



National College of Art and Design

BA (HONS) International - Applied Arts
Department of Applied Materials - (Textile Art & Artefact)

**The Cowboy Boot: Evolving Perceptions of Masculine Stereotypes
as American National Identity.**

Siobhán Curtis

Submitted to the School of Visual Culture in Candidacy for the Degree of
BA (HONS) International - Applied Arts
Department of Applied Materials - (Textile Art & Artefact)

2023

School of Visual Culture

I declare that this **Critical Cultures Research Project** is all my own work and that all sources have been fully acknowledged.

Signed: 

Programme / department: BA (HONS) International - Applied Arts
Department of Applied Materials - (Textile Art & Artefact)

Date: 30/01/2023

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my Critical Culture tutor Henry Martin for your continued help and support over the duration of this research project.

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations	5
Introduction	6
Case Study One: “The Workwear Boot”	8
The Vaquero	9
Functionality	9
The Western	10
The Myth	11
Simulacra	11
Masculinity	12
American National Identity	13
Case Study Two: “The Rhinestone Cowboy Boot”	16
History of the country singer	17
Singing Cowboys	17
The Original Rhinestone Cowboy.	19
The Man in Black	21
Dolly Parton	22
Feminism	23
The Heel	24
Case Study Three: “The Bondage Boot”	26
Lil Nas X	26
Queer Cowboy Fantasy	27
The American Queer Revolution	28
The Castro Clone	32
Urban Cowboy	32
Brokeback Mountain	33
Old Town Road Video	34
Conclusion	37
Bibliography	39
Image Reference List	44

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Original antique Old West Cowboy boots (Source: River Junction Trade Co. LLC, no date). Reproduced with the permission of River Junction Trade Company LLC.	8
Figure 2: The Marlboro Man (Source: Allan, 2022)	15
Figure 3: Dolly Parton's Boots (Source: Getty Images, 2018)	16
Figure 4: Gene Audry: British postcard in the Picturegoer Series, London, no. 1182. (Source: British Lion, 2019)	18
Figure 5: 50,000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong: Elvis' Gold Records (Source: Music Zone, no date)	20
Figure 6: Elton John, 1972 (Source: Courtesy Photo, 2016)	20
Figure 7: Lil Nas X 2020 Grammy Award Outfit (Source: Sussman, A., 2020)	25
Figure 8: Butch Cassidy mentioned in newspaper dated May 27, 1899 (Sourced: Library of Congress, Washington, DC., no date)	29
Figure 9: Lil Nas X - Old Town Road (Official Movie) at 1.06 minutes (Sourced: Lil Nas X, 2019)	33
Figure 10: Lil Nas X - Old Town Road (Official Movie) at 4.29 minutes (Sourced: Lil Nas X, 2019)	35

Introduction

“Are you a real cowboy?” she asks. The man responds, “Well, it depends on what you think a real cowboy is” (Urban Cowboy, 1980)

The Cowboy. Who is ‘He’?

The cowboy is one of the great cultural archetypes of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. My fascination with the topic began on the 28th of June, 2019, after attending “Suhl’s Rodeo” in Kissimmee, Florida, USA. The next day I bought myself a pair of genuine leather cowboy boots. I did not need them and could barely afford them, but my interest convinced me to buy them. Nearly four years on, I still wear these boots regularly. They make me feel confident and empowered, yet when I imagine a cowboy, I picture a bandit outcast, a ‘masculine’ man, a macho man. How could an item with such strong imagery of ‘masculinity’ make me, a female, feel so empowered?

This is where my research question began; what does the ‘cowboy’ represent, and what is the meaning held by the cowboy boot?

Throughout the following pages, I will discuss and dispute the true persona(s) of the cowboy personage through the medium of the cowboy boot. By undergoing research into the late nineteenth and twentieth-century America, I unveil the identity politics of a nation, question the ethics of the simulacra used in a masculinity crisis; from both a feminist and queer point of view, to reveal the twenty-first century’s modern perception of the cowboy boot.

These questions will be answered with the support of three case studies of three different pairs of cowboy boots.

1. “The Workwear Boot”, an antique cowboy boot from the late 1800s,
2. “The Rhinestone Cowboy Boot”, Dolly Parton’s high-heeled cowboy boots,
3. “The Bondage Boot”, Lil Nas X’s cowboy boots worn to the 62nd Grammy Awards in 2019.

In these three case studies, sectioned into three chapters, I discuss the ever-changing evolution of the identity associated with the cowboy boot, exploring factual history and myth, the Hollywood Western, the ‘Singing Cowboy’, the country singer, the ‘Rhinestone Cowboy’ and the ‘Gay Liberation Movement’, to lead us to the identity given to modern cowboy, by focusing on the cowboy boot.

Case Study One: “The Workwear Boot”



Figure 1: Original antique Old West Cowboy boots (Source: River Junction Trade Co. LLC, no date). Reproduced with the permission of River Junction Trade Company LLC.

Pictured above is a pair of ‘Original antique Old West Cowboy boots’, dating back to the 1860-70s, that were published and sold from the River Junction Trade Company, Iowa - originally founded in a museum collection (River Junction Trade Co. LLC, no date). River Junction Trade Company described these boots as having a two-piece arch front in brown, brown being far less common than the typical black boot. The sole has a thin arch, is stitched on the edge and glued on the inside. The raised heel is made with stacked leather and nailed together with small square nails in a pattern; this was done to protect it from wear. There is also delicate stitching, all of which is still intact. “This

pair of boots are the real deal” (River Junction Trade Company, no date). Everything about these boots, from design to production, has the functionality of a work boot and longevity in mind.

The Vaquero

“It is the custom and costume of the Mexican vaquero that provide the outline of the earliest Westerner” (Buscombe and Pearson, 1998, p.177). In the late 1600s, there was the Vaqueros. These were hardworking, horseback-riding Mexican cattle ranchers; the Spanish word ‘vaca’ translates to ‘cow’. It is believed that the Vaqueros are the earliest form of cowboys, or rather the original influence of the origin of the American cowboy (Kauffman, 1980, p.8).

The Vaqueros workwear was not created with a fashion aesthetic in mind but with a purpose. The boot, in particular, was a tool, a piece of equipment. In the words of the author, Sandra Kauffman, boots were “Worn for protection, not adornment”(Kauffman, 1980, p.14).

Functionality

The ‘Original antique’ boots discussed in this case study have a two-piece arch front. The original Vaqueros boots were constructed from two pieces of leather wet-boned, a method that lacked shape and form. The artisans of the American boot introduced many new methods, often constructing the boot from four pieces of leather and adding stitches. Each pair of boots were crafted with a function. The original stitching was used to make the boot stand up straight and hold its shape. Over time the stitching became a status statement,

“According to Cosimo Lucchese:
one to three rows of stitching - good for a work boot;
four rows - okay for a dress boot, but a little short;
six rows - real class, gives body to the design;
eight rows - too fancy; Hollywood boots!” (Kauffman, 1980, p.26)

The purpose of using leather was due to the material’s durability, which was needed in the field of cattle-ranching and horseback riding in extreme weather conditions. The knee-high length front and back shafts were for protection from thorns, rubble and snakes. They also prevented the stirrup from bruising his leg. The narrow toe meant the cowboy could find the stirrup quickly while riding horseback, and the heel was used to burrow into the ground and brace himself while going down a steep hill. The heel also kept his foot from slipping through the stirrup while riding. “The correct boot could mean the difference between life and death” (Kauffman, 1980, p.14)

I have found evidence through my research that the original cowboy was a cattle rancher. How has the perception of a heroic masculine man, a lone rider, a rebel, an outlaw riding off into the sunset become the image of the original American cowboy?

The Western

The Western has become a worldwide film genre favourite over the last 100 years, leading to the cowboy becoming recognised as one of the potent symbols of America. However, the cowboy portrayed in these films differs significantly from the cowboy that wore the original antique boots discussed in this case study; rather a

“codified American identity as mainly white and male, largely accepted racial supremacy as a given, romanticised aggressive masculinity and, ultimately, eulogised resistance to regulated society as the truest mark of manhood” (Coyne, 1997, p.15)

Which leads me to this question; how did the Hollywood western cowboy deceive the world of the historical cowboy? Carleton Young quoted the answer in John Ford's Western film, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), saying, "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend". The legend of the western cowboy is not fact but merely fiction of scrambled truth; the legendary cowboy we all know and dress as today is not but a simulacrum of the true cowboy.

The Myth

There are numerous old myths and legends of gun-slinging outlaw cowboys; for example 'Billy the Kid', 'John Wesley Hardin' and 'Jesse James' (Kennedy, 2020). Although not every story is true, there is evidence that some of these mythical characters did exist (shown in chapter three). It is important to note that although there is evidence of a small minority of these outlaw cowboys, the cowboy was a cattle rancher by trade and should be recorded in history as such. Although "the legendary housemen left us tangible proof of his existence" (Kauffman, 1980, p.8), he is more fiction than fact.

Simulacra

Jean Baudrillard once wrote, "The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth - it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true" (Baudrillard, 1981, p.1).

Simulacra is the copy of something that is not itself an original and is therefore not a real form itself. This leads me to the discovery that the idealised cowboy that most people imagine when thinking of the original cowboy is not real but a simulacrum of what the cowboy truly was. This simulacrum was created by Hollywood film producers

and writers, who merged the timelines of authentic history with fictional myth. “The crucial period of settlement in which most Westerns take place lasted only about thirty years, from 1860 to 1890” (Wright, 1975, p.5).

This simulacrum of distortion between myth and fact is seen in the popular Westerns; *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*, 1966 (set in 1862); *Stagecoach*, 1939 (set in 1880); and *Shane*, 1953 (set in 1889). All of these well-known western movies are set within this thirty-year timeline, and these are to name only three. Andrew Bergman observed that there were 30 quality westerns produced between the years 1939-41; 24 of these movies had a historical theme (Coyne, 1997, p.18). With the number of westerns being produced, and in an enticing manner, this is where history got mixed up with myth, and the simulacrum of the heterosexual, misogynist, hyper-masculine cowboy began.

Masculinity

The stereotype that the cowboy in the Western represents is one of masculine male, white supremacy. Often a lawless, dominant figure, but one of a straight, heterosexual man. “The Western hero must prove his heterosexuality and thus his masculinity through demonstrations of virility ... and violence” (Symmonds, 2018, p.2)

By definition, masculinity is “the characteristics that are traditionally thought to be typical of or suitable for men” (‘Masculinity’, 2023). French philosopher, Élisabeth Badinter’s studies, state that cisgender masculinity is articulated into four imperatives;

1. He is not effeminate
2. He is superior to others regarding success, power and admiration
3. He is independent; he relies on himself alone
4. He is stronger than others; even violent (Badinter, 1995, p.130)

These are the attributes projected by the Hollywood Western cowboy; it is because of this idealised perception that I thought of this ‘masculine’ man while examining my own cowboy boots. “The cowboy embodies all masculine stereotypes” (Badinter, 1995, p.131)

Why did the film producers of this genre decide on this particular persona? Enticing the idea of violence and death? Historian George L. Mosse believed that modern society needed an image against which it could define itself, and I could not agree more with this observation. I believe this statement shows the start of a ‘masculinity crisis’ linked to American national identity at the beginning of the twentieth century.

American National Identity

Considering the culture of the name, lifestyle and workwear was copied from Mexican-Spanish Vaqueros, the cowboy is a known symbol of America. Even though the Hollywood western cowboy is not a ‘real’ figure but rather fiction, why does America still use this representation for its national identity?

Published in 1997, Author Michael Coyne wrote that “Presidents of the last four decades have either consciously engaged with the western or at least employed Western trapping to deepen their own sense of national identity” (Coyne, 1997, p.2) This statement reinforces the attribute of power associated with the cowboy image.

Did American society use this simulacrum of the cowboy to re-conceptualise their national identity as this heterosexual-masculine stereotype; one of which “meant that men and women were homogenised, considered not as individuals but as types ... all men were supposed to conform to an ideal masculinity” (Mosse, 1996, p.6)

The concept of white supremacy as national identity is seen in both the Western and nineteenth-century America. “The Western’s habitual representation of American identity was white as well as male. Numerous Westerns either implicitly advanced or explicitly assailed depictions of white supremacy” (Coyne, 1997, p.4). Not only has the cowboy simulacrum been used to white-wash a nation’s history, but used to influence a nation’s pride and perception.

In conjunction with masculinity, I have to mention femininity. As previously mentioned, “Westerns at least highlighted heroic man’s exclusion from society; the genre predominantly marginalised women from the outset” (Coyne, 1997, p.4). This too was noted in nineteenth-century America. However, throughout the twentieth century, Professor Chris Beasley’s study of “Gender & Sexuality” concludes that feminism’s “critical stance takes the form of a critique of misogyny, the assumption of male-superiority and centrality” (Beasley, 2005, p.16). As aforementioned, these are attributes of the Western cowboy’s persona. This caused a feminist reaction against the cowboy image, as will be discussed in chapter two.

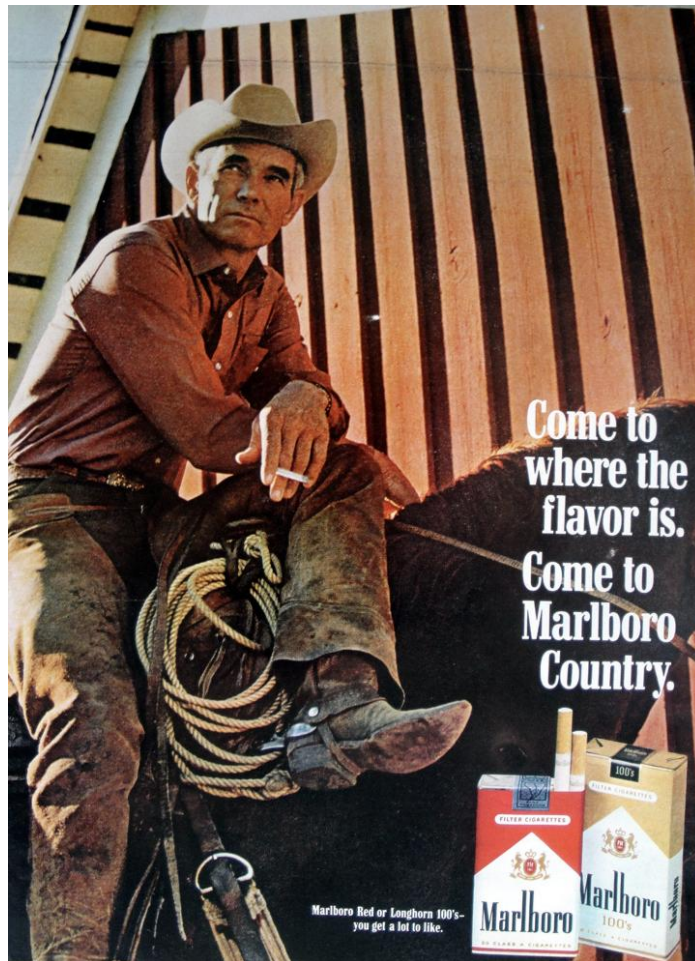


Figure 2: The Marlboro Man (Source: Allan, 2022)

The simulacrum image of the western cowboy persona didn't stop at movies; even the advertising industry used this masculine persona to promote their products. One of the best examples of this is 'The Marlboro Man' (Allan, 2022), shown in figure 2. Marlboro was once conceived as a women's cigarette but didn't sell well on the market. However, in 1954 when Marlboro changed its advertisement image to a western cowboy smoking a cigarette, "The Marlboro Man made Marlboro the best-selling cigarettes in the world" (Wright, 1975, p.1).

Circling back to the original old antique boots I began my investigation with in this case study, I have discovered that although these boots may have been worn by a 'real'

cowboy, they were not worn by the known simulacrum of a cowboy that America has built into its national identity today. I have answered the first question that led me to this research; why did I imagine a ‘masculine’ figure when looking at my cowboy boots? Through the distorted mix-up of fact and fiction caused by the Western film genre, along with America’s hold on this idealism of masculinity as part of national identity, this stereotype of masculinity became a preconceived idea to me of what my cowboy boots represented.

Case Study Two: “The Rhinestone Cowboy Boot”



Figure 3: Dolly Parton’s Boots (Source: Getty Images, 2018)

Dolly Parton is an American country singer born in 1946 in Tennessee, USA. Figure 3 shows a pair of her original cowboy boots (Getty Images, 2018), now located in The Buffalo Bill Museum, Denver, USA (Tenace, 2018). My first case study revealed that the American cowboy was perceived as a male character; the cowboy boot represented the highest form of 'masculinity'. With a female's pair of cowboy boots, this concept is skewed. What do these boots represent? This case study examines the evolution of the country singer through the persona of the Rhinestone Cowboy to reveal how the feminist inclusion of the heel in the boot function resulted in changing the National identity associated with the cowboy boot.

History of the country singer

The country music genre in radio media began in the early 1920s; the first country music hit was Fiddlin' John Carson's "The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane", released in July 1923. (Kingsbury et al., 2004, p.IX). During this time, country music or 'folk' music was referred to as 'Hillbilly' music. That was until the generation of 'signing cowboys' came along.

Singing Cowboys

Gene Autry, Roy Rogers and Tex Ritter are all part of this subtype; they are all Hollywood Western Stars who influenced the change in the country music image. Country music historian Don Cusic said, "no kid wants to grow up being a hillbilly, and everybody wants to grow up being a cowboy." (Kochones et al., 2015). Once again, American national identity in the form of country music chose to be represented by the Hollywood Western cowboy, leaving the 'real' cowboy in their past, blurring the lines between fact and idealised perception.



Figure 4: Gene Autry: British postcard in the Picturegoer Series, London, no. 1182.

(Source: British Lion, 2019)

“Gene Autry was a huge star and a great influence on country music, not for what he sounded like, but for what he looked like” - Don Cusic (Kochones et al., 2015). As seen in figure 4, Gene Autry embodied the Hollywood Western cowboy look (British Lion, 2019)

Country music’s 1930’s new era of ‘Singing Cowboys’ changed the image of the male singers’ attire and persona. It also changed the female country singers’ look. However, there was still an element of “the sentimental mother and the pure mountain girl

sweetheart ... there were cultural expectations about who they were supposed to be”, quoted by author Diane Pecknold (Kochones et al., 2015). Which meant the cowboy persona remained purely masculine. That was until the era of the Rhinestone Cowboy, where the evolution of the feminised cowboy/girl began.

The Original Rhinestone Cowboy.

The phrase is commonly known from Glen Campbell’s song *Rhinestone Cowboy* (2010), written by Larry Weiss and released in 1975. That reflects profound lyrics about a singer’s struggle to fame, but the real origin of the Rhinestone cowboy began in the 1940s, with fashion designer Nudie Cohn: The Original Rhinestone Cowboy.

Nudie Cohn, née Nutya Kotlyrenko, in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 1902, moved to the United States as an immigrant. After setting up a shop in Manhattan in 1934 called “Nudie’s for the Ladies”, where he designed rhinestone-embellished costumes for chorus girls and strippers, he moved to Los Angeles in the 1940s, where he began making stage wear for country western singing musicians. (George-Warren, 2023)

The rhinestone attire, or as Don Cusic quoted, the “Hillbilly Bling” (Kochones et al., 2015), began to take over the country western genre’s image. Singers like Porter Wagoner, Bill Anderson and Pierce Webb rose to fame wearing sparkling ‘Nudie suits’ and cowboy boots, influencing a generation of rhinestone cowboys.



Figure 5: 50,000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong: Elvis' Gold Records (Source: Music Zone, no date)



Figure 6: Elton John, 1972 (Source: Courtesy Photo, 2016)

Following the success of the rhinestone cowboy wear in country music, in 1950, Nudie and his wife set up a new store in North Hollywood called “Nudie’s Rodeo Tailors”, where he created suits for not just country stars, such as Hank Williams but other major music genre stars, including Elvis Presley’s Gold Lamé Suit, 1957 (Music Zone, no date) and Elton John’s *Rocket Man* single cover (Courtesy Photo, 2016) shown in

figures 5 and 6, showing how the glamorised western wear style began to spread across America.

The Man in Black

In the 1960s, one of the most prominent faces in country music was Johnny Cash, otherwise known as “The Man in Black”. Rolling Stones stated that “country’s self-proclaimed Man in Black embodied outlaw country’s rebel spirit” (Browne et al., 2017). Cash’s style and persona didn’t fall under the rhinestone cowboy genre but rather an outlaw and lone rebel - similar to the Hollywood Western cowboy persona.

When talking about The Rhinestone Cowboy style and country singers’ dress, country music historian Peter Cooper said, “the clothes you wore, that was part of your story” (Kochones et al., 2015). Johnny Cash embodies the image of his story while dressing in black. The persona of the Hollywood Western cowboy is recognised in Cash’s image because of the national recognition of the American nation with the ‘masculine’ cowboy idealisation, not by what Cash proclaimed to be. Historian Shannon Thomas Perich explained that Cash “becomes that very American idea of tradition, but rebelliousness as well.” (Kochones et al., 2015).

On New Year’s Day, 1959, Cash played a free concert at San Quentin Prison for the prisoners. In the crowd that day was an inmate called Merle Haggard. Inspired by Cash’s performance, Haggard said, “For the first time in my life, I have a hint on what I might be doing the rest of my life” (Kochones et al., 2015). Haggard went on to pursue an incredibly successful career as a country music singer following his release from prison in 1960.

Considering his past as an actual outlaw, Haggard gave veracity to the simulacrum of the cowboy boot while finding inspiration in that exact persona. It was stated that “Haggard stands, with the arguable exception of Hank Williams, as the single most influential singer-songwriter in country music history” (Di Salvatore, 2023). Haggard’s story gave the American nation a stronger hold on the idealisation fixated on the simulacra meaning of the cowboy boot.

Although the Rhinestone Cowboy style was still apparent in the 1970s, influential musicians such as Cash and Haggard began to steer country image out of the rhinestone cowboy attire. Haggard even said, “I wore a different kind of boot, just to let people know that I wasn’t a hillbilly” (Kochones et al., 2015).

Another major influential country singer who changed the style of their cowboy boots in the 1970s was, quoted by photographer Raeanne Rubenstein, “queen of country music” (Kochones et al., 2015) Dolly Parton. While the male country singers were moving away from the style of the Rhinestone cowboy, Dolly was using it to her advantage.

Dolly Parton

The evidence collected thus far has proved that the cowboy boot represents a hyper-masculine, male-based image designated by the Western cowboy persona. Author Fouz-Hernández referred to the Western as a paradigm that is a

“hyper-masculine and hyper-heterosexual genre, where women are absent or ejected as agents from the film universe, but present in objectified form as things to be protected, directed and dominated, albeit often paternalistically” (Fouz-Hernández, 2009, p.79)

Historically, Glenda Riley’s studies revealed that ‘ranch-women’ did exist, that they “worked in fields, helped with cattle roundups and drives” (Riley, 1988, p.3) but in most

cases, “women’s lives focused upon domestic production, childbirth and childcare” (Riley, 1988, p.2), leaving the role of the cowboy to male figures.

Feminine association with the cowboy boot has been predominantly marginalised. From authentic history to the idealised image of Hollywood’s pseudo-history to the inspiration that enhanced the 1940s Rhinestone style, the cowboy image has always remained male orientated, right up to the 1970s (queer identity discussed separately in chapter 3).

Dolly Parton was not the first female to wear cowboy boots, nor was she the first female to make it big in country music. Fellow pioneers Kitty Wells, Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn paved the way for women in American country music by helping “break industry barriers for women” (Bufwack, 2023).

Parton differed from these women by rebelling against the gender stereotype associated with country music; and, in turn, the ‘cowboy’ image. The pioneers who preceded her made women singers apparent in the industry. However, Parton provides a new perspective on the genre’s authenticity debates through her music and purposely over-feminised image, feminising the Rhinestone cowboy representation and breaking the masculine image associated with it.

Feminism

“It’s hard to be a diamond in a rhinestone world” - Dolly Parton. This quote reflects Parton’s impact and approach to masculine stereotypes superbly. Parton refers to being genuine and ‘real’ in a world full of ‘fakes’ (Hussey, 2019). Furthermore, this quote could reference Parton’s experience as a woman in a man’s world.

Parton's feminist strategies are applied through her exaggerated image and pro-women songs. Parton combines her 'pure mountain girl sweetheart' past in her song *My Tennessee Mountain Home* with the stereotypical woman of ill repute, 'hillbilly hooker' persona in *Backwoods Barbie*. Unlike the Western cowboy persona, Parton embraces her 'fake' look with her real-life story as an essential part of her work (Edwards, 2018, p.8).

Parton's boots used for this case study embark on the change in the 'masculine' stereotypes connected to the cowboy boot portrayal. They combine elements of the traditional cowboy boot in the construction and use of leather and the glamorised 1940s' Rhinestone' essence with ornamental motifs and statement gold colour. The part that breaks the stereotype is the heel.

The Heel

Parton uses this distinctly feminine feature to break the depiction of the masculine image linked to the cowboy boots. Historian Valerie Steele wrote that the heel "signifies power. It indicates domination" (Steele, 1996, p.101). Steele's studies note that the heel was fetishised by men (before fashion incorporated the feature into mainstream fashion) due to the heels' erotic connotations, such as height and size, along with their association with pain, power and dominance; all attributes to the idealised masculinity. Parton switches preconceived gender roles by displaying the previous attributes of manliness but through a female-endorsed feature. "Equally important is the role shoes play in the creation (and violation) of gender stereotypes" (Steele, 1996, p.113).

Considering those mentioned above, Parton's amplified presentation and persona of femininity changed the sexuality and gender role expectations and norms associated

with country music. Therefore changes in the simulacrum of the ‘masculine’ national identity linked to the cowboy persona, specifically through the concept of her feminine cowgirl boots.

It is due to Parton’s feminist efforts and those who followed her that when I wear my cowboy boots, although I still picture a man, I feel empowered and confident. My boots take on a new meaning and a newfound feminine power that repels the false attributes previously assigned to them.

Case Study Three: “The Bondage Boot”



Figure 7: Lil Nas X 2020 Grammy Award Outfit (Source: Sussman, A., 2020)

Lil Nas X

Lil Nas X née Montero Lamar Hill, in 1999, grew up in Lithia Springs, Georgia. Within the first four years of his music career, Lil Nas X has become one of the biggest inspirations of this generation for not only queer men and women but black men and women. “Lil Nas X makes interventionist pop that affirms LGBT / BIPOC people’s right to exist in an establishment culture that has long thrived off our abjection and self-hatred” (King, 2021).

Lil Nas X attended the 62nd Grammy Awards show on January 26, 2020, where he embodied the cowboy image. Unlike the cowboy personas discussed thus far (excluding Parton’s case), this pink bondage ensemble, as seen in figure 7 (Sussman, A., 2020), represents the modern cowboy and what the cowboy boot represents today, which I reveal throughout this chapter.

Queer Cowboy

In the exception of Parton’s case, the cowboy has always stemmed from a cisgender heterosexual-male image. However, Academic Michael Bronski’s observation suggests scenarios in which the ‘masculine’ cowboy represents a queer man: “The cowboy is queer; he is odd; he doesn’t fit in; he resists community” (Bronski, 2011, p.44).

Similarly, author Roberta E. Pearson’s studies make connections between the cowboy and queer-related fantasy by looking at the way “naturalisation works to re-eroticise the sensuality of the Western scenario, particularly for a gay male pornographic fantasy.” (Buscombe and Pearson, 1998, p.179). Observations of how the Westerner’s leather chaps framed the crotch area, the phallic nature of a gun, and the cowboys’ use of the double belt (trousers and gun belt), along with propositions such as how the male

cowboy's sexual expression was portrayed as 'rough and tough', lead Bronski's studies to the concept that the Western costume indicates similarities to Victorian fetish props; including the whip and spurred boots (Buscombe and Pearson, 1998, p.179).

The heeled cowboy boot once used to secure the cowboy into the ground or on his stirrups has been re-conceived on an erotic extent as "exquisite torture of the sado-masochist's fantasy" (Buscombe and Pearson, 1998, p.179), also seen in Parton's heeled-cowboy boots (chapter 2) as an act of feminist power against male domination politics.

This concept overlooks the function of the cowboy's workwear (as mentioned in chapter one). This eroticized ideology gives new perceptions of the 'masculine' cowboy, a new portrayal of the cowboy persona. Once again, the concept of changing the functionality and purpose of the cowboy boot resulted in breaking the stereotypes associated with them, giving the cowboy boot a new meaning.

This concept directly opposes the national identity associated with the 'masculine' concept of the cowboy persona discussed until now (except Parton's case). To understand how this representation of the 'queer cowboy' integrated into social politics today, I will discuss the gay liberation movements of the twentieth century and the western-based films that opposed and endorsed these movements.

The American Queer Revolution

To examine American National Identity thoroughly, it is necessary to note that the majority splits American politics into liberal (left) and conservative (right) parties. Each party has their respective views. However, for simplicity, LGBTQ activists stand with

the liberal. In such a short amount of pages, I cannot provide a comprehensive history of the queer revolution in America. However, I have been prudent in what I have chosen to include concerning the cowboy representation in queer culture.

While the Western film genre began to get more popular in the 1950s, “an explosion in the use of the cowboy motif as a merchandising ploy for children’s products” (Vettel-Becker, 2005, p.81) began. This ploy re-enforced National identity as the heterosexual ‘masculine’ Western cowboy persona onto the youth. During this period, “The Mattachine Society” was formed. It began as a secret gay rights organisation in 1950, set up by Harry Hay and others, including Bob Hull, Chuck Rowland and Dale Jennings. The organisation is acknowledged as “one of several prominent groups organising during the period of LGBTQ+ activism” (Library of Congress, 2023). The connection between these two events shows how the conservative government was trying to project cisgender heterosexual sexuality onto the next generation (through the persona of the cowboy) while the LGBTQ+ community gained momentum.

June 27th, 1969, was the date “The Stonewall Riots” began. In short, the riot began after police raided the Stonewall Inn (a gay bar), and LGBTQ+ protesters fought back. However, this was not just any riot; this caused a shift in activism. The Stonewall Riots have been “identified as the most important event in U.S. lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer (LGBTQ) history” (Stein, 2019, p.1).



Figure 8: Butch Cassidy mentioned in newspaper dated May 27, 1899 (Sourced: Library of Congress, Washington, DC., no date)

The Oscar-winning Western *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) was released that same year. This Western stands out not because of its vast success but because it was based on a true story. Butch Cassidy (real name Robert LeRoy Parker) and the Sundance Kid (Harry Longabaugh) were real people (Pointer, 2013), as seen in the newspaper archive (Figure 8) dated May 27, 1899 (Sourced: Library of Congress, Washington, DC., no date). This may contradict the fidelity that the Western cowboy is

a simulacrum of the true cowboy. However, the research (in chapter 1) shows that although there were some outlaws during that time, the cowboy persona represented in the Western is more fact than fiction.

Also, in that same year, *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) was released. The film may not have been a Western, but its appearance “at the cusp of the 1960s is no accident, since this was the moment when a ‘gay liberation’ movement was being born” (McNair, 2002, p.134). The film follows a story about a Texan man who moves to New York City to become a male prostitute and participates in queer sexual relations while portraying himself as a cowboy. This film was the first X-rated film (X meaning violent or sexual content considered potentially disturbing for the audience) to win an Academy Award. Its X-rate was later changed to R-rate (Under 17 requires an accompanying adult guardian). Professor Kevin Flood’s article “Closing the (Heterosexual) Frontier” stated there was much controversy over this film in Hollywood, mainly due to the film’s “homosexual content in particular - is generally understood as the main reason for its X rating” (Floyd, 2001, p.100),

The *Midnight Cowboy*’s (1969) projection of queer relations showed the beginning of the disassemblment of the cowboy persona and the attributes conformed to men. The release of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969) in the same year showed the conservatives’ refusal to let go of this cowboy persona, specifically due to the film being based on a true story, in an attempt to prove the simulacrum Hollywood created to be true. However, one of the most significant moments in the gay liberation movement running parallel to the release of these films led to the liberal LGBTQ+ community becoming predominantly more recognised in society.

The Castro Clone

Following the 1960's gay liberation movement, in the 1970s, the queer community began to 'clone' the cowboy persona, reclaiming it. The first men to clone were nicknamed 'Castro Clones' after the area in San Francisco, but the term moved across the country shortly after. (Stein, 2019). To 'clone' meant gay men dressed in a queer-signalling uniform as a direct response to societal stereotypes (Cole, 2000). Queer men took a uniform associated with masculinity. They exaggerated the features of the uniform to take back the preconceived masculine attributes it represented, showing that masculinity is both heterosexual and homosexual.

This act of taking 'workwear' attire with preconceived attributes of masculinity and turning it into a queer image shows another way the cowboy boot's function has been altered for representational purposes to give it new meaning, which changed the perception associated with the cowboy boot.

This era of reclaiming the cowboy persona while breaking the stereotypes of 'masculinity' as a national identity for LGBTQ identification lasted through the 1970s and 1980s (for example, The Village People's YMCA video, 1978).

Urban Cowboy

The film *Urban Cowboy* (1980) was released in 1980. A modernised, romanticised western style film. What caused this film to stand out against the queer films mentioned was that this film steamed "new notions about traditional masculinity, the disappearing country scene" (Brinks, 2019). Integrating a modern, trendy western-based film in mainstream mass media led to an urban Cowboy western-wear craze spread across urban America. Together, the already influential movement of the 'clone' era and the

‘Urban Cowboy’ craze led to the further popularity of the cowboy boot and attire, evidently leading to the inclusion of the cowboy boot into the fashion industry. Albeit the ‘Urban Cowboy’ was a cisgender masculine image still aided the ‘clone’ movement further (Scofield, 2017).

Brokeback Mountain

Although the gay liberation movement is still on the rise, homophobia is still very much present in the 21st century. *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) is a story of a secret relationship between two homosexual cowboys. The film’s start was based in 1963, showing their secret relationship over the following 20 years. The film excellently displays how “the fear of being labelled homosexual operates to enforce conformity throughout society” (Patterson, XXI), even in 2006, causing perturbation among conservatives in American society. Patterson concluded that many critics refused to watch the movie, which is a “direct manifestation of the central subject of *Brokeback Mountain*” (Patterson, 2008, XLIX).

This film depicted the struggles between the masculine attributes associated with the Cowboy and the idea of homosexuality, displaying the toxic burden this representation ensues over queer individuals. Although it focuses on the homophobic National Identity during 1963, the homophobic commentary in the film is still ongoing to the present day; Lil Nas X defended his identity after someone “criticised his Grammys outfit for allegedly lacking “masculinity” (Michallon, 2020).

It is through these queer western-based films depicting homosexual cowboys that the hyper-masculine attributes given to the cowboy persona revolutionised. Although conservative parties and individuals still give ongoing backlash, the queer community

has been able to use the cowboy persona to represent a New American National Identity. One of equality. Whilst there was both positive and negative feedback from these films, they ultimately benefited the queer revolution, a new age of masculinity.

Old Town Road Video

Lil Nas X's pink bondage attire was a fitting outfit for the Award show because it was where he won the award for 'Best Music Video' and "Best Pop Duo/Group Performance" for *Old Town Road Remix* (2019), alongside Billy Ray Cyrus, an American country singer.

In my opinion, the award-winning video for *Old Town Road Remix* (2019) concludes all perceptions and simulacrums of the cowboy persona throughout history; and shows the new identity of the cowboy boot.



Figure 9: Lil Nas X - Old Town Road (Official Movie) at 1.06 minutes (Sourced: Lil Nas X, 2019)

The video opens with a Western-style font, showing the 'Old Town Road' in 1889. Lil Nas X and Cyrus are riding horses back away from lawmen with a bag of money, making reference to the old Hollywood depiction of the cowboy. In the next scene, Lil Nas X and Cyrus stop to make camp where they say, "Last time I was here they weren't too welcoming to outsiders" (Lil Nas X), "you're with me this time, everything's going to be alright" (Cyrus), proceeded with a white man shooting just at Lil Nas X, not Cyrus; a white man. The scene is shown in figure 9 (Lil Nas X, 2019)

This scene represents the whitewashing and racial prejudice that occurred both in American history and America's simulacrum of the nation's identity in Western film.

The video flashes forward to 2019, with Lil Nas X on a horse with the same 1889 attire, followed by urban society's confused gaze at his appearance, showing the unfamiliarity with the past perception of the cowboy in modern-day America.

Lil Nas X's boots are not the intricately designed boots of the Western, but a simple two-piece mould, referencing the 'real' cowboy boots (similar to the boots in chapter 1), making reference to true history.



Figure 10: Lil Nas X - Old Town Road (Official Movie) at 4.29 minutes (Sourced: Lil Nas X, 2019)

This attire then changes in the video to a ‘Rhinestone’ cowboy attire, made by no other than a Nudie protégé, Jerry Lee Atwood (George-Warren, 2023), as seen in figure 10 (Lil Nas X, 2019). This outfit change shows the representation of cowboy attire at the peak of the gay liberation movement.

The video ends with a scene of Lil Nas X and Cyrus singing on stage together, line dancing and posing with elder folk in what seems to be a community hall, representing a queer man in the Rhinestone ‘clone’ representation of a cowboy intertwined with a modern-day view of rural western community.

This video sums up the evolution of all the cowboy personas throughout American History, along with what the cowboy boot has represented during this time. It covers all aspects of my three chapters, in regards to both masculine and feminine attributes, racial disparities, country music’s progression, urbanised and rural settings, and traditional and

modern styles, contrasting and juxtaposing all these in one video. It displays the effect all of these influences have had on the cowboy image as National Identity; and what the cowboy boot represents in the present day. This leads me to my final conclusion.

Conclusion

This research project began with a question I asked myself; if I, a female, felt empowered and confident wearing a pair of cowboy boots, why did I imagine a masculine man as the identity behind the cowboy personage?

I can conclude that it is through the depiction of the Hollywood Western cowboy persona, through the distortion of fact and fiction, that America's National identity politics created a masculinity crisis. Where set attributes of manliness were suppressed onto all cisgender men. Attributes such as none effeminate, superiority, power independence and violence, when in truth, there are no set attributes to any gender. This idealised white-washed masculine cowboy representation marginalised women. It was enforced through the media, still marginally observable in our society today - causing my preconceived association with masculinity when looking at my own cowboy boots.

However, It is through the reconstruction of the cowboy boot's functionality, by liberating the Western and Rhinestone attire, 'cloning', and the evolving Western-based films that supported these actions that the LGBTQ+ and feminist communities changed the simulacrum perception of masculine stereotypes associated with the cowboy boot, creating a New National Identity.

Finally, to answer the question, the cowboy, who is 'He'?

There is no 'He'. The cowboy is genderless, representing all genders and sexualities in one. The beauty of the cowboy boots' purpose in modern-day identity politics is how it is perceived in all of its past forms but not conformed to just one. From its constructed functional past to its integration into modern fashion aesthetic, the cowboy boot represents a new age of National identity, individualism and inspiration, not just in western America but in western society globally.

Bibliography

Badinter, E. (1995) *XY: On Masculine Identity*. Translated by L. Davis. New York: Columbia University Press (European perspectives).

Baudrillard, J. (1994) *Simulacra and Simulation*. Translated by S. F. Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (The Body, in theory).

Beasley, C. (2005) *Gender & Sexuality: Critical Theories, Critical Thinkers*. London: SAGE.

Billboard Staff (2016) *Stars Who Rocked The Nudie Suit*. Available at: <https://www.billboard.com/photos/stars-who-wore-nudie-suits-elvis-gram-parsons-cher-dolly-parton-more/1-elvis-1957/> (Accessed 28 November 2022).

Brinks, M. (2019) *The Rise And Fall Of The Urban Cowboy Craze*. Available at: <https://www.ranker.com/list/the-urban-cowboy-moment-in-america/melissa-brinks> (Accessed 5 January 2023).

Brokeback Mountain. (2005) Ang Lee [Film]. USA: River Road Entertainment.

Bronski, M. (2011) *A Queer History of the United States*. Boston: Beacon Press (ReVisioning American history).

Browne, D. et al. (2017) *100 Greatest Country Artists of All Time*. Available at: <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-lists/100-greatest-country-artists-of-all-time-195775/hank-williams-jr-6-195613/> (Accessed 10 January 2023).

Bufwack, M. A. (2023) *Kitty Wells*. Available at: <https://www.countrymusichalloffame.org/hall-of-fame/kitty-wells> (Accessed 10 December 2022).

Buscombe, E. and Pearson, R. E. (1998) *Back in the saddle again: New Essays on the Western*. London: British Film Institute.

Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid. (1969) George Roy Hill [Film]. USA: 20th Century Studios.

Cain, P. A. (1993). 'Litigating for Lesbian and Gay Rights: A Legal History'. *Virginia Law Review*, 79(7), pp. 1551–1641. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1073382?origin=crossref> (Accessed 3 January 2023).

Cole, S. (2000) 'Don We Now Our Gay Apparel': Gay Men's Dress in the Twentieth Century. Available at:

<https://www.bloomsburyfashioncentral.com/encyclopedia-chapter?docid=b-9781847888679&tocid=b-9781847888679-chapter7&st=Clones> (Accessed 3 January 2023).

Coyne, M. (1997) *The Crowded Prairie : American National Identity in the Hollywood Western*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Di Salvatore, B. (2023) Merle Haggard. Available at: <https://www.countrymusichalloffame.org/hall-of-fame/merle-haggard> (Accessed 10 December 2022).

Dolly Parton (2009) Dolly Parton - Backwoods Barbie (Official Music Video). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJBz1U6Y-pg> (Accessed 10 December 2022).

Edwards, L. H. (2018) Dolly Parton, Gender, and Country Music. Available at: https://books.google.ie/books?hl=en&lr=&id=H5dBDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&q=dolly+parton+feminism&ots=dGVDDtIhEc&sig=8RVmZCO1omN_ONckLSCjzOPY9iQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=dolly%20parton%20feminism&f=false (Accessed 10 December 2022).

Floyd, K. (2001). 'Closing the (Heterosexual) Frontier: "Midnight Cowboy" as National Allegory'. *Science & Society*, 65(1), pp.99–130. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40403886?seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents (Accessed 3 January 2023).

Fouz-Hernández Santiago (2009) *Mysterious skin : male bodies in contemporary cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris.

George-Warren, H. (2023) The rodeo tailors who made country stars shine brighter: Part 4 Nudie Cohn: The Original Rhinestone Cowboy. Available at: <https://countrymusichalloffame.org/exhibit/suiting-the-sound/nudie-cohn-the-original-rhinestone-cowboy/> (Accessed 27 November 2022).

Glen Campell (2010) Glen Campbell - Rhinestone Cowboy (Official Music Video). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kAU3B9Pi_U (Accessed 2 December 2022).

Hussey, A. (2019) What Can We Learn from Dolly Parton? A Lot, It Turns Out. Available at: <https://indyweek.com/music/what-can-we-learn-from-dolly-parton-a-lot-it-turns-out/> (Accessed 10 January 2023).

Jones, M. (2023) Patsy Cline. Available at: <https://www.countrymusichalloffame.org/hall-of-fame/patsy-cline> (Accessed 10 December 2022).

Kauffman, S. (1980) *The Cowboy Catalog*. New York: C.N. Potter.

Kennedy, L. (2020) *5 Legendary Wild West Outlaws: Their iconic status endures, despite their history of violent crime*. History: A&E Television Networks, LLC.

Available at:

<https://www.history.com/news/famous-wild-west-outlaws-billy-the-kid-jesse-james-butch-cassidy> (Accessed 17 November 2022).

King, J. (2021) *Lil Nas X is the boundary-smashing pop revolutionary of 2021*.

Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/28/1068323960/lil-nas-x-pop-revolutionary> (Accessed 12 December 2022).

Kingsbury, P. et al. (2004) *The Encyclopedia of Country Music: The Ultimate Guide to the Music*. Available at:

https://books.google.ie/books?id=untabCgOVkgC&pg=PR3&dq=history+country+music&lr=&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q=history%20country%20music&f=false (Accessed 2 December 2022).

kkiilljjooy (2009) *Dolly Parton - My Tennessee Mountain Home*. Available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0u40tHs-Yu8> (Accessed 10 December 2022).

Kochones, S. et al. (2015) *Country: Portraits of an American Sound*. Annenberg Space for Photography Films, & Arclight Productions [Film] Gravitas Ventures. Available at:

https://video-alexanderstreet-com.ncadie.idm.oclc.org/watch/country-portraits-of-an-american-sound?utm_campaign=Video&utm_medium=MARC&utm_source=aspresolver (Accessed 15 October 2022).

Library of Congress (2023) *The Mattachine Society*. Available at:

<https://guides.loc.gov/lgbtq-studies/before-stonewall/mattachine#s-lib-ctab-23440398-3> (Accessed 10 January 2023).

Lil Nas X (2019) *Lil Nas X - Old Town Road (Official Movie) ft. Billy Ray Cyrus*.

Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2Ov5jzm3j8> (Accessed 2 December 2022).

‘Masculinity’ (2023) *Cambridge Dictionary*. Cambridge University Press 2023.

Available at: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/masculinity> (Accessed 2 January 2023).

McNair, B. (2002) *Striptease Culture: sex, media and the democratisation of desire*. London: Routledge.

Michallon, C. (2020) *Lil Nas X claps back to ‘homophobic’ and ‘hateful’ comment criticising his Grammys outfit*. Available at:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/lil-nas-x-pastor-troy-ig-p-ost-grammys-outfit-response-twitter-a9308921.html> (Accessed 14 December 2022).

Midnight Cowboy. (1969) John Schlesinger [Film] USA: Jerome Hellman Productions.

Mosse, G. L. (1996) *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity*. New York: Oxford University Press (Studies in the history of sexuality).

Patterson, E. (2008) *On Brokeback Mountain: Meditations about Masculinity, Fear, and Love in the Story and the Film*. Available at:
https://books.google.ie/books?hl=en&lr=&id=jUd3AAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=brokeback+mountain&ots=n6wysUo5-T&sig=var_fzdokzsVKtNCkq_1W5VIO0&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=brokeback%20mountain&f=false (Accessed 14 December 2022).

Pointer, L. (2013) *In Search of Butch Cassidy*. Available at:
https://books.google.ie/books?hl=en&lr=&id=iuhDsxCQj-sC&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=real+life+Butch+Cassidy+and+Sundance+kid&ots=6ceA_U1km4&sig=xSPwzHVuag4umzMUAmACTO2-PT4&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=real%20life%20Butch%20Cassidy%20and%20Sundance%20kid&f=false (Accessed 15 December 2022).

Riley, G. (1988) *The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains*. Available at:
https://books.google.ie/books?hl=en&lr=&id=RJdYAAAAYAAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP11&dq=female+1880s+western+america&ots=6Cj0iWhn6M&sig=hugLvfmq3kaOKDuIWUTnBsKPFY&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=female%201880s%20western%20america&f=false (Accessed 3 January 2023).

Scofield, R. (2017) “‘Chaps and Scowls’: Play, Violence, and the Post-1970s Urban Cowboy’, *The Journal of American Culture*, 40(4), pp. 325-340. Available at:
<https://www.proquest.com/openview/953a89beb0aba0eee5f8ced8f363416a/1?pq-origsite=scholar&cbl=29587> (Accessed 5 January 2023).

Shane. (1953) George Stevens [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Stagecoach. (1939) John Ford [Film]. Los Angeles: Walter Wanger Productions.

Steele, V. (1996) *Fetish: Fashion, Sex and Power*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stein, M. (2019) *The Stonewall Riots: A Documentary History*. Available at:
https://books.google.ie/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4VZxDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=stonewall+riots&ots=UyoxVku3En&sig=u_U7m_d92E0fSpqIR8IXWVfLKGM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=stonewall%20riots&f=false (Accessed 10 January 2023).

Symmonds, D. (2018) *The Western, Violence, and Queer Expression in Red River, Brokeback Mountain, and Thelma & Louise*. Undergraduate Research Awards: Hollins University. Available at: https://digitalcommons.hollins.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=research_awards (Accessed 12 December).

Tenace, M. (2018) *From the Wild West to the catwalks: the (Fascinating) history of Texas boots, the quintessential cowboy boots, will conquer you*. Available at: <https://www.elle.com/it/moda/g19859666/stivali-texani-storia/> (Accessed 19 November 2022).

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. (1966) Sergio Leone [Film]. Italy: Produzioni Europee Associate.

The Great Train Robbery. (1903) Edwin S. Porter [Film] USA: Edison Studios.

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance. (1962) John Ford [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Urban Cowboy. (1980) James Bridges [Film]. USA: Paramount Pictures.

Vettel-Becker, P. (2005) Shooting from the Hip : Photography, Masculinity, and Postwar America. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Village People (2008) Village People - YMCA OFFICIAL Music Video 1978. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS9OO0S5w2k> (Accessed 3 January 2023).

Wright, W. (1975) *Six Guns and Society : A Structural Study of the Western*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zwisohn, L. (2023) Loretta Lynn. Available at: <https://www.countrymusichalloffame.org/hall-of-fame/loretta-lynn> (Accessed 10 December 2022).

Image Reference List

Allan (2022) *1969 Marlboro Man Country Horseback Boots Lasso Barn Original 13.5 * 10.5 Magazine Ad*. Etsy [Photograph]. Available from: <https://www.etsy.com/ie/listing/995257941/1969-marlboro-man-country-horseback> (Accessed 15 November 2022).

British Lion (2019) *British postcard in the Picturegoer Series, London, no. 1182*. [Postcard]. Available at: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/5783454.Paul_van_Yperen/blog?page=115 (Accessed 20 November 2022).

Courtesy Photo (2016) *Stars Who Rocked The Nudie Suit*. [Image]. Available at: <https://www.billboard.com/photos/stars-who-wore-nudie-suits-elvis-gram-parsons-cher-dolly-parton-more/1-elvis-1957/> (Accessed 28 November 2022).

Getty Images (2018) *Dal selvaggio West alle passerelle: la storia (affascinante) degli stivali texani, i cowboy boots per eccellenza, vi conquisterà*. ELLE [Photograph]. Available from: <https://www.elle.com/it/moda/g19859666/stivali-texani-storia/> (Accessed November 2022).

Library of Congress, Washington, DC (1899) *Image 8 of The Washington bee (Washington, D.C.), May 27, 1899*. [Newspaper]. Available at: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn84025891/1899-05-27/ed-1/?sp=8&q=butch+Cassidy&st=pdf&r=0.101,0.449,0.862,0.458,0> (Accessed 28 October 2022).

Lil Nas X (2019) *Lil Nas X - Old Town Road (Official Movie)* [Image] ft. Billy Ray Cyrus. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2Ov5jzm3j8> (Accessed 2 December 2022).

Music Zone (no date) *50,000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong: Elvis' Gold Records*. [Image]. Available at: <https://musiczone.ie/product/elvis-50000-elvis-fans-cant-be-wrong-elvis-gold-records-volume-2-vinyl/> (Accessed 28 November 2022).

River Junction Trade Co. LLC (no date) *Sold Original antique Old West Cowboy boots RJT#5704*. [Photograph]. Available from: <https://www.riverjunction.com/5704> (Accessed 20 October 2022).

Sussman, A. (2020) *The Best Dressed Celebrities at the 2020 Grammy Awards*. [Photograph]. Available at: <https://fashionista.com/2020/01/grammys-awards-best-dressed> (Accessed 20 October 2022).