From Warfare to World Fair: The Ideological Commodification of Geronimo in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century United States

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A Brief History: Geronimo and the Chiricahua Apaches

Of all the Native American groups caught in the physical and ideological appropriations of expansionist-minded Anglo-Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Apache are often framed by historiographical and visual sources as distinct from their neighboring bands and tribes. Unlike their Arizona contemporaries the Navajo and the Hopi, who were ultimately relegated to mythical status as domesticated savage and artistic curiosity, the Apache have been primarily defined by their resistance to Anglo-American subjugation in what came to be known as the Apache Wars.

This conflict between the Apache bands of southeastern Arizona and northern Mexico—notably the Chiricahua, the primary focus of this study—and the United States Army is loosely defined as the period between the conclusion of the Mexican-American War in 1848 and the final surrender of Geronimo and Naiche to General Nelson A. Miles in September 1886. Historian Frederick W. Turner, who published a revised and annotated edition of Geronimo's 1906 oral autobiography,

¹ The terms "Anglo-American," "Euro-American" and "white American" are used interchangeably throughout the piece as a means of avoiding the monotony of repetitious diction. The same may be applied to Geronimo, herein occasionally referred to as "infamous Chiricahua," "Bedonkohe leader," etc.

notes that early contact between the Chiricahua and white Americans was at that point friendly, "probably because neither represented a threat to the other." Yet the United States' sizable land acquisitions following the Mexican-American War, coupled with President James K. Polk's solicitation of manifest destiny, created a national obsession with delineating the Southwest as a non-native and non-Mexican space. The ensuing conflict necessitated a search by white Americans in the late nineteenth century for an accessible symbolic representation of this war against the "savage" Apaches. Concurrently, there was a certain Chiricahua Apache whose name had begun to surface, an individual known by Americans for his decisive (some might say vindictive) raiding tactics against Mexican settlements. The whites found their symbol in a man named Geronimo.

Geronimo, whose real name may be rendered in English as Goyahkla, was perhaps a slightly ironic choice for representation of the Apache, if only because his Chiricahua name roughly translates to "one who yawns." Yet a cursory examination of his character reveals him to have been an ideal (or at least idealized) central figure in the prolonged dispute between the United States and the Chiricahua Apache. Cultural perceptions of Geronimo in the nineteenth century United States were based largely on his continually hostile relations with Mexico, which comprised in equal measure raiding and retaliation carried out by the Chiricahuas and the Mexican Army in turn. Interestingly, this conflict allowed white Americans to create in Geronimo a sort of mythical folk hero, a figure who fought against the "inferior" Mexican presence in the south. Yet as white Americans expanded further into the Southwest in the middle of the nineteenth century, the increase in contact with

² Geronimo and S. M. Barrett, *Geronimo: His Own Story*, ed. Frederick Turner (New York: Meridian, 1996), 19.

³ Unless otherwise noted, quotations are a product of the author in denoting a term or descriptor as subjective and/or in keeping with contemporary Anglocentric ideals.

⁴ William M. Clements, *Imagining Geronimo: An Apache Icon in Popular Culture* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 17-18.

⁵ Angie Debo, *Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 13.

⁶ That is to say, white Americans at this time held to the ethnocentric belief of Mexicans as morally and culturally inferior, especially following the Mexican-American War (1846-1848).

Geronimo's Bedonkohe and other Chiricahua Apache invariably led to conflict.7

Influenced by reservation agent John P. Clum's public condemnation of Geronimo in 1877, Euro-Americas came to view the Chiricahua as the last group of "primitive" peoples to resist Anglo-American expansion, thereby registering as an ideological and physical threat to the dominant belief held by white Americans at the time. However this late nineteenth century perception of Geronimo as simply the war chief for a group of "savage" Apaches is complicated by an oppositional idealization that flourished in the early twentieth century, one that quite literally advertised Geronimo as a native curiosity in the process of assimilation into Euro-American culture. Perhaps most interesting is that Geronimo, by this point having gained an understanding of American commercialism, did not object to this commodified depiction of self. Not only did he accept the (largely inaccurate) way in which he was portrayed to the white masses, he learned to profit from it, selling pictures, autographs and such crafts as bows and arrows. This seemingly absolute transformation of Geronimo from despondent, primitive menace to heroic representation of assimilation and native culture was not the product of binary, linear Anglo appropriation. Rather it was the product of an iterative, nonlinear discourse of collection and spectacle, in that Euro-American perceptions of Geronimo informed each other to create and solidify a series of expectations, as per Anglocentric ideologies of primitivism and modernity.

The study of Geronimo conducted by historians in the years between his death in 1909 and the present has been characterized as extensive, yet even this would be an understatement. Within the latter part of the twentieth century, there has been a veritable explosion of biographical and historiographical material that has sought to eschew the popular "demonization" of Geronimo in favor of a more grounded, humanistic portrayal. Perhaps the most important—or at least most influential—text within this field, Angie Debo's Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place provides a nuanced biographic discourse that has inspired others to reevaluate Geronimo through exploration and analysis of Apache grievances towards Euro-American policies.8 However Debo's account of the famous Bedonkohe leader, while significant in its distillation and presentation of historical content, is somewhat lacking

⁷ The Bedonkohe are commonly recognized as one of several bands within the "tribe" of Chiricahua, which is itself one portion of the regionally and culturally related group known as Apache (David Roberts, Once They Moved like the Wind: Cochise, Geronimo, and the Apache Wars (New York: Touchstone, 1994), 35). 8 Clements, Imagining Geronimo, 38-39.

insofar as providing analysis of either sources or information, the result of which is a thoroughly palatable and informative history that merits further scrutiny.9 C. L. Sonnichsen's "From Savage to Saint: A New Image for Geronimo" picks up a decade after publication of Debo's work, and explores chronologically fictional and nonfictional literary strains wherein Geronimo is first appropriated as subhuman villain before transitioning to social and cultural hero. Yet Sonnichsen's work, like Debo's, is made distinct by its lack of concrete analysis on the part of the author, which in this case is often hidden beneath myriad recitations of excerpts and ideas from other sources, or is summarily presented without further evidence.¹⁰ Perhaps the most comprehensive study to date regarding the oscillating perceptions of Geronimo is that of William M. Clements, whose book length Imagining Geronimo: An Apache Icon in Popular Culture, forgoes a lengthy biographic narrative in favor of thorough assessment of the ways Geronimo was appropriated by media and popular culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In employing the theoretical processes of primitivism, modernity and representation as outlined by Leah Dilworth and Philip J. Deloria, this essay examines the work of Debo, Sonnichsen, Clements, and others in reconciling the disparate characters inhabited by Geronimo during the Apache Wars and later as a prisoner of war and national cultural icon.

Staged Authenticity: Early Representations of Geronimo in Euro-American Culture

The first known photograph of Geronimo, taken by Frank Randall at San Carlos reservation in spring of 1884, depicts the famous Bedonkohe leader as existing largely outside of Euro-American

⁹ There have in subsequent decades been an indefatigable number of sources published on Geronimo and the Chiricahuas in the latter part of the nineteenth century, such as David Roberts *Once They Moved like the Wind* and Edwin R. Sweeney's *From Cochise to Geronimo: The Chiricahua Apaches, 1874–1886.* While these and others provide a bevy of secondary information, Debo's biography is noted above for essentially having influenced the creation of this subfield of humanistic Geronimo studies.

¹⁰ C. L. Sonnichsen, "From Savage to Saint: A New Image for Geronimo," in *Geronimo and the End of the Apache Wars*, ed. C. L. Sonnichsen (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1987), 25, 31. Upon introducing Geronimo's famous biography by S.M. Barrett, Sonnichsen notes simply that it "could have been much better," and concludes the piece with the idea that "Geronimo lived too long" without providing specific reasoning or analysis for this statement.

influence.¹¹ Clothed in supposedly traditional Chiricahua dress and situated within a desert landscape that most contemporary white Americans would find exotic, Geronimo is literally and figuratively framed by Randall as the quintessential unassimilated or "wild" native figure. Taken in conjunction with the selective use of props and posturing—clutching a Winchester repeating rifle, Geronimo appears ready to pounce towards the camera at a moment's notice—this employment of specific costume and landscape (actually a studio) injects into the photograph an undercurrent of violence, as associated with ethnocentric Euro-American beliefs regarding primitivism in the late nineteenth century.

The framing of Geronimo as native "Other" serves as the discursive component of contemporary primitivism, a lens through which the content of this ideological structure may be understood. 12 The photograph explicitly labels Geronimo as an anomalous presence, the presentation of a "savage" being implied through application of visual elements containing a potentiality for violence. The rifle in Geronimo's hands, the relatively close framing of which Geronimo's scowling visage is central (an expression consistently associated with the Bedonkohe leader and presented in the majority of visual reproductions created since then), and the inclusion of a Southwestern desert "landscape" that was, as per Euro-American expectations, labeled as a "regional other" or "American Orient," form the basis of this sociocultural anomaly. 13 Yet this institution of Geronimo as anomalous performs the cyclical role of reinforcing stereotypical expectations: because he is presented by Randall as antithetical of contemporary modernity, Geronimo becomes in effect a gauge against which Anglocentric expectations of normality may be contrasted, thereby heightening his stature as native incongruity.

This practice of arranging individuals as either conforming to or defying sociocultural expectations may be extended to ideological and

¹¹ Frank Randall, Geronimo, 19814, Gatewood Photograph Collection, Folder 6, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

¹² Philip J. Deloria, *Indians in Unexpected Places* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 10. Deloria describes discourse as the practice or application of ideology, the latter of which provides an understanding of the content of said practices.

¹³ Leah Dilworth, Imagining Indians in the Southwest: Persistent Visions of a Primitive Past (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1996), 6. General George Crook argued that the acquisition of breech-loading rifles by Apaches transformed their "tactics and whole system of warfare," the result of which was "a system of offensive-defensive operations" that "added to the difficulties encountered in savage warfare" (George Crook, "The Apache Problem," Typescript, Crook Collection, 1867-1890, MS 0197, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, 4).

physical landscapes, a process readily applied by Euro-Americans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Classified by Leah Dilworth as a monochromatic comparison between preconceived "civilization" versus "others," primitivism may be generally defined as "a belief in the superiority of seemingly simpler ways of life."14 As a central tenet of unilinear cultural evolution, primitivism functions as a representational framework that is both a reactionary and self-reflexive process, the authors of which seek to designate spaces of the Other as separate from their own while also appropriating them as Euro-American sites of rejuvenation and authenticity, a supposed "cure for what ails modernity."15 Thus, as contemporary white Americans eschewed the (largely self-imposed) trappings of civilized urbanity in favor of "authentic" native spaces, their absorption and representation of native landscapes and sociocultural practices within Euro-American expectations yielded an asymmetrical power relationship defined not by communication, but by consumption, appropriation and objectification. In returning to Randall's (literally) iconic photograph of Geronimo, the aforementioned components of primitivism may be espied. The image exists as a form of staged representation, wherein the audience is led to believe they have been privy to a genuine experience, despite such innate contradictions as the studio setting.¹⁶ As one of a handful of images taken prior to Geronimo's surrender in 1886, Randall's print manifests in the Bedonkohe leader the apocryphal savage native of the Apache Wars. The image lends an amount of specificity and immediacy to what had previously been a largely anonymous conflict against an archetypical, menacing Other, viewed by Anglo-Americans as an obstacle to geographical and metaphysical domination. The photograph may also be viewed through the lens of imperialist nostalgia, as many historians, ethnologists and other Euro-American groups bemoaned the loss of native culture even as the United States army was inevitably driving the Chiricahua and other Apaches towards extinction.¹⁷ Thus, representation

¹⁴ Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest*, 4.

¹⁵ Ibid., 5. William H. Clements describes the theory of unilinear cultural evolution as a static ethnocentric ideology "that colored nineteenth- and twentieth-century thinking about the rise of mankind from savagery through barbarism to civilization," founded on the belief that there was only ever one correct route to the latter (Clements, *Imagining Geronimo*, 84-85).

¹⁶ Dominique Bregent-Heald, "Primitive Encounters: Film and Tourism in the North American West," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 38:1 (Spring 2007): 57.

¹⁷ Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest*, 15.

in this case precedes objectification as a sort of living relic paradoxically in need of preservation and suppression.

On the Reservation: Visual Representations of Chiricahua Lands

Such appropriative, ethnocentric processes of primitivism and imperialist nostalgia heavily influenced visual representations of native Chiricahua spaces during and after the Apache Wars. An analysis of such textual and cartographic sources demonstrate the ways in which literal mapping of native spaces has transformed over the course of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and therefore the ways Euro-American ideologies towards Apaches have equally transformed. In examining Anglicized geographical representations of Apache territories and reservations, a connection emerges between the mapping of physical



Apache spaces and the dynamic sociocultural "mapping" of Geronimo the man, as previously seen in Randall's provocative 1884 photograph. A prime example may be found in George A. Dorsey's Indians of the Southwest, a guidebook published in 1903 by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad System. Dorsey's text, intended as a companion piece to the burgeoning railway, provides a touristic portrayal of Southwest Indians and their reservation lands.18 Utilizing a mixture of landscape and portrait photography, written text, and simplistic hand drawn insets, the

Figure 1

¹⁸ George A. Dorsey, *Indians of the Southwest* (New York: AMS Press, 1976).

text portrays Apache and other native cultures within the frame of Euro-American expectation. Scant factual ethnographic information is couched within a bevy of geographical, agricultural and statistical data that serves the dual function of presenting the included Apache bands as objectified commodity and as exclusively domesticated and artistic or else warlike and savage (two extremes Geronimo similarly inhabited). For example, the White Mountain Apache are noted for their signature dress and often elaborate ornamental jewelry, whereas the Jicarilla are connoted as animalistic, defined by their alleged obsession with tiswin, gambling and polygamous marriage practices. 19 The text describes reservations in terms of climate and geography, with a continual emphasis on population numbers and tillable acreage indicative of the ideological—and in many cases physical—appropriation of native spaces by Euro-Americans. Reservations are located spatially to the railroad and to cities and settlements inhabited by individuals of Euro-American descent, further alluding to the rapid transformation of reservations from a restricted native space to that of a commodified and easily accessible, touristic space for white Americans. Dorsey's text therefore serves the binary and antithetical purpose of documenting these zones while also reinforcing their inclusion within the hierarchy of preexisting Euro-American ethnographical and sociocultural expectations.

Geronimo as an individual was connected to this hierarchy of expectation, which fluctuated between three basic phases in accordance with shifting Anglo-Chiricahua relations. Initially perceived by Euro-Americans as the archetypical savage being and a threat to their physical and ideological domination, Geronimo became "chief" of a group of "hostiles" allegedly requiring pacification. Such is presented in the rather overbearing "Outline map of the Field of Operations against Hostile Chiricahua Indians: Showing Operations from April 12th, 1886, to the Date of their Surrender September 4th, 1886," which serves a primarily military function, indicating the zone of conflict between the United States Army and the Chiricahuas.²⁰ The map's emphasis on artificial boundaries and the significant lack of "hostile" Chiricahua presence are

¹⁹ Ibid., 178-179, 184.

²⁰ E.J. Spencer, E.D. Williams, Charles Kern, Nelson Appleton Miles, and Thomas Sydney McCaleb. Outline Map of the Field of Operations against Hostile Chiricahua Indians: Showing Operations from April 12th, 1886, to the Date of their Surrender September 4th, 1886 ([place of publication unknown]: United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1886). The area depicted therein includes portions of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Sonora.

together indicative of an obsessive desire to delineate the space as exclusively Euro-American through containment or removal of past and present non-Anglo cultures.²¹ This impulse to physically and socially confine the Chiricahua Apaches to a reservation system corresponds directly with a desire to contain Geronimo as an individual, especially given his attendant reputation as a "sly and viscous inciter of rebellion and bloodshed" among his people.22

Following Geronimo's surrender in 1886, this fear of "hostile" Chiricahuas as related to Euro-American anticipation of "outbreak" subsequently progressed towards expectation of containment and assimilation, as displayed in the second map, aptly titled "Map of San Carlos Indian Reservation, Arizona."23 This early twentieth century representation of San Carlos Reservation is similarly preoccupied with boundaries, serving in many ways as a continuation of the previous map's commentary on the United States Army's attempts to suppress and contain the Chiricahua. The multilayered enclosure surrounding the designated native space of San Carlos epitomizes the "dual impact" of reservation boundaries upon native cultures: the physical fence performs the multiple roles of constraining native presence while also reinforcing the divide between Euro-American conceptions of primitivism and modernity.²⁴ Gone are the latent implications of violence presented in the previous graph's "Indian Fights," here replaced with an agricultural emphasis, including annotations for subsistence farm sheds and family settlements. The previously explicit hostility between Apaches and Euro-Americans is here replaced by the submissive properties of the "Indian School," which connoted with the overall agriculture/subsistence theme produces an ideal of the Apache as Other who, like Geronimo in the years following his surrender, was in the process of domestication and assimilation.

The third and final map, "Fort Apache Indian Reservation," represents another leap forward in time, yet continues along the trajectory of Apache domination by and assimilation into Euro-American

²¹ This marginalization of non-Anglo presence in the nineteenth century Southwest included not only Apaches and other native groups, but also Mexicans, who were to a lesser extent contextualized as inferior as per Euro-American ideological constructs of racial hierarchy.

²² David Roberts, Once They Moved like the Wind: Cochise, Geronimo, and the Apache Wars (New York: Touchstone, 1994), 203.

²³ United States, Office of Indian Affairs, Map of San Carlos Indian Reservation, Arizona (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, 1924).

²⁴ Deloria, *Indians of the Southwest*, 15-16.

societal expectations.²⁵ Its placement within magazine articles and advertisements centered on tourism and recreation represents the apex of this intercultural primitivistic discourse. The process of collection and suppression as presented in the previous graphs has been replaced by appropriation as per the white fantasy of renewal, leading to the representation of formerly native Apache spaces as commodified spectacle and staged authenticity. Whereas the previous sources placed emphasis on military operations, infrastructure and settlement, this map is explicitly designed with general navigational aid in mind, providing routes to points of interest and local wildlife. Much like Geronimo himself, who assumed the role of touristic spectacle at expositions, Fort Apache Reservation—itself a Euro-American construct—has been reappropriated as a "native space" white Americans may interact with as a means of solidifying their own cultural identity at the expense of the Apache Other.

Yet, a comprehensive understanding of Geronimo's individual transformation within the frame of Anglo-American expectations may only be achieved through an investigation as to how he first acquired the sobriquet of "the worst Indian who ever lived." This perception of the infamous Bedonkohe leader, so thoroughly disseminated by myriad press releases and fictitious literary accounts during and after the Apache Wars, may be traced back to a single source. It began with a man named John P. Clum. ²⁷

Demon of the Borderlands: The Rise of Geronimo in Media and Literature

John Philip Clum assumed the post of agent for the San Carlos Reservation on August 8, 1874.²⁸ As part of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Francis Walker's ill-fated plan of consolidating "savages" in "a single place under a uniform regimen," Clum immediately set about the task of removing the Chiricahua from their reservation near Apache Pass,

²⁵ Fort Apache Indian Reservation, (Indians of North America-Apache-Fort Apache Reservation-Description and Travel [ephemera file], Ephemera File, Arizona Historical Society, Tucson). The authorship and date of exact publication are unknown, yet textual inference from the surrounding materials implies an approximate time frame of 1964-1965.

²⁶ Roberts, Once They Moved like the Wind, 203.

²⁷ Debo, Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place, 99.

²⁸ Roberts, Once They Moved like the Wind, 152-153.

established two years previously when General Oliver Otis Howard sought out Cochise within his stronghold of the Dragoon Mountains in Southeastern Arizona.²⁹ In a meeting with Tom Jeffords, Clum's counterpart at the Chiricahua Reservation, Clum was notified as to the presence of Geronimo and Juh, who had expressed a desire to meet with the new agent of San Carlos. A conference at the agency ensued in early June of 1875, wherein Geronimo acquiesced to the removal to San Carlos on the condition that he be allowed to gather his people together first. Clum assented, though he sent a number of his reservation police to shadow the Chiricahua leaders. Upon reaching their band, the leaders ordered the camp broken down, and the Apaches fled. Thus Geronimo's first outbreak from the reservation system served as Clum's introduction to the as of yet relatively unknown Bedonkohe Apache leader, against whom the young San Carlos agent would hold a grudge for the remainder of his life.³⁰ When Clum finally "captured" Geronimo and his band at the Warm Springs (Ojo Caliente) Agency in spring of 1877, he issued a press release, including a telegram that implied Geronimo as one of "the worst" of those arrested.31 Though Geronimo would remain a relatively minor fixture in local and national press for several years hence, Clum's initial statement ultimately proved the catalyst for the torrent of condemning press releases attributed to Geronimo from the late 1870s until well after his final surrender in September 1886.32

This emphatic censure of Geronimo and the Chiricahuas by local and national newspapers (which on occasion extended to international news outlets) was primarily led by the Arizona press, which played a central role in the public "demonization" of Geronimo. In fulfilling the multiple functions of "praising the noble pioneers, condemning the Indians sympathizers back East, lashing the military leaders who coddled the Apaches or let them get away, and demanding the speedy elimination of the hostiles," Arizona newspapers instituted the prevalent construct of sociocultural and political expectation concerning not merely Geronimo, but the Apaches as a whole.33 Employing "to the fullest extent all its editorial resources of impassioned rhetoric and blistering invective," the newspapers provided a conduit for public opinion regarding how the associated Apaches should be handled, vacillating between removal to an extraterritorial reservation and outright extermination.³⁴ This

²⁹ Ibid., 102, 154-155.

³⁰ Debo, Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place, 98-99.

³¹ Clements, *Imagining Geronimo*, 17.

³³ John A. Turcheneske, Jr, "The Arizona Press and Geronimo's Surrender," Journal of Arizona History, 14:2 (Summer 1973): 133-134. 34 Ibid.

"impassioned rhetoric" of such political figures as territorial governor Anson P. K. Safford, who in his 1871 address to Arizona's Sixth Legislative Assembly broadly denounced the Apache Indians for "their tortures, murders and robberies, which hang like the dark pall of night over every enterprise," was by the late 1870s and early 1880s applied wholesale as the de facto Euro-American posturing towards the Chiricahua, and in much greater specificity. Several months prior to Geronimo's "capture" by General Nelson A. Miles, the Weekly Phoenix Herald denounced Geronimo as "the embodiment of treachery and murder," to be "tried and hanged at once" by the civil courts of the Arizona territory. Several months prior to describe the Arizona territory.

Many territorial newspapers shared this opinion (among them John P. Clum's own *Tombstone Epitaph*), all of which deferred that a military commission was incapable of rendering a verdict to Geronimo's band.³⁷ Thus when General Miles, acting in contradiction to orders from the War Department, had Geronimo and his band deported from the territory on the afternoon of September 8, 1886, the Arizona press responded with incredulity and condemnation of the one who had allowed the source of their ire to escape civil justice.³⁸ However, within a month of Geronimo's removal to San Antonio, the territorial newspapers had largely assented to the notion of Geronimo as beyond their reach. Somewhat paradoxically, the Arizona press also recanted their earlier denunciations of General Miles, with many newspapers actively supporting the latter's decision in defying the War Department and the wishes of a "chicken hearted" president.³⁹ Yet where Miles was able to

³⁵ Anson P. K. Safford, "Message of the Governor of Arizona," *Arizona Citizen*, January 14, 1871. An interesting (and perhaps telling) feature of this article, published as it was several months prior to the infamous Camp Grant Massacre, is the inclusion of a statement by Safford that the creation of a civilian army would be ideal in combating the Apaches, implying Sanford's alignment with the public opinion of the Army's failure heretofore in adequately suppressing the Apache threat.

³⁶ Weekly Phoenix Herald, February 18, 1886, quoted in John A. Turcheneske, "The Arizona Press and Geronimo's Surrender," Journal of Arizona History 14:2 (Summer 1973): 134.

³⁷ Turcheneske, "The Arizona Press and Geronimo's Surrender," 140. ³⁸ Ibid., 137.

³⁹ Ibid., 144. In a telegraph to General Miles immediately after Geronimo's capture, President Cleveland expressed his desire to turn the captives over to civil authorities, to be kept as prisoners of war or hanged, the latter of which Cleveland admitted he "would much prefer" (Roberts, *Once They Moved like the*

redeem his stature in the eyes of the Arizona public, and in no great span of time, the years of condemning press attributed to Geronimo created in him the emblematic Euro-American figure of primitivistic and savage Other, an archetype further reinforced by his inclusion in other literary forms, not the least of which was the highly stylized romantic adventure novel that flourished internationally at the close of the nineteenth century.40

Historian C. L. Sonnichsen refers to this appropriation of Geronimo by novelists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as a "marvelous opportunity," wherein "he and his people made wonderful villains."41 Yet while Sonnichsen's subjective rhetoric should be observed with a measure of caution, there can be no doubt as to the fact that a large number of writers did in indeed utilize the predominant Anglo conceptualization of Geronimo as an antagonistic figure within fictional narrative threads, many of which centered around the campaigns of the Apache Wars.⁴² These fictionalized accounts (as opposed to the alleged "truths" of contemporary local and national press) merit in the least a cursory examination within the frame of ethnic and sociocultural commodification of Geronimo. These novels thrive on Victorian literary tropes concerning ethnocentric and geographic idealizations, in this case applied to the American Southwest as a space wherein these beliefs may be acted out as a means of reinforcing their supposed values. Consider the works of Edward S. Ellis, who was responsible for several novels that centered on military campaigns against the Apaches. Ellis' 1901 publication On the Trail of Geronimo draws prominently from a number of the aforementioned Euro-American ideals. The young protagonist Dick Whitcomb emerges from the preeminent institution of West Point only to confront Geronimo and the typified "savage" Apaches within the equally untamed domain of the Southwest, the former of which serves as the primary obstacle to harnessing the latter in geopolitical and monetary

Wind, 297). Whereas Roberts posits that Miles eventually convinced Cleveland to deport the Chiricahuas from Arizona, Turcheneske implies that Miles acted of his own accord out of fear that Geronimo would not live long enough to stand

⁴⁰ C. L. Sonnichsen, "From Savage to Saint: A New Image for Geronimo," in Geronimo and the End of the Apache Wars (Tucson: Arizona Historical Society, 1987), 10-11.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 13. Further contemporary examples of the demonization of Geronimo and the Apaches may be found in the works of Charles King, and later those of James Warner Bellah, whose mid twentieth century renderings of the Apaches lacks either the romanticism of Ellis or the sentimentality of King, instead portraying a wholly emphatic censure of Apaches as irredeemable nonhumans (12-13).

terms.⁴³ The novel is rife with authorial intent that leads to frequent misconceptions of Apache culture, as in the scene where a grizzly bear attacks eight Apache of Geronimo's group, whom the protagonist observes as "eager to bring down the great game," or when the narrator explains that the young lieutenant must be the first to reach the cache of gold housed nearby, lest the Apaches discover it and "seize the plunder...for which hundreds are always eager to risk their lives." When Geronimo appears before the young Whitcomb, it is as "a heavy set man in middle life...teeth stained by tobacco smoke, twinkling bead-like eyes... and a villainous expression, in which it would have been hard to find a trace of kindness or magnanimity." Recalling again Frank Randall's 1884 photograph, this description appears at least partially accurate. Its placement within the context of highly subjective or plainly inaccurate sociocultural expectations, however, removes from it any authority as an objective portrayal.

Such merging of partially factual representations within the broader sphere of Euro-American expectation may be seen in the personal accounts of those whose paths intersected with Geronimo either directly or indirectly, notably two groups: officers who participated in military campaigns against "Geronimo's band" in the late nineteenth century, and native contemporaries of Geronimo within the western grouping of the Chiricahua Apache.

Loved, Hated, Feared: Contemporary Accounts of the Bedonkohe Leader

An historical figure made famous for his attempts to subdue the Chiricahuas in the 1870s and 1880s, General George Crook is perhaps best known as a studious observer of the Apache.⁴⁶ Crook's article "The Apache Problem" encapsulates many of the ethnological ideas (and fallacies) held by other military officers who participated in the hunt for Geronimo. Its argument extends beyond the monochromatic ethnocentrisms espoused by the public and the press even as it reinforces them.⁴⁷ Unlike most Euro-American depictions of the Apache, which

⁴³ Ibid.; Edward S. Ellis, On the Trail of Geronimo; Or, In the Apache Country (New York: Street and Smith, 1901).

⁴⁴ Ellis, On the Trail of Geronimo, 70, 76-77.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁶ Roberts, Once They Moved like the Wind, 79-80.

⁴⁷ Crook, "The Apache Problem," 1-2.

presented them solely as antagonistic barriers to geographical settlement and ideological domination, Crook places the Chiricahua within the more objective realm of reactionary figures rather than as unprovoked murderers of white settlers. However he repeatedly refers to the Apaches as animalistic "savages" within an asymmetrical discourse wherein "civilization always conquers barbarism," and is given to imperialist nostalgia as he laments the loss of native populations as a result of this exchange.⁴⁸ The result is a narrative that simultaneously conforms to certain aspects of Euro-American ideology towards Apaches while also attempting to subvert those views in hopes of further understanding them as a distinct group. Yet, whatever sympathy Crook held for the Chiricahua was impaired by his opinion of Geronimo, with whom he met in late March of 1886 at Canyon de los Embudos to discuss terms of surrender.⁴⁹ After several days of circuitous negotiations, Geronimo agreed to Crook's ultimatum of surrender and exile; these plans, however, never came to fruition. A bootlegger named Tribolet approached the Apaches that evening, selling them a large quantity of whiskey before allegedly "warning" them that they would be seized and hanged upon crossing the border. Under direction of Geronimo and Naiche, thirtynine Chiricahuas fled camp that night, a failure attributed to Crook by his superiors, which ultimately led to his resignation and replacement by the vainglorious General Nelson A. Miles.⁵⁰

The paradoxical viewpoint of Crook in relation to the Chiricahuas carries over at least partially to other military officials, many of whom provide quite specific opinions of Geronimo. Lieutenant John G. Bourke, who served as an aide on Crook's staff from 1871 until the latter's resignation in 1886, was a staunch defender of the General's methods in suppressing the Chiricahuas in Arizona.⁵¹ Based on a series of diary entries from time in the field, Bourke's 1883 text An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madre argues that Geronimo's actions were solely responsible for the discrediting of Crook, furthermore that his escape had "disastrous consequences for all of the Chiricahuas."52 In fact, Geronimo is hardly mentioned throughout Bourke's account, save when the Chiricahua leader enters the General's camp near the close of the

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Roberts, Once They Moved Like the Wind, 268.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 273, 274-275. Upon visiting the Mount Vernon Barracks where Geronimo was briefly held in 1890, Crook refused to see Geronimo, who he dismissed as "such a liar that I can't believe a word he says. I don't want to have anything to do with him" (Clements, Imagining Geronimo, 21).

⁵¹ Joseph C. Porter, "Foreword," in An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madres: An Account of the Expedition in Pursuit of the Hostile Chiricahuas in the Spring of 1883 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), xiii-xiv.

⁵² Ibid., xv-xvi.

narrative. Bourke notes that Crook "declined to have anything to do with him," before shifting focus to a group of Mexican women that had previously been captives of Geronimo, one of whom characterizes the latter as "the devil, sent to punish them for their sins." Whether Geronimo's relative absence from the Lieutenant's account is intended as a criticism or mere apathy on the part of the author is unclear. However Bourke's omission and later denunciation of the Chiricahua leader is placed within the broader context of reformation of government Indian policy as a means of saving the "brave but bloodthirsty aborigines" from corrupt bureaucrats and the Chiricahuas' own implied primitive tendencies. 54

A more favorable depiction of Geronimo may be found in the writings of General Oliver Otis Howard, whose histrionic compilation Famous Indian Chiefs I Have Known provides an extremely rudimentary and Anglocentric discourse on a range of North American Indian leaders.⁵⁵ Referred to by Howard as "the last Apache chief on the war-path," Geronimo exists therein as a highly malleable individual requiring white supervision from "Uncle Sam." 56 As in Bourke's account, Howard introduces Geronimo as a simplistic native figure who is defined by inherently violent tendencies. Yet, unlike the text of Crook's lieutenant, Howard's narrative arc closes out with a series of broad and ethnocentric expectations that border on storybook quality. Within the last few pages, Geronimo embraces the Euro-American education system, proclaiming his desire for the captive Apache children at Mount Vernon Barracks to "become white children," while living the remainder of his life as "the last Apache chief...happy and joyful, for he had learned to try and be good to everybody and to love his white brothers."57

General Thomas Cruse's *Apache Days and After* includes a presentation of ideas similar to those of Crook and Bourke, simultaneously defending the Chiricahua against the corruption present at San Carlos Reservation while objectifying them as inherently violent

⁵³ John G. Bourke, An Apache Campaign in the Sierra Madres: An Account of the Expedition in Pursuit of the Hostile Chiricahuas in the Spring of 1883 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 85, 92.

⁵⁴ Bourke, An Apache Campaign, xxi.

⁵⁵ O. O. Howard, Famous Indian Chiefs I Have Known (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

⁵⁶ Ibid., 353, 358.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 361, 364.

primitives in need of assimilation.⁵⁸ Moreover, Cruse singles out Geronimo as a "brave and shrewd" manipulator who "could always stir up a handful of wild followers," though unlike Bourke, Cruse suggests "his own people knew him for the liar and assassin he was." This last statement opens another argument entirely regarding perceptions of Geronimo, and requires a foray into the contemporary accounts of Apaches who interacted with the Chiricahua leader during the Apache Wars or as prisoners thereafter. Assessing native opinions of Geronimo, however, is more complicated than gauging those of Euro-American sources, for there are two additional factors which must be considered. As is often the case with native testimony, many early opinions provided by Apache and other native sources derive from writings by non-Indians who may have affected the original meanings through authorial intent (as is potentially the case in S. M. Barrett's Geronimo: His Own Story and Eve Ball's In the Days of Victorio). Furthermore, Apache narratives may reflect a "colonized mentality" in that the native sources said what they believed their Euro-American audience wanted to hear. 60 Regardless of their merit as credible sources, the negative opinions furnished by Chiricahua and other Apaches contributed to the larger demonization of Geronimo within Anglo-American frames of expectation.61

Accounts by Chiricahuas with close relations to Geronimo, of which there are relatively few that enter into any substantial discourse, are quite mixed in their reception of the Bedonkohe. In his semiautobiographical *I Fought with Geronimo*, Jason Betzinez portrays the Bedonkohe warrior in largely humanistic terms, referring to Geronimo as "the most intelligent and resourceful as well as the most vigorous and farsighted," and "a much braver warrior and abler leader than [Chatto and Naiche]." Regarding the many interviews of Geronimo in the years

⁵⁸ Thomas Cruse, *Apache Days and After*, Eugene Cunninghame (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, 1941), 40-41. Cruse's general opinion of the Chiricahua may be derived from his especially contradictory labeling of them as "amazing savages" (208). ⁵⁹ Ibid., 207-208.

⁶⁰ Clements, *Imagining Geronimo*, 31. See also Mary Louise Pratt's "Arts of the Contact Zone" for more on the concepts of autoethnography and transculturation.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Jason Betzinez and Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *I Fought With Geronimo* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987), 58, 182. Though as a Chihenne, Betzinez is quick to denote Victorio as "head and shoulders above the several war chiefs [including Geronimo]...who have bigger names with the white people" (50). Ethnologists eventually placed the Chihenne (or Warm Springs Apache, as they came to be known by Euro-Americans) within the larger sociocultural band of the Chiricahua, although some are keen to distinguish between the Warm

following his surrender, Betzinez defends his fellow Chiricahua, noting "if [white journalists] couldn't get enough fire and bloodshed out of his account, they used their lively imaginations."⁶³

A more ambivalent representation may be derived from James Kaywaykla, who served as narrator to Eve Ball's recounting of Victorio and the Warm Springs Apache.⁶⁴ Kaywaykla similarly defends Geronimo, going so far as to rationalize the raiding of the latter as one who "fought to protect his family, his tribe, his land," and therefore views his imprisonment as altogether unjustified.⁶⁵ Yet unlike Betzinez, Kaywaykla does not deliver an entirely altruistic portrayal of Geronimo. Referring to the Battle of Alisos Creek in spring of 1882, Kaywaykla elaborates on Geronimo's supposedly cowardly actions therein, which remain highly controversial among historians of Geronimo and the Chiricahua. According to Betzinez, who was present, Geronimo's heroic rallying of warriors against the attacking Mexican forces saved the lives of many of the Chiricahua.66 Yet Kaywaykla—who, it should be noted, was not himself present—claims that Geronimo called to his men "if we leave the women and children we can escape," at which point Fun, Geronimo's cousin and a trusted warrior, turned to the Bedonkohe and threatened to shoot him, should he repeat himself.⁶⁷ Perhaps Geronimo's contradictory image in relation to his fellow Chiricahuas is best illustrated in his funeral,

Springs and the "true" Chiricahua often associated with Cochise's Chokonen (Roberts, Once They Moved like the Wind, 35).

⁶³ Ibid., 198. It should be noted that Betzinez was fully a generation younger than Geronimo, and that his account was not written until the end of his life in the late 1950s. As it was published shortly before Angie Debo's biographical *Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place*, which influenced the creation of a more humanistic strain of Geronimo studies, Betzinez's text may be seen as conforming to (or preceding) Anglo expectations.

⁶⁴ Eve Ball and James Kaywaykla, *In the Days of Victorio* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970).

⁶⁵ Ibid., 152.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 75.

⁶⁷ Ball and Kaywaykla, *In the Days of Victorio*, 144; Roberts, *Once They Moved like the Wind*, 212. Three years later, a group of Chiricahuas fled Turkey Creek Reservation under the direction of Geronimo and Mangus (son of famous Chihenne chief Mangas Colorodas). Upon hearing that the two had induced the others to flee through circulating a rumor that Lieutenant Britton Davis, the reservation agent, had been murdered, another Chiricahua leader named Chihuahua became so incensed that he sought to kill Geronimo, who escaped to the south before Chihuahua could enact his plan (Roberts, 257).

wherein an elderly woman began to wail in Apache: "Everybody hated you: white men hated you, Mexicans hated you, Apaches hated you; all of them hated you. You [have] been good to us. We love you, we hate to see you go."68 Clearly, Geronimo's reputation was as fractional among native Apaches as it was to Euro-Americans, comprising a variegation of perspectives that ranged from violent and selfish primitive to altruistic and folkloristic hero.

Yet, an understanding of these intricate and often antithetical perceptions requires an analysis of one final piece in the complex life of Geronimo. To do so requires a jump backwards in time to approximately ten years prior to the death of the Bedonkohe leader, at the end of summer 1898. Housed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, Geronimo had already begun his public transformation from "violent savage" to acculturated native; his greatest exposure to Euro-American culture, however, had yet to come. Geronimo was going to the world fair.69

Geronimo on Display: The International Exposition as Contact Zone

Geronimo's first participation in such large scale displays of sociocultural and technological Anglo "advancement" came by way of the Trans-Mississippi and International Exposition at Omaha, Nebraska, held throughout most of September and October 1898. By this point having achieved an understanding of American commercialism, Geronimo set out to profit from this commodification by selling photographs of himself, later expanding his entrepreneurial skills to the marketing of crafts and artwork.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the Bedonkohe's daily participation in highly theatricalized "sham battles" devoid of any ethnological merit reinforced the notion of the expos as contact zones, wherein these "coerced performance[s] of identity" served only to further the agendas of the fair's organizers, of which there were two in relation to the American Indian presence.⁷¹ The first concerned the promotion of federal Indian policy, as exhibits of material native culture reinforced the theory of unilateral cultural evolution. Accordingly, the second agenda of fair organizers centered on assimilation, including exhibits that openly

⁶⁸ Roberts, Once They Moved like the Wind, 314.

⁶⁹ Debo, Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place, 400.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 400, 405. Geronimo had begun to profit from his celebrity status even before reaching the expo, selling buttons and hats at train stations along the way, which he dutifully replenished prior to each stop.

⁷¹ Clements, *Imagining Geronimo*, 82-83. That is to say, there existed two main goals of the organizers in addition to the obvious motivation for utilizing the Indian presence as a means of entertainment and generation of profit.

contrasted native schoolchildren and graduates with those who maintained "traditional lifeways" of native culture as a way of acquainting Indians and Anglo spectators with the inherent "synthesis of progress and white supremacy."⁷²

Placed within this framework was Geronimo, who, in accordance with the decades of largely negative press entered into the world fairs and other expositions as the popular Euro-American ideal of the essential, unassimilated Indian. In fact, this static depiction of Geronimo as the archetype of the last "real" Indian warrior applied even before the Bedonkohe had participated in any of the international expos, as may be seen in Ed Irwin's 1897 photograph of Geronimo at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.⁷³ Irwin's print epitomizes the ways in which Geronimo was later showcased in the international expos at Omaha, Buffalo (NY) and St. Louis, as well as in President Theodore Roosevelt's 1905 inaugural parade. Framed as a medium shot portrait, it displays the upper body of Geronimo in a sitting position, scowl plastered on his face. Similar to Randall's 1884 image of the Bedonkohe, Irwin's photograph is charged with an undercurrent of violence, here implied through Geronimo's clutching of a revolver in his waistband, though the absence of ammunition on the belt—which it was obviously designed to hold draws attention to the theatrical qualities of the image. This theatricality is only heightened by the choice of dress: rather than the loose fitting cloth garments commonly seen in portraits of the Bedonkohe, Geronimo wears a frayed leather tunic, blanket draped across his lower body, and an ornate headdress with hornlike appendages that recall his aforementioned moniker as "the devil." 74 Clearly Geronimo was "acting" in accordance with the white fantasy of encountering the prototypical native figure, yet his dichotomous presentation as violent and "savage" Indian when in fact he was a thoroughly disarmed and subdued individual together create a powerless subject that is "safe" for Euro-American consumption.⁷⁵

⁷² Ibid., 84-85.

⁷³ Ed Irwin, *Geronimo: Chief of the Notorious Band of Arizona Apache Indians*, 30375, Subjects-Indians-Apache-Campaigns-Geronimo [photo file], Arizona Historical Society, Tucson.

⁷⁴ In his criticism of educational programs for Indians, which involved removal of native children from their communities and then returning them after assimilation, Geronimo argued that those who are returned may simply discard the (physical and ideological) garb of the Anglo and reclaim his or her Indianness through clothing oneself in the transformative object of the blanket (Clements, 98).

⁷⁵ Dilworth, *Imagining Indians in the Southwest*, 100.

The Bedonkohe's agenda ran contrary to those of expo organizers, whose institution of an Indian Congress carried the overbearing purpose of maintaining natives as perpetual savages within static Anglocentric ideology.77 Yet Geronimo did everything in his power to shift Euro-American expectations, acquiescing to touristic preconceptions and even adopting the role of tourist himself. He acted as spectator at the "sham battles" at the Omaha exposition, and toured the exhibits of such foreign minorities as Turks, Africans, and Filipinos at the St. Louis Expo.⁷⁸ Furthermore, Geronimo sought to modify his image through changing his physical appearance, often eschewing "traditional" native dress in lieu of civilian and military clothing, as is the case in a particularly striking anonymous photograph of Geronimo at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904.⁷⁹ The image is a long shot of two rows of assorted figures sitting or standing, most of which are Euro-Americans dressed in civilian garb. Of the five Native American individuals present, two are clothed in the elaborate garb expected of purely "native" figures, including such fetishistic items as the feathered headdress and fraved

⁷⁶ Clements, *Imagining Geronimo*, 92.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 109.

⁷⁸ Clements, *Imagining Geronimo*, 96; Geronimo and Barrett, *Geronimo*: *His Own Story*, 156, 160. In Barrett's allegedly autobiographical text of Geronimo, the Bedonkohe comments quite objectively on these other minorities, save the Filipinos, whom Geronimo, temporarily assuming the mantle of ethnocentrism, views as "little brown people" that "should not have been allowed to come to the fair." Somewhat ironically, Geronimo reports that "the President sent them to the fair so that they could learn some manners, and when they [go] home teach their people how to dress and how to behave" (160).

⁷⁹ Figure 1: 50144, Subjects-Indians-Apaches-Campaigns-Geronimo [photo file], Arizona Historical Society, Tucson. The image was originally catalogued as having been taken at Fort Sill in 1900; however it has since been correctly identified as an image of the St. Louis Expo in 1904. No author or title is provided therein.

leather leggings. Yet the observer who searches for Geronimo among these more ornamented figures would be surprised to find that he is clothed in the outfit of a US cavalryman. This particular choice of clothing, taken in conjunction with his placement as the most central native figure—spatially associated not with other Indians but rather white Americans—echoes his desire to distance himself from existing "savage" preconceptions in favor of projecting the oppositional expectation of the acculturated and domesticated native. It was an image Geronimo would strive to maintain until his death in 1909. Paradoxically it was this very event that ultimately removed the final obstacles to Chiricahua repatriation, and allowed for the emergence of a new way of viewing Geronimo and the Apaches: as human beings.⁸⁰

Neither Savage nor Hero: Geronimo the Man

In 1897, artist Elbridge Ayer Burbank visited Geronimo at Fort Sill Reservation, with the intention of capturing the "savage" and violent tendencies of the "fierce raider" on canvas.81 What he discovered instead was entirely the opposite, and must have surely astounded him. He found in Geronimo a small, quick man, who expressed genuine interest in his visitor, repeatedly inviting the artist to dinner and of course, eagerly posing for a number of paintings. When Burbank finally left the reservation, it was with the impression of Geronimo as an intelligent and compassionate man, bound by strong familial ties.82 In looking closely at the many diverse imaginings of Geronimo within developing Euro-American culture—the archetypal primitive, the humanistic folkloric hero, and countless variations between the two extremes—it is clear these conceptions draw influence from one another, creating a cyclical representative dialogue. This discourse shows that Geronimo inhabited not one, but many of these roles simultaneously, defying the static exclusivity of Anglo expectations as he sought to create and maintain his own self-image. In attempting to regulate his perception by others, Geronimo revealed himself to be as human as those on the opposite side of the screen erected by ideological expectation and the touristic gaze, and that is something with which all may identify.

⁸⁰ Clements, Imagining Geronimo, 36, 136.

⁸¹ Debo, Geronimo: The Man, His Time, His Place, 379.

⁸² Ibid., 380-382.

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