results for guests who identify as Latino/a as Latinx, and to combine Latinx with guests who identified as Hispanic. I know this is potentially problematic seeing as the identity discussion is still happening within the community (McWhorter 2019; Benavides 2020). I decided to use the gender-inclusive, though notably academic and activist, term Latinx to include any person of Latin American descent (McWhorter 2019). I decided to combine Latinx and Hispanic as a singular group because the all-encompassing term Hispanic was used to discount the needs of Latinx people by grouping them with White, Spanish-speaking people (Benavides 2020). I am assuming that participants who identified as Hispanic were Latinx because they did not specifically say they were White and Hispanic.

I genuinely tried to leave Old Tucson just as I found it, and I believe I acted ethically before, during, and after my research there.
Conclusion

Between November 22 and December 10, 2019, I collected 101 guest surveys and six employee interviews. I designed the surveys to be efficient and highlight themes of national identity/history/film and film-induced tourism.
Chapter Five: Results

_These violent delights have violent ends._

- Evan Rachel Wood as Dolores Abernathy in _Westworld_ , 2016-

HBO’s _Westworld_ is a statement on tourism more than Westerns. Dolores Abernathy hosts wealthy tourists at a remote theme park, and she sees how people act in a setting where they have paid to be a guest. The line quoted above is originally uttered by William Shakespeare’s Friar Lawrence in _Romeo & Juliet_ , as the friar is about to marry the young characters. Dolores and other characters repeat this line as a mantra, warning guests and each other about quick, shallow entertainment.

My research results suggest that outdated entertainment is still where audiences picture the American West and its people. If we are to expand the reflection of ourselves to include more people and landscapes, we must include that diversity in entertainment.

Guest surveys suggest that the American Western is dominated by White men and the Southwestern desert in American memory. Guests ranked buildings as Old Tucson’s most impactful feature, and tours as the least impactful. Guests were least likely to come to Old Tucson for education, but likely just to see the park. Guests were likely to be satisfied by the end of their visit. Recently seen Westerns typically were released between 1951-1970, a large piece of John Wayne’s career. Less than half of the guests reported
seeing a Western made between 2000-2019. Over half of the guests related most to John Wayne as a character, and 75% of guests related to White men in Westerns such as John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and Wyatt Earp. Most guests selected Saguaro National Park (AZ) and Big Bend National Park (TX) as appropriate settings for a Western, while the least selected the Grand Tetons (WY) in winter and Kodiak, Alaska. Cars in the parking lot were registered all over North America.

Employee interviews are divided into themes and presented in block quotes. The identified themes are: 1) the sense of community amongst the people who work at Old Tucson; 2) the sense of identity with Old Tucson’s landscape; 3) the authenticity of Western genre; 4) the unique balance Old Tucson strikes between entertainment and education; and 5) the future of Westerns and Museums.

Survey

Both surveys shared six questions, totaling 101 responses. The following graphs show how many out of 101 answered with a particular response. The shared questions are:

- What about Old Tucson’s environment has had the greatest impact on your visit? Select all that apply.
  Buildings | Nature | Shows | Living History | Tours | Music/Sound | Costumes | Staff Interactions | Other, please describe:

- What did you come to learn about? Select all that apply.
  The American West | Filmmaking | Neither | Other, please describe:

- Was Old Tucson what you expected? Select one.
  Yes | No | In some ways | No preconceptions

- What were you expecting?

- What was the last Western you saw?

- If different from above, what was the most recently produced Western you saw?
Old Tucson’s most impactful features (figure 1) were costumes (92), buildings (94), staff interactions (85), nature (84), music and sound (82), living history (74), and shows (71). Tours (40) were less impactful, and other (39) included the train, cleanliness, food, and the dog-friendly rules. Four guests noted that the music was too loud.

![Impactful Features]

Figure 0-1: Survey question 1

When asked why they were visiting the park (figure 2), guests overwhelmingly responded with other (38), compared to the American West (6), filmmaking (9), or both (17). Other tended to mean that they were somewhat regular visitors that were familiar with the park, or that they came “just to see,” for “fun,” or “vacation” (9).
Figure 0-2: Survey question 2

I asked guests if Old Tucson was what they expected (figure 3), and 74 replied yes. Twelve guests responded no, and of that twelve, seven expressed that they thought Old Tucson was going to be a historical section within the city of Tucson.

Figure 0-3: Survey question 4
I asked guests to name the last Western they had seen, and then I looked up the film’s release year in order to find which Westerns were the most popular. For guests who could name the actor but not the film, I counted each decade of the actor’s career. Many guests named more than one Western, and each response was recorded. The most Westerns were between 1950-1970 accounting for 61 of 148 titles, or 41%. The next popular time period is 1991-200 with 21 titles.

![Last Seen Western Chart]

*Figure 0-4: Survey question 6*

I asked guests to name the most recently released Western, and I proceeded to look up the film’s release year. Thirty-two guests responded with a Western older than 20 years old, and 33 named a Western in the last ten years. Only 11 could name a Western between 2000-2010, and 30 could not name a film.
Overall, these surveys show many aspects of the park impacted the guest experience, guests visit Old Tucson for more than learning opportunities, and Old Tucson is meeting guest expectations. Surveys also provide evidence that Westerns made between 1950-1970 are still popular, and guests were typically able to name more of them than younger films between 2000-2019.

The parking lot license plates included Canada, Mexico and 32 out of 50 states (see figure 13). According to Old Tucson, November and December holidays are their snowbird season. People from northern states travel south for a warmer winter, and that could explain partially why there are so many northern areas represented. These plates are from the guest parking lot, and Old Tucson is far from any other attraction or building in the area, so the probability of them belonging to guests is high.
Character Survey

Guests took the survey in groups, so they were able to pick more than one character if necessary. There are 51 survey responses, and 60 relatable character responses (see figure 14). Thirty-one out of sixty guests related to John Wayne most as a character. He is not a character, and neither are Clint Eastwood, Gene Autry, or other White, male actors that guests would select. 9 guests related to Doc Holliday, Wyatt Earp, or another White, male character based on a living person. Other responses included archetypes like the gunslinger or prostitute. Some people named entire shows like Bonanza and Little House on the Prairie (1977-1983).
Thirty-nine out of fifty-two, or 75%, of people who took the survey identified as White, Caucasian, or of European decent (see figure 15). People of color still strongly identified with White, male actors and characters in Westerns. The people categorized as “Other (but probably White)” are placed in that category because I asked for their race and gender identities, and they responded with a prepared, ideological response and eventually declined to answer.

Thirty-seven out of sixty-seven, or 55%, respondents identified as female, and 27, or 40%, identified as male (see figure 16). One guest preferred not to specify their gender, and the 2 that “declined but probably cis” were the same guests who declined the previous identification question.
Landscape Survey

Guest could select as many images as they wanted. 46 out of 50, or 92%, selected Big Bend National Park, Texas, 0 guests selected Kodiak, Alaska (see figure 17). 2 guests, or 4% selected the Grand Tetons in the winter, while 49, or 98% selected Saguaro National Park. 29 guests or 58% selected the Grand Tetons in the summer, and 7 guests or 14% selected North Cascades National Park, Washington. 26 guests, or 52% selected a summer wheat field in North Dakota as a good place for a Western.

![Western Landscapes](image)

*Figure 0-10: Landscape survey, question 3*

Guests were visiting primarily from North America, but the map does not include the responses from the United Kingdom (2) or Holland (1). This map contains less states, countries, and provinces than the license plate map (see fig 13). The survey asked each guest where they are from, rather than inferring from a car’s registration. The survey was limited to 50 respondents, but there were 544 license plates.
Employee interviews

The following are excerpts from the employee interviews that fall within certain, repeated themes. These themes are; 1) the sense of community amongst the people who work at Old Tucson; 2) the sense of identity with Old Tucson’s landscape; 3) the authenticity of Western genre; 4) the unique balance Old Tucson strikes between entertainment and education; and 5) the future of Westerns and Museums. The quotes are presented in as evidence block format with minimal commentary, and will be analyzed in Chapter 7: Discussion.

Belonging as people

Since Old Tucson employees are responsible for the guest experience, I wanted to know how they felt about their place in Old Tucson’s story. I particularly wanted to know how employees saw themselves reflected in Old Tucson and how that transferred to the guest experience.
For one employee, she sees her Latin heritage reflected at Old Tucson:

“I just, I feel, I mean, being a girl, I like the dresses, I like the peasant clothes! I love the way they dressed. Actually, I'm the one who started the peasant dresses. Yeah, this is how I incorporate my attire to this town. And that was, dressing in my Latin peasant skirts, peasant tops. I've been considered, the Señora of Old Tucson. Well, the historians, they're really close and stuff with us as well. We're all, pretty close. And they gave me that title. So, I'm like ‘Ah, Señora of Old Tucson!’”

She spoke Spanish to bring an international guest into an experience that bridged generations and borders:

“I had a person here who was from Guatemala and they actually pulled me out from the front gate so that I could translate for him. He grew up with his family, his father, grandfather, watching The High Chaparral. So, this was something he wanted to come see for himself and had the opportunity. So, I went and translated the tour. And then we kind of steered off because he wanted to see The High Chaparral so bad. I took him back there and he was in awe. Even though it's an empty building. He was just fascinated by being there, just being in the presence of this is where he made the movies that he's been watching on TV since he was a child. So, it felt good just to be part of that and to be able to connect him to his history, what he grew up with… he couldn't be up happier. He was so, so happy. And it's like, it feels good to be part of that… And I don't speak proper,
proper language. Just barley, it's 'chopped' is what I call it. And he's like, ‘I understood everything. Thank you so much.’ He's like, ‘You were perfect.’ I'm like, "Oh, my God. My grandmother would be rolling over in her grave if she heard me speaking like that! I'm sorry, you know, English/Spanish kind of together. He's like, ‘No, no, no! It was perfect.’ And I was like, ‘Oh, thank you so much!’ See Nana! I could do it!"

This employee extends her empathy to guests as soon as they arrive:

“And so, I'm on a tight budget, you know, I can't assume everyone is, but I will. To help them out. Sometimes they have a large party. Like today someone came in and I gave them one of my guest passes. I said, ‘I'll help you out. How about if I do this for you? Would that help?’ ‘What? Really?’ ‘Yes. I'll do this for you.’ …It's a drive [to Old Tucson]. And people get this confused with the Desert Museum when they're driving.”

The confusion with the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum is common enough, as they are on the same road, they are six minutes apart, and they both close at 5pm. Old Tucson, the Desert Museum, and Saguaro National Park are the only attractions in an otherwise wild desert. Mountains abruptly and physically separate this area from the city of Tucson, and while the distance to Tucson is not far, it is still a commitment. The employee keeps this in mind because for visiting families.

Another employee spoke of his family’s heritage at Old Tucson. He sees his and his adoptive father’s career reflected in the park:
“I grew up in Tombstone, Arizona with the man Gayle Bell and anything I've ever done interview-wise, I've mentioned his name because… Gayle did over 107 motion pictures in his time. Gayle kind of raised us, a bunch of kids on a ranch in Tombstone… So, he was a stunt man. He'd tell stories about out here, flipping stage coaches on cue, several times… And when it comes to horse stunts, any of that stuff, that's the guy taught us all how to do crazy things… and I was already with him at the age of 13. So, I started doing all this different stunt stuff, in that sense for horses. When I was like 14 -15 years old. And then as the years went, I learned to do crazier stuff as I went.”

Not all bonds are familial or ethnically cultural. One employee said that the staff bond over popular culture as well:

“Everyone here, they're big movie and Disney nerds like, to be honest. Star Wars.”

The bond among staff extends into their sense of belonging. Two employees specifically mention that the people or atmosphere is why they stay at Old Tucson:

“I have three jobs. This is just one. And this is one of my fun jobs. And I stay connected to it because I enjoy it. I enjoy being connected to it. But this is my one day a week. There was a day where I would put in for vacation at my other job, my day job. And then I'd be here… I'm connected. I'm connected.”
“I feel privileged to be here at Old Tucson. I am a volunteer. Technically, I could walk away anytime I want to, but for whatever reason, Old Tucson kind of holds you in. It’s very much a family friendly group that I work with, not only in the docents, but in the Old Tucson employees. And, uh, the saying of ‘they take care of their own,’ really is true. They want to know what goes on with us. We ask what goes on with them, we eat lunch in the same place. It’s- it’s great.”

**Belonging with land**

All six participants had visited Old Tucson before applying to work or volunteer at the park. Some grew up near Tucson and visited regularly with family and school trips, others visited once while living elsewhere, and applied as soon as they knew they were moving to Tucson. Some live within a few miles of the park, one employee drives an hour one-way for work. I wanted to know how employees identified with the land that they saw every day at work. During an interview, an employee gestured to Golden Gate Peak saying, “The backdrop of these mountains is just half of the magic of Old Tucson.”

One employee described Golden Gate Peak as their starting point in storytelling:

“I’ve done stagecoach tours out here forever. And so, I do - I get bored saying the same stuff. So, I would go and research something extra out, you know, because we touch the bases on, of course the movie Arizona, and all the other - like our stagecoach tour is totally different than the walking tour. But we pretty much all kind of based in the same structure like Golden Gate Peak - that’s right here in front of us. You know, that’s been a backdrop for over 700 movies out here.”
Arizona land is more than just Old Tucson, and films have been produced all of the state. Another employee explained why all of Arizona is the ideal film location, and, to an extent, why we associate the American Southwest with all Westerns:

“Arizona has every landscape there is to shoot in. We've got sunshine, you know, over 300 days out of the year. We're right next to Hollywood, so it's close by. It's just - I mean, all those reasons were why it was so popular back in the heyday of the Westerns… I'd love to see some good tax incentives come back for Arizona. That's the biggest problem.”

Even though Arizona has more history with film, other states are offering more competitive tax incentives that lure in mainstream, large-budget films. The lack of tax incentives and the decline in Westerns has made film a less reliable industry in the state.

**Staged Authenticity in Film**

Authenticity is decided by how the guest or audience feels. When asked why the Western was so important to American heritage, one employee said:

“I believe that it's an era that has been romanticized, perhaps beyond its limits, but it's what a lot of us, especially 50s and 60s babies grew up on. It represents, at least to some of us, a freedom that we no longer have. When you look at thousands upon thousands of acres of land and the thought of attaining that, is very small. You're
usually stuck in a city or at the very least, a suburban area. But the American West will forever represent that freedom. Most of us can never have.”

One employee admitted that “movies are both good and bad when it comes to portraying history” and warns guests that, “Wyatt Earp died in Hollywood telling his story. Wyatt Earp told Wyatt Earp's story.” The following is all from the same employee who researches Western American history.

He expressed thoughts on whitewashed casting and John Wayne’s casting choices:

“I watched a lot of the John Wayne stuff and, he always expressed a type of values that were kind of interesting. Which is funny because as I got more into his history, you see how he incorporated more stuff that you wouldn't have seen in other Westerns. Like an example being the Native Americans. He insists on bringing real Native Americans into his movies, as opposed to you had Chuck Connors back in those days playing Geronimo. You know things like that. You know, Valdez Is Coming is one of my favorite movies. But when you look at it, it's Burt Lancaster playing a Mexican. You know, it's like, ‘Why? Why were there not Mexicans playing Mexicans?’ … There are groups that are trying to express [John Wayne] as being prejudiced where, you know, you never really saw that. It's more like, his politics didn't agree with their politics, so they're trying to find something to disagree with him on. Even though he's not here to defend himself.”
He critiqued prop and costume choices:

“It's John Wayne. He does these movies, is like, ‘Oh the Civil War just ended, so here I'm walking around with my 1892 Winchester.’ It's like, what? And it's not even a regular off the rack Winchester. It's a custom Winchester that you would not have seen. (laughs)... Guys didn't have belt loops till the 20s, you know. But they're portraying the 1880s... They look good... But that's part of movie, magic.”

He also explained how the American Southwest tells a different story than Alberta, Canada:

“It's really significant to me, is talking about these movie remakes. Old Tucson's set in the Sonoran Desert. Right. So, one of the first things that they did at Mescal, in fact, and my understanding is why they built Mescal, was for the original Monte Walsh movie. The whole story of Monte Walsh is it was a bad winter. Cattle operations are changing. He's an old cowboy who doesn't want to change, you know, but by taking it here in Mescal and some of the Arizona ranches here, by doing the movies here in a desert, it looks bland. It looks poor like poor land, you know? And so, you could believe that, yeah, the West is changing. It was a bad winter. There's not enough stuff to grow good cows. The remake of that movie, The Tom Selleck Version was done in Canada. And I always point out it's like, ‘How do you convince
me that it's not good range for cows when he's riding around on grass, that's this tall.’” (Employee gestures near shoulder height.)

A well-researched historian can spot inaccuracies, but this employee dismissed the inaccuracies because of the truth did not fit the Hollywood version of the story. Another employee works as a stunt actor and explained his interest in the historical details:

“And it was kind of neat, because when it came to the Black Bart episode, I knew something about him, but I wanted to research it out since I was playing my brother's shotgun rider, and I shot Black Bart in the head. Which guns-wise back then, if it was that close, he got grazed, which the weaponry in 1800s was not as accurate as most people think (laughs)… And I thought what an interesting guy. The government basically turned him into an outlaw. I guess… if the government would have just left him alone, he probably would never have been who he was.”

Old Tucson is steeped in history and the employees are invested in various layers of that history. All of them are dedicated in some way to the American and cinematic history associate with Old Tucson. Certain employees, however, have personal history in Old Tucson’s cinematic history and they hold unique, firsthand knowledge of the park.
Old Tucson with entertainment and history

One employee described the filmmakers’ challenge to incorporate modern storytelling and safety requirements. This quote is specifically referencing dangerous stunt work:

“So then to come here and see where we took the West and turn it into movie magic. It's not just ‘OK, we're portraying the West.’ It's also, how do you make these movies? How do you take in 2019 and do something that was set in the Civil War or something?”

Old Tucson specializes in the balance between the present and the past, and then presenting that balance to their audience. The same employee described Old Tucson’s shared heritage and experience between the staff and the guests:

“Well not only does the audience feed off of what we give them. We feed off of what they bring to us, too… I worked at the Arizona History Museum as a docent, working over there, and it's so much funner to come here and do the talks… Sometimes you get some of the guests that are coming in. They've been on movies, they've done things, they've met John Wayne and things like that also. So sometimes, yeah. Guests can be part of the museum.”

Another employee described the heritage guests experience at the park:
“For many of our guest, that come in, again, this is what they grew up on or their parents. It gives them the chance to walk in the same footsteps as some of their heroes. Whether those heroes are real actors or the characters that they played.”

Old Tucson, at 80 years old, has hosted many actors and characters. Another employee pointed out how Old Tucson is a unique site for exploring American heritage:

“There are other Western attractions all over the place in this country, but they don't have the draw of the film history like we do. There is nothing like Old Tucson… To go on and read the reviews from people that come out here, you can see how surprised and blown away they are, what they experience when they come here. And again, and to be able to focus on both sides of it, the education and the entertainment. The edutainment, is what that's called, it's kind of a goofy word, but it's very true. We're trying to give them a taste of the Hollywood version and the way it really was. Even in our shows, we have shows that are based on movies that were made here. We have others that were based on stories that actually happened in this region. And we have some that are just pure fiction.

“And that's why, since we're not strictly a period correct, living history museum, someone will say, ‘Oh, that's not realistic.’ Well, so what? It's enjoyable. You know, it's entertaining, ‘And if you want the exact history, go to this living history presentation at one o'clock,’ you know. We want to be able to offer things for everybody… We now have the Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation. And that's helped us focus a lot
on the cultural side of things The Chinese Cultural Center, the Buffalo Soldiers, the Tohono O'odham Nation.”

Old Tucson is reaching out to different groups and they are trying to paint a more holistic picture of the people in southern Arizona. Their commitment to representation is as much for their community as it is for the national and international audiences. Old Tucson is a reflection of the people and the land in southern Arizona, which is essentially what tourists travel so far to see.

The Future of Museums and Westerns

I think experiential learning is the best way to learn, and experiential learning often takes place within museums. However, the museum is only a tool, and cannot force a guest to learn or feel something new. I asked what role does the audience play in their own experience and an employee responded:

“I have seen guests come in at 10 o'clock in the morning and it is an effort for them to leave at five because they have been to every show, they've been in and out of every building and they really absorb and want to do as much as they can. There are other guests that come in and might be here for an hour and they're done. They didn't like this show, they didn't have fun. Why would I want to go see that? So, they don't- I think those guests come simply because it's in TripAdvisor and the tour books. They don't really know what they're coming to. And once they get here, it's not what they're interested in… I think they play the biggest part.”
As a guest, I noticed a subtle message in Old Tucson’s programming. Because of their casting choices, Old Tucson says stunts are for men, and singing and dancing are for women. I included gender roles into the interviews, and one employee declined to answer while another declined the entire interview. Employees who engaged with the topic of gender roles expressed that the cowboy could be more versatile to modern audiences. Even though, according to one employee, “Kids nowadays don't know John Wayne,” another employee says kids still recognize cowboys:

“You know, it's funny, I've seen - little kids is what gets me, because I have fun with kids, but little kids still love cowboys. I've been not just here, I'll wear tall, tall boots. I have to wear work boots here with spurs and stuff. But I'll go to stop at a gas station and kids come out like, ‘Mommy, there's a cowboy,’ you know… So, for me, that's huge because, you know, the kids are still more into cowboys, you know. And I think they come out here and it's just, you know, put themselves into that perspective that they could love to be that, for at least one day out here.”

Within Old Tucson’s clearly gendered entertainment, one employee explained that the audiences enjoy seeing stunt women perform, but that stunt work is a full-time commitment:

“If they get hurt or hurt ankle or something, then they can't sing and dance. So, if we did have a stunt woman, which would be awesome, I think, because the crowd always
loves it. Like when we have shows and the girl- especially if there's a villain in there being mean to women, and she comes out with a shotgun and then kicks his butt, it's such a crowd pleaser. But I feel like, if we did have a stunt woman, she would have to be in the stunt cast like permanently, not the singing and dancing part of it. She would have to fight and do stunts every day just like we do.”

Another employee explained that women used to be in the stunt shows:

“At one point, though, the girls were doing stunts out here with us and hitting us just as hard as we were hitting them… it takes a special person. It doesn't matter if it's a man or a woman - to do stunts... And the question I can't answer is, I don't know why they don't do it now. But, you know, back in the day, we had - we did shows combined together.”

No employee could explain the lack of stuntwomen or singing and dancing men, but no employee seemed to support the division in gender roles either. As for the future of Westerns, employees offered thoughts on the mainstream trends in violence, race, and sexuality in films:

“As far as the film industry is concerned, and I realize this is only my opinion, they take a lot of the mystery out of things now. It's almost like they have to put every little nuance on the screen in order for their viewing audience to understand it. And I think that's really underrating what the viewing audience is capable of. The old film noirs, as
you didn't usually see a bloody gory body, but you knew what had happened. Now it's like they want to show you that bloody gory body. They have to take up film time with that because they don't think you're going to understand it any other way… As far as the museums are concerned, I think they have improved. I think they are much more in tune now to what interests their particular niche and trying to work with that. They seem to want to give you what you are looking for. Isn't that funny, I'm saying films are doing that and shouldn't be and museums are doing it, and I think it's the right way to go.”

Though guests and employees vocalized a strong disinterested in violent Westerns, employees still like the stunt show and wish for new Westerns to be filmed. Two employees expressed explicit interest in antiheroes or villains as characters:

“This is going to sound silly, but… it's a silly one. I personally am a fairly strait-laced person, but I tend to like the cowboys that are a little bit, the bad boy. A little more wild, a little more daring than people I actually know. I told you it would be silly.”

“Oh, I love villains for some reason. I don't really know why until I started acting here, too. They're just- they get the attention and they're always just- how do I say it, the most interesting character? Like, why? Why are they villains? And then, you know, people get mad at them and they want things to happen to them and they want justice and stuff. So I was always attracted to like the bad guys and not like necessarily on their side. But, you know, that's what would get me pumped up, especially about the Wild West. ‘Get him,’ like, ‘Get him. Get a rope. He's going down!’… Villains are definitely what I
look forward to in Westerns, I guess… I play a villain quite often here. They're always fun.”

Complicated, antihero protagonists are a common character in Clint Eastwood and later John Wayne films. Western antiheroes, like *The Mandalorian*, maintain popularity today. When I asked the about what kind of landscapes he’d like to see in a Westerns, one employee linked film-induced tourism with his own preferences:

“The places that I haven't been to myself, I would say. So, seeing that thinking, ‘Wow.’ I've lived in Tucson pretty much my whole life. So, when I see big forests or open land that isn't the bushes and cactus, it always kind of makes you think, ‘Oh, I bet it's like really nice in person.’ So yeah, the mountain areas, I've always been kind of outdoorsy. So yeah, pretty landscapes, forestry, mountains, snow is always really cool to see either on TV or in real life.”

Overall, the employees encouraged creativity to keep history accessible and relevant to audiences:

“We've had a lot of bad things happen in our history. We've had a lot of great things happen. Most of all, we've had a lot of things happen in our history that haven't happened anywhere else in the world… Let's portray that, let's show people that. Bass Reeves is a former slave that became one of the best man hunters ever to serve in the U.S. government. And we've never wanted to tell that story. It's like, really? Why wouldn't
you? ... So, what if the vast majority of society wants to play on PS4? You know, put some good Western out there.”

“Be creative. Always be creative and try to make something your own. You can't really make anything that hasn't already been done or hasn't already been made, but you can still make in your own. find ways to keep people interested in these kinds of things, find a way to make people like get a spark in their head… If you want to keep that history alive, you have to keep people interested in the topic.”

Old Tucson employees are not necessarily looking for new stories. They acknowledge that there are plenty of old stories, connected to the American West that would engage audiences. The fact that these stories are historically based, ingrained in the land, and potentially available for visitation makes the stories interesting to audiences.

**Conclusion**

Guest surveys suggest that classic, Western imagery with White, male actors and the American Southwest are the persisting image of the American Western. Cars in the parking lot were registered all over North America. Guests ranked buildings as Old Tucson’s most impactful feature, and tours as the least impactful. Guests were not particularly motivated to visit Old Tucson for educational purposes, but to see what the park had to offer. Old Tucson tended to meet guest expectations by the time they were leaving the park. Most recently viewed Westerns were from the period between 1951-1970, which is within John Wayne’s time period. Less than half of the guests reported
seeing a Western made in the last 20 years. Over half of the guests related most to John Wayne as a character, and 75% of guests related to White men in Westerns such as John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and Wyatt Earp. Most guests selected images of the Sonoran Desert and Rio Grande river canyons as appropriate settings for a Western, while the least selected the Grand Tetons in winter and Kodiak, Alaska.

By the nature of their occupation, Old Tucson’s employees are in tune with storytelling, Westerns, southern Arizona, and the guest experience. Each employee touched on themes regarding; 1) the sense of community amongst the people who work at Old Tucson; 2) the sense of identity with Old Tucson’s landscape; 3) the authenticity of Western genre; 4) the unique balance Old Tucson strikes between entertainment and education; and 5) the future of Westerns and Museums.

The results suggest that the current idea of the West is still lodged between the 1951-1970, despite there being new Westerns. An employee explained that these images were the one seen by 50s and 60s children, and that generation is still holding onto that imagery. If we are to expand the American image to include more people and landscapes, we must include that diversity in entertainment.
Chapter Six: Discussion

So, what we got now is Brokeback Mountain! Everything’s built on that, that’s all we got, boy.

- Jake Gyllenhaal as Jack Twist in Brokeback Mountain, 2005

Brokeback Mountain is a Western “which nearly always privileges outside over inside, wilderness over society, individual freedom over oppressive social networks and institutions,” and by introducing a layer queerness to those preferred spaces, the main characters keep their identities hidden from others (Todd 2009). Twist shouts this line, frustrated, at his partner for never committing to a relationship after nearly 20 years. Up to this point, the film promises an empty future where neither character is happy, and they have chosen to follow society’s heteropatriarchal trajectories. Their future is bleak.

When the present and future seem unsteady, people can turn to the past. In Southern Arizona, the astronomers at Kitt Peak National Observatory are always looking into the past for answers. My tour guide said the finite speed of light is a gift because the further out one looks, the further one sees into the past. I mention this because somehow astronomers and a similar theory to my anthropological ones. Across disciplines, we all cling to history because “the past is tangible and secure” in comparison to the present and future (Lowenthal 1985).
The past holds security for Americans everywhere, but in this research, I found that people prefer or recognize only a small piece of everything the Western can historically represent. Luckily, Old Tucson acts as a convergent point for people, employed or visiting, young and old, North American or further. The collected results are intended to answer the following, primary research questions:

1) What role, if any, do American Western films play in establishing historical and geographical perceptions of Americans and their landscapes?
2) What attracts guests to Old Tucson year after year?
3) What insights from Old Tucson can be applied to museums and heritage sites communities struggling to increase guest visitation?
4) What constitutes a museum and/or a heritage site?

And the secondary questions are:

1) What narrative or story is Old Tucson producing on an individual level to visitors to encourage repeat visitation?
2) Do visitors recognize and/or appreciate non-classical landscapes and storytelling in new American Western films?
3) Is there a story guests and employees want to see on screen and experience in the park, or what is the next step in American Westerns?

This chapter first addresses the limitations of the research, and then answers the research questions contextualized within the background and theory previously presented.
in this paper. In order to best contextualized the results, the discussion has been divided into three sections; 1) John Wayne and Saguaros; 2) The Spirit of the Old West; and 3) The Future of Our National Films. The chapter concludes with suggestions for future, related research.

Limitations

To the best of my knowledge, there is no previous study that combines film, tourism, and heritage. Therefore, there is a lack of previous research from which to pull. While I was in Tucson for 21 days, Old Tucson was only open for 14 of those days, and provide a narrow window for guest participation in the quantitative datasets. The qualitative datasets were limited to the employees’ interviews at the time of collection as I did not provide them with their transcripts for final approval. Employees did not review their interviews in the interest of their anonymity, and I do not possess any of their contact information.

John Wayne and Saguaros

I titled this paper People and Place because I think those are most important elements identity and in Westerns. Participants showed me that they relate strongest to John Wayne as a character and strongly associate saguaros with the Western. This is significant because John Wayne’s last film was in 1976 (The Shootist), and the last, successful, big-budget film made with Old Tucson’s saguaros was Tombstone in 1993. John Wayne and saguaro cactus are enduring images with historic, cultural, and pilgrimage-like importance, therefore supporting Ina Bertrand’s national identity/history/film. These images of John Wayne and saguaros are incredibly narrow
representations of the American West, and therefore an incomplete representation as well. This identified version of the West is clearly rooted between 1951-1970 (the civil rights movement, the second wave of feminism, the American Indian Movement, and the Vietnam War) or 1991-2000 (Post-Cold War era) according to this study, with only 33 participating guests recalling a Western in the last 10 years. The nation has changed significantly in the last 20 years, which newer Westerns reflect, but the Old Tucson audience did not seem to embrace.

And while it is interesting that most guests related to White, male figures, 25% of the guest participants were not White, and 56% were not male. The most popular image of the West is an incredibly narrow and outdated definition in terms of storytelling.

Overwhelmingly, despite their identities in race, ethnicity, and gender, guests identified with the White, male identity in American Westerns. I say identity, and not character because 63% responded with an actor’s name rather than a character’s name, with 51% naming John Wayne. While it is interesting that Wayne is still seen as the personification of the West, it is problematic. Guests did not name John Wayne’s characters, which means they may not see him separately from his acting, and that the line between character and actor for this man is blurry at best. This blurry distinction is aided by the face that John Wayne is the stage name for Marion Michael Morrison. The authentic, Western character may be John Wayne after all. As one of the employees said, “As an actor, John Wayne played John Wayne, no matter what name you gave him.”

Wayne is a conservative icon. His views are recorded in an infamous interview with Playboy magazine where Wayne shares racist and homophobic opinions. Wayne refers to
Easy Rider (1969) and Midnight Cowboy (1969) as “perverted” (Wayne 1971). He continues to describe Midnight Cowboy as “a story about two fags,” but “As far as a man and a woman is concerned… healthy, lusty sex is wonderful,” and he saw “no reason why it shouldn't be in pictures” (Wayne 1971). One employee said that Wayne is not here to defend himself against these claims, and that he was instrumental in casting people of color in roles for people of color. However, John Wayne said what he said and the characters of color are not equal to characters he played. As a director, Wayne “gave the blacks their proper position,” because he “had a black slave in The Alamo, and… had a correct number of blacks in The Green Berets” (Wayne 1971). Regarding Indigenous peoples and their land, Wayne said, “the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves,” and “what happened 100 years ago in our country can't be blamed on us today” (Wayne 1971).

By the time Wayne explicitly states, “I believe in white supremacy,” he has already aligned himself with the white supremacist heteropatriarchal mindset (Wayne 1971). He reinforces the Uncle Tom stereotype when Jethro, an enslaved character, gains freedom and chooses to remain subservient to their previous enslaver. Wayne’s casting choices are exploitive convenience and fall into the settler-native-slave relationship. Wayne risked very little of his reputation by creating a stereotypical, Black character that preferred White leadership, thereby normalizing racism during the civil rights movement through film (Hill Collins 2002). In the film, the settler-native-slave relationship is played out metaphorically and in reality. Jethro is freed of his enslavement, bringing him closer to the settler status, however, he will never attain true settler status and settles back into his
slave-like relationship. Jester Hairston, and many other actors, took stereotype parts like Jethro because they were the jobs available to actors of color. Hairston “was harshly criticized for accepting stereotypical roles” by civil rights groups because the settlers pick which natives and slaves are promoted closer to settler-status, rather than working together towards decolonization (Watkins 2000; Tuck and Yang 2012). Wayne, the film’s director, still matched with 51% of the guest respondents. To have Wayne as our collectively relatable memory of the West is disturbing because this memory is one of fondness. It is not even a memory of complicated fondness, because I witnessed the guests’ answers and they offered little-to-no hesitation. The Western is synonymous with Wayne’s image because he appeared in many Westerns, but also because the nation went through many social changes near the time of Wayne’s death and the national genre need to re-evaluate the nation’s identity.

The nation’s identity also seems to reside in the American Southwest desert. Guests strongly preferred the desert landscapes of the Arizona Sonora National Park and Big Bend National Park, Texas. Guests were strongly opposed to the oceanside cliffs in Kodiak, Alaska and Grand Tetons National Park in the winter. At the time of this survey, the guests were in a desert setting surrounded by a Western theme, which may have influenced their responses. Although many were visiting from the American Southwest, there were guests from Alberta, British Columbia, Colorado, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Washington state who did not associate snow with a Western. These states and provinces fall into Woodard’s Far West Nation, and they all experience snowfall, but their idea of a Western did not include snow. This may be because in Westerns, the
national film was historically shot in warmer climates, and therefore became the national identity (Lawton 2008; Bertrand 1984).

Strongly associating with the Arizona Sonora desert is problematic because the saguaro is a tree that only grows in one, small part of North America (see fig. 21). Saguaro cacti only grow in southwest Arizona, parts of California, and the Western region of the Mexican state Sonora. As one employee said, “the saguaros give it away here… It's like, "There's saguaro cactus in the background. Why's John Wayne saying he's in Texas?”

Figure 0-1: Map of the saguaro cactus habitat in Arizona, California, and Sonora (“Carnegiea Gigantea” n.d.)

The Saguaro cactus, though limited to a specific region, are an interesting plant to associate with American identity. Though the saguaro does not grow throughout United States, it is indigenous to the cultural nation El Norte, which spans both the United States and Mexico. The saguaro is “ecologically connected to nearly every other organism in its range” due to its survival adaptation (“Saguaro Cactus: Sentinel of the Southwest” n.d.).
The trunks grow for 75 years before growing a branch, and they can live for up to 200 years (McDonald n.d.). There are living saguaros that are older than the United States-Mexico border where they reside, and they help to sustain the life of other plants, animals, and people in the desert through food, water, and shade. The saguaro cactus acts as intersection for all life in the desert, and according to survey participants, it may act as an intersection for American identity as well. The collective memory of the American West could be, should be, and is so much more than one desert, but this particular desert is a natural convergence point. The intersection at the Sonoran Desert is possible because it is an extremely old place, and has been in many films. Old Tucson’s popularity as a film set was due to predictable weather and proximity to Hollywood (Lawton 2008). Old Tucson is still a good place to film today, but they are also actively exploring heritage in the American Southwest.

Where the Spirit of the Old West Comes Alive

Both the guest surveys and employee interviews confirm the importance of the relationship between guest and employee, suggesting that staged authenticity continues to play an important role in cultural tourism. The guest surveys indicated that despite how people identified, or where they came from, they still preferred classic, Western imagery in the American Southwest. This is troubling because it is neither how the West is, nor how it was. Old Tucson’s Western Heritage Festival occurred while I was there, and it has the potential to create a more holistic picture of the West. In the national identity/history/film cycle Old Tucson supports each step of watching, expecting, and delivering recognizable themes through film-induced tourism. Old Tucson also include
Bertrand’s key requirement of the historian. Bertrand says that national films are a going to shape the way people view themselves in the context of their nation, and that in order for that context to be useful, a historian must be present to fill in the gaps left by Hollywood (Bertrand 1984).

Old Tucson’s core mission is to bring the spirit of the Old West to life. Seven of the nine features had more than 70% positive responses. The widespread confirmation of impactful features indicates that Old Tucson is giving their audience good, museum visitor experience design. Three high ranking features were costumes (92/101), staff interactions (85/101), and living history (74/101). These three features rest solely in the hands of individual employees, and guests noticed their commitment to the Old West experience. The Old West experience, however, is fluid and does not conform to a strict, living history museum concept. Regarding critiques that a program is not historically accurate, an employee said, “Well, so what? It's enjoyable… And if you want the exact history, go to this living history presentation at one o'clock.” Nina Simon’s core and doors museum model is seen, where Old Tucson concentrates on bringing the Old West to life, and then provides multiple opportunities for guests to share the Old West experience with each other (Simon 2016). Employees do the labor up front providing multiple atmospheric options for the guest, but ultimately, the guests “play the biggest part” in their experience at Old Tucson.

Falk and Dierking write about visitors learning best when the information is provided with personal context, sociocultural context, and physical context (Falk and Dierking 2000). Guests were coming for a variety of reasons, and Old Tucson met their
expectations. In an employee interview, we even saw that they can assist large families with cost or a language barrier. Old Tucson transferred their lease agreement to the non-profit Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation, and committed to be a place for all the people who claim heritage in the area. Old Tucson is opening many doors and, in turn, welcoming many people into the past.

Museums are supposed to help us decide “what kind of society we wish to live in, how much diversity a society can tolerate and how much uniformity it dares to impose” (Ames 1992). Old Tucson is approaching this conversation with a clear shift into cultural heritage. They still have segregated gender roles in entertainment, but Old Tucson invited the Tohono O'odham tribe to the Western Heritage Festival and posted anti-racist statements during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. In their attempt to provide an “understanding and appreciation of southern Arizona’s diverse cultures which impacted and influenced life in the Sonoran Desert region during the Territorial period” (“Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation” n.d.), the Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation flies three flags at Old Tucson’s front gate: Arizona, the United States, and the Tohono O’odham Nation. Unfortunately, missing from the Western Heritage Festival were the Indigenous Tohono O'odham people. They were present on Saturday selling fry bread, but were absent on the second day. I do not know why they were absent. I do know that the Tohono O’odham Nation Reservation is an hour’s drive away, that fry bread is a one-dimensional representation of Indigenous peoples, and that guests vocalized disappointment at their absence. During the Black Lives Matter protests, they shared pre-made resources on anti-racist media and Black owned businesses in Tucson
(Old Tucson 2020c; 2020b). In regards to film, Old Tucson essentially responsibility filmmakers carry when they create a narrative with national identity and national history through fiction. Old Tucson said, “the importance of film in its ability to teach, engage and foster empathy for those whose experiences are different from ourselves” (Old Tucson 2020a). Old Tucson accepted responsibility for misrepresenting the people of southern Arizona. These statements echo the studies and theoretical framework that move audiences to a greater place of understanding (Kauffman and Libby 2012; Bertrand 1984; Hill Collins 2002). Old Tucson seems prepared to engage with their many heritage partners, and they are well equipped to use spectacle and experience to foster social change (Forjindam 2020). This dialogue is in the beginning stages, and will hopefully be explored in the near future.

As allies, Old Tucson will have to decide where they stand on John Wayne as a main attraction. The guests I surveyed overwhelmingly identified with him, but he will not fit nicely into intersectional, decolonized future towards which they seem to be working. John Wayne is aging out of the heritage, as seen with the employee who said, “Kids nowadays don’t know John Wayne,” but kids still recognize cowboys. John Wayne’s era was for “50s and 60s babies,” and the nation has changed significantly since then. The significant changes are visible in newer Westerns like Godless, Timeless, The Mandalorian, The Magnificent Seven, Brokeback Mountain, and more. In order to “supports the black community” and “towards more authentic and greater representation of minorities who shaped Southern Arizona” (Old Tucson 2020a), it is time to evaluate
the settler-native-slave relationship between John Wayne and people of color, and to create more intersections for Southern Arizona.

As a location, Old Tucson is uniquely designed to continue the conversation of heritage through tourism and entertainment. Through staged authenticity, Old Tucson has established itself as the bridge between make-believe and reality. They open their gates and give guests a peek into filmmaking, not so much as to dispel the illusion, but to enhance the story created by filmmakers. The stories are relatable because they are about people learning to live with each other on the land they now share.

The Future of Our National Films

The employees seem to have a strong sense of community with each other, the guests, and their own heritage at Old Tucson. No one seemed rushed to finish their interview because they enjoyed speaking about their jobs. During the formal interviews, nobody mentioned pay, though in casual conversations, employees would admit to receiving low wages. Interestingly, employees did not ask for more or better pay, since they are often retired or working multiple jobs. State tax incentives are often a deciding factor in where a film will shoot. States like Georgia and New Mexico have completely shifted their economies based on the massive tax incentives offered by the government (Prigge 2018). Simplified, productions apply for these incentives, receive the money, and hire a local crew to shoot the film (Prigge 2018). Incentives can account for 20-45% of the estimated production costs, and big-budget films rely on the incentives as investments. Incentives led to a booming film economy in New Mexico, where the film industry is well supported by residents (Adrian Gomez 2020). Currently, the Arizona tax incentive is not as
competitive as other states, leading films that take place in Arizona to be shot elsewhere (Thompson 2019). Old Tucson used to stand in for so many other states like California, Texas, and Minnesota, but now they struggle to be their own place in film.

The employee interviews confirmed that without tax incentives, big-budget, mainstream films will not shoot in Arizona. In my observations, the employees liked their jobs and wanted to do more of what Old Tucson is designed to do. This is similar to the founding of the Far West nation on Colin Woodard’s map. The Far West was settled by railroad companies promising people a sustainable livelihood similar to the one they knew (Woodard 2011). Old Tucson was built for a somewhat distant industry that no longer needs it. The Western’s hiatus from popular culture also affected Old Tucson after their 1995 fire. With little demand for Western sets, they were not able to recover everything that burned (Lawton 2008). Thus, we are left with the Western images created in the 50s and 60s, and an old place looking for new ways to create revenue.

Interviews and surveys revealed that audiences are not watching newer Westerns because they are too violent, and lack the nuanced storytelling of classic Westerns, “The old film noirs, as you didn't usually see a bloody gory body, but you knew what had happened.” Some audiences are not ready to have the discussion of how physically and culturally violent the West was and continues to be for colonized peoples. The current trajectory for Westerns like *Wind River* (2017) and *Westworld* (2016) is for the story to sit and dwell in the aftermath of violence.

The good news is that there are new Westerns created every year. Filmmakers are working to explore our new, national identity. Filmmakers work hard to create a staged
authenticity for the audience on screen, and more hard work is necessary as we work
towards decolonization in film.

**Future Areas of Study**

The answers to these questions naturally brought up more questions. I have divided
them into three categories: people, place, and film.

People are the center or anthropology, and therefore, a major element of the study. If
given the opportunity to continue this research, I would 1) Include local, Indigenous
histories; 2) Ask adults for their age range; 3) Create a survey specifically for children
and teenagers; 4) Ask for people to choose a Western character archetype rather than a
singular character; 5) Ask if people identify with characters because they endorse the
values of those characters/actors; and 6) Partner with another organization through the
Arizona Sonora Western Heritage Foundation.

The physical location is inextricably tied to the stories associated with it. Because a
sense of place grounds our identities, I would in the future 1) Work with a local,
Indigenous community member to create a land acknowledgement with actionable items
2) Ask guests if Old Tucson, to them, is first a museum, theme park, film set, or heritage
center; 3) Ask participants to draw where they think the American West begins and ends;
4) Conduct a similar study at a Western film festival.

Film instills the emotional connection to people and places separated by time and
distance. If I were to explore the future of Westerns, I would 1) Ask what kind of
character or landscape the participant would like to see in a Western; 2) Ask participants
how they define the Western genre; and 3) Create new Westerns.
Conclusion

Old Tucson provided an anthropological site rooted in people, place, and culture. It has endured time through filmmaking and tourism, and they strive to improve both through the lens of southern Arizona. People come from all over North America just to see what Old Tucson has to offer, and they offer a well-balanced blend of entertainment and history. This study is the first to look at race, gender, land representation through film and tourism at Old Tucson, and there is room for future studies.
Chapter Seven: Conclusion

“They tried to break us, they tried to ruin us. But instead, they created us.”

- Laura Dern as Clementine in The Good Time Girls, 2017

*The Good Time Girls* (2017) is a short film about calculated revenge, where characters take advantage the enemy’s predictable priorities. Revenge is not what I am recommending, but it is possible to extract patterns and make a plan. In Westerns, the audience has loved the same actor and landscape for so long that they have become our national identity and memory. And I think it is possible to do it again with a different set of heroes in the landscapes that enhance their stories the best.

The United States is, once again, at a major shift in its values and identity in 2020. Over the course of this study, the coronavirus ravaged the entire planet, and the demand for racial equality reached a breaking point. I watched as communities of color were more susceptible to the virus due to institutionalized racism (Sabatier 2020; Chavez 2020; Amanda Gomez 2020). I saw saguaro cacti older than the U.S.-Mexico border removed in order to build a border wall (Hennessy-Fiske 2020). I watched as theme parks, film sets, and museums shut down over night (Perman and Sakoui 2020; “COVID-19 Resource Center” 2020; IAAPA 2020). Most impressively, I saw *Hamilton* shift from the
greatest musical ever made, to a problematic retelling that continues erasure, white supremacy, and heteropatriarchal themes (France 2020).

With this much change, the Western may take a few years to reinvent itself again. I am hopeful that it will come back and filmmakers continue to link multiple layers of identity within a story. I also hope that film-induced tourism and museums work together and manage the collective heritage stored within popular culture. Mostly, I hope that there will be so many new Westerns that we begin to decolonize our national memory.

The key points I hope to have identified in this paper are:

1. Westerns reflect evolving, mainstream, American values
2. American identity is in the people and their places.
3. Old Tucson’s audience doesn’t strongly identify with newer Westerns.
4. Old Tucson Studios is a uniquely designed location to explore American identity through the Western.

My research shows that audiences will relate to an American hero, and that they can identify iconic landscapes. Audiences will go to see where that hero stood in the landscape, and that place can be for every single one of us. The only thing we need are more heroes in more landscapes telling these stories.

We can continue trying to decolonize our country’s memory through film. This means casting characters that embody different intersectionalities, giving them agency over their own narrative, and placing them in landscapes that we recognize, visit, and
cling to for our own identities. Now would be the time for Westerns to return and redefine what it means to live in America.

Film-induced tourism will also help restructure our national identity by acting as a caretaker for the story. Films are an emotional investment, and visiting a filming location can be an intergenerational, time-traveling pilgrimage. The land will continue to hold more and more stories extending from the past into the future.
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Appendix A

Visitor Survey: Character

1. What about Old Tucson’s environment has had the greatest impact on your visit? Select all that apply.
   Buildings | Nature | Shows | Living History | Tours | Music/Sound | Costumes | Staff Interactions | Other, please describe:

2. What did you come to learn about? Select all that apply.
   The American West | Filmmaking | Neither | Other, please describe:

3. Which Western character do relate to the most? Please list the character and film.

4. Was Old Tucson what you expected? Select one
   Yes | No | In some ways | No preconceptions

5. What were you expecting?

6. What was the last Western you saw?

7. If different from above, what was the most recently produced Western you saw?

8. What are your race and gender identity?
Appendix B

Visitor Survey: Landscapes

1) What about Old Tucson’s environment has had the greatest impact on your visit? Select all that apply.
   Buildings | Nature | Shows | Living History | Tours | Music/Sound | Costumes | Staff Interactions | Other, please describe:

2) What did you come to learn about? Select all that apply.
   The American West | Filmmaking | Neither | Other, please describe:

3) Which landscapes would be a good setting for a Western?

   A. 
   B. 
   C.
4) Was Old Tucson what you expected? Select one
   Yes  | No  | In some ways | No preconceptions

5) What were you expecting?

6) What was the last Western you saw?

7) If different from above, what was the most recently produced Western you saw?

8) Where are you visiting from? State/Province, Country
Appendix C

Employee Interviews

1) Why is the Western important to American heritage and culture?

2) Had you ever visited Old Tucson before applying to work there?

3) What kind of characters/landscapes tended to be your favorites in Westerns?

4) Did Old Tucson have any impact on how you view American or cinematic history?

5) What do you think about having a museum dedicated to American Westerns?

6) What do you think about the gender roles in the entertainment shows?

7) What role does the audience play in their own experience?

8) As a professional, have you noticed a change in the museum or film industry in the last 20 years?

9) What, if any, changes would you like to see any changes in the museum or film industry?

10) Anything else you would like to say?
Appendix E

OLD TUCSON
“Where the Spirit of the Old West COMES ALIVE!
TODAY’S PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

10 a.m.
5 p.m.
Repeats

Remembering John Wayne - This original Old Tucson video presentation pays homage to the legendary John Wayne and the four films Wayne made here.

10:15 a.m.
Old Tucson Historic Tour - Take a 30 minute guided walking tour and explore the streets that many of your favorite television and movie stars have walked.

11 a.m.
Sir William Shands Miracle Eye Show - Step right up and listen close to what this copper master traveling optician and his nutty assistant have to offer!

11:30 a.m.
The General Mercantile - If he ain’t got it, you don’t need it. Just ask Storekeeper, Solomon Warner.

12:30 p.m.
The Pecos Saloon - Saloons were among the first establishments to spring up in new towns. Learn about how they operated and the clientele that frequented them.

12:30 p.m.
September Gun - A former church has been taken over by a crooked mayor and turned into a saloon. But a fiery nun hires an aging gunfighter to help get it back.

1:15 p.m.
Old Tucson Historic Tour - Take a 30 minute guided walking tour and explore the same streets that many of your favorite television and movie stars have walked.

1:15 p.m.
The American Cowboy - The Cookie of this outfit can tell you all about being boss around the cookfire and second in command of the trail drives.

1:45 p.m.
Miss Diamond’s 80th Jubilee - Join Miss Diamond and her girls for a rip-roarin’, high-kickin’, car-crowin’ good time!

2:30 p.m.
Hollywood Stunt Demonstration - The Old Tucson stuntmen take you behind the scenes for an entertaining look at how stunts are performed.

3 p.m.
Old Tucson Historic Tour - Take a 30 minute guided walking tour and explore the same streets that many of your favorite television and movie stars have walked.

3:30 p.m.
The Spirit of the Old West - A live singing presentation revisiting some of the greatest songs featured in western films; some of which were shot right here!

4 p.m.
Frontier Sheriff - Keepin’ the peace in the wild west was no easy task! Visit with the Sheriff for a spell and learn all about it.

4:30 p.m.
The Rules of the Lawless West - Some frontier lawmen had one foot on each side of the law, often times reaching their own verdicts and imposing their own sentences... This is one such story.

UPCOMING EVENTS:
April 8th - Shot of Old Tucson Film Series - Rio Bravo
April 13th & 14th - Old Tucson’s 80th Anniversary Weekend!

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## Appendix F

Westerns mentioned in this text:

* denotes film was made, at least in part, at Old Tucson Studios  
** denotes film starred John Wayne  
*** denotes film was made, at least in part, at Old Tucson Studios and starred John Wayne.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 Days of Night</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Alamo</td>
<td>1960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>1940</td>
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<td>Big Jake</td>
<td>1971</td>
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<td>Blazing Saddles</td>
<td>1974</td>
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<td>Bonanza</td>
<td>1959-1973</td>
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<td>Brokeback Mountain</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>Cat Ballou</td>
<td>1965</td>
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<td>Easy Rider</td>
<td>1969</td>
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<td>Firefly</td>
<td>2002-2003</td>
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<td>Godless</td>
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<td>The Good Time Girls</td>
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<td>The Great Silence</td>
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<td>1957</td>
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<td>The Hateful Eight</td>
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<td>The High Chaparral</td>
<td>1967-1971</td>
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<td>The Last Outpost</td>
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<td>The Lone Ranger</td>
<td>1949-1957</td>
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<td>The Lone Ranger</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>The Man with No Name Trilogy</td>
<td>1964-1966</td>
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<td>The Mandalorian</td>
<td>2019-</td>
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<td>The Magnificent Seven</td>
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<td>The Magnificent Seven</td>
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<td>The Mask of Zorro</td>
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<td>McLintock!</td>
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<td>Midnight Cowboy</td>
<td>1969</td>
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<td>Monte Walsh</td>
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<td>No Country for Old Men</td>
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<td>North to Alaska</td>
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<td>Rio Bravo</td>
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<td>September Gun</td>
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<td>Serenity</td>
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<td>The Seven Samurai</td>
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<td>Tombstone</td>
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<td>Westworld</td>
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<td>Wind River</td>
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<td>Valdez Is Coming</td>
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