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## The Pioneer Paradigm

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**ABSTRACT** This essay considers the deployment of a nineteenth-century white-supremacist imaginary within popular culture and, more curiously, within feminist media historiography. Tracing the paradoxical figure of the “female film pioneer” to groundbreaking work by Ally Acker and Jane Gaines in the 1990s, I historicize how the “pioneers” initially functioned as strategic interventions in a white masculinist landscape, but argue that they have since become naturalized in post-millennial digital culture and are (mis)shaping the discourse of the field. Leaning on foundational texts by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam and Emma Pérez, this paper intervenes in the pioneer paradigm so prevalent in the study of the silent film era—and in discourse on female film and video makers more generally—calling for a proliferation of metaphors to provoke new insights into the very real challenges facing feminists in the present. **KEYWORDS** film pioneers, silent cinema, victorian cinema, new media frontier, western genre, intersectionality, just stop!

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*Pioneer-of-nature —The penis: see prick*  
—Farmer and Henley, *Slang and Its Analogues*, 1902

*How will we choose to describe our past, now, at this moment, as an enunciation in the present?*  
—Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*, 1999

In true pioneer form the female film pioneer appeared on the horizon, proliferated quickly, and become a naturalized feature of the feminist media landscape. An ever-expanding list of titles from *Silent Women: Pioneers of Cinema* (2016) to *Mary Ellen Bute: Pioneer Animator* (2020) celebrate the achievements of women in the media industries. Dee Rees’ *Pariah* (2011) has been declared “a pioneer of African-American cinema,” we have mourned the loss of “Agnes Varda, feminist pioneer filmmaker,” and lesbian director Leontine Sagan’s classic anti-fascist film *Mädchen in Uniform* (1931) has been rebranded as one of the “Pioneers of Queer Cinema.”<sup>1</sup> The Kino-Lorber

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FIGURE 1. Real Photo Postcard, circa 1907, private collection.

*Pioneer* series and *The Women Film Pioneers Project* are indispensable resources for teaching and research. The ubiquitous and paradoxical figure of the female film pioneer has long since passed a saturation point that warrants examination. Leaning on legal scholar Alfred C. Yen, we can say a paradigm emerges when a single metaphor becomes so prominent or ingrained that it begins to shape the discourse of a larger field.<sup>2</sup> What I call “the pioneer paradigm” follows the foundational work of Ella Shohat and Robert Stam on “the western as paradigm,” to name and describe the current deployment of a nineteenth-century white supremacist imaginary within popular culture and—more curiously—within contemporary feminist film historiography.<sup>3</sup>

In the pages that follow, I sketch a provisional genealogy of the female film pioneer and call for a proliferation of metaphorical models to unsettle the pioneer paradigm, stimulate dialogue, and, perhaps, better envision the collective and coalitional anti-racist politics necessary in the (ever)present moment to build a more feminist future. In identifying and naming the pioneer paradigm my argument is not directed against any singular instance through which this paradigm circulates and does not intend to indict the content of work being produced under this rubric. Ironically, much of the best, most accessible, and anti-racist work produced in the field over the last thirty years mobilizes the figure of the pioneer. My concern, instead, is to recognize, identify, and understand how the pioneer figure functions in

relation to feminist historiography and media theory—and to assert that feminist film historiography must reassess and reinvigorate its relationship to intersectional feminism and decolonize its historiographic project.<sup>4</sup> The moment is overdue for a rupturing of identification with the problematic figure of the pioneer and a polyvocal revisioning that responds to the urgent need, not simply for a different language, but rather for a different paradigm.

In one of the foundational texts of media studies, Ella Shohat and Robert Stam describe the western genre as a paradigm that is a eurocentric, imperialist fantasy in which “the elimination of the Indian allows for elegiac nostalgia as a way to treat Indians only in the past tense and thus dismiss their claims in the present.”<sup>5</sup> Their analysis reveals the ideological work of the frontier fantasy, disrupting the western as paradigm by centering the question of colonization and the violent appropriation of land by settlers.<sup>6</sup> They describe how this dominant American cultural fantasy coalesces around “the idealized figure of the pioneer” imagined as an “Adam” in a “virgin land.” In this fantasy, the European male pioneer “penetrates” and “cultivates” the “virgin” land, implying “that the land, prior to Western penetration, was empty,” and therefore ripe for the taking.<sup>7</sup> Of course, the land was not empty, as the increasing adoption of land acknowledgments reminds us, and as feminist indigenous thinkers, makers, and activists such as Zitkala-Ša (1876–1936), Women of All Red Nations (WARN, 1974–present), the Water Protectors of Standing Rock (2016–present), Red Nation (2018–present), and others have continuously insisted for hundreds of years. As the radical women of color network INCITE (2000–present) slogan puts it, “feminist since 1492.”<sup>8</sup> The paradigm of the western, then, is a phantasy, a (contested!) cultural fantasy, of a “past” produced to reinforce the status quo, which includes the disenfranchisement of indigenous peoples and the appropriation and exploitation of their lands in the present. What work, then, does the popular figure of the female film pioneer produce in the present?

Historical theorist Emma Pérez has demonstrated how even in counter-histories, historical knowledge is often produced in relation to categoric spaces, such as “the frontier,” or “the American West,” “without challenging how such discursive sites have been assigned and by whom.” In her analysis, “these spatio-temporal models enforce a type of colonial historiography” because they already “deny and negate the voice of the other.” Pérez therefore proposes a new category through which to rethink history: “the decolonial imaginary.”<sup>9</sup> Pérez describes the decolonial imaginary as both a “time-lag”

between colonial and post-colonial subjectivity, and as an interstitial, in-between, third space of negotiation “where kaleidoscopic identities are burst open and where the colonial self and the colonized other both become elements of multiple, mobile categoric identities.”<sup>10</sup> Centering Chicana histories while leaning on Teresa de Lauretis’ “perverse reading of psychoanalysis,” Pérez insists on the utility of a psychoanalytic framework to understanding how “fantasies of origin are historically structured,” incorporating even objectionable and unconscious memories. “A past, a history, therefore dictates desire,” she writes.<sup>11</sup> Leaning on Pérez, we might begin by saying that the pioneer paradigm is a fantasy of origin that produces pleasures through a recreation of what has come before. The concept of the decolonial imaginary provides both space and tools to decolonize the imaginary of feminist film historiography, insisting on the embodied stakes of historicizing undocumented female filmmakers. Following Pérez: Now, at this moment in the present, how might feminist media historians disrupt rather than consolidate identifications with phantasmatic structures of colonialism, imperialism, and “whiteness”?

#### THE FRONTIER METAPHOR

The figure of the pioneer is part and parcel of frontier mythology, or “the frontier metaphor,” which many scholars in diverse fields have long analyzed and warned against, including screen studies scholars such as Chon A. Noriega, Ella Shohat, and Robert Stam.<sup>12</sup> The frontier metaphor is generally traced to Frederick Jackson Turner’s 1893 essay “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.”<sup>13</sup> Turner argued that the pioneer experience of the frontier shaped a unique “native American” character in European settlers that was forged through interaction with the wilderness and its inhabitants, “the Indians.”<sup>14</sup> He wrote, for example, “The wilderness masters the colonist. It finds him a European in dress, industries, tools, modes of travel, and thought. It takes him from the railroad car and puts him in the birch canoe. It strips off the garments of civilization and arrays him in the hunting shirt and the moccasin.”<sup>15</sup> As many others have demonstrated, the frontier thesis served as legitimization and celebration of the process of colonization and the dispossession of the lands of indigenous peoples.<sup>16</sup> Turner’s thesis was popular and influential—and it remains so. For many invested in intersectional feminism, myself included, the idea of a “feminist pioneer” is a contradiction in terms because of its imbrication with white

supremacy. As prominent historian Patricia Nelson Limerick put it in 2001, “What seemed to be going on in people’s minds in the late twentieth century when they called someone a pioneer or referred to an activity or an enterprise as a frontier?”<sup>17</sup> How did this insidious paradigm become so ingrained and invisible in feminist film studies, a field that was formed in dialogue with the liberation movements of the 1960s?<sup>18</sup>

### A PROVISIONAL GENEALOGY OF THE FEMALE FILM PIONEER

In 2002, filmmaker Alice Guy was a visionary—by 2009, she had become a pioneer.<sup>19</sup> Google’s Ngrams and *New York Times*’ word visualizations suggest that the word “pioneer” was in decline in the second half of the twentieth century; yet, the figure of the pioneer began taking on renewed significance in media studies by the turn of the twenty-first century when use of the term “media pioneer” increased sharply (Figures 2 and 3). I attribute this phenomenon primarily to the frontier metaphor’s dominance in discourses of new media where it was ubiquitous by the turn of the twenty-first century. Vannevar Bush, the first chairman of the U.S. Office of Scientific Research and Development—and the architect of the military industrial complex—imported the frontier metaphor into scientific discourse and state policy in his 1945 report *Science: The Endless Frontier*.<sup>20</sup> In 1990, the Electronic Frontier Foundation was founded to “defend civil liberties in the digital world.”<sup>21</sup> Throughout the 1990s, the metaphor of the electronic frontier, filled with digital pioneers and homesteaders, proliferated in tandem with the popular, commercial, and academic growth of the internet and new media. This rejuvenated coupling of new media and the frontier metaphor harnessed the symbolic associations of Turner’s frontier thesis with “newness,” “exploration,” and “progress” in the context of American neoliberal technological expansion. In other words, the ideological work of the figure of the new media pioneer is to displace invasion and substitute innovation; this disavowal continues to function in relation to contemporary anxieties produced by proliferating technological change in the present period of American imperialism.<sup>22</sup>

The pioneer paradigm within feminist film scholarship can also be traced to the early 1990s (see Figure 4), with Ally Acker’s *Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema 1896 to the Present* (1990) and Jane Gaines’ *Women Film Pioneers Project* (1993). It is no coincidence that both of these important, ambitious, and influential projects were aimed at a broad popular audience

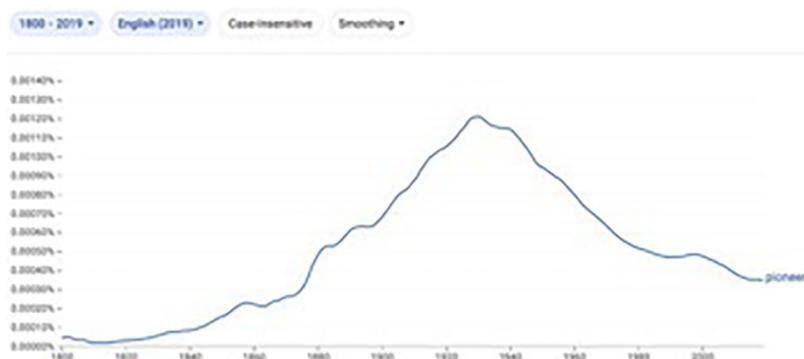


FIGURE 2. Google Ngrams, “pioneer,” visualized March 2, 2021.



FIGURE 3. Google Ngrams, and “media pioneer,” visualized March 2, 2021.

and emerged in the midst of culture war debates about multiculturalism in the digital decade leading up to the new millennium.<sup>23</sup> These initial figurations of the female film pioneer functioned as strategic reappropriations of the white masculinist figure of the pioneer so problematically prevalent in film and new media discourses of the time.<sup>24</sup> They both self-consciously attempted to destabilize, resignify, and resist the reemerging frontier thesis of the 1990s, challenging the mythological figure of the pioneer as it was being recirculated in discourses of film and new media. For instance, *The Women Film Pioneers Project* problematizes the pioneer figure by placing quotes around the pioneer term on its About page: “This project began as a search for ‘women film pioneers’ who challenged the established idea of the great ‘fathers’ of cinema.”<sup>25</sup> Yet, we must ask, how does the intervention of the female film “pioneer” function today? For instance, how do we interpret

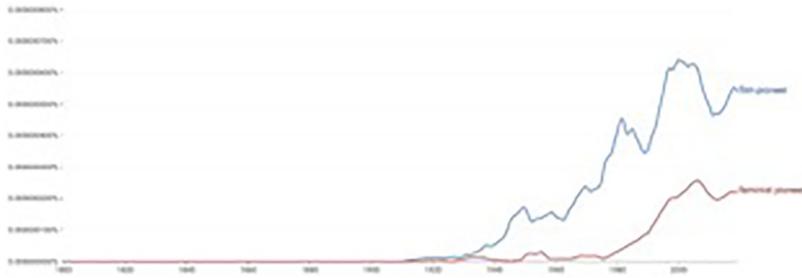


FIGURE 4. Google Ngram, “film pioneer” and “feminist pioneer,” visualized October 11, 2021.

the too-close-for-comfort histories of apparently white supremacist motion picture lecturers such as Cora Johnstone Best and Audrey Forfar-Shippam, which sit alongside profiles of visionaries such as filmmakers Marion Wong and Zora Neale Hurston on the project’s website:<sup>26</sup> Does the pioneer paradigm equip us with the analytical tools to confront and challenge the power relations of both past and present?

Fast forward past September 11, 2001, and the Bush Doctrine of preemptive war, past the financial crisis of 2007 and the great recession, past the reemergence of feminism as a popular cultural force. In 2013, the *Women Film Pioneers Project* launched online, and just a year later, in 2014, Acker’s *Reel Women: Pioneers of the Cinema* was reissued in a revised and expanded version with a ten-disc DVD set. The Kino-Lorber *Pioneers of African-American Cinema* curated by Jacqueline Najuma Stewart and Charles Musser was released in 2016, and *Pioneers: First Women Filmmakers* curated by Shelley Stamp was released in 2018. In the postmodern 1990s, the appropriation of the pioneer figure, as female, was legible as a clear feminist intervention within film and media histories. Reformulated in post-millennial digital popular culture, the figure of the female film pioneer has taken on a whole new life. Disoriented and amplified by the digital reach and reproduction of social media, the anti-racist feminist intervention in media studies has become naturalized. For instance, a recent headline about the documentary *My Name is Pauli Murray* (2021) reads “Amazon Prime doc tells story of Black, queer civil rights pioneer.”<sup>27</sup> Civil rights pioneer?! Does “pioneer” best describe Murray’s work? Arguably, such headlines claim the “heroic” value and power of the pioneer for marginalized people; yet, in so doing, they reinscribe the problematic association between the pioneer and heroism. This naturalizes a positive association with the pioneer figure. The

result of this naturalization has effects that go beyond language—the pioneer paradigm is an ideological construct that is shaping the larger discourse and imaginary of our field. Current high-profile mobilizations of the pioneer metaphor include important projects that I support; in fact, I love them. But their prominence influences the vernacular of the field, and popular culture more broadly, in ways that are sometimes at odds with their own agenda.

Consider the story told through promotional materials and reviews of Kino-Lorber's *Pioneers: First Women Filmmakers*. "In the Wild West days of early filmmaking—before Hollywood hardened into an assembly-line behemoth and boys' club—talented women worked regularly as writers, producers, and directors, instrumental in shaping the very language of cinema as we know it."<sup>28</sup> This widely reproduced narrative was taken up in reviews with declarations such as "when the frontiers were open and the language of film reinvented itself everyday, more women were involved in producing and directing films than at any time until this century."<sup>29</sup> The celebratory discourse of the "wild west" as an open, empowering space for (unraced, unmarked) "women" obscures the racialized violence of U.S. settler colonialism in tandem with its structuring sexism. The pioneer paradigm recirculates the "wild west" mythology of white supremacist meritocracy, which remains one of the founding myths of the study of early women directors. In this analysis, because the industry was "new," there were no preconceived notions about who could do what. Karen Ward Mahar has forcefully modelled the rejection of this myth, which she names "the empty field thesis," as the first step toward understanding gender in the early American film industry.<sup>30</sup> As the slang use of "pioneer" for the penis at the turn of the twentieth century suggests, the pioneer paradigm is imbricated with racialized reproductive logic that feminist film studies' critique of the "fathers" of cinema and the racialized language of film history has long sought to dismantle.<sup>31</sup>

The current iteration of the pioneer paradigm was consolidated by the end of the Obama era (2008–2016), a period associated with both profound optimism and virulent racist, white nationalist backlash. During this period of swift cultural change, the woman pioneer figure began to circulate seamlessly as a decontextualized and problematic part of mainstream popular media and vernacular culture; I presented a version of this paper just days after the disastrous 2016 presidential election. In that moment, in which 53 percent of "white identified" women voted for Donald Trump over Hilary Clinton, I highlighted the urgent need for anti-racist feminist scholars to

disrupt rather than consolidate identifications with phantasmatic structures of “whiteness.” In the years since, we have continued to witness a resurgent white supremacy that coalesces and recruits around a myth of “white heritage.” We have witnessed the president of the United States attempting to ban the concept of intersectionality by executive order.<sup>32</sup> Of course, we have also witnessed the toppling of monuments to the white supremacist past and well-organized, righteous protest led by *Black Lives Matter*, which we might well credit as saving American democracy (TBD). The storming of the capital building by a motley crew of “alt Right” rioters on January 6, 2021, followed—underscoring the continued urgency of our task.

Two points are salient here: first, that the face of the riot might be said to be “the guy with the horns,” an apparently “white” self-proclaimed “shaman.”<sup>33</sup> This politicized performance resurrects Turner’s formulation of the “native American,” as white man descended from the frontier encounter with indigenous Native American people.<sup>34</sup> Second, the “insurrection” is being understood and analyzed primarily in relation to the dangers of social media, including the swift—if belated—“deplatforming” of the former president.<sup>35</sup> While the evolving structures of the new media economy may seem far afield from the objects of feminist film historiography, perhaps particularly so for those of us who study early cinema, it is incumbent upon us to recognize that this is the area of our expertise and to analyze the way the historical imagination is being mobilized. As the figure of the female film pioneer proliferates, extending far beyond the “pioneer” period of early film, we must ask, what cultural work is this figure doing in the present?

### NEW MEDIA, METAPHOR, AND THE PROBLEM OF “HERITAGE”

In turn-of-the-twenty-first-century media studies, parallels abound between the new media technologies of the early 1900s and those of the twenty-first century.<sup>36</sup> On one hand, these parallels emerged logically as scholars tried to make sense of the rapidly shifting new media landscape. On the other, they responded strategically to the “death of cinema” discourse, which threatened the relevancy of the academic discipline of film studies in material ways, precipitating a variety of reconfigurations of the field under new rubrics.<sup>37</sup> These imaginary parallels between “now” and “then” can create a problematic metaphorical equivalence—and identification—between past and present. Within feminist film historiography, the question of identification between scholars and their subjects might be said to structure the field, from Giuliana

Bruno's founding notion of authorial identification in *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map* (1993) to Jane Gaines' provocation, "Are they 'just like us'?" (2018).<sup>38</sup> How then, do these two models of new media and feminist media identification between "now" and "then" collide in the pioneer paradigm and with what effect?

Whereas the initial nineteenth century "frontier thesis" was unabashedly constituted by violent encounter and displacement, the contemporary iteration of the pioneer paradigm in US feminist media historiography is often structured by the uncanny absence of indigenous people. Yet, early cinema was deeply engaged with "the Indian question," and indigenous performers, including silent film actresses such as Minnie Devereaux and Red Wing (Lillian St. Cyr), both participated in—and protested—the emergent discourse of the Hollywood cinema.<sup>39</sup> This uncanny critical absence appears to be the case even in *The Women Film Pioneers Project* and Kino-Lorber's influential *Pioneers* series of DVDs, which are both very self-consciously inclusive projects. More troubling yet is the way the paradoxical pioneer paradigm that has emerged in their wake is often just as self-consciously "white." This is perhaps because the pleasures of the "empowering" and celebratory popular discourse enabled by the feminist pioneer would be inevitably ruptured by face-to-face encounter with the plurality of the past.<sup>40</sup> I first wrote about the structuring absence of indigenous people in the pioneer paradigm in my review of Hilary Hallett's otherwise brilliant volume *Go West, Young Women! The Rise of Early Hollywood*.<sup>41</sup> As the title of Hallett's important volume epitomizes, the imperialist work of the frontier metaphor shows up in surprising places, haunting and distorting a range of significant scholarship which sometimes unwittingly repeats these tropes.

## CONCLUSION

In designating the pioneer paradigm as the twenty-first century deployment of the nineteenth-century ideological constructs that were used to justify genocide, I am concerned with the larger discourse, patterns of thought, and structures of feeling being repackaged and recirculated across the boundaries, as it were, of feminist media scholarship and popular American discourse in this particular juncture in history. The pioneer paradigm is colonial, imperial, and patriarchal by nature. As it commonly circulates today, it condenses nineteenth-century ideas about genius with a myth of American empiricism founded on genocide. It relies on an imaginary of white westward expansion,

individualism, and exceptionalism that reproduces the nineteenth century frontier metaphor filled with pleasure—but largely devoid of blood. We must acknowledge the political stakes and ideological functions, limits, and dangers of the frontier metaphor in this moment in which resurgent white supremacy coalesces around a myth of “white heritage” that adopts the language of identity politics. The pioneer paradigm needs to be recognized, analyzed, and balanced through a proliferation of a range of metaphors to provide insight into the very real challenges facing feminists in the present historical moment. In this moment, in which the raced and gendered stakes of the frontier metaphor are so very starkly apparent, let us foster collective dis-identification with the pioneers of the past.<sup>42</sup> There are ways to remember that do not involve trans-historical identification with colonialism and genocide. It is past time to construct more ethical, varied, and politically potent forms of analysis, remembering, and imagining. Let us foster intersectional feminist identifications, alliances, and politics in present and past as we work for a more ethical future. The pioneer paradigm is not just about how we remember, but about how we imagine.

#### ANTICLIMAX: THE METAPHORS

In her canonical 1978 article “In the Name of Feminist Film Criticism,” B. Ruby Rich wrote, “because this need is so very urgent, I here offer an experimental glossary of names as an aid to initiating a new state of feminist film criticism.”<sup>43</sup> And so, because this need is so very urgent, I here offer an experiential glossary of metaphors as an aid to initiating a new state of feminist media historiography. The list below is not meant to be definitive; rather it is offered as an invitation to rethink and reimagine together. Part of what makes the *Women Film Pioneers Project* and the Kino Pioneer series so powerful is that they are collective, or at least collaborative, efforts to rewrite the historical narrative and intervene in the mainstream memory of popular culture. While it’s tempting to say, “Just stop! Just stop using this word, ‘pioneer!’” (and, indeed, why not just stop?!), to do so risks mischaracterizing the initial critique that the figure of the “woman film pioneer” produced, and worse, confusing the word with the paradigm. Such a call might invite word-policing rather than paradigmatic transformation. As Susan Sontag reminds us, “the metaphors cannot be distanced just by abstaining from them. They have to be exposed, criticized, belabored, used up.”<sup>44</sup> Yet, the word and the paradigm are related; language has implications and effects. *Now, this moment*

in the present, is an important moment for us to revision together—calling the future into being.

*Lovers* suggested by *The Memoirs of Alice Guy* (1986) and Zhang Zhen's *An Amorous History of the Silver Screen* (2005)

*Antecedents* from Barbara Koenig Quart, *Women Directors* (1988)

*Points of Resistance* from Lauren Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance* (1991)

*Undocumented*, suggested by Chon Noriega's *Chicanos and Film* (1992)

*Streetwalkers/Saints* from Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map* (1993)

*Trespassers/Dreamers* from Elissa J. Rashkin, *Women Filmmakers in Mexico: The Country of Which We Dream* (2001)

*Figures of Resistance* from Teresa de Lauretis, *Figures of Resistance* (2007)

*Interlocutors* from Rhonda Garelick, *Electric Salome* (2007)

*Collaborators/Traitors* from Lan P. Doung, *Treacherous Subjects: Gender, Culture, and Trans-Vietnamese Feminism* (2012)

*Bellwethers* from Tami Williams, *Germaine Dulac* (2014)

*Migrants* suggested by Laura Isabel Serna, *Making Cinelandia* (2014)

*Indigenous Circuits* from Lisa Nakamura, "Indigenous Circuits: Navaho Women and the Racialization of Early Electronics Manufacture," *American Quarterly* (2014)

*Sisters* from Yvonne Welbon and Alexandra Juhasz, *Sisters in the Life: A History of Out African American Lesbian Media-Making* (2018)

*Interstice* from L.H. Stallings, "Shine Louise Houston: An Interstice of Her Own Making," in *Sisters in the Life* (2018)

*Hustlers* suggested by Debashree Mukherjee's *Bombay hustle* (2020) and Christina Petersen's "Mary Murillo" (WFPP)

*ProvocAuteurs* from Maria San Filippo, *ProvocAuteurs and Provocations* (2021) ■

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KIKI LOVEDAY is an artist and scholar whose work engages feminist practice, queer historiography, and the moving image. Her scholarly writing has been published by *Framework* and *The Women Film Pioneers Project*. Her creative projects have exhibited from UnionDocs in New York City to The Virginia Scott Galleries of American Art at The Huntington in Los Angeles. Kiki cofounded *The Women in the Director's Chair Oral History Project* at Tisch, NYU. S/he is currently completing her doctoral dissertation, *Sapphic Cinemania! Female Authorship, Queer Desires, and the Birth of Cinema*, at the University of California Santa Cruz.

## NOTES

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\*"Pioneer-of-nature," John S. Farmer & W.E. Henley, *Slang and Its Analogues Past and Present*, vol. V-, *N to Razzle-Dazzle*, MCMIL, 210, 289 (publisher unknown, digitized by Google); Emma Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 27.

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3. Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, "The Imperial Imaginary," in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (London: Routledge, 1994), 114.

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5. Shohat and Stam, "the Imperial Imaginary," 118.

6. Shohat and Stam, "From Eurocentrism to Polycentrism," in *Unthinking Eurocentrism* (London: Routledge, 1994), 15-18.

7. Shohat and Stam, "Tropes of Empire," 141.

8. See Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy," *Feminist Formations* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2013): 14. The slogan was created in 2006 by the activist group INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, <https://incite-national.org/history/>. See also "Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally Industrial Complex, An Indigenous Perspective," *Indigenous Action Media*, version 2, May 2, 2014; Christopher Green, "The New Red Order Promote Indigenous Futures," *Frieze*, February 6, 2020.

9. Pérez, *The Decolonial Imaginary*, 4, 5.

10. *Ibid.*, 6, 7.

11. *Ibid.*, 125, 102, 108.

12. Chon Noriega, "Warhol's Western: Queering the Frontier Myth," *Azlan* 29, no. 1 (2004); Shohat and Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism*, 118. See also: Gloria Anzaldúa,

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20. See Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, eds., *The New Media Reader* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 35–47.

21. Electronic Frontier Foundation, <https://www EFF.org/>.

22. Food for thought on the twenty-first century nationalist implications of the new media economy: Eric Bolling, "Donald Trump and the Resurrection of the American Cowboy," *The Washington Times*, June 28, 2016; Kif Leswing, "Chinese protestors smashed iPhones because Apple is a symbol of America," *Business Insider*, July 20, 2016; Erin Banco, "Is Your Cell Phone Fueling Civil War in Congo?" *The Atlantic*, July 11, 2011; Nick Stockton, "The Dismal Science of the Standing Rock Pipeline Protests," *Wired*, November 3, 2016.

23. By "digital decade," I mean to signify the mounting debates, anxieties, and pleasures swirling around new digital technologies in the 1990s; for instance, the mainstream popular questions raised about objectivity, truth, and history in the move away from indexical lens-based photography, perhaps best exemplified by the simultaneous awe and concern over the digital special effects in films such as *Forest Gump* (1994) and *Jurassic Park* (1993).

24. For instance: Kevin Brownlow, *Hollywood: the Pioneers* (New York: Knopf, 1979) and the Thames Television series with which it is associated, which was also released as a VHS set.

25. "About" WFPP, <https://wfpp.columbia.edu/about/>; also available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20211007023730/https://wfpp.columbia.edu/about/>, and <https://www.facebook.com/WFPPProject/>, accessed December 2021.

26. See Gregory Waller, "Cora Johnstone Best and Audrey Forfar Shippam" [2019], Aimee Dixon, "Zora Neale Hurston" [2013], and Jenny Kwok Wah Lau, Marion E. Wong" [2013], in *Women Film Pioneers*, ed. Jane Gaines, Radha Vatsal, and Monica Dall'Asta (New York: Columbia University Libraries, 2013/2019).

27. Kathi Wolfe, "Amazon Prime doc tells story of Black, queer civil rights pioneer," *The Washington Blade*, October 9, 2021.

28. Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) promotional materials, July 20–26, 2018.

29. Michael Barrett, "Pioneers: First Women Filmmakers Brings Forth a Time When, Unlike Today, Women Made Lots of Movies," *PopMatters*, January 25, 2019.

30. Karen Ward Mahar, *Women Filmmakers in Early Hollywood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press), 5.

31. Judith Mayne, "'Primitive' Narration," in *The Woman at the Keyhole* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 157–222.

32. Yeganeh Torbati, Juliet Eilperin, Lisa Rein and Josh Dawsey, "A two-page White House 'race' memo became a flash point in Tuesday's debate," *The Washington Post*, September 30, 2020.

33. Greg Moore, "Trump rioter Jake Angeli gets organic food in jail," *AZ Central, USA Today*, February 26, 2021.

34. To say nothing of the place of Pocahontas in the politicized discourse of biologized "race" in the current moment; Vann R. Newkirk II, "Trump, Warren, and America's Racialized Essentialism," *The Atlantic*, October 16, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2018/10/trump-and-warrens-feud-over-racial-heritage-and-dna/573091/>.

35. Merrill Perlman, "The rise of 'deplatform'," *Columbia Journalism Review*, February 4, 2021; Ron Blitzer, "Trump returning to social media with 'his own platform' in 2–3 months: advisor Jason Miller tells Fox News' '#MediaBuzz' the platform will 'completely redefine the game'," *Fox News Channel*, March 21, 2021; Tim Mak, "Across the Internet a Game of Whack a Mole is Underway to root out Extremism," *All Things Considered*, March 16, 2021.

36. See: Wendy Hui Kyong Chun and Thomas Keenan, eds., *New Media Old Media* (New York: Routledge, 2006); David Thornburn and Henry Jenkins, eds., *Rethinking Media Change* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

37. Ibid.; see also Chon A. Noriega, *Chicanos and Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992) xxiv, note 3. According to the SCMS website, "In 2002 the "M" for Media was added to SCS to reflect these changes and create the Society for Cinema and Media Studies," [https://www.cmstudies.org/page/org\\_history](https://www.cmstudies.org/page/org_history).

38. Jane M. Gaines, "Are They 'Just Like Us'?" in *Pink-Slipped: What happened to women in the silent film industries?* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2018), 112–31.

39. Joanna Hearne, *Native Recognition* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012); Michelle H. Raheja, *Reservation Reelism* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Linda M. Waggoner, *Starring Red Wing!* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019).

40. Or would it? Certainly, the history of the Western genre in United States cinema suggests otherwise.

41. kerrie welsh [Kiki Loveday], Untitled book review of *Go West, Young Women!* by Hilary Hallett, from *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 40, no. 2 (Winter 2013): 141–45.

42. José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

43. B. Ruby Rich, “In the Name of Feminist Film Criticism” (1978), in *Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Diane Carson et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

44. Susan Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor & AIDS and Its Metaphors* (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 182.