

which indicated only 3 per cent of the chain's employees were guilty of dishonesty. The annual inventory losses of the chain dropped from a million and a half to a half million dollars.

This is just one of the numerous testimonials illustrating the value businessmen have found lie detectors to have in security work. With proper regulation and controls, this device may become the most important single investigative aid in the hands of security personnel.

It is evident a vast potential lies with the will of business and society to control pilferage. Though it is important that consumers maintain their desire for material gain this report has presented practical methods that help assure that this desire will be satisfied through honest means: (1) controlling pilferage by emphasizing prevention methods first and detection second; (2) heavy fines for offenders; (3) legal mechanisms for anonymous prosecution by entrepreneurs; (4) increased attention to effective man-

agerial and supervisory pilferage controls; and (5) increased public and commercial awareness of preventive and detection techniques.

Certainly larceny is often one of the earliest stages of criminal activity. A progressive crime prevention program would do well to stem the fetus of larceny before it matures into the felonious activities that are plaguing our communities today.

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The TV Western— America's Folk Art in Raw Form

By PAUL SCHOENWETTER

In the 1870's and 1880's, the American West was a raw, primitive area dominated by amoralistic men and women. It was truly an American frontier, and the Wyatt Earps and Jesse James' preceded the glamorous, materialistic, and

semi-civilized shapers of America's image of the West, a la Hollywood.

The West was won by brutal, corrupt men and women with sweat and blood, now portrayed as clean-cut, just defenders of law and order. We find this

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manipulated new image of the old West everyday on television, in the movies, and in books.

Since Porter's "The Great Train Robbery" in 1903, the Western has found its way into the lives of all Americans, and many foreigners as well. The maxim, "There is no law west of Kansas City; and west of Fort Scott, no God," takes on new meaning as all Americans watch the Western hero bring law and order to Dodge City.

People read about the hero in Zane Grey's fifty-four novels (23,000,000 copies sold) and loved Owen Wister's "The Virginian" in 1902. Today, over 60 years later, "The Virginian" still exists, only now on television.

What accounts for the continued success of the Western, America's folk art in raw form? And, why is it able to survive today, denying the law of supply and demand? The answer rests with the individual viewer, the society, and the Western; and the combination of their characteristics.

The American TV Western fan is not shaped by educational accomplishments, or the lack of them. Men and women alike, young or old, rich or poor, are all drawn to the fictitious tales of the glory of the Old West. One survey showed that 29 per cent of *all* viewers preferred action programs, and 19 per cent picked Westerns as their favorite type of program.¹

Sir Galahad With a Six Gun

Although there have been some rather significant changes in the characteristics of the Western over the past 50 years, its theme has remained intact, untarnished by its growing maturity into the present stage of "adult Westerns". Though the hero is no longer necessarily garbed in all white, riding a white horse or palomino, his attributes are basically the same as they were in 1910. True, the puritan William S. Hart, Tom Mix, and

Hoot Gibson have given way to the more complex Paladins, Mavericks, Gil Favors and Hoss Cartwrights; but so too has our society grown in size, complexity, and diversity.

Basically, the Western is a simple morality play—good overcomes evil, and the hero becomes a Sir Galahad with a six-gun. In order to free the stories from the complexities of love, the hero remains aloof, true only to his horse and the law. The presence of a woman is a sure sign of trickery and evil. Recently (since "The Outlaw" with Jane Russell), more femininity has crept into Westerns, but the hero still remains—free, independent, and unblemished.²

In addition to being extremely simple and highly moral stories, Westerns are constructed to be utterly meaningless. The viewer identifies throughout the action of the story with the characters, and is then left vacant at the end of the show. The ending (and virtually the entire show) is forgotten, and the viewer becomes subject to relive the same experiences another day or during another show.

Every Western ends on the side of the law and order, supporting the viewer's established super-ego function. This, normally repressed in daily living, is then ready to be challenged again through the next episode of hero identification.³

The manifest functions of the Western—good versus bad, adventure, nature—appear to serve only as secondary influences upon the viewer. Of prime importance seems to be the hero and his latent characteristics.⁴ When closely examined, an understanding of the hero sheds light upon the mysterious and compelling viewing situation of the Western.

The hero, like the story, is a simple character. He has typically no past and no evident future. He is as free as nature; in fact, he is as pure as nature too.

The hero is a loner, a righteous, soft-spoken man in a primitive sort of way. Basically, he is the personification of independence and individualism; and with his gun he become *deus-ex-machina* (god from a machine).

Although he appears to seek acceptance or love, he can never accomplish his task because of a basic clash of cultures. Women are irrelevant to him, they "don't understand him" and his nature. Only the prostitutes can come close to accepting him, but then he can't fully accept them.⁵

The hero does things, he is the master of his own fate, and those who conform stand in awe of his charismatic powers. Unlike Dewey's modern, anomic man, the "lost individual", the hero knows and does — intuitively and decisively.⁶

Narcissistic Desire Takes Hold

The individual, sitting in his easy chair with a can of beer, views himself as this hero on the screen. He lets his narcissistic desires take hold and is drawn into the story, strongly identifying with the hero. Subconsciously, man tends to prefer themes which are structurally and dynamically similar to his own daily situations: good versus bad, dependence versus independence, masculinity versus femininity, etc.; all found in the Westerns.⁷ All of which the hero handles perfectly, permitting easy identification.

There have been propositions made that the viewer's identification stems from his aggressive desires or from the father-like image of the hero, but it seems that an even stronger desire of an individual is to love himself.

Subconsciously, the hero appeals to both repressed sources of psychic energy, the id and the super-ego, because he is a model of perfection, both primitively and morally. Therefore, the narcissistic tendencies of the individual viewer will take in the hero as a model, and the individual will readily identify with the hero in

order to substitute and vicariously experience those virtues which are unattainable in our society, and those activities which are denied by society.⁸

Our society not only prevents such universal virtues, but also provides a positive framework for easy identification with heroes. Furthermore, our social system is so structured as to make a Western desirable, as well as accessible. The present complex state of the world is extremely frustrating to an average American. If we follow the paradigm of the psychology of aggression (frustration leads to anxiety, anxiety leads to aggression, aggression leads to increased frustration), we can see how Westerns serve as a source of gratification to the viewer.

Frustrations Lead To Anxiety

The daily frustrations presented by our complex society leads to anxiety. This has been expressed by American teen-agers through dance crazes from the Charleston to Rock 'n Roll, the Twist, and today's tongue and body-contortions.

To a degree, our anxieties are released by physical activities such as dancing and sports, but the more the anxiety is held within, and repressed, the more aggressive we become. This becomes a vicious, spiraling circle of frustration — anxiety-aggression; for our society again and again frustrates our aggressive tendencies.

As our desires become forcibly repressed by society, the need to release them increases. This is when the Western serves an important societal function and becomes socially desirable and meaningful. It is a near-perfect, though unfortunately temporary, vicarious release of aggressive tendencies. Through identification the viewing public temporarily satisfies a basic need in a socially accepted manner.

The Western viewer is not an egregious personality — he is an integral

part of America's societal framework. In primitive and agrarian-feudal cultures, society was divided into two classes: the rulers and the ruled. Each class had its own set of values, norms, sanctions, and there was virtually no economic or social mobility. To these societies, the family was the only primary group relationship. One worked, lived, loved, and played within the familial framework. Industrialization has changed this ancient form of life by creating the middle-class society.

A Fluid Social System

As communication among social classes increased, the family lost much of its importance. The world we live in today, especially in America, emphasizes social mobility. In fact, our political society is based upon the premise that any individual has the right to improve his social and economic standing.

This upward mobility creates a fluid social system — increased normative and functional integration, greater interdependence, more communication, and greater instability of society. All of these factors have contributed to create additional emphasis upon the individual, rather than the group.

Many social scientists have warned about the possible dangers of such a mobile, unstable, anomic society.* They feel that the advent of automation — cybernetics in practical action — is another step towards the decline of society into complete anomie.

The middle class, they say, is turning into the leisure class, wasting their time watching television.⁹ And what do these masses watch? Westerns!

Why? Because the vicarious experience satisfies psychological needs; not, as many sociologists insist, because they reflect anomic society.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

*The author uses "anomic" as an adjective derived from "anomie" to indicate a person adrift without values.

True, the individual is greatly affected by society, which in turn affects his viewing habits, but the Western is an appealing, Horatio Alger-like story. It is something agreeable to the frustrated viewer.

The decline of personal ties in our society, being replaced by impersonal anonymity, is not denied by the Western. The viewer does not identify as a wish-fulfillment to increase personal ties (as is intimated by John Evans), but because the Western hero has coped with his anonymity. The individual viewer doesn't attempt to fight society. He'd rather join it, and make the best of it, as the hero has done.



The class of Americans most likely to be affected by this growing anomie (if indeed it is growing) seems to be the present middle class — those who have risen over the years from the ranks of serfdom, those who have been the most mobile and unstable.

How then do the skeptical social scientists account for the fact that the middle-class Americans watch Westerns less than the more stable, less overtly-frustrated lower-class?¹⁰ Maybe we are not so close to an anomic society as some feel.

Perhaps education, automation, in-

dustrialization, communications, and even creative television have aided the individual in combating the instability of his socio-economic plight.

Perhaps, also, a degree of anonymity, extra leisure time, and emphasis upon the individual is worth the loss of social stratification in our present world situation.

A Society of Frustrated Individuals

"It is the Western, more often than even the soap opera serials or the quiz show, that is held up as the symbol of TV's cultural bankruptcy."¹¹

This extreme outlook towards America's television fare essentially chides all American for something over which they have little or no control — at least immediately. If our society has shaped a generation of frustrated individuals and then given them an accepted method of identification, what harm can come to those who make use of the television Western for gratification?

After all, the "eggheads" watch as avidly as the "culturally bankrupt". (In 1955, at the height of the TV Western era, there were 35 Westerns on the air in 19 hours of network prime time. In 1962, there were 14 shows in 12 hours, one year later, 11 shows in 9½ prime time hours. In 1964, only 7 Westerns filled network prime time during 7 hours. During the 1965-66 season, there is again a resurgence of more Westerns during prime time.¹²)

Any individual enters the viewing situation in order to "escape" or to vicariously consummate his desires.¹³ Rather than harmful, it is more likely that normal viewing habits (6.2 hours per day) release an individual from his tensions and responsibilities, and aid him in seeking a meaningful organization of his needs and motives within the context of society.

The viewing situation, itself, is reduced to a secondary goal, and it is the

identification with the Western hero which the individual seeks and is gratified by.¹⁴

The hero with which the viewer identifies may change from time to time, but his characteristics are, on the whole, the same. So too are the viewer's desires. The interchangeability of heroes is not so surprising when you consider the similarity of characteristics of each of the many Western heroes. The viewer, when losing his self-awareness and subconsciously identifying with the hero, identifies with a personality and a way of life, not with a name.

The consequences of such strong identification are not as harmful as is widely believed. The viewing situation is temporary, the identification experience is temporary, and the loss of self-awareness exists only during the viewing situation.¹⁵ To near-psychotics, perhaps the loss of self-awareness would extend beyond the temporary stage but this could and does occur without television.

Reality and Fantasy

The irreality (not unreality) of the viewing situation allows easy shifting of attention by the individual. In fact, as the individual matures and becomes educated, he prefers a different distribution of reality and fantasy — he develops a semblance of artistic taste. The individual's needs change as he matures — yet the diffuse nature of the Western permits a change in selective perception and identification as the viewer's needs alter in favor of greater reality.

The lack of casual connection may appear obtrusive to the objective social scientist, but the continuous psychological activity of the viewer, though less definitely determined, does exist.

Another extreme viewpoint on the process and effects of the TV Western, diametrically opposed to ideas held by some social scientists, is that of Warren J. Barker, M.D.:

"For a brief hour of glory the participant vicariously acts out the role of the omnipotent hero. Surreptitiously, in unconscious identification with the 'isomers' of the hero, he lives out his forbidden wishes in relation to the other members of the family. In so doing, he enjoys temporary triumph, and anxiety is held in check."¹⁶

While there exists a strong attraction of the individual to the identification potentiality in the TV Western viewing situation, it is difficult to fully appreciate Dr. Barker's emphatic relationship of aggression to the viewer's family. Perhaps for certain individuals the various characters in TV Westerns can be subconsciously projected to represent family and friends, but to generalize this possibility to apply in all situations to all viewers appears to surpass even the most loosely outlined boundaries of social psychology.

Dr. Barker, adhering to a neo-Freudian psychological approach, blatantly omits recognition of the importance of the themes portrayed in the television Western, as well as forgetting the importance of society in our daily activities. True, many characteristics of the TV Western can be symbolized to represent mother, father, sibling, homosexuality, potency, phallus, primitivism, etc.; but the TV Western has mass audience appeal because of its broad base and diffuse attraction.

As long as our society prevails in its present state, so too will the TV Western. For not only do our television Westerns satisfy individual needs and desires vicariously, they also fulfill societal needs, and examine the cultural heritage of America. It will only be a matter of the economics of the television industry that determines the number of Westerns on the air in any given season.

The mystery and thriller shows (from "The Shadow" to Agent 007 of James

Bond and his imitators) are very similar to the Western, but require much more active thought participation by the viewer. Because of a need for greater active participation, a barrier is established between the characters on the screen and our friend in the easy chair holding a can of beer. The viewing situation is no longer one of pure "escape" and identification.

It is the television Western that has in the past, does today, and will continue in the future to mold the fantasy and the moral with individual and societal functions and needs into one experience. Its themes represent unattainable ideals, as do its characters.

And in our society — our complex though non-anomic society — the ideal is impossible to achieve as a reality. So, we accept this fact, and we identify with the ideal in the irreality of a television Western. ●

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