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The American Cowboy as an Icon

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Table of Contents

List of Plates		Page 4
Introduction		Page 5
Chapter One	The Cowboy Image in Western Films	Page 6
Chapter Two	Masculine Mythology, Advertising and the Cowboy	Page 18
Chapter Three	Richard Prince's <i>Cowboy series</i>	Page 28
Conclusion		Page 36
Bibliography		Page 38

Table of Contents

Page 1	List of Plates
Page 2	Introduction
Page 3	Chapter I: The Changing Image of Western Man
Page 4	Chapter II: The Image of the American in the West
Page 5	Chapter III: The Image of the American in the East
Page 6	Chapter IV: The Image of the American in the South
Page 7	Chapter V: The Image of the American in the West
Page 8	Chapter VI: The Image of the American in the West
Page 9	Chapter VII: The Image of the American in the West
Page 10	Chapter VIII: The Image of the American in the West

List of Plates

Figure One	- Untitled, Marlboro Advertisement, Philip Morris Inc., 1995	Page 19
Figure Two	- Untitled, Marlboro Advertisement, Philip Morris Inc., 1997	Page 19
Figure Three	- Untitled, Marlboro Advertisement, Philip Morris Inc., 1997	Page 21
Figure Four	- Untitled (Cowboys), Richard Prince, 1980-1987	Page 30
Figure Five	- Untitled (Cowboys), Richard Prince, 1980-1987	Page 31
Figure Six	- Untitled (Cowboys), Richard Prince, 1980-1987	Page 31

List of Plates

Figure One	1960-1962, Midway Island, Alaska	Page 10
Figure Two	1960-1962, Midway Island, Alaska	Page 11
Figure Three	1960-1962, Midway Island, Alaska	Page 12
Figure Four	1960-1962, Midway Island, Alaska	Page 13
Figure Five	1960-1962, Midway Island, Alaska	Page 14
Figure Six	1960-1962, Midway Island, Alaska	Page 15

Introduction

A grand and nasty irony is the inevitable consequence of analysing the emotional content of any image in terms of its material form.

Barrett Watton, *Richard Prince's Imitation of Life (Magazine)*,
Art Week, July 8 1993

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the figure of the American cowboy and to find possible explanations as to why it is such a popular icon. He is not limited to his defining medium of film but appears across the board, from the fine arts to advertising.

Through the course of research it became apparent that in order to reach any sort of conclusion it was necessary to be more specific and find a focus point in which to centre an argument.

Consequently Richard Prince's *Cowboy series* became the starting point. However the cowboys which feature in his work are a result of a long process of development. This started first with the birth of the cowboy's image in American Western films. Chapter one explores Western film in relation to this idea. It establishes what has been presented and accepted as the archetypal cowboy.

Secondly, Chapter two discusses the cowboy in another stage of development, the advertising star. It assesses why the cowboy was a suitable choice for an advertising campaign. Also it acknowledges that by moving from film to advertising, the cowboy has cultural identity implications.

Finally Chapter three examines Richard Prince's *Cowboy series*. This specific body of work seems to comment on both the figure itself and the mediums of film and advertising. It is hoped that by exploring these three different areas in which the figure of the American cowboy appears a wider understanding of this icon and what he reflects will be reached.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the variables of the dependent variable and the independent variable. The study is based on the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the variables of the dependent variable and the independent variable.
H2: There is a negative relationship between the variables of the dependent variable and the independent variable.

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Chapter One

The Cowboy image in Western films

When discussing the cowboy as an icon the genre of the Western films must be discussed. The western genre is the point from which the figure of the cowboy became popular. When discussing the West as it portrayed in film it is important to discuss western literature which preceded film. This, together with graphic images such as painting, influenced the style of many and possibly all Westerns. In early Western literature and art one can see the first real documentation of 'the Old West'. In *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrup Frye discussed the characteristics of narratives, in which he describes five types of narratives.

The first type is called 'Myth'. The protagonist/hero is superior to other men and his environment. The hero has godlike qualities. The second narrative is called 'Romance', where the protagonist/hero is superior to a certain degree to other men and his environment. He is usually mortal (with "marvellous actions" which suspend nature). Thirdly there is the "High Mimetic Mode" narrative, where the protagonist/hero is superior to other men but not to his environment. He is also subject to the laws of nature and social control. There is an epic feel or sense of tragedy to these narratives. The fourth type of narrative is described as "Low Mimetic Mode". The protagonist/hero is superior neither men nor his environment. In this narrative there is a sense of realism and it is often described as realistic fiction. Finally the fifth type of narrative is "Ironic". The protagonist is inferior both to other men and his environment. He is also inferior in power and intelligence to that of the reader.

It is a scale of types from the 'Romantic' to the 'Ironic' and from these modes major sources of conflicts emerge. What classified a particular genre depended on the conventions of the story, such as plot; other structural features (day/night, action/response); character; time and space; iconography and themes. The western narrative evolves by using these conventions within the

historical context of the early pioneering days of America. The popularity of early Westerns relied upon the use of solid, reliable conventions with which the audience could identify. This consequently led to the staying power of the Western.

The popularity of the Western is largely due to the fact that it offered real settings for the grounds of a myth. This mythology was the making of America. It was a much more dramatic setting for American heroes than the eastern coast, which reminded the audience of America's European origins. The West was ennobling to its people because the frontier was often portrayed as a last paradise. The West also asserted a primitive innocence in its people because it was far from the civilised world. The West supplied its audience with a possible alternative to modern American life. This assumption can explain the nostalgia linked to the West. However much the west was documented, to this day the west has never been realistically defined. In an account of Remington's paintings, Philip French points out that even though Remington's work was based on primary sources, he was selective in his choice of subjects. For example fights over watering holes seemed more important than say a westerner washing his/her clothes.

Frank Gruber classified westerns as fitting into seven basic stories. These were the railway story; the ranch story; the cattle empire (which stems from the ranch story); the revenge story; cavalry versus Indian; the outlaw story; and the marshal/law and order story. All of these define character and are a development from Frye's five modes and plot conventions mentioned earlier. However as more westerns were made the stories developed further and became more character defining i.e. epic, realistic, sociological, satirical, spaghetti.

When examining themes, it should remember that we are dealing with a particular representation of the West, a myth largely portrayed for American audiences. It must be realised that this myth is far from reality. What is found in the Western is a set of standards. These idyllic virtues were

set up for comparison with the audience's own urban life. With this in mind, themes which developed in westerns are not surprising, i.e. good versus evil; progress versus freedom; success versus defeat; violence versus puritanical control. In one account J.G.Cawetti points out the connection between the audience's needs and the theme of man vs. nature. He explains that by using the frontier as a setting, westerns are able to explore the idea of nature and the limitations of man/society. This causes the west to become a place of conflict. Consequently the western can be seen as a justification of violence and lawless force. The result is the audience being able to watch and associate itself with violence without feeling any guilt. Cawetti explains further that the lack of realism in popular western is necessary because,

The myth is thereby separated from the everyday concerns and actions of most people, who cannot constantly be plagued by that particular psychological strain. Yet it is precisely these everyday concerns and actions that the myth is designed to make more bearable through the reinforcing power of what we call entertainment.¹

The American film industry and its international dominance can be seen as another aspect which influenced western themes. The classical western era coincided with the studio era in Hollywood (1940's - 50's). Ultimately the studios made the decisions as to what type of Western was made. The studio's decision was usually based on what the audience wanted to see but film makers were also constrained by budgets. As a result the studios were setting certain conventions and artistic limitations to filmmakers. A small group of directors, actors and cinematographers were continually involved in Westerns. For example, the actors- John Wayne, Henry Fonda, and Gregory Peck; the directors- John Ford, Anthony Mann, and Sam Peckinpah. The fact that the same people were making Westerns meant that components such as characters and setting were seen more than once. This proved to help the audience associate even more with the films. A prime example of this is John Ford and Monument Valley. Both of which became synonymous with each other. The repeated use of Monument valley in Ford's films asserts an immediate

set up a committee with the subject's own urban life. With this in mind, themes which

developed in the film are not surprising. The good nature of the people seems to be

shown rather than as a series of political events. In one scene, the people are

confronted by the military. The people and the theme of the film are

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familiarity with the audience. The valley itself and the familiar characters developed into icons. Westerns produced for television serials only proved to further this phenomenon, because now audiences could watch their favourite hero weekly as opposed to monthly or yearly.

Another reason for directors to use familiar characters or setting was a conscious decision to accept the audience's associations. At first these were reinforced and then manipulated for the director's own ends. For example, for a known hero who features in many films, to suddenly become a villain or die would have dramatically affected the plot. However it would also have a drastic effect on the audience. The hero abided by the audience's desires and was relied upon to act accordingly in the films. This generated a feeling of ease with the hero. For the hero to betray the solid ideals associated to him, meant the hero betraying the ease of the audience. This ease of association could almost be mistaken for trust.

However these associations could work against the director as well. Casting a famous person such as John Wayne could contribute to difficulties with specific character definitions. This is because John Wayne fits into a larger, more generalised class of western hero, due to the sheer number of films in which he featured. This worked against the actor also, for example if Wayne wanted to play a gangster. It is almost impossible to imagine this because Wayne has become the image of the quintessential cowboy. Nowadays, this would be called typecasting.

An interesting development occurred through the use of the same actor. The cowboy/hero was seen to age, which he had not previously done. Consequently the themes developed too. New dilemmas arose for the ageing cowboy. Previously these had not been of concern for him in his youth. The theme of modern society versus the old way of life is explored. New generations of young and inexperienced (new actors) are presented. They are to be compared with the older more knowledgeable cowboys (established actors).

The West became a status symbol. The west and the frontier experience depicted in these films were uniquely American. Americans could finally define themselves relation to a national

mythology, which was depicted for them. America had the monopoly of film at the time. This meant that along with the novelty of film, this mythology was easily asserted internationally.

Film was a commercial enterprise. What the audience wanted the audience got. Unpopular films were not very profitable. Consequently this meant that the Western like most films were subject to audience dictation. The Western satisfied social needs. In simpler terms the Western became a game of match. Linking the audience's expected archetypes with the new characters introduced by a new film. The success of a new Western depended upon the ease in which the audience could impose its own preconceived notions and ideals on new characters.

Another important development to consider is the psychology behind the Western. Which was another result of the expectancy of the audience. The westerns of the silent era had little complexity of character and followed the standard expected modes, that is the hero in a white outfit who saves the day. However in the 1940's and 50's sociology and psychology were influential forces and became a plot necessity. Heroes and villains became victims of circumstance and childhood environments.

Westerns were consequently ill equipped to confront certain areas of American life such as complex political ideas, because the film belonged to the audience. This audience may have viewed politicians as ideally corrupt, and this may have been reflected in some films. However even if Westerns tended not to deal with politics directly, it often made references to American politics and government. The civil war era featured in many Westerns as a setting in time. During the Un-American Activities Committee investigation (1940's and 50's) Western became very patriotic, promoters of American ideals, even more than they had been previously.

When discussing political influence, Philip French links the content of Westerns to those who had strong political influences at the time. For example he refers to 'Kennedy westerns' (e.g.

Winchester '73, 1950). This type of Western contained elegant rhetoric and a slightly diffident hero, who had a sense of anguish or failure. Its society was sympathetic with regard for aliens and capable of change. Which French suggests reflects Kennedy's liberal image. In comparison there was the 'Goldwater westerns' (e.g. *The Searchers*, 1956). Which contained a resolute hero, rock like in virtue. His language was simple and straightforward. Themes such as individualism and inequality were featured. Aliens were viewed with hostility and suspicion. The idea that society could be ordered was predominant. These would be French's perception of Goldwater's conservative character.

With all this in mind a chart of the general development of the Western can be formed. The start of which can be called the pre-Western or the early Western. This type of Western celebrated the taming of the wilderness. It also celebrated the pioneer virtue. They were usually silent. They also contained little or no character complexity. The mature Western celebrated the salvation of civilisation. Stories explored the defeat of the wilderness and what was lost as a result. The mature Western also saw character development (e.g. Indians were seen as either noble or ignoble savages). The late western saw the closure of the frontier. They often eulogised the wilderness. The wilderness was seen as a place of truth and the town, corruption. Which is almost a reversal of what early and mature Westerns believed. Late Westerns damned the coming of social order.

What should be recalled at this point is Frye's, *The Anatomy of Criticism*. What can be noted is that the Western developed structurally as it moved through each of the narrative modes chronologically. Now in the post-Western era, films move around the modes in no set order. Filmmakers today rely generally more on the preconceived notions of the audience. They can pick and choose from a number of components, themes, style, themes, characters and settings. They can follow conventions, break conventions or do mixture of both. It all depends on the filmmaker's particular aims (i.e. to make a profitable film, an artistic, film, or a comic film etc.).

In order to discuss the figure of the cowboy, the typical Western must be established and examined. The typical or model Western is important for two reasons. The existence of this type of Western is a result of expected audience conventions. Secondly the cowboy who features in the model Western can be accepted as the archetype. He too is subject to audience enforced conventions. The model Western is closely linked to the early/mature Westerns mentioned previously, because it promotes the western life style. What must be established is a clearer definition of characters, which featured in the model Western.

Firstly the environment and landscape can be described as a separate 'character'. The land is an integral part of the Western because it adds to the dramatical action and appeal of the genre. Howard Mumford Jones in *O Strange New World* sums the west up in five words, 'astonishment, plenitude, vastness, incongruity and melancholy'². It also possesses a surreal quality because it is foreign to most viewers, particularly non-Americans. However this is not the case all the time. Places such as Monument Valley became familiar to audiences although they had never visited there. Monument Valley became Ford's own moral universe. The Western scenery enables this microcosm through its size and vast expanse. Also the fact that it was so far removed from the civilised cities of the American east Coast. Open land became associated with freedom and a relaxed association with nature. The town is consequently associated with social form and conformity. Secondary to these two settings are places such as mining towns and ghost towns. Which highlight concerns of American life: the impermanence of life and problems of putting down roots. The wilderness cannot be ignored. All other environments are set up as contrast. The landscape shows the true importance of the events presented in the film. Which at times become squalid. Nature's way is to continue regardless if the events in the character's lives.

The villain in the Model western was the exact opposite to the cowboy in theory. Compared to the cowboy he is ugly and dirty. He has no respect for law, order or other people. He is often a

smooth talker. The villain is mainly concerned with advancing his own cause at any cost and by any means. He often opts for the easy way out and is prone to make mistakes. He is normally doomed to failure or death. His surrounding also reflects his character i.e. hideout, abandoned town, rocky wilderness. The villain serves as an antithesis of the hero.

The original types of women in a western were on a parallel. On one side there was the virtuous wife, virginal daughter and schoolteachers. On the other side there were the whores, saloon girls and dancers. The hero had the virtuous woman and the whore was for the villain. Virtuous women were in short supply but there seemed to be plenty of whores. The development of the western saw the development of female roles. However this was only proportional with other secondary characters such as the Indian.

The Western was the male perspective on the American way of life and was male oriented (this is very important to note for reasons which will be discussed later). Women did not pay heavily for their sins. Philip French points out that redemption is a male prerogative. Just as the defining lines of the male characters blurred throughout the course of the genre's development, so too did the females. The result was the inability to recognise the difference between the good female characters and the bad ones. Virtue was seen in the whore who marries the cowboy. The law abiding, townswoman is seen as a bitter and twisted, old maid. The good guy plays with the whore and the bad guy rapes the virtuous woman.

The relationship between the hero and a particular woman is dubious. A settled life would seem to appear as a compromise. Marriage lures the cowboy away from his defining independence, the company of men and his horse. A woman is often seen as the voice of reason. Therefore she can be subsequently be linked to law and order then the town. The difficulty in which the cowboy deals with the town is similar to the difficulty he feels around women. Like the town, the cowboy will never fully understand women. The town highlights a fear of conformity that the cowboy feels. This fear is also then associated to women

emotional. The effort is usually rewarded with a sense of achievement and a feeling of accomplishment. The effort is usually rewarded with a sense of achievement and a feeling of accomplishment. The effort is usually rewarded with a sense of achievement and a feeling of accomplishment.

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Finally we reach the character of the Indian who is the subject of much controversy when it comes to his character. Particularly the way in which it was depicted in Westerns. However this thesis wishes only to discuss the Indian in relation to the hero. The Indian developed from savage to enemy to victim and then to a friend. In early silent Westerns the Indian was more a symbol than a particular character. The Indian was the personification of the wilderness. A particular character's opinion of the Indian depended on his/her opinion of the wilderness. 'It needed to be tamed, it teaches, it was the source of problems', are various examples of opinion. It is also worth pointing out that the Indian figure could never be truly happy in the constraints of the town.

The cowboy is the hero of the western. He is the image of the survivor. He is the closest America can get to an archetypal or ancestral image for its mythology. In the model Western the hero is the embodiment of good. He is usually attractive, upright and clean living. He respects law, order, women, and the American way. The audience can take comfort in the fact that he will win. The qualities of the land can also be associated with him. The hero rides a horse that he masters with ease. The horse is crucial to the cowboy. Consider the cowboy who is dispossessed of his horse. He is left to face the land on foot, which is near impossible due to its size.

Westerns developed to question the very notion of heroism. They adapted in response to shifting social/political/historical climates. For example since the 1950's the possibility of the hero's defeat/death was addressed. The hero lived in a society where winning was everything. The only way the audience could accept the hero's defeat/death was if the hero's defeat death was seen as some sort of moral victory i.e. the hero remained true to himself and paid the ultimate price. Therefore the concept of the hero was modified but not destroyed. Consequently the defeat/death could be seen as a positive attribute of the hero. Death was a fact of life. The death of the hero furthers his association with nature. Death is the hero's ultimate fate and is depicted in all its

The first of these is the character of the Indian will in its contrast with the European. The Indian mind is not a single entity, but a complex of many different elements. It is not a single entity, but a complex of many different elements. It is not a single entity, but a complex of many different elements.

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pains. It unites the hero with all the other characters. They will all experience it. Good or bad, 'Westerners' are entitled to a Christian burial.

The hero is very complex and cannot be viewed in isolation. Practically all the components of the film contribute in some way to the hero's character. Costume in particular is used to describe character. The good guys were clean and the bad guys were dirty. It was important to have a visual distinction between the cowboy/hero and the townspeople. The hero's costume became more striking. To contrast, the townspeople's costume became simpler. Occasionally the hero's costume appeared more artificial. J.G. Cawetti describes the cowboy costume as a meeting of utility and dandyism. Costume, like the landscape added to the visual impact of westerns.

The cowboy experienced many conflicts; these can be highlighted when discussing themes. Examples of which are father versus son; former comrade versus comrade; upright man versus evil gang. The role of the cowboy went through many developments. There was the cowboy who protects the people against the savages. He identifies more with the savages but through the course of the film, he changes his position. He becomes an ally of the people. There is also cowboy who revenges and tries to reject the ideals of the town but cannot. Also there is the cowboy who seeks material gain by using his savages instincts. However his moral involvement wins in the end and he becomes a champion of the townspeople. There is also the 'used' cowboy. The townspeople used his knowledge of the wilderness and skill for their own purpose. They still rejected his way of life.

To sum up it must be accepted that the Western film was the crucial defining medium of the cowboy, both theoretically and visually. It continually established and reinforced the mythology of the West. This was achieved on a national and international scale. The novelty of film helped to bring the Western to a much wider audience than the fine arts and literature ever could. Film also associated a magical quality to the American landscape and ideals.

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The Western became idealised because it was subject to audience expectancy. It featured idealised characters and stories. One fact became apparent, there was a gap between the represented reality of American life and lived reality. Therefore successful and popular Westerns were less realistic. However this was also a result of fixed conventions placed by the studios. Although they varied on themes and style most Westerns show the evidence of a basic prototype. This model Western presents the viewer with what has been accepted as the model cowboy. The figure of the cowboy is basically a hero. However because of the Western this hero is uniquely American. He is presented as standing by a uniquely American code.

The Western becomes identical because it was subject to similar expansion. It is a

shared experience and stance. One that became a sign of the

convergence of American life and lived reality. It is a

shared experience. However, this was also a result of fixed constraints placed on the

Western by the railroad and telegraph. Westerns show the

Western as a genre that was not just a product of the

Western but also a product of the Western. It is a

shared experience and stance. American

¹ J. Cawetti, *Sixguns and Society*, University of California Press, 1975, P.7

² H. M. Jones, *Westerns*, Secker Warbury, 1977, P.105

1972
The American Public Health Association
1015 15th St. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

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Washington, D.C. 20004

Chapter Two

Masculine Mythology, Advertising and the Cowboy

The dilemma of the sexes defined by Freud is the oedipal concept of the mother. Both sexes start life with a love/desire for the mother. For the girl, this is then transferred to the father. The rejection of this desire by the father leads the girl to look for another male to desire. The new desired male becomes the husband. For the boy, the desire for the mother is transferred to the father because of fear. The boy fears the father's reaction (which Freud states as castration). However the boys desire for the father is rejected because of the jealousy of the father. The father sees the son as competition. The son therefore looks for an alternative female, which results in the wife. Following this path is considered part of growing up. These are psychological explanations of masculinity. Ideas of masculinity and femininity also have social and historical roots. This is the idea of the distinction between work and home. This generates a separation between production and consumption. This asserts a parallel between workplace for production and home for consumption. Changing the assumptions of this parallel is a question of politics, social and radical change. An example of which is the feminist revolution. Although definitions of masculinity are accepted as fixed and resistant to change, the contrary is true. These definitions of masculinity often change. This is due the fact that masculinity is subject mostly to cultural influences.

The masculine ego can be described as the desire to dominate or master everything other than itself, such as people and nature. The masculine ideal is what features in the advertising campaign of Marlboro cigarettes and is a conceptualisation of masculinity. It highlights the romantic myth that man is most at home when at one with nature. Who better personifies this than the American cowboy? According to Western films, the cowboy is more in touch with the landscape than any other type of American. However, the use of the cowboy still preserves the desire to dominate.

Chapter Two

Advertising Mythology and the Cowboy

The cowboy is a mythological figure, a symbol of the American West. He is a man of action, a man of courage, a man of honor. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has seen the world from a different perspective. He is a man who has been tested and found himself. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many talents. He is a skilled horseman, a skilled shooter, a skilled rider. He is a man who has learned to live with the elements of nature. He is a man who has learned to be self-reliant. He is a man who has learned to be a team player. He is a man who has learned to be a leader.

The cowboy is a man of many virtues. He is a man of courage, a man of honor, a man of integrity. He is a man who has learned to be a man of action. He is a man who has learned to be a man of faith. He is a man who has learned to be a man of hope. He is a man who has learned to be a man of love.

The cowboy is a man of many dreams. He is a man who dreams of a better life, a man who dreams of a better world. He is a man who dreams of a better future. He is a man who dreams of a better tomorrow. He is a man who dreams of a better life for himself and for his family.

The cowboy is a man of many adventures. He is a man who has seen the world from a different perspective. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many legends. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many myths. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many stories. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many lives. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many worlds. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many adventures. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

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The cowboy is a man of many myths. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many stories. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many lives. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

The cowboy is a man of many worlds. He is a man who has lived a life of adventure and risk. He is a man who has become a legend.

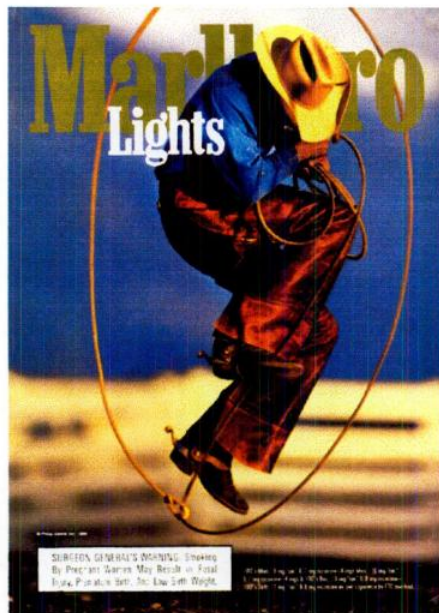
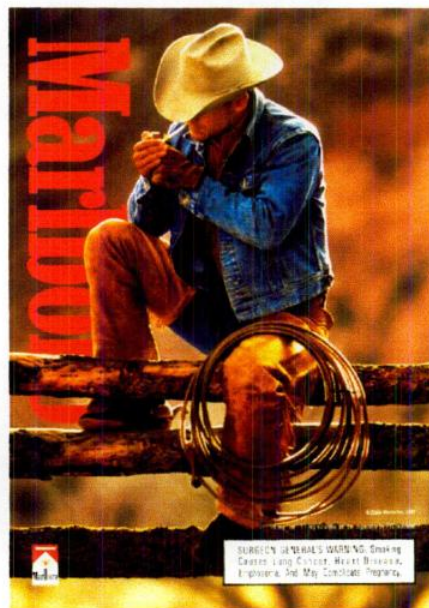


Figure 1 (top)
 Marlboro Advertisement, 1995
Figure 2 (bottom)
 Marlboro Advertisement, 1997





1997
1998
1999
2000

At this point it is important to establish what these Marlboro advertisements looked like and how the figure of the cowboy is generally presented. Figures 1, 2, and 3 are all examples of advertisements that appeared in *Vanity Fair* magazine during the course of 1998. Figures 1 and 2 are similar because they both concentrate on the figure as opposed to the environment. Figure 1 shows the cowboy in action; here he is showing the viewer his skill of lassoing. Figure 2 is the cowboy at rest, casually smoking a cigarette. What should be noted is that in both occasions is that the background is blurred. The viewer is forced to concentrate on the figure and the text only. In both occasions the figure obstructs parts of the text. This suggests that the figure of the cowboy is whom the advertisers wish the viewer to acknowledge first.

Figure 1 was published in 1995 and figure 2 in 1997. In the space of two years the figure of the cowboy has changed little. Both are wearing chaps, denim jacket, glove, hat and spurs. The 'Marlboro man' is very recognisable. His face is obscured by the hat on both occasions, this suggests that these particular adverts are more concerned with the physical features of the cowboy. In both cases he is presents physical dexterity. In Figure 1, he is jumping through a rope and in figure 2; he sits on a wooden fence.

Figure 3 is an example of the 'Marlboro man' on his environment. This advertisement is a particular example of man's desire to dominate nature, specifically his horse. Both horses are under the control of the cowboy. The horse on the right has been saddled and the horse on the left although rearing (a sign of resistance) is contained within fencing. The cowboy is in complete control. This control of the horses is transferred to the mountains in the background, more subtly. The shapes and contours of the mountains are very similar to that of the horses. The dip in the saddle on the horse on right is shadowed by the dip in the mountain range behind. The height of the rearing horse on the left is repeated again in the peak of the mountain behind. This suggests a similarity between the horses and the mountains. Both are seen to be at the same, subordinate level in relation to the cowboy. Again this is suggested in the colour scheme. The horses and the mountains are in cool colours and the cowboy is in contrasting, warmer ones.

The first part of the report is a general introduction to the subject of the study. It discusses the importance of the study and the objectives of the research. The second part of the report is a literature review. It discusses the work of other researchers in the field and identifies the gaps in the current knowledge. The third part of the report is a description of the methodology used in the study. It discusses the data collection methods and the statistical analysis techniques. The fourth part of the report is a presentation of the results of the study. It discusses the findings of the research and compares them with the results of other studies. The fifth part of the report is a discussion of the implications of the findings. It discusses the practical applications of the research and the limitations of the study. The sixth part of the report is a conclusion. It summarizes the main findings of the study and provides recommendations for future research.

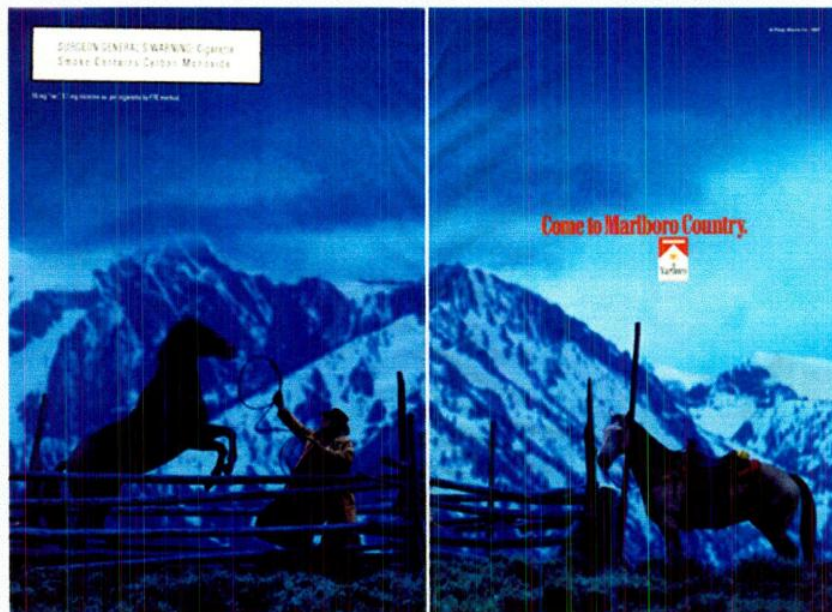
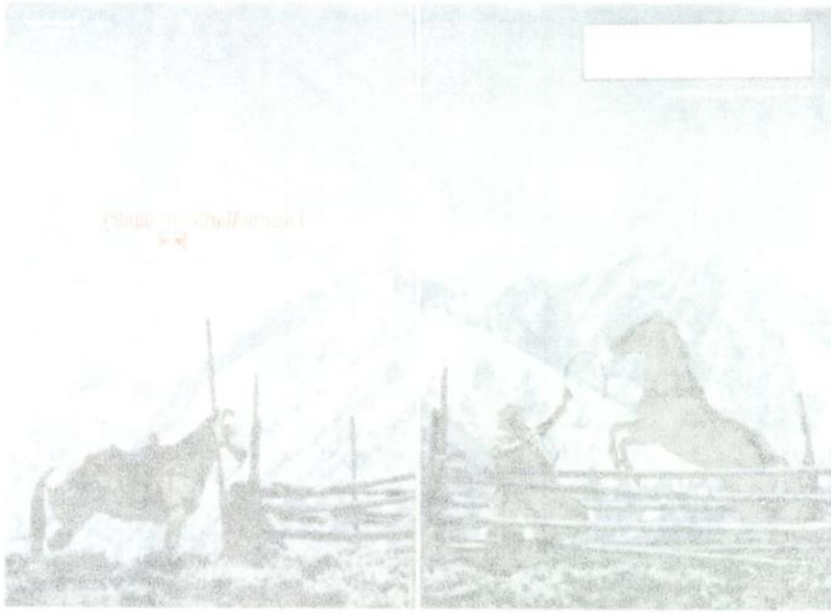


Figure 3, Marlboro Advertisement, 1997



This cowboy is similar to the cowboys in figures 1 and 2 in many ways. His face is not clearly defined. More importantly is the text in relation to the image. In this case there is no obstruction of the text. Therefore how does the advertiser make the viewer concentrate on the image first? The advertisers have used the size of the text in relation to the size of the image. This advertisement spreads across two pages of the magazine. It successfully projects the expanse of the west in reality. The text on the other hand is considerably smaller. Of course the viewer will notice the image first.

Another component of all the advertisements is worth mentioning - the government health warning. Most would suspect that this would hinder this campaign. However as Rosetta Brooks points out.

By a brilliant slight of hand, the reality of addiction is reversed in these commercials. The cowboy who originally represented the weathered mask of survival proves himself a *real* man once more by rejecting the medical mask of dependence; a man who survives the dangers of smoke and proves himself invulnerable. He re-emerges again as a survivor figure. Dependence is transformed back into an image of independence¹

The cowboy figure embodies the fantasy of man and the masculine. He is the man who made himself from nothing. The cowboy life style is the determination of the male ego. These ideas are also embodied in the myth of the American dream. J.D.Rockefeller, one of America's most affluent men, is quoted in saying that the growth of a large business is merely a question of survival of the fittest. J.K.Galbraith called this social Darwinism.

Social Darwinism bore more importantly on the attitudes which Americans brought into the age of affluence... here if, any where the ordinary man had a chance.

However all types of economic lifestyles are a struggle. In excepting the fact that he or she might fail. Failure is the reality of debt, hunger and death. This highlights inequalities and insecurities. Those who enjoy prosperity and success are therefore perceived as better.

The ideal of male heroism is not a new idea and can be seen in classical Greek sculpture. Previous to Greek classical period the figured was portrayed in two forms. Firstly as fertility objects, which were associated with nature and had over emphasised genitalia (i.e. the Venus of Winnendorf). Secondly in a more androgynous, god like figure (i.e. Egyptian god, Thoth). What the Greeks achieved was an ideal human form. The Greeks believed that the gods took similar forms to these perfect examples of men when they wanted to achieve beauty. Therefore the idea that beauty was the common bond between man and god was suggested. This idea still remains today. One type of man that the Greeks concentrated on was that of the muscular man, The Hercules figure.

Kenneth Dulton suggests that there are fundamentally two types of figure in Greek art. One who was similar to the figure of Hercules, who was active, physically strong and brave. Secondly there was the figure that was similar to the character of Narcissus, Who is seen as beautiful, soft and submissive. He states that they were seen as aspirational figures. This is because they are examples of men who achieved immortality in Greek mythology. Hercules achieved his by rising above human suffering and setting fire to his own funeral pyre. Narcissus achieved his because he drowned himself in waters, which were the source of his own reflection. The image he saw was the realisation of the god within himself. The first is an example of rising above oneself and achievement through exploits. The second is an example of absorption through knowledge and inwardness. Dulton also suggest that the ideology linked to the form of Hercules is a reflection of western cultures. Whereas the ideology linked to the form of Narcissus was a reflection of eastern cultures. This is very much the issue with regard to America and the figure of the cowboy. The cowboy is very much an example of the Herculean form of man. Physically stronger than the horse he rides and the people he protects. He lives the American dream of struggle and survival against the backdrop of a magnificent landscape.

Abigail Soloman-Godeau also discusses two generic types of male in an investigation of masculinity and classical French painting. One was a masculinized male and one was a feminized male. The first was purpose and active, like David's Horatio. The second was young and passive like Guerin's Eros. Both figures were similar to the forms of Hercules and Narcissus, which Dulton put forward earlier.

In today's images of mass culture there are widespread and varied expressions of what is masculine and aspirational. Soloman-Godeau suggests that the male figure 'has returned after an absence of nearly two centuries as compelling presence in postmodernity. Morphologically restyled and culturally reencoded, conscripted to the services of a commodity culture.'² Consequently it becomes apparent that the media has been incorporated into what was the sole realm of the fine arts. The portrayal of gods, royalty and civil authorities has had to give way to the images that the media promotes (i.e. the movie star, the cowboy). The two types of male figures presented earlier are still present today. Soloman-Godeau puts forward the Versace model as an example of the feminized male. It can therefore be concluded that the Marlboro man is example of the masculinized male.

Accepting the cowboy as an icon means accepting the cowboy as a metaphor. The cowboy was a metaphor of the American ideal. Consequently, this makes the cowboy a national icon. In a discussion of national icons in America, Albert Boime states that, 'national icons preserve historical, religious and biographical memory'³. However it is a specific memory which the West represents. For example it fails to address the slaughter of thousands of Native American Indians. A belief in the icon of the cowboy is the belief in the idealised West, regardless of the facts. This is the subsequent power of icons. In Further discussions Biome refers to the American flag as an icon. Political attacks on a national icon such as this, is not only an attack on an object itself but it is also an attack on a whole belief system. The burning of the flag is consequently an attack on an American identity, which the flag inspires. This idea can also relate to the cowboy. An attack on

The first part of the document is a letter from the author to the editor of the journal. The letter discusses the author's interest in the topic and the reasons for writing the paper. The author mentions that they have been thinking about the topic for some time and that they believe it is an important one that deserves attention. They also mention that they have conducted some preliminary research and that they believe their findings are significant.

The second part of the document is the main body of the paper. It begins with an introduction that outlines the purpose of the study and the research questions. The author then discusses the literature on the topic and identifies the gaps in the current research. They then describe the methodology used in the study and the results of the data analysis. The author concludes by discussing the implications of their findings and suggesting areas for further research.

The third part of the document is the conclusion. The author summarizes the main findings of the study and discusses their significance. They also discuss the limitations of the study and suggest ways to address these limitations in future research. The author ends the paper with a statement of their appreciation for the editor and the reviewers.

The fourth part of the document is the references. The author lists the sources of information used in the paper, including books, articles, and other scholarly works. The references are listed in alphabetical order and include the author's name, the year of publication, and the title of the work.

The fifth part of the document is the appendix. The author includes additional information that is relevant to the study but that is too large to include in the main body of the paper. This includes a list of the participants in the study, a copy of the questionnaire used, and a copy of the data analysis software used.

The sixth part of the document is the acknowledgments. The author thanks the people and organizations that have supported the research. This includes the author's advisor, the funding agency, and the participants in the study. The author also thanks the editor and the reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

The seventh part of the document is the index. The author provides a list of the key terms and concepts used in the paper, along with the page numbers where they are discussed. This helps the reader to find the information they are looking for more easily.

The eighth part of the document is the back matter. This includes the author's contact information, a list of the author's other works, and a list of the author's affiliations. The author also includes a statement of their copyright and a statement of their permission to publish the paper.

the figure of the cowboy can be seen as questioning of the myth's reliability. Therefore it questions the idea of American identity and masculinity. Loyalty to icons such as the flag is everything. Loyalty is the reinforcing power. An example of a loyalty enforcer is the soldier. He is ready to lay down his life in the name of his flag/icon and country/ideal.

Icons possess a dark side in their ready-made text designed to enlist blind obedience to the government who purport to represent them and embody their ideals.⁴

Examining icons such as the American flag and the American cowboy highlight a gap. This is the gap between the American promise/ideal and the American reality.

The most powerful influences in advertising are myths such as these. Advertising doesn't sell an object it highlights the desire to buy. It works on the idea of the need of the consumer to obtain objects that denote a certain lifestyle. This life style must be seen as better than the consumer's existing one. Advertisers assume a basic insecurity in the consumer. This is the driving force behind advertising. By constantly projecting ideal lifestyles the advertisers constantly reinforce this insecurity. The quest to live the lifestyle portrayed in advertising will never be fulfilled in its entirety. This is because the advertised lifestyle is not entirely possible or realistic. This ensures the constant sale of objects. Advertisers can suggest to the consumer that a new object will bring them one step closer to their desired lifestyle.

Advertisements that work the best are subtle interruptions in the consumer's daily routine. A good advertisement is a complex message reduced to its simplest form. The faster the penetration the message the greater the potential impact. Successful advertising like successful film shows an awareness of the consumer. Think of the public arenas in which we meet advertising. A consumer riding a bus will be presented with the same images everyday. The constant repetition of messages makes the consumer remember them when not on the bus.

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What is important to note with the Marlboro advertising campaign is the seductiveness of the cowboy. The first reaction is to the image itself. Like film, the advertisers have adhered to the expectancy of the consumers as to what the cowboy such look like (i.e. hat, boots, white Caucasian male). The success of the campaign is the fact that by using the same text, which features on the cigarette box, the advertisers have placed the cigarette within the western context. The advertisers want to make the consumer to make the association of cigarette - Western lifestyle - masculinity. It is not compulsory to refer to the cigarette directly because of the text. The success of this particular campaign is the fact that the association of Western lifestyle and masculinity needs little enforcement. Western films had already done all the groundwork. All the advertiser had to do was associate Marlboro cigarettes with the Western lifestyle. This was achieved over the course of the 1970's and 1980's. The campaign featured images with the same text and a similar cowboy figure. The only thing to change was the situation in which you found the 'Marlboro man'. He became very recognisable. Believability was achieved because of this.

To sum up we can conclude that the cowboy is part of a broader sphere of cultural ideals. He therefore is generally an attractive figure because he typifies what is seen as masculine.

Masculinity is something to which conventional society has always aspired.

The cowboy is also the perfect choice for advertisers. Marlboro has successfully associated its product with the Western lifestyle and the cowboy. This is largely due to the fact that they do not have to establish the cowboy's masculinity. That had already been done for them, largely by Western films. Marlboro only had to convince the consumer that the cowboy smoked Marlboro. This they achieved through the repetition of the advertising style. What the Marlboro campaign represents is the successful manipulation of a widely accepted cultural image for it's own commercial purposes.

¹ J. K. Galbraith, *An Affluent Society*, Penguin Books, 1958, P. 60

² A. Soloman – Godeau, *Male Trouble; A Crisis in Representation*, Thames and Hudson, 1997, P.23

³ A. Boime, *The Unveiling of National Icons*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, P.7

⁴ A. Boime, P.13

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Chapter Three

Richard Prince's *Cowboy series*

Richard Prince's *Cowboy series* was first shown in 1983 at the Baskerville and Watson Gallery, New York. It featured the rephotography of the Marlboro advertisements; however the images were cropped so that they only featured the image of the cowboy and his environment, with the text removed. Prince's images were presented as large format colour photographs (ranging in sizes). By presenting an image that was formerly associated with text, Prince's main objective was to engage the viewer's primary reaction or associations to that image. He was less concerned with the secondary message implicit in the original advertisements – that like you, this cowboy smokes Marlboro cigarettes. At this stage, the medium that Prince used for his work will be examined.

It may be useful to explain here that rephotography is when an artist photographs an existing image and presents it as his/her own. This is now a recognized art form. It received its inspiration from the pop artists of the 1960's who used painted and printed media and advertising images as part of their work. Prince took this process a step further. He used the original image itself in the form of a photograph. "I didn't want to alter the original image, but I wanted to change the perception of the original image"¹.

Artists and intellectuals have often dismissed photography as a legitimate art form. This elitist attitude is rooted in history. When photography was invented during the Industrial Revolution, purists asserted that because the hand of the 'artist' was assisted by a 'machine', its originality was in some way diminished. Prince added to the confusion by further seeming to copy a copy. However, Prince defends his work by asserting that while photography is associated with realistic views of the world, these can be manipulated to the artist's own ends. In an interview for *Aperture*

Chapter Three Richard Prince's Copy Art

I found that Prince's work was first shown in 1983 at the Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition was titled "Richard Prince: A Retrospective." The show featured a wide range of his work, including his most famous piece, "Cowboy with a Shotgun." This work, which is a reproduction of a photograph by Robert Frank, has become one of Prince's most iconic pieces. It is a black and white photograph of a cowboy in a dark coat, holding a shotgun. The image is grainy and has a high-contrast, almost graphic quality. Prince's version of the image is a reproduction of the original, but he has made several changes. He has added a white border around the image, and he has changed the color of the cowboy's coat to a dark, almost black color. He has also changed the color of the shotgun to a dark, almost black color. The result is a more graphic and stylized version of the original image.

Prince's work is often described as "copy art." This is because he takes existing images and reproduces them in his own style. He is not creating new images from scratch, but rather he is taking existing images and making them his own. This is a controversial practice, as it raises questions about the value of original art and the role of the artist. However, Prince's work has also been praised for its ability to challenge our perceptions of art and to explore the relationship between the original and the copy. He has shown that a copy can be just as powerful as the original, and that the artist's role is not necessarily to create something new, but rather to reinterpret what already exists.

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magazine, he commented that the camera believed 'visual lies' and reported them as 'truths' to the viewers. Coincidentally, this is how advertising images succeed, because the viewer/consumer is usually encouraged to accept them as truths. Baudrillard further suggests that photography is not the representation of the subject, but the transformation of the subject into an object. Therefore photography as an art form is achieved through the object created and not through the subject represented. With this in mind, should the cowboys whom Prince has rephotographed be perceived not as real people, but as representations of people?

To gain a better understanding of the rationale behind Prince's work, let us examine his thoughts as expressed in his book, *Why I Go to the Movies Alone* (1983). This was book of inner monologues with a common theme. Prince is addressing no one in particular, but seem to express the same meanings as his photographs, i.e. the reality and fictions of identities.

The calculation was about business, the desire to project the right image an image that would sell.... The bad girl, the sympathetic slut, the girl from the wrong side of the tracks. The trouble was the fiction was always about five seconds from coming apart and X thought that at any moment, Connie A. Connie would be found out for what she was... a basically serious funny woman with about as much chance for a "rep" as a spayed puppy.²

The reader eventually realizes that a definitive explanation of Prince's writing is difficult, there can only be individual interpretations. The same can be said of his art.

It is at this point that we must take a broader look at Prince's work. The Marlboro series is only a part of a larger body of work, in which he uses commercial images to comment on American cultural identities. What is apparent is that Prince has offered the viewer a pause in the continuous flow of images. The viewer has been given a chance to acknowledge a particular commercial image, out of context.



Figure 4, Untitled (cowboys), Richard Prince





Figure 5, (top), Untitled (cowboy), Richard Prince
Figure 6, (bottom), Untitled (cowboy), Richard Prince



The woman in the photograph above is the same person who is shown in the photograph below. She is the same person who is shown in the photograph below.

In Figure 4 the viewer is presented with the cowboy, the horse and the landscape. By removing the text, the image that was partially obscured in the original advertisement can be examined in greater detail. What is evident is that the image contains a cinematic feel. This could be a result of a comfortable association with Western films. Marlboro advertisers may have consciously used this style of photography for that reason. Figure 4 looks a lot like a film still or a pause in a continuous piece of movement or development. The removal of the text has given an ambiguous quality to the image; something is missing. Or perhaps, something is concealed from the viewer? What is clear is that the image relies on the viewer's input to finish the story. As a result the viewer can imagine a whole scenario to follow the image. By referring to Western films the viewer may have seen, he or she can create a whole identity and purpose for this cowboy. Figure 4 also presents the viewer with a cowboy riding a horse across a magnificent landscape. The imagination conjures up all sorts of scenarios. Perhaps the cowboy is riding off to save a woman from the 'savage' Indians, he may be returning after saving the day or he may be riding through the depicted landscape in search of a new adventure. The cowboy's purpose is unclear. What is clear, however, is that Prince is presenting a hero. However, by choosing the 'Marlboro man', Prince is not presenting a new hero. Through his choice, he is highlighting a hero which has been already chosen by society (particularly the commercially orientated American society). Figure 4 has been chosen to illustrate this point; however it can be applied to the other images which featured in this particular series (for example, Figures 5 and 6).

They preserve all their cultural baggage because they are common, easily recognizable in short, found images. They already exist ... Prince doesn't force ulterior meanings upon them.³

The fact that all the images used by Prince are rephotographed advertisements ensured the public's familiarity with the subjects. It would suggest he was jumping on a bandwagon, but this

was not the case. Prince's intention was to break down the 'aura of authenticity' which advertising presents to the consumer/ viewer. He tries to differentiate between meanings that are both obvious and concealed. As suggested earlier in Chapter two, the constant bombardment of images which the consumer receives is, on one level a marketing ploy. The advertisers use certain images to reinforce ideals/norms. The constant repetition of similar images aids the sale of certain 'lifestyle objects'. However, on another level, it encourages a shared experience by consumers as a group. Consequently, the information which is relayed through certain images

are more likely to be believed as genuine, because more than one consumer has seen it.

Alternatively, the image becomes a type of mold. On a purely face value, the images are empty shells relying on the viewer. The interaction between the viewer and image is essential for any meaning to be conveyed.

Another reason why Prince selected media images for his work is that he may be suggesting that perhaps today's media creates too many fictions, 'we perceptually experience too many worlds, too many histories at once'⁴. This consequently can lead to confused identities and even more insecurities for the viewer/consumer. Prince has attempted to redress this situation. He allows the viewer/consumer to stop and think and choose. He encourages introspection and analysis in relation to the images, a feat previously made impossible by the pervasive power of advertising.

By putting these images into a gallery space, Prince applies his name as an author to a previously commercially authorized image. The presence of an author, in general, brings about an awareness of image manipulation. The viewer consequently becomes aware of the origins of these images, because Prince has rephotographed them from advertising. The result is that the viewer begins to question the motives of the original advertising campaign and hopefully gains new insights on advertising techniques and agendas. Barrett Watton states in his review of Prince's

was not the case. France's intention was to break down the wall of ignorance and to establish a new relationship between the two countries. The new relationship was not to be based on the old one, but on a new one. The new relationship was to be based on the old one, but on a new one.

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work that 'a grand and nasty irony is the inevitable consequence of analyzing the emotional content of any image in terms of its material form'.⁵

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- ¹ R. Prince, 'Social Science Fiction, An Interview with Richard Prince', Art in America, 1997, P.88
- ² Anonymous, *Why I Go to the Movies Alone*, Tanam Press, 1983, P.24
- ³ D. Salvioni, 'On Richard Prince', Flash Art, 1988, P.89
- ⁴ J. Rian, 'Social Science Fiction, An Interview with Richard Prince', Art in America, 1997, P.88
- ⁵ B. Watton, 'Richard Prince's Imitations of Life (Magazine)', Art Week, 1993, P.4

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997, 278, 10, 1200-1201.
2. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997, 278, 10, 1200-1201.
3. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997, 278, 10, 1200-1201.
4. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997, 278, 10, 1200-1201.
5. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1997, 278, 10, 1200-1201.

Conclusion

The American Cowboy was presented as a uniquely American hero and because of the influence of American film, he became a globally recognised symbol. He signified the idealised narrative of endurance and persistence in relation to an American mythology and he became a metaphor for survival and success.

The Marlboro advertising campaign saw the cowboy in this heroic light, the epitome of strength, skill and control. The notion of the cowboy as a hero brings us to the universal ideal of the powerful figure of the Herculean male. However a critique of advertising would suggest that this is a manipulation of the idea of the hero for commercial purposes. The fact that the cowboy can successfully be translated from film to advertising is evidence of just how popular and credible of an icon he is. He embodies what is perceived to be truly masculine and truly American, and at the same time.

The work of Richard Prince, specifically his *Cowboy series*, examines the psychology behind this film and advertising ideal. He encourages the viewer to look behind the façade of the cowboy figure and recognise the image as a representation. Which would lead the viewer to consider the gap between the presented reality and the lived reality, of media images such as these. He achieves this by forcing the viewer to acknowledge the cowboy as the advertising 'star', an image with a function (i.e. to sell objects). As a result of this the cowboy becomes less believable, a falsity is attached to him. This is what is important about his work.

Is this the 'grand and nasty irony' to which Barrett Watton refers? Is it that the American cowboy, which society has found to be an attractive and aspirational figure, is fictitious. From this thesis this would be apparent. However this investigation has only really addressed the presented

reality of the cowboy, his image. It has not begun to address the lived reality of this figure. For this is not what these particular images discussed address.

The American cowboy is a hero, to be compared with Hercules and Horatio. However because of the age in which we live, the cowboy is the most accessible and therefore the most popular. He reflects the unchanging need for heroes, men or woman to better than ourselves. These types of figures will always be aspirational. The more widely an image such as the American cowboy is presented and manipulated, the more generalised and idealised it becomes. This is acceptable as long as there is an ability to recognise these stereotypes and not to accept them blindly.

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this is not what these particular images are called address.

The American cowboy is a hero in the imagination, with his own set of values and...

of the age in which we live, the cowboy is the ideal of... while and the...

to be an encouragement for those who are in search of a better tomorrow...

to be a symbol of the American dream. The cowboy is a hero in the imagination...

presented and transformed the cowboy into a hero and a symbol of the American...

and the cowboy is a hero in the imagination, with his own set of values and...

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