




## 19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century, No 9 (2009)

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### *Beyond the Mohawk Warrior: Reinterpreting Benjamin West's Evocations of American Indians*

Julia A. Sienkewicz

#### **Abstract**

*This essay offers a reinterpretation of the narratives in John Galt's *The Life and Studies of Benjamin West* (1816) that introduce the artist's encounters with, or evocations of, American Indians. This study grapples, in particular, with the iconic status of the narrative in which the young artist, newly arrived in Rome from the British Colony of Pennsylvania, is said to have exclaimed 'My God, how like it is to a young Mohawk warrior!' when he first encountered the Apollo Belvidere. It questions whether West actually did liken the Apollo Belvidere to a Mohawk warrior in 1760, and instead resituates the narrative within concerns of transatlantic audience and international politics in 1816. Rather than the naive exclamation of a provincial visitor to a European metropolis, this article contends that West's remark, at least as retold within Galt's narrative, was the calculated reflection of a cosmopolitan intellectual on matters of intercultural and transatlantic concern.*

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