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The savage as living ghost: representations of Native Americans and scholarly failures to dismantle the notion of the savage

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Introduction

To introduce the topic of this thesis, let me start with a personal note, by saying that I am a *Chinese* scholar writing on a Western issue; the notion of the savage. Allow me to begin with Chinese terms, then, because what struck me first and foremost when doing research into the notion of the savage, was the difficulty and perhaps even impossibility to adequately translate this notion into Chinese. For instance, the historical linguist on Central Eurasian Studies, Christopher I. Beckwith, claimed in 2009 that it is "impossible to translate the word *barbarian* into Chinese because the concept does not exist in Chinese" (358). The typical modern Mandarin Chinese translation of the term barbarian is *yeman ren* (野蛮人), which, according to Beckwith, means: "wild man, savage." Thus, he concludes, "That is very definitely not the same thing as 'barbarian'" (358). Of course, not every scholar agrees with him, and in Chinese discourse both the term savage and the term barbarian are generally and almost automatically translated into *yeman ren*. Still, the terms savage and barbarian both have several other, different Chinese equivalents rather than this single one. As a noun, the term savage is translated in Chinese as *wei kaihua de ren* (未开化的人), *yeshou* (野兽), next to *yeman ren* (野蛮人). Etymologically, *yeman ren* refers to "wild *Mán* person," which hints at a certain set of peoples called *Mán*.[1] *Wei kaihua de ren* means "the uncultivated person" or those who are still not influenced by civilization or who live outside the city in remote areas.[2] Finally *yeshou* signifies "the wild beast and wild animal."[3] All these three equivalents of the term savage in Chinese have the connotation of being wild and violent, but they also have a different emphasis. The situation is similar with the term barbarian. Next to *yemanren*, barbarian can also be translated as *yuanshi ren* (原始人) or *yibang ren* (异邦人).[4] Etymologically, *yuanshi ren* refers to those who live in the past or in primitive circumstances, while *yibang ren* mainly signifies the foreigner or those who live far away.[5]

If we look closely at the common denominator, *yeman ren* or "wild *Mán* person," there seems to be a proper noun *Mán*, which does not indicate an individual but a collective: a set of peoples. As a more general term, it is "often translated as 'barbarians'" without having "the strength of the English word" (Drompp 174). *Mán* is indeed not an equivalent of the English word, since *man* can be either used singularly or together with another word, *yi*, to refer to aboriginal tribes or to minority nationalities living outside the Central Plains (comprising the middle and lower reaches of the Huanghe River).[6] These tribes or nationalities are considered as different and distinct from the dominant Chinese nationality Huaxia. The compound word *manyi* is also used as a synonym of another compound word *rongdi*, and the two taken together are also used as one compound: *manyirongdi*. This term refers to aboriginal tribes or minority nationalities in which *man* often refers to those who live in the south, *yi* in the east, *rong* in the west,

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[1] On definition of *yeman,* see <http://www.zdic.net/c/e/109/286694.htm>. The proper noun *Mán* will be discussed in detail in next paragraph.
[2] On definition of *kaihua*, see <http://www.zdic.net/c/0/fb/264227.htm>.
[3] On definition of *yeshou*, see <http://www.zdic.net/c/e/109/286691.htm>.
[4] On Chinese translation of barbarian, see <http://www.iciba.com/barbarian>.
[5] On definition of *yuanshi*, see <http://www.zdic.net/c/f/25/59792.htm>.
[6] On definition of *manyi*, see <http://www.zdic.net/c/e/a7/196988.htm>.

and *di* in the north. However, these references are not fixed, because, for example, sometimes *yi* may refer to those in the north and the same holds for the other terms (*man*, *rong*, *di*) as well. At first, the word *manyirongdi* did not have pejorative or insulting connotations with regard to minority nationalities. Rather, the word mainly referred to their different ways of life. For instance, according to an early second-century Chinese dictionary from the Han Dynasty, *Shuowen Jiezi*, *man* refers to those who live on fishing while *yi* refers to those who live on hunting.[7] However, gradually during the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 BC), these four exonyms were expanded into general designations "referring to the barbarian tribes"; i.e. tribes that threatened the Central Plain states (Poo 45). Still, one must not, however, carry that notion too far, since "Chinese documents make it abundantly clear that these *topoi* tended to be employed when expedience demanded, but could be overlooked or even contradicted when necessary. 'Good barbarians' did exist, and were in fact praiseworthy" (Drompp 12). Recently, the word *manyi* or the word *yi* has been used to refer to foreigners and colonizers from the West.[8]

Clearly, there are intriguing and puzzling issues involved when we consider the untranslatability of culturally and linguistically different terms. Such terms do not just have different histories, but different attitudes as well, and at times different aesthetics, different fields of connotations, different semantic webs, different politics and ideologies. The French philologist and philosopher Barbara Cassin studied this dynamic in the European context, which resulted in *Vocabulaire européen des philosophies: Dictionaires des intraduisibles*, a study that was translated in English as *Dictionary of Untranslatables: A Philosophical Lexicon*. One of its translators and editors Emily Apter would give Cassin's argument a follow-up in arguing that, in the context of modern comparative studies departments, the cultural specificity of texts is too easily considered to be a minor problem.[9] To be sure, to state that something is untranslatable, in both studies, is not to say that words are untranslatable in principle. On the contrary, words that defy direct translation propel relentless attempts to translate: attempts to capture the specificity of terms.

In this thesis, my aim in what follows is not to come up with a comparative study although it was a cultural comparison that was at the basis of my curiosity, namely the untranslatability in Chinese of the European notion of the savage. My study on the savage investigates something else, namely whether we can move *beyond* the very notion of the savage. The question of whether one can move *beyond* a concept is only of relevance, of course, when a concept has detrimental effects. In this case, the effects are not hard to describe. The concept of the savage functions as a counterpart that has been used to define others as civilized and therefore superior. This superiority has been used in the colonial era and in its aftermath to underpin an ideology that justified appropriation and exploitation. The rhetorical strategy was, or still is, based on two presuppositions: (1) apparently it is clear who is civilized and who is not; (2) apparently it is clear that cultural differences can be valued on a hierarchical scale.

Before I deal with these presuppositions further, let me distinguish first between the terms savage and barbarian which are terms often used interchangeably, and not only in

[7] On definition of *man,* see <http://www.zdic.net/z/23/sw/86EE.htm>. On definition of *yi*, see <http://www.zdic.net/z/17/sw/5937.htm>.

[8] In *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (2004), Liu Lydia discusses how "*Yi*" is used to refer to foreigners and is to be banned because of revolt of the English, who interpret it as an insulting term.

[9] See Apter (2013).

the case of the Chinese common denominator *yeman ren*. According to Dictionary.com, one of the English online dictionaries, the word *barbarian* is defined as "a person in a savage, primitive state; uncivilized person," and the adjective *barbarous* is regarded as a synonym for savage.[10] Thus the two become, indeed, synonymous, but each term has its own specific history and cultural implications both in the Western and Chinese contexts. Moreover, when comparing them, we can find that there are principal conceptual differences between the two. So let me focus on this conceptual distinction first and then introduce the research question of this study, which is twofold: What was and still is the potential in the notion of the savage; and what were and are the limits of the most prominent philosophical and methodological attempts to dismantle the Eurocentric nature of this notion? My hypothesis is that all major attempts to dismantle the Eurocentric term "savage" in the last seventy years up until today have not been successful.

0.1 The Barbarian-Savage Dynamic in the Western Context

Although the terms "savage" and "barbarian" are often used interchangeably, the concepts have different (though partly overlapping) genealogies. The genealogy of the savage or wild man has been mapped by historiographer Hayden White in "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea" (to which I will return in more detail in chapter two). The following account of the relation between the savage and the barbarian is based on White's essay and primarily on Christian Moser's elaboration of the relation between the two concepts.[11] While the concept of the barbarian has its roots in Greek antiquity, and was only later appropriated in a Christian context, the figure of the wild man was formed first in a Judeo-Christian context due to its appearance in the Old Testament, and entered sources of pagan antiquity later on.[12] The word "wild" likely derives from the German *Wald* (forest) just as the equivalent term savage comes from *silva*: savages are people that live in the woods. This makes the savage a spatially defined concept. This space, however, does not define the other as exterior to a (civilized) community; rather, in the Old Testament, "wild" is used to indicate a person or place that has been abandoned by God and thus does not have God's blessing or grace (White 1972, 12-13). If the barbarian in the Greek context marks a political and cultural difference—denoting the other that does not share Greek democracy and/or culture—the savage comes to mark a moral or even metaphysical difference (Moser). The wild man is impure, an

[10] See <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/barbarian>.

[11] Here and in the following points of comparison between the two concepts, I am drawing from Moser's chapter "Barbarism as a Transitory Stage in Eighteenth-Century Cultural Theory, Political Philosophy and Literature" in Markus Winkler, Maria Boletsi, Christian Moser Eds. *'Barbarian': Explorations of a Western Concept in Theory, Literature and the Arts from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (forthcoming by Metzler). My references to Moser's chapter are without page numbers, since the publication is forthcoming.

[12] In *Genesis* (16:12), the angel of the Lord tells Hagar that she is going to give birth to a boy, whose name is Ishmael. Of this young man it is said that: "He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." As White argues, "The archetypal wild men of the Old Testament are the great rebels against the Lord, the God-challengers, the antiprophets, giants, nomads – men like Cain, Ham, and Ishmael, the very kinds of 'heroes' who, in Greek mythology and legend, might have enjoyed a place of honor beside Prometheus, Odysseus, and Oedipus… They are depicted as wild men inhabiting a wild land, above all as hunters, sowers of confusion, damned, and generative of races that live in irredeemable ignorance or outright violation of the laws that God has laid down for the governance of the cosmos" (1972, 14).

outcast, a sinner, and often a rebel against God. In the Bible, this would be someone like Cain, who murders his brother, or Nimrod, a violent hunter king that seems to stand opposite to the peaceful pastoral Fathers. Considered in a certain tradition as the founder of the city of Babel and the tower of Babel, the wild Nimrod is associated with a human nature that is uncontrollable and that—after God's intervention—will come to connote the corruption of human language.

An important difference between wild men and barbarians lies in the fact that biblical wild men are not found in groups: they are usually individual, isolated figures (Moser). This continues to apply to the concept of the savage or wild man as it developed in the Middle Ages. The savage is an individual who lives alone in the wilderness, away from communities. This is the typical wild man in medieval folklore and literature. There are traces of this figure in pagan ancient forest dwellers and mythological hybrid creatures (satyrs, centaurs, nymphs). "Wild men" are often naked, hairy, animal-like, grotesque (for instance in the form of gigantic shapes) and lack reason and proper speech. They satisfy their desires immediately, they usually lead the life of the hunter-gatherer, and tend to be sexually promiscuous or represent a danger of sexual nature (rape, kidnapping) (Moser). According to this medieval understanding, then, the concept "wildness" does not merely connote the absence of culture or an original state before culture (in the way it will appear in Michel de Montaigne's sixteenth-century essay "Of Cannibals").[13] Rather, it results from a fallen state that follows an error or sin: wild men are cursed and damned. In that sense, given that every man participates in Adam's original sin, savagery represents a threat that lurks in every man, and that only God's grace could avert (Moser).

Outside of the Judeo-Christian context, in ancient pagan sources, and particularly in epic poems and political philosophy, the wild man is also an isolated figure, yet not a sinner or cursed by God: wild men are often those who follow a rather primitive, pre-social mode of living (Moser).[14] In ancient political philosophy (in Cicero, for example), people who live without any form of social organization are designated as wild rather than barbarians. Moser locates here a crucial difference between the wild man and the barbarian in Greek and Roman antiquity: "Wild" people live outside society and are lawless, while barbarians have a form of social organization despite being ruled by kings, despots or tyrants rather than by laws. In ancient thought, however, as Moser argues, the barbarian and the savage are not conceived as stages in an evolutionary development towards civilized society, as they would come to be used in eighteenth-century models. They are both absolutely opposed to, and ontologically detached from, "civilitas" (Moser).

Before the concepts of the savage and the barbarian started being used as stages in an evolutionary development (in the eighteenth century), in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they are used interchangeably and grow semantically close. This development, according to Moser, became possible due to several factors, which include the secularization of the savage (leaving behind its metaphysical character and allusions to sin) and the application of the term savage to groups, and not just isolated figures. The term starts being used more often in the plural, as in the French "les sauvages," the savages, the wild men, or wild peoples. An important factor for this extension of the term savage is the colonial conquest of America. This leads to the term savage being

[13] Montaigne argues that these seemingly barbarous nations remain in their original simplicity and obey the laws of nature, that is: is not influenced by civilization (1958, 105-19).

[14] Moser mentions the Cyclop Polyphemus in Homer's *Odyssey*, who engages in anthropophagy, as a prominent example of such a wild figure.

applied (alongside the term "barbarian") to the indigenous peoples of the New World, who live together in communities according to specific rules. In writings about the indigenous peoples of the Americas, terms like wild, savage and barbaric are used interchangeably. Evidence for this mixing can also be found in attempts to reverse and positively reappropriate these concepts, as in Montaigne, who in his essay "Of Cannibals" (1580) puts forward the assertion that Europeans are more barbaric than those people of the new World that they designate as barbarians or savages. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there is no systematic attempt to differentiate the terms (much comparable to the Chinese context). The terms barbarian and savage are not explicitly distinguished in Montaigne's essay, however within the text Moser is able to identify traces of a differentiation of these terms as indicative of different stages of development, prefiguring the terms' systematic differentiation in models that would be fully formed in the eighteenth century.[15]

The differentiation of the savage and the barbarian in the eighteenth century has to do with the temporalization of these concepts, which now come to function not in dyadic oppositional structures with civilization, but rather form a conceptual triad (Moser). The terms start to be used not only to indicate inferior others occupying another space, but also another time. The savage occupies the lowest position, while the barbarian is the middle and mediating phase in an evolutionary scale that leads towards the most advanced stage of civilization. In models developed in the context of the French and the Scottish Enlightenment, civilization is not a static state but a dynamic process involving a series of transitions: from savagery, to barbarism, to civilization. The savage and the barbarian thus become parts in this civilizing process (Moser). This development, which takes place in the fields of anthropology, political and cultural theory, and the philosophy of history, casts the savage as a historical category, not as a being devoid of history and outside of historical time. In universal historical evolutionary schemes of that period, the total history of mankind, its progress and ascent to higher forms of culture, proceeds from the primitive stage of savagery through the intermediate stage of barbarism to the highest level of civilization. Enlightenment thinkers distinguished between a wild, barbaric and civilized phase of human cultural development based on forms of subsistence: savages are usually thought as hunter-gatherers; barbarians are often nomadic shepherds or use agriculture and domesticated animals, and know a rudimentary form of property; civilization is marked by mercantile exchange, division of labor and money (Meek 28-36). These distinctions can already be found in Baron de Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* (*The spirit of laws*, 1748) and Adam Ferguson's *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767) (34).[16] Exactly how and when the transition to the third stage takes place is an object of debate for theorists of the Enlightenment. Some claim that the invention of agriculture and the introduction of sedentary lifestyle marked a transition to the state of culture and civilization. Others argue the beginning of civilization is tied to the founding of cities and the introduction of commerce. In these models, the barbarian becomes a complex in-between figure: barbarians have one foot

[15] For the specific way in which this differentiation unravels in Montaigne's essay, see Moser.

[16] In Book XVIII of *The Spirit of Law*, entitled "Of Laws in the Relation They Bear to the Nature of the Soil," Montesquieu discusses the relation of the laws and population to the mode of subsistence and there he distinguishes the savage from the barbarian. Although "there is certainly no indication in *The Spirit of Laws* that Montesquieu regarded the mode of subsistence as being in any case the *key* factor in the total situation," his ideas lay the foundation for the French and Scottish thinkers in the middle of 19th century (Meek 34). In this context Meek also mentions the Scottish Enlightenment thinker Adam Ferguson. In *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (1767), Ferguson argued that what happened in history is "indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design" (qtd. in Meek 150).

in civilization and the other in a wild state of nature. Nevertheless, these significant semantic shifts in the concepts of the savage and the barbarian do not put an end to the concepts' older semantic connotations and structures. The savage thus still often refers to people living in a state of nature outside of social organization (Moser).

White argues that in modern times the wild man, which has served the process he calls "ostensive self-definition by negation," is considered as a category of fiction or mere prejudice (1972, 5-6).[17] First, the category of the wild man was applicable to specific groups of people outside civilization. In modern times, so White contends, the wild man has been partially de-mythologized and de-spatialized, giving rise to a "compensatory process of psychic interiorization" (7). The wild man does not constitute an essentialist but a sociopsychological category: that is, it denotes parts of our psychological landscape and not actual groups of people (35). This interiorization amounts to a "remythification" of the wild man through the trope of the "wild man within." This trope in modernity is closely related to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which projected savagery as internal to every individual psyche—"an aspect of our unconscious, which civilization tries to keep under control" (Boletsi 2013, 103).

This Freudian insight changed the self-perception of being/the civilized, revealing an inherent instability within the civilized subject. In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) Freud delineated the conflict between instinct and civilizational restraints. In this study, Freud, Maria Boletsi writes, "sees a progression of humans from an unrestricted satisfaction of instincts (a primitive state) to a repression of instincts, which is the precondition for a civilized society" (104). The repression of instinct is essential for sustaining civilization. This, however, gives rise to "unhappiness, frustration, neurosis, and self-hatred" (104). Civilization has two mechanisms for restraining the manifestation of aggressive impulses: law as the external mechanism and the production of guilt as the internal mechanism, both of which regulate aggression. According to Freud, our "loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt" is the price for enjoying civilization's merits (81). "This control mechanism, however," as Boletsi writes on Freud, "does not always succeed in keeping our aggressive instincts at bay" (2013, 105). "In Freud's model, the 'return of the repressed' becomes the greatest threat to civilization" due to what can be called "the savage within" (105).

Next to all these historical differences, there are also linguistic differences in play between the two terms. One element that distinguishes the term barbarian from the term savage is that both "perform" differently when turned into an *-ism*. Whereas barbarity does exist next to savagery, barbarism is an accepted and often used term, also conceptually speaking, while "savagism" is not; it does not even exist as a term. The suffix *-ism* serves to turn nouns into abstractions, so it becomes clear that the barbarian can be made more general or abstract, whereas the savage cannot. This may relate to a second element of distinction: the term barbarian can in scarce occasions shift into a verb, in the form of to "barbarize" or "barbarianize"—to make barbarian—but it is not a verb itself.[18] By contrast, the word *savage* can be an adjective, a noun, but also a verb: to savage. The latter, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, means: "to attack or treat (someone or something) in a very cruel, violent, or harsh way."[19] Other dictionaries add that "to savage" can also mean to mutilate. So, it is evident that the

[17] My account of White in this and the next paragraph also draws from Boletsi's presentation of White's views in *Barbarism and Its Discontents* (103-105).

[18] See < http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/15383?rskey=ma2h8e&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid>.

[19] See <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/savage?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonld>.

barbarian connotes some form of organization and form whereas the savage connotes loss of organization and non-form. This supports the function of savagery and barbarism in ternary models of societal development that, as previously mentioned, came into use since the eighteenth century, in which barbarism connoted a more advanced level of societal organization than savagery (Moser 2015, 128). Consequently, barbarian organization and form is closer to civilization in terms of its hierarchical proximity to civilized society: it represents a scale higher than savagery. In this context the etymological origin of the term barbarian is telling: it involves *language*—a language that to so-called civilized ears may sound incomprehensible or less fully developed than the language of the civilized person himself. Instead the etymology of savage involves *space*, as we have seen, like the places where savages live, or come from: woods, caves, wastelands. This space, as Freud suggested, can also be a cultural space, or a mental or bodily one. It can be a space far away but also a space "within."

0.2 Research Question: Attempts to Move Beyond the Oppositional Concept of the Savage

Since the 1990s, and especially since "9/11," both terms barbarism and civilization have become increasingly popular. Barbarism has been attached to different groups in Western political and public rhetoric and even when these terms are employed in critiques of Western discourse, it seems that their meanings remain largely uncontested and are taken for granted (Boletsi 2013, 1 & 55-56). Since "9/11" the term barbarism is often used to refer to Islamic terrorism, but also more generally to Islamic fundamentalism, Muslim societies, migrants, or all non-Europeans, are regarded as simple, infantile, and inferior, while the term civilization often signifies the Western civilization, which is believed to be the only or the Absolute Civilization. For example, in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996), Samuel Huntington identifies Islam as the main threat to the West, and China as the other primary threat to Western civilization (Boletsi 2013, 41). In his narrative, he proposes a kind of oppositional thinking, which clearly distinguishes between "the West" and "the rest," or civilization and barbarism. To denaturalize the conventional binary opposition between barbarism and civilization, and break up the current rigidity of their meanings, Boletsi in *Barbarism and Its Discontents* (2013) argues that "Barbarism is not an inherent quality of a human subject, language, medium, or cultural object" (2). Barbarism is not an immanent concept, that is, and this makes it impossible to essentialize barbarism. By contrast, and alongside the concept's violent and negative connotations, Boletsi suggests that, as a concept, barbarism also has a critical and transgressive potential and proposes to use it as a theoretical concept in cultural critique. For her, "barbarism not only is an object of study but becomes a theorizing agent: it is recast as a theoretical and methodological concept" (8). She argues that "barbarism and the barbarian also carry a performative force with a transgressive potential" (3). In order to "tease out the critical thrust of barbarism," she adopts a performative approach rather than an essentialist approach (8).

In this way, the meanings and the uses of barbarism can be opened up through centering on the performativity of barbarism and the barbarian. Instead of being limited to being the negative part in a hierarchical opposition to civilization, barbarism turns out to be "a disruptive element within the self: a constant reminder of the fact that we can never own what we think belongs to us, including our languages, our cultural

practices, our own selves" (245). On the one hand, the exposure of this internal barbarism brings about a self-dispossession that may be uncomfortable or even painful, but on the other hand, it also contains alternative ways of knowing and relating to others as well as ourselves (245). Boletsi's research not only successfully dislodges barbarism from conventional contexts, but also shows that barbarism can be used as a creative and critical concept with transgressive potential in cultural theory.

In 2015, Boletsi, together with Christian Moser, edited the book *Barbarian Revisited: New Perspectives on an Old Concept*. Just as the title of the book indicates, they *revisited* the term barbarism and mapped out "a series of discursive domains, traditions of thought, and cultural and historical contexts which have decisively shaped, and been shaped by, the notion of barbarism" through several case studies (20). In order to break with the self-evidence with which barbarism is often used and counter the essentialization and naturalization of the term, they focus on how the concept of barbarism is involved in complex semiotic and rhetorical mechanisms. Just as Boletsi regarded barbarism as a theorizing agent in *Barbarism and Its Discontents*, Boletsi and Moser "see barbarism and the barbarian not as objects we wish to fully master as scholars, but as forces, the potential functions, implications, and meanings of which we set out to test and explore" (14). Engaging with the intricate genealogy of barbarism, they find that "the opposition between civilization and barbarism" is not simple or stable, but is characterized by "an inbuilt asymmetry" and "an inbuilt instability," which may account for "its versatility and adaptability to diverse contexts" (15). For them, the concept of barbarism, in its fundamental instability, works in two opposite ways: "On the one hand, it reinforces the discourse of civilization that needs it as its antipode. On the other hand, it can also disrupt the workings of the discourse of culture or civilization" (20). That is to say, as a concept, barbarism is a constitutive element of civilization, and at the same time, it keeps challenging or disturbing the discourse of civilization.

My research is part of an attempt to expand the study on barbarism to that of the savage. Next to the distinctions we encountered in the previous section, there is one specifically charged element, here, that will be relevant to my study. The savage came to embody a potential that the barbarian never acquired, at least in the European context.[20] For those who consider civilization itself to be a perversion or alienation or degeneration—a typically Romantic idea in the Western context—the uncivilized can become the vessel of purity and nobility. Whereas the barbarian usually connoted civilized existence on a lower scale, especially from the eighteenth century on, the savage could also connote purity and purification and, consequently, a higher ideal. In this context, the savage, more than the barbarian, could become an excellent vehicle for a double form of desire and hatred. The marker "savage" facilitated civilized subjects to hate uncivilized others, and for those civilized subjects living in self-hate it facilitated the desire for, and imagination of, an idealized (and thus not real) other. In the context of colonialism, this double dynamic was distinctly at work. And let me make clear that I will deal with colonialism in what follows as something that did not exist next to modernity but was at the very heart of it, as Walter Mignolo has argued.[21] During colonialism and due to colonialism, the savage served as a negative counter-image, to ideologically underpin and justify the Western desire to appropriate space and time. At

[20] In Chinese history, the imagination of a "better barbarian" was brought forward in the fourth century BC (Lehner 26).
[21] See Mignolo (2007).

the same time, the noble savage facilitated a nostalgia propelled by Western self-critique or even self-hate.[22]

Especially due to this ideological use of the term, the last seven decades have witnessed relentless attempts to do away with the oppositions in play, or to do away with the very term savage and the Eurocentrism it connotes. These attempts are the focus of my study.

There have been several moments in history when people felt the need to reflect on the abuse of language by certain political powers. One famous example would be Germany after the Second World War and after the atrocities of the Nazi regime, and another one would be South Africa after the Apartheid regime. In both cases language, or distinct words, were used to support, defend, veil or legitimize acts of atrocity. A seemingly innocent word such as "resettlement," for instance, would hide violent mass deportations and appropriation. Likewise, Jews were not murdered but "put on transport."[23] Or, defining the Jews as "vermin," defended and naturalized the Nazi attempt to "root them out" (yet another seemingly innocent phrase). More in general there have been words and phrases that were used by parties to cover up or defend acts of atrocity. A good example would be the more recent phrase "ethnic cleansing" where the word "cleansing" is used to avoid saying terms like mass deportation, mass killing, mass raping, mass destruction and mutilation.

Once terms and phrases like these have come to life, one vexing problem is that even when they are criticized, ideologically exposed, or straightforwardly rejected, this does not mean they go away. In a sense such terms keep imposing themselves. In the current circumstances there are few terms that keep imposing themselves so intensely, so regularly and so persistently, next to barbarism as the one of "savage." Today, savage and savagery are terms that are used nearly daily and almost compulsively, by many people in relation to certain forms of warfare. To give just one example, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Modern Warfare* has one section entitled "Civilization and Savagery."[24] In this section David Tucker, who works for the American based Strategic Studies Institute, is quoted in saying that contemporary civilized societies are threatened by "savage warriors who respect none of the civilized constraints" of warfare (Bowden 276). And according to the war historian John Keegan (quoted in the same text), there is a clear link, here, between "the savages of the past and the savages of the present" (282). I am not saying that these scholars use the term unreflectively, nor am I saying that they use the term only rhetorically or ideologically (although all this may be the case). One could even question, "why bother that they use the term, as long as we are all capable of sensing and tracing how they specifically use it?" However, that would be a bit naïve, for the term savage indeed *imposes* itself, almost self-evidently and naturally, and our response to it, or resistance against it, will not make it go away. Thus unavoidably my study contributes to the term's imposition, yet it does so in a relevant context and not in order to get away from the very term savage. In a sense this study takes seriously that the term savage is here to stay. The relevant issue, consequently, is that we, as scholars, ask ourselves how come and why? Or more precisely: how come and why does this term persist despite decades of serious and continuous criticism?

This brings me to my research question. As said, by now there have been many studies, especially in the entire body of knowledge on colonialism and postcolonialism, in which the use of the term savage has been critically investigated. Instead of adding yet

[22] On this nostalgic characteristic in modernity and capitalism, see Braidotti (1994).
[23] On the manipulation of language in Nazi Germany, see, for instance, Michael and Doerr (2002).
[24] See Bowden (2016).

another genealogy of, or yet another linguistic or ideological critique on the use of the term, this study aims to investigate four major ways people have tried to dismantle, or to move away from the term savage as being part of an opposition that always contrasts the civilized European or Western man with uncivilized savage. In my analysis, the four major modes of trying to dismantle this Eurocentric opposition, and hence the term savage, have been: the structuralist one, the poststructuralist one, the postcolonial or multiculturalist one, and, most recently, the decolonial one. With respect to these my study wants to chart first of all, more or less systematically, how they have been trying to dismantle the term, and secondly how the different attempts led into one another, with decoloniality as the latest attempt in a chain.

In this context one question I will raise is: What was and is the potential in, and what were and are the limits of these prominent philosophical and methodological attempts to dismantle the Eurocentric notion of the savage? To answer that question I will bring paradigmatic theoretical texts in dialogue with what I consider to be paradigmatic literary and cinematographic texts. I do so because my hypothesis is that the notion of the savage cannot be dismantled critically, rationally, or in terms of scrutiny and awareness. This hypothesis is related to my second question: Why were or are all these attempts to dismantle the Eurocentric term "savage" not successful? One answer to this question is that the referent of savage is not real in the sense of *real*, while, yet, it is real. That is, it belongs to the realm of imagination. With respect to this, in the end of my study, I will come to define the savage as a ghost, and a multiple one at that. The other answer is that the theoretical attempts to dismantle the notion of the savage have not been able to really ground their analysis affectively, or aesthetically. This is also why I decided to bring theoretical texts and artistic ones into dialogue with one another. When I will get to my suggestions for further research, one of them will be that, perhaps, we do not need alternative theories, but rather more and other cultural representations—representations that do not rely on familiar and too often repeated stereotypes and oppositions.

0.3 Method: Rubbing Theory and Art

The theoretical attempts to do away with the savage that I will identify are, like I said in the above: the structuralist one, the poststructuralist one, the postcolonial or multiculturalist one, and, most recently, the decolonial one. Each one of them will be central to, respectively, chapters one, two, three and four. In these chapters and on the basis of a paradigmatic theoretical text that exemplifies the approach as a whole, I will make the theory talk to paradigmatic artistic texts. The texts involved in chapter one are the French structuralist anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss's study *The Savage Mind* (originally published as *La Pensée Sauvage*) from 1962 and William Golding's novel *Lord of the Flies* from 1954. In chapter two I will bring White's "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea," from 1972 in dialogue with Aldous Huxley's novel *Brave New World* from 1932. In chapter three I will focus on Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* from 1994, especially chapter five entitled "Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle over Representation," and discuss it in context with Quentin Tarrantino's film *Inglourious Basterds* from 2009. In chapter four, finally, I will deal with Mignolo's "DELINKING: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality," from 2007 and bring it into dialogue with a recent film by Alejandro González Iñárritu, *The Revenant* from 2015. Why I chose

specifically these artistic texts will be discussed in the next subsection. Here I want to focus on how I relate the artistic texts methodically to the theoretical texts.

In terms of method I want to make it clear that I will not be offering overviews of the theoretical approaches involved. These overviews already exist.[25] I will be dealing with the potential they offered in their attempt to dismantle the notion of the savage in a European and Western context. This will be tested on the basis of paradigmatic theoretical texts in which the key characteristics of this potential can be found. When I said in the above that I will make these texts "talk to" or bring these texts "into dialogue" with artistic texts, this needs specification. The theoretical texts, although famous and important in their own right, and although they have influenced scholarly fields that may have a global scope, are comparatively marginal in terms of audience size and audience diversity, when compared to the audiences that read the novels or watched the films involved. *Brave New World* and *Lord of the Flies*, for instance, are still on the reading lists of almost all high school education in the Western world. In fact, when in the pre-final year of my research, 2016, the Dutch campaign called *Everyone in the Netherlands Reads* ("Heel Holland leest") selected *Lord of the Flies* as one of three books that everybody should read, and the book was distributed for free to masses of readers. Thus you can imagine how many students will read *Lord of the Flies* years before potentially being introduced to the ins and outs of structuralism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism and multiculturalism, or decoloniality. And in terms of scope (audience size and diversity) the novels I focus on turn pale in relation to the films concerned. *The Revenant*, for instance, was made with a budget of 135 million dollars and after its world wide release in January 2016 it earned more than 532 million dollars, and the numbers are still rising.

Due to their diverse if not disparate status, it seems that it would be hard to make all the almost incompatible texts "talk to one another." Yet I will take all these texts as indeed *text*, texts that as such can be close read. They are close read not to compare them, but to assess how a theoretical approach could or would deal with the artistic text it is confronted with, in trying to dismantle the notion of the savage. Methodically speaking, my analysis follows four steps, here. First, the theoretical text is close read for its paradigmatic status in relation to an approach. Second, the artistic texts functions as an object of analysis that may illustrate the *potential* in the theoretical approach involved. Third, the artistic text will help to indicate the *limits* of the attempt to do away with the Eurocentric notion of the savage. Fourth (and finally), I will pay attention to the ways in which the artistic text is "excessive" in that it will provoke or call for yet another attempt. Such provocation consists in the fact that these texts will prove to be hard to entirely grasp theoretically. They do not nicely fit. They are doing several things at the same time. Or they may be analyzed ideologically and criticized, while still preserving considerable affective powers. The theoretical and artistic texts brought together, here, are not so much "in dialogue" then. I had better say that I will be rubbing them against one another consecutively, in a scholarly way, in order to come to an overview of the attempts to critically deal with the notion of the savage.

As for the structuralist attempt, or more specifically structuralist anthropological attempt, it can be read as an alternative to the nineteenth century comparative forms of studies in which the comparison, implicitly or explicitly, was based on the cultural superiority of European nation states amongst one another and in relation to cultures and peoples globally.[26] In order to substantiate the structuralist alternative Lévi-Strauss

[25] See Culler (1975), (1982), Loomba (2015), and Mignolo (2011).
[26] See Bassnett (1993) and Bernheimer (1995).

proposed an approach that was heavily influenced by the Prague form of structuralism, with Roman Jakobson as its major proponent, but that also implied some key aspects of French structuralism. The most important element here was the arbitrary relation between signifier and signified. Translated to anthropology this meant that the transition from nature to culture was not one of essential differences but of arbitrary rules. The difference between cultures was not one of hierarchy, moreover, although there were historical differences. Modern, rational, instrumentalized or technological science was different from what Lévi-Strauss called "wild thinking" but also has a structural resemblance with this type of thinking, in the sense that even the older "wild thinking" functioned as the "substrate" of this modern kind of thought. Here Lévi-Strauss formed a prelude to what later would be called "a difference within" (central to poststructuralism and to chapter two of this thesis).

In rubbing *The Savage Mind* against *Lord of the Flies* it will become clear that, in the novel, the signifier savage is an elusive sign that maintains a both naturalized and at the same time arbitrary relationship with the signified savage. Reading it in the structuralist mode, it appears that the novel not so much imposes an essentialist idea of the savage but instead works out a differential structure of savages, such as between noble savage, ignoble savage and animal-like savage. Secondly, it will appear that savage thinking is operative in the novel as well, in terms of what Lévi-Strauss would call "bricolage." The children's savage thinking is equal in this sense to the science that facilitated the very war that made the children end up on an uninhabited island. With respect to this, savage thinking is not inferior to Western scientific thinking but another mode of thinking that forms the substrate to modern thinking. Still, this all may not be enough to show that the signifier "savage" would not be able to function within the confines of Eurocentric oppositions. I will bring in Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics* to make clear why the idea of savage is difficult to eradicate, precisely due to structuralist effects. Especially Culler's ideas on "*vraisemblance*" are pivotal, here. With this notion Culler traced five different levels of *vraisemblance*, or the way in which things appear to be conceivably real. All these levels apply to *Lord of the Flies*. Ironically, a structuralist poetics tells us, then, why structuralism is able to analyze oppositions but not do away with them.

Chapter two deals with what has been called "a difference within." Basing himself on White's *Metahistory*, Arnold Krupat in a study on Native American[27] autobiographies, described how "the story of Indian savagery must be structured as a tragedy, because the story of Euroamerican civilization … was structured as a comedy" (qtd. in Sayer 34). Krupat brought in White's different generic modes to organize historical materials in order to show that history does not exist in forms of history that are opposites and in order to show that no one history coincides with itself due to internal differences. The idea, here, was to dismantle the Eurocentric or Western historiography as it was projected through one single and dominant perspective and to focus on internal dynamics. Following the logic of poststructuralism I will be looking here at the novel

[27] There are many different terms to refer to the Natives who lived in the Americas before the Conquest of the New World, such as *Native Americans*, *American Indians*, *Indians, Injuns* and *Indigenous*. Different scholarly circles choose different terms. For example, the latest overview of Ecocriticism chooses *American Indians*. The reason is that *Native Americans* suggests that they are Americans though native ones while *American Indians* works the other way around. However, in this thesis, I prefer to use the term *Native Americans*, because the use of *Indian* in *American Indians* seems rather Eurocentric in that it repeats the misunderstanding of Christopher Columbus and his contemporaries that the natives they encountered in the New World were, in fact, the people of India (so the appellation *Indian* confirms their gaze in a way). As other authors prefer to use other terms, I have left their words as they wrote them, as to a certain extent these term can be used interchangeably.

Brave New World in terms of a cartography of different territories, which include the Civilized World, the Savage Reservation, the Exile place and the Light house, where John the Savage spends his life in the end. John the Savage will illustrate here how the savage embodies a difference within that exemplifies how civilization and savagery coexist in and with one another. Rubbing the novel against White's article "The Forms of Wildness: Archaeology of an Idea," I will come to conclude that the poststructuralist approach finds its limit in that it cannot lead to an alternative history, but instead reshapes history in the form of what White would call historiographical Satire.[28]

In chapter three I will discuss a chapter from Shohat and Stam's *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (1994). The chapter is entitled "Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle over Representation" which are all notions that are of relevance in rubbing the text against Quentin Tarrantino's film *Inglourious Basterds* from 2009. The attempt embodied in the work of Shohat and Stam was not so much to look for a difference-within but for a plurality of options, as is the case with multiculturalism. Central here was not so much to try to deconstruct the dominant perspective, but rather to show how within one world a plurality of cultural representations exist. In the film, for instance, representations of the Second World War, of the destruction of Jews, and of Native Americans, of civilized and less civilized, and of civilized and savage, intermingle. They do not do so on an equal par, however. This is what brings Shohat and Stam to a second element in the attempt to avoid focusing on one dominant perspective. Instead they propose that readers and critics amplify voices that are hidden or marginalized in texts, again in order to plurify. Such plurification has one major opponent, namely stereotypes that have such a powerful persisting force. Here the idea is that by means of repetition a difference can be realized nevertheless. That is to say: attempts to do away with stereotypes by means of criticism may not work but repeating them may, because through repeating them other meaning potentials may materialize and possibilities of difference may start to work (I will be following the work of Judith Butler here).

In chapter four I will rub Iñárritu's film *The Revenant* (2015) with Mignolo's "DELINKING: The rhetoric of modernity, the logic of coloniality and the grammar of de-coloniality" (2007). The film may serve to indicate that the attempt here is not so much to think in terms of plurality but in terms of multiplicity. Whereas plurality, like multiculturalism, operates within one world, the term multiplicity suggests that there are worlds existing next to one another that are not translatable into one another and may be disparate. The decolonial attempt aims to consider history not from one dominant and dominating perspective, nor from a plural perspective on that history, but to multiply history. To that order we have to "de-link" ourselves, as Mignolo calls it, from a historiography that perpetuates itself even when subjected to criticism and attempts to plurify it. Instead we have to focus on other histories, other modes of thinking, other worlds.

0.4 Why the Paradigm of "the" Native American?

In what follows I will be focusing on representations of Native Americans only, and this choice requires justification. In Western colonial discourses, African, Asian, Australian,

[28] Here in order to distinguish Satire from satire as a literary genre, I choose to use "Satire" with the capital "S" to refer to the historiographical Satire discussed by White in *Metahistory*. More on this in chapter two.

and American peoples have all been regarded as "others," and many of them have been depicted as savages. *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1853), for instance, under the lemma "Asia," described the situation as follows:

> Among those semi-barbarians who have no fixed habitation, but who dwell in tents, migrating periodically with their flocks in quest of pasture, all crimes of violence, such as rapine, revenge, and murder prevail without any restraint. … The regular commerce of Asia is in consequence carried on in caravans or large companies or merchants who travel together for safety; and even these are not secure from the savage tribes, the remnants of the Tartar population, who inhabit the mountains and central plains. (751)

The passage can be seen as paradigmatic in its stereotypical description of savage peoples from other continents than Europe. Here, in fact, we may trace the scalar Enlightenment idea of evolutionary progress that I talked about in section 0.1, where savages come before barbarians, or semi-barbarians. My decision to focus solely on Northern Native Americans is due to their unique relationship with Westerners. Before Christopher Columbus landed on what later would be termed "the New World," in 1492, Native Americans lived on their own, in their diversity, on the Northern and Southern American continents. Among all other, these continents, and especially the North, were called "The New World" by Europeans who desired to leave their own "Old World" either for trade and profit or to escape religious persecution. In this context and in this process, the American colonization, much like the later Australian one, amounted to an appropriation that did not consist in ruling other peoples, but *removing* them, in one way or another. Whereas nineteenth century colonialism consisted of European nation states ruling other peoples and nations that, at least to a certain extent, continued to exist, the histories of many Native American groups were nigh extinguished. Thus, from almost this moment in the sixteenth century, the figure of the Native American became a dominant, haunting subject in the European and Western imagination.

Centuries later, at the height of European colonialism, the German novelist Karl May (1842-1912) contributed enormously to a popularized and sometimes almost savoured idea of the Native American as either a ferocious or violent savage, or a noble one, fighting against the injustice of European settlers. Through works such as May's, the Native American, or "Indian," became the paradigmatic and favorite Western savage, who was either regarded as brave, noble, and good, or as animalistic, offensive, bloodthirsty, and bad. This was not just a matter of artistic imaginations such as May's. The meeting between Europeans and Native Americans produced fundamental changes. As Jodi Byrd noted, the conquest of the New World and its inhabitants "marked a fundamental and radical shift within the historical trajectory of European epistemology, engendering in its wake the notion of the human and mobilizing the concept of property, money, and life as possessions that would come to stand as the boundaries between civilization, savagery, and the nonhuman" (Byrd 122). That is to say, with the European appropriation of the Americas, European epistemology changed, and the boundaries between civilization and savagery, the human and the nonhuman, were redefined. Yet, since this very fundamental change was intrinsically linked to the confrontation with Native Americans, the latter kept haunting the European and Western imagination.

In the course of centuries, but especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Native Americans who had been external to the Old World came to be treated

as savages external to their own, now New World as well. As Byrd also notes: "Sovereignty in the New World required Indians as the sign of the external savage in order to cohere an internal ordering of the nomos" (124). In being framed as external savages, Native Americans were redefined as subjects who would not be eradicated coincidentally by European settlers, but had to be removed on so-called legitimate grounds. The treatment of Native Americans as external to their own native land, as unwanted others that needed to be expelled from their territory, continues well into the twenty-first century. This process is also met with acts of resistance, which underline the irony in the colonizer's treatment of Native Americans as trespassers in their own territory. A striking recent example is the protest known as the Standing Rock Protest, which is still taking place at the moment I am writing this thesis. This protest was initiated in 2014 by Native Americans—the Standing Rock Sioux tribe—to safeguard their sacred native land and protect their water sources from being contaminated by a project called The Dakota Access pipeline (DAPL).[29] Until November 1st 2016, the federal government did not issue any specific proposal or commandment in response to the protest, and both presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump held an unclear attitude towards the protest, while what is clear is that "a highly militarized police force" has been formed to "aggressively target protesters."[30] That is to say, even today, the rights of Native Americans to their lands are still hardly guaranteed.

Thus, the history of a "discovery," which was also glorified as a history of conquest, turned out to be a history of colonization, genocide and racialization of Native Americans. In this history, however, Native Americans were not simply or not always passive objects, if only for the reason that they proved to be constitutive elements in the conceptualization of European civilization: "European modernity hinges upon Indians as the necessary antinomy through which the New World—along with civilization, freedom, sovereignty, and humanity—comes to have meaning, structure, and presence" (Byrd 123). As the *necessary* antinomy, then, Native Americans came to contribute to the construction of European modernity. Compared with savage Africans, savage Asians, or savage Australians, the savage Native American came to be a both external and central figure, who was constantly reproduced in Western discourse.

In my research, I do not bring in works by Native Americans themselves, which is not to deny their significance or relevance. On the contrary, as Elvira Pulitano argues in *Toward a Native American Critical Theory* (2003), the works of Native American critics, such as Paula Gunn Allen, Craig Womack, Robert Warrior, Greg Sarris, Louis Owens, and Gerald Vizenor, form an independent Native American critical theory. Their studies contribute to:

> a corpus of works that could represent the beginning of a Native American critical theory, a complex, hybridized project that, while deeply embedded within the narratives of Native American oral tradition and Native epistemology, inevitably conducts dialogues with the larger critical discourse of contemporary theory and significantly disputes the scholarly assumptions of a resistance to theory within Native American studies. (Pulitano 3)

[29] See <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/03/north-dakota-access-oil-pipeline-protests-explainer>.

[30] See <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/03/north-dakota-access-oil-pipeline-protests-explainer>.

Many contemporary Native American novelists, such as N. Scott Momaday, Louise Erdrich, James Welch, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Sherman Alexie, began to make their voices heard in order not just to rethink but also move away from, or provide alternatives to, the stereotypes of Native Americans. In fact, Marmon Silko's *Ceremony* was counted as "among the four most important American publications" in 1996 (Wiese 79). It would be possible and a decisive endeavor to bring in the voices of Native Americans themselves, to think with Native American critics, and study the figure of savage the Native American from the perspective of Native Americans. However, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak once explored in her study "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1988), the danger might be that we have not prepared the grounds for such a meeting well enough, as a result of which what Native Americans utter might be transformed or even distorted by the echo chambers of their European or Western-American masters. In fact, even the question of who or what "the" Native American is, has become vexing, which cannot be avoided in any discourse involving Native American issues. As Louis Owens points out in *Other Destinies*, the identity of Native Americans is an invention. The Native American, "in today's world consciousness is a product of literature, history, and art, and a product that, as an invention, often bears little resemblance to actual, living Native American people" (4). For Owens, as a product of colonial Western discourse, the Native American does not convey much about the reality of Native Americans, which includes diverse tribes, but instead tells us about Western imaginations. Therefore, in order to open possible grounds for talking about Native Americans as "actual, living" people in the past and in the present, we have to break up the conventional idea of the savage Native American first, or to de-naturalize its meanings in Western discourse. To that end, we do not have to return to Western discourse itself but, rather, to the attempts to do away with the dialectical, oppositional notion of the savage in order to assess their strengths and weaknesses.

In Western discourse, the savage Native American is a construct with a long history: a construct that keeps repeating itself in literature and films, from, say, James Fenimore Cooper's 1826 novel, *The Last of the Mohicans*, to the 1990 film, *Dances with Wolves*, directed by Kevin Costner, to all sorts of contemporary comics, television series, and animations in which Native Americans appear explicitly and, increasingly, in a respectful way.[31] Yet, even more abundant are those cultural forms of representation in which Native Americans appear *implicitly* or tangentially. For instance, Golding's *Lord of the Flies* mentions the Native American tangentially, in comparison with J. M. Barrie's different versions of the Peter Pan story. Yet, the (racist) ghosts of both Peter Pan's Native Americans and the representation of Native Americans in general are *manifestly* present in Golding's novel.[32] In Huxley's *Brave New World*, John the Savage is far from

[31] There are many examples of such comics, television series and animations. In 2015, Marvel Comics created its first Native American superhero, Red Wolf, who is resourceful, and uses grit, wits, and knowledge of his environment to battle crime. Instead of taking a supporting role, a Native American character named Naikia Parker takes the lead on the TV series *Nakia* (1974), which tells a story of a Native American police officer in New Mexico. Another TV series, *Northern Exposure* (1990-1995), in which a newly graduated doctor is required to set up his practice in an Alaskan town, not only features Native Americans, but also respects their culture. *Bravestarr* (1987-1988) is an animated television series, in which Marshal BraveStarr [Pat Fraley] is depicted as a Native American who can call upon the power of "spirit animals."

[32] On the occasion of the NBC show *Peter Pan Live!*, "a bold new LIVE television production of the classic Broadway musical," Elizabeth Broadbent rightly argued that things that would be simply impossible and unacceptable in the context of contemporary representations of Black Americans, are very well still possible regarding Native Americans, as when they are represented as less than children. See <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elizabeth-broadbent/peter-pan-and-the-roots-o_b_6301724.html>.

being a Native American. Yet, here as well, the allusion is unmistakable, with the Reservation being a dominant space in the novel. My interest in relation to these is not to find out an authentic or realist, let alone *true* representation of the history of Native Americans, which is almost impossible to achieve. Instead, I want to delve into the presence of the savage, paradigmatically embodied by the Native American, in Western discourse and discuss how people, in reflecting on that discourse, have tried to break away from the ways in which the figure of the savage Native American was produced, is reproduced, and repeated, and how it, as a consequence, persists. Only if we have more clarity about these more or less successful attempts, can we try to find the grounds on which, or the cultural spaces within which, the voices of Native Americans themselves can be heard, without their being framed beforehand in such a way that these voices might not be their own in any true sense of the word.