

DEMEANOR AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE AMERICAN COWBOY

by

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A buckaroo cowboy from Oregon who was interviewed on a PBS broadcast was asked if he thought that cowboys were declining in numbers.¹ He responded that not only was that true, but they would probably disappear from the range altogether by the turn of the century. Such thinking receives considerable support in the mass media and to many, when the cowboy exits the range, the role and occupation of cowboy will cease to exist.

Most Americans believe that it is relatively easy to define cowboy. Possibly this is due to the fact that they believe the cowboy role entails relatively fixed meanings inherited from the past. In the 19th century, the role of cowboy may have been comprised of only a few, clearly defined attributes. Typically, a person who was a cowboy was an itinerant hired hand who worked with cattle on the open range, often alone or in small groups.² The range cowboy was usually an excellent horseman, who relied on initiative, resourcefulness and his own decision making skills to perform a variety of tasks. The traditional cowboy's most important quality may have been his ability to be a "jack-of-all-trades." He was expected to build barns, mend fences, shoe horses, doctor sick cattle, and master virtually every ranching skill.

In recent decades, industrial ranching with its helicopters and computers has greatly modified our understandings of the cowboy role. Instead of a unidimensional role (the traditional range cowboy), there has emerged a variety of highly specialized occupational roles that include the contemporary range cowboy (who most closely resembles popular stereotypes), but, also rodeo cowboys, feedlot cowboys, cattle truck cowboys, and others with their own institutionalized subculture.³ From an occupational perspective, all of these cowboys are equally legitimate in the sense that they play some role in the cattle industry; all make their living performing tasks that traditionally have been considered appropriate to the cowboy.

Despite the proliferation of cowboy roles and occupations in the 20th century many Americans would probably agree with the buckaroo that the cowboys' days are numbered.⁴ This is because they do not consider any of the modern cattle specialists to be "real" cowboys. According to this view, contemporary cowboys may look and act like "real" cowboys but they do not fulfill all requirements of the role. From this perspective, to be a real cowboy a person must work with cattle, outdoors on the range, or for some, perform on the rodeo circuit. All others, particularly those who ply their trade in urban areas or who work in highly specialized tasks within the cattle industry, are usually deemed "illegitimate."

We disagree with this position on two fundamental grounds. First, we propose that while there are numerous popular understandings of the cowboy role, it has in fact, no fixed meanings; rather, it (like any social role) is defined and redefined continuously through the process of social interaction.⁵ From the interactionist perspective, the notion of "real cowboy" is a popular fiction created and perpetuated largely by the mass media rather than by cowboys themselves. Second, we contend that cowboy demeanor--dress, language, and behavior which is usually considered the least important component of the cowboy role, may in fact, be the primary criterion upon which social understandings of the cowboy role are based.⁶

We believe that the occupational definition of cowboy is, in fact, so ambiguous that it actually plays a relatively minor role in popular understandings of the cowboy. Occupationally, a cowboy is any individual who works with cattle for at least a portion of his livelihood. This definition, of course, includes all cowboy variants both past and present. The occupational definition of cowboy, however, is but a minimum description of cowboy, for if we are to consider any individual a legitimate cowboy it is also essential that he look and act like a cowboy. If he does not, and this would even include the range and rodeo cowboy, he would not be considered a cowboy by most people regardless of his occupational specialty.

In this article we will briefly review the historical development of modern cowboy occupational roles and media contributions to our understandings of the role. We will then show that demeanor is an essential element by which the public evaluates whether a person is or is not a cowboy. By this measure we contend that the majority of modern cattle specialists are "real cowboys," in part, because they work with cattle, but more importantly, because they view themselves as cowboys and manipulate the appropriate symbols in their attempt to have others view them as such.

Many diverse cultures contributed to our understandings of the cowboy role. The Spanish open range rancher, the Mexican horseback worker (vaquero), southern frontiersman, and the Texas Traildriver all contributed key elements in the creation of this early American subculture. When the Texas cattle drives ended in the 1880s cowboy roles did not become fixed, but were further modified by the complex nature of commercial ranching. For some cowboys working on the vast northern ranges, early traditions could be maintained relatively intact. Cowboys working at the fringe of densely settled farming areas, however, were strongly influenced by the farming lifestyle. In areas where farming and ranching skills were required, both cowboy roles and the cowboy world view were adjusted accordingly.

Accompanying these changes was a radical redefinition of the cowboy by the mass media. As early as the 1870s the cowboy had become a media favorite. Artists and photographers played an important part in shaping the cowboy image. So did magazine articles and romantic dime novels which not only had a profound effect on the public but also on the working

cowboy. Some tried to imitate the bold adventurer, of the range as depicted in pulp fiction about the west.⁷ Dime novels transformed a complex role with numerous behavioral options into a relatively narrow set of ideal behaviors. By dime novels standards, "all cowboys were loyal, cheerful, courageous and proud; they never complained, minded their own business and did their best."⁸ Wister was one of the first novelists to cast the cowboy in the heroic mold.⁹ Stereotypic notions of the cowboy were promoted by wild west shows, and later by rodeos. The dress, mannerisms and behaviors of cowboy performers were soon interpreted by the public to be the characteristic demeanor of all cowboys.

Hollywood and television further embellished those stereotypes. More importantly, they purged environmental and occupational aspects of cowboy life. In many early shows cattle were never seen, the wind never blew, and the temperature never climbed above 80 degrees. Thus transformed, the cowboy became spotlessly clean, carried a guitar, and usually had a sidekick. Instead of the violent hard drinking maverick, the cowboy became a kind of "Boy Scout."¹⁰ Such notions were retained by such legendary figures as Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, and John Wayne, and the notion of cowboy as "good guy" reached its peak of popularity. A recent PBS broadcast entitled "The Singing Cowboy" traced the careers of Tex Ritter, Rex Allen, Gene Autry, and Roy Rogers describing how Hollywood portrayed the cowboy in the 1940s and 1950s. This version of the cowboy, which was the first to appear on television and largely influenced two generations' notions of what a cowboy was like, depicted the cowboy as clean-cut, honest, brave, and talented. The "singing cowboy" always beat the bad guy, always rescued the girl, and usually maintained a stronger attachment to his horse than to any female. In fact, the horses of cowboys (Champion, Trigger, etc.) were eventually considered stars in their own rights.

The 20th century not only produced the media cowboy, but a greater variety of highly specialized cowboys, who further defined the role. By World War II, the range cowboy had become a specialist in the cattle industry, working the "grass phase" of the operation. Many traditional behaviors and skills like horseback riding, roping, and branding remained essential to his occupation. As Martin noted:

There are cowboy purists of note who swear that these modern-day horsemen are the only *real* cowboys among us . . . but *real* is a dangerous word to use in connection with cowboys. It implies authenticity and a specific standard of comparison.¹¹

While the rodeo cowboy may have once been a range cowboy, he now generally specializes in demonstrating cowboy skills to the public rather than as a functional part of his daily routine. He makes his living "cowboying," but is essentially an entertainer. The majority of rodeo cowboys come from farm and ranch backgrounds where they initially learned rodeo skills, although a few now go to "rodeo schools" and "cowboy colleges." When they are not performing on the rodeo circuit, many return to farms and ranches to use their cowboy skills for more pragmatic ends.

Replacing the range cowboy on long cattle drives today is the truckdriving cowboy. He, too, is an essential link in modern industrial ranching, and hence is also a cowboy. He helps load and unload cattle, checks the condition of livestock while in transit, and is expected to be knowledgeable about cattle and their behavior. Like the rodeo cowboy, many are from farm or ranch backgrounds, and some are ex-range cowboys, who have decided to change occupations within the industry.

Feedlot cowboys are another essential component of the cattle enterprise. They play no role in grass feeding cattle or in roundups, but they assume full responsibility for cattle once they are brought to the feedlot for finishing. Feedlot cowboys work with cattle daily, feeding, culling, and doctoring their charges until they are ready to be shipped to the slaughterhouse. While different from the traditional range cowboy, the feedlot cowboy is authentic. As noted western author Caleb Pirtle wrote:

The feedlot cowboy: his pasture is encased, not fenced, with steel rails. He faces no roundups, no branding. He drives no cattle. He makes sure they don't run at all. He has no trail to sleep upon. Yet the feedlot rider may be the most honored man left in the great western prairies. He just may be the last cowboy.¹²

Most feedlot cowboys come from rural backgrounds and have worked with livestock during their youth. Like other cowboys, feedlot cowboys view themselves as cowboys and tend to define a cowboy in occupational terms. During a visit with feedlot cowboys, we asked several who they considered to be a real cowboy. Their response was that a cowboy was anyone who made his living "cowboying." When asked if they considered rodeo cowboys legitimate, most responded that they did. Their positive response was not based on the cowboy's behavior in the rodeo arena, but what they did at home on their ranches. One made the observation that the difference between a rodeo cowboy and a working cowboy was the difference between a race horse and quarterhorse--"one is all show, while the other gets the job done." The idea of getting the job done was further emphasized by a cowboy who was asked if a cowboy college graduate was a real cowboy. His response was, "if he can do the job, he is."

Finally, the ranch manager is another important cowboy role today. While he is expected to perform virtually all ranching tasks, the ranch manager must be a cowboy with modern business skills. Today's ranch manager may be as comfortable with computers as cattle, or as familiar with helicopters as he is with horses. To regulate and oversee his business, ranch managers must have a thorough knowledge of all cowboy activities. He must also be able to perform most of the same functions as those of other industrial plant managers, including the overseeing of personnel, production, and profits. Calculating feed mixtures, overseeing breeding, herding, castrating, and other cattle operations are also under his charge. Many ranch managers come from rural farm

backgrounds, but they have usually supplemented their youthful skills, with college and professional training.

In addition to their working in some phase of the cattle industry, all cowboys share something else in common that is essential to our understandings of the role--it is that they by means of various subtle and not so subtle symbols and behaviors, perform their activities in such a way that all of those with whom they interact recognize them as cowboys. Goffman defined this as demeanor, "that element of the individual's ceremonial behavior typically conveyed through deportment, dress, and bearing, which serves to express to those in his immediate presence that he is a person of certain desirable or undesirable qualities."¹³ Thus, for a person to be considered a legitimate cowboy, he must continually act in such a way that others view him as authentic. In effect, being a cowboy becomes a matter of "definition of the situation."¹⁴ The essential symbols that define and maintain the cowboy persona are dress, behavior, and language.

Perhaps no other social symbol defines the meaning of the cowboy as much as dress. For a person to be a cowboy, he must look the part. According to historian, David Dary, many diverse cultures have contributed to cowboy dress. The Mexican horseback worker (the vaquero) appears to have provided the foundation upon which cowboy dress rests. The vaquero borrowed elements of Spanish peasant attire and Native American dress and adjusted them to the open range to create the original cowboy garb. The sombrero, usually plain and undecorated, shielded him from sun and rain. Vaqueros wore cotton shirts, wrapped leather leggings, and buckskin shoes (or no shoes at all). Iron spurs were then strapped to whatever footgear was worn, or even to the ankles of [their] bare feet.¹⁵ Dary also noted that vaqueros often wore their hair brushed back in long single braids, usually topped by a bandanna, and that they were agile, hardy, unclean, and occasionally dishonest.¹⁶

The Texas cowboy borrowed numerous elements of vaquero dress. An 1882 newspaper report described the typical [Texas] cowboy as one who: ". . . wears a white hat, with a gilt cord or tassel, high-top boots, leather pants, a woolen shirt, a coat and no vest . . . On the heels he wears a pair of jingling Mexican spurs, as large around as a teacup . . ."¹⁷

Cowboy dress was further modified when cowboys reached the northern ranges. The bitter cold winters required wool or flannel shirts, pants, and vests, and many "northern cowboys had knee length, fur-lined overcoats."¹⁸ Because of strong 30 to 50 mile an hour winds the wide hats were trimmed and most cowboys made a hat band of braided horse hair to secure their hats. Boot design was changed as well; they became high topped to allow the northern cowboys to cross the deeper streams without having water pour into their boots.¹⁹

During the 20th century some elements of cowboy dress have been modified to suit changing fashions and occupational needs, although simple pragmatism remains central to cowboy fashion. Boots have retained the pointed toe and high heels because of their continued advantages on horseback, or while

performing outdoor chores. Tight fitting pants, sometimes covered with leather chaps continue to protect the cowboys' legs from briars, thorns, horns, and other hazards.²⁰ Not just any pants will do. According to folklorist, Jim Hoy, older cowboys today tend to wear Levi's, while most others wear Lee Riders and Wranglers.²¹ The shirt with buttoned pockets allows the modern cowboy to keep various tools and assorted items such as tobacco in a safe place where they would not likely be lost during frequent mounting and stepping down from horse back or pick up. Perhaps no single element of traditional cowboy dress is more practical than the hat, possibly the preminent symbol of the cowboy both past and present.²² The wide brim still protects cowboys from sun and rain and the high crown continues to serve many other functions, such as a feed sack or water bucket, or even as a fan to get a fire started.

If cowboy attire has changed much in the last few decades, it has been in the direction of becoming more simplified. Or, for some, more worn and tattered. As Hoy mentioned, ". . . to be a cowboy, you have to have some sweat stains on your hat, some dirt on your boots, and the right design on your rear pockets."²³ Possibly this trend is related to the fact that urban cowboys and recently "urban yuppies" have coopted several elements of cowboy dress.²⁴ For the urban cowboy, and urban professionals as well, multi-colored hats with fancy bands, and shirts with piping and embroidery have become the norm. Simplicity of dress may be the cowboys most effective response to this encroachment. As his imitators adopt the finest and most decorative elements of his attire, the cowboy had adopted opposite fashions--those most plain and natural. According to a visitor to the 1985 American Royal in Kansas City:

Those [cowboys and ranchers] working at the Royal generally don cowboy boots and hats but leave the frilly shirts packed away. Beyond the requisite blue jeans, most wear flannel shirts, warm seaters or down jackets. Occasionally a rancher . . . puts on a suit jacket, but it generally has the down-home touch of leather patches.²⁵

Today, some elements of cowboy attire seem to be more symbolic than practical. Undoubtedly, pragmatic elements persist, and when the cowboy is questioned about his attire, he is likely to cite such aspects. But there is obviously more to the cowboy wardrobe than its functional qualities. Why, for instance, does the rancher who spends a significant amount of time at the computer, and little time on a horse, continue to wear the cowboy hat and boots? The answer is that the hat, shirt, pants, and boots continue to symbolize cowboy to those with whom he comes in contact. Some additional meaningful symbols for the modern cowboy include a wide decorative belt with a large buckle, a can of snuff (sometimes kept in a leather pouch), and a leather sheath attached to the belt which holds either a knife or pliers. These articles of apparel become "significant symbols"²⁶ in that they project a common meaning, in this case cowboy, to all of those who are even the least bit familiar with the role.

Merely wearing the appropriate clothing is not sufficient to make a person a cowboy. In fact, since anybody can put on cowboy attire, and "urban cowboys" often do, there may be more significance in how a cowboy wears his clothing than there is in what he wears. A recent beer commercial shows several-time national rodeo champion, Jim Shoulders, claiming "I can tell a real cowboy by the way he wears his hat." As Goffman pointed out, "to be a given kind of person, then, is not merely to possess the required attributes, but also to sustain the standards of conduct, and appearance that one's social grouping attaches thereto."²⁷ This process may be very subtle and provide a most important means by which cowboys distinguish their own members from outsiders.

Many cowboy mannerisms can probably be attributed to the idealized conception of the old west range cowboy. As Stegner illustrated in his novel, Wolf Willow, the popular folk culture of the west admired "good shots, good riders, tough fighters, dirty talkers, [and] stoical endurers of pain."²⁸ This code of the "stiff upper lip" has come to epitomize the cowboy persona.²⁹

It is possible that folk notions of the cowboy as a rugged individualist, have had the greatest impact on his overall demeanor. The belief that the individual should have maximum flexibility in defining reality appears to have been translated into a variety of key symbolic behaviors including: eye contact, bodily gestures, notions of space, and even language. The underlying theme that shapes much of cowboy demeanor today is the understanding that each cowboy will respect another's individuality, if his in turn is respected. Symbolic elements which might detract from this unwritten code are carefully avoided. The end result is a carefully fashioned informality that all cowboys seem to share.

Proper eye behavior is an important feature of cowboy identity, particularly as it relates to respecting a stranger's independence. A cowboy neither stares, nor does he regularly scan the eyes of others during conversation. Rather, most of his conversation is spent gazing at his boot tops. The best way to understand proper cowboy eye behavior is to remember the rule that one's gaze must never suggest that one party or another is dominant or in any way directing a conversation.

The cowboy rule of eye behavior is apparently so important that it may override extreme curiosity. During a 1983 public Broadcasting program on Oregon buckaroo cowboys, a ranchhand who was being interviewed told a story of how he and his co-workers were fascinated by a newly hired cowboy who had arrived wearing a fancy outfit and a ponytail. The buckaroo noted that despite his interest in this cowboy's bizarre appearance, neither he nor any of his co-workers ever got the opportunity to get a good look at the man until several days later when the crew was so busily engaged in a cooperative chore, that the newcomer was unable to notice their stares.

Cowboy body posture and gestures also may be used to symbolically reflect respect for another (or the opposite) and can be manipulated in a variety of ways. The key to cowboy

posture is that it is informal and relaxed. What seems particularly important is that the cowboy rarely stands straight up. Head down, hat over eyes, the cowboy typically slumps forward or leans left or right. One might suggest that cowboy posture is not social at all, but rather is a function of years of hard riding on the range. But this does not explain why many modern ranchers, who may spend little time on horseback, employ almost the exact same posture as their open range counterparts.

Cowboys also seem to be particularly adept at using props to enlarge their personal boundaries. Just as women may use purses or the British umbrellas to defend or increase their personal territories, the cowboy employs his own distinctive props. Cowboys often seem to be busily engaged in a variety of activities even when they are resting or talking to others. They often kick at the ground, pull at the grass, throw small rocks, or pick their teeth with sticks as they talk. All of these activities serve to enhance the cowboy's ideas about personal space and avoidance of eye contact. The pocket knife and chew of tobacco can serve similar functions. As a cowboy nonchalantly whittles with his knife blade turned outwards, chips and shavings tend to fly making it unwise for another to stand too close. Similarly the chewing of tobacco necessitates a lot of spitting, and whether consciously or unconsciously, this too can be used by the cowboy to enlarge his space.

Cowboy conversation also follows other rather special conventions. For the cowboy, it seems particularly important that a person appear inconspicuous at the beginning and end of a conversation. Conversations are entered slowly and carefully, and social space is particularly important in projecting the ideal of noninterference. The very beginning of a conversation is usually an abrupt shout from a pick-up window with most replying in kind from a distance of fifty feet or more. During one's approach, it is common for each person to speak in short sentences with considerable pauses allowing the other sufficient time to respond. Longer phrases and the actual purpose of the visit are not broached until each party has settled into a comfortable speaking distance, typically six feet.

Cowboy participants in the interaction also use social distance and even social context (house, truck) to terminate the conversation. The key to a proper performance is that the exit be gradual with each person slowly phasing out the other. First they are dimly seen, then out of sight. Voice level and the substance of conversation are gradually reduced until the conversation has no meaning, or no effect on what another says or thinks. Like the Cheshire cat in Alice in Wonderland's Looking Glass, each cowboy is supposed to fade away an element at a time.

Finally, because of the mass media most Americans are also aware that there is a specialized language of the range.³⁰ Geographer, Terry Jordan suggested that cowboy language is constructed from several American Indian languages.³¹ Spanish borrowings are also abundant in both modern range and rodeo culture, and include such popular

expressions as bronco, corral, dogie, wrangler, lasso, and lariat. In some regions of the west, ranchers have reduced Spanish elements to some extent. For example, in parts of Kansas cowboys prefer to use the word rope to lariat, or in Texas cowpen instead of corral; despite regional preferences, however, all cowboys can instantly recognize the meanings of any of the above terms.

Like any language, cowboy language is more than the sum of its specialized words. It also consists of subtle understandings that include such elements as appropriate topics of conversation, length of sentence, tone of voice, and numerous other linguistic devices. Although cowboy language varies according to social context, a number of broad generalizations can be proposed. First, cowboys generally speak in short, abrupt sentences. Like other aspects of cowboy demeanor, their language is marked by a simple pragmatism which avoids abstractions and circumlocutions. Hollywood in the past, has often exaggerated this element of cowboy speech in its movies. For example, film cowboys often responded to complicated philosophical or conceptual questions with nothing more than a "yup," "nope," or "it looks like it." Modern cowboys usually do the same. When during an interview with several "feedlot cowboys" we asked the rather complex question of who qualified as a "real cowboy" today, most informants responded simply that it was "anyone who could do the job." Even more simply put, one cowboy responded that "A cowboy's a cowboy, period."

Many elements of cowboy speech appear to be a response to more formal, class-conscious eastern expressions. Cursing is common, and some authors have suggested that as much as one third of all words spoken by cowboys are curse words.³² Cowboys are also famous for telling tall tales (especially to non-cowboys), for stretching the truth, and for boasting. Interestingly a cowboy will rarely brag about himself, but he can lavish unlimited praise on his cohorts, or his horse. Popular cowboy topics almost always include the heroic abilities and talents of their peers as riders, ropers, or endurers of pain. Cowboy sense of humor also utilizes both exaggeration and the gullibility of the listener. For example, when a feedlot cowboy was asked if a graduate of a cowboy college was a real cowboy, he responded that he was only "if his horse could read the diploma."

Will the 20th century mark the end of the American cowboy as many have predicted? We think not. As we have indicated, the role of cowboy in American society is a multidimensional one constantly being redefined through the process of interaction.

Clearly, one dimension of the definition of cowboy focuses upon cowboy as an occupation. In that regard, the role of cowboy has undergone dramatic changes in the past few decades. The range cowboy who oversaw the cattle operations from beginning to end has now been replaced, in large part, by a variety of more specialized roles. Despite the predictions of their demise, the number of cowboys involved in the livestock industry is not diminishing, but is actually increasing.

Beyond the occupational element are the social dimensions of what it means to be a cowboy. With firm historical roots and modifications by media stereotypes, cowboy demeanor continues to survive. Contemporary American cowboys may come from a variety of backgrounds and may pursue a variety of occupations, but they all share common elements of demeanor which symbolize to others that they are "real cowboys."

What meanings will be imputed to the cowboy role in the future remain unclear. However, based on our analysis, a number of potential directions can be suggested. First, the mass media has recently begun to portray the cowboy in a less stereotypic manner, and this may modify popular understandings of the role. The proliferation of occupational specialists within the cattle industry may also result in their contributing more to what it means to be a cowboy. At present, modern cowboys employ many of the symbolic elements essential to the occupation of the range cowboy, but this may change. While it is unlikely, certain core elements of cowboy demeanor like blue jeans, the hat and boots may be modified by "computer cowboys" who may begin to add elements that are more practical in the office or boardroom than out on the prairie. Of course, it is equally plausible that the opposite may occur. As cowboy specialists become more detached from the range cattle phase of the operation, and the outdoors in general, their demeanor may become more like that of old west cowboys to compensate for the loss of their occupational ties to the past.

While it is possible that one or a combination of these groups may eventually emerge as dominant, we believe that the cowboy role will never assume any permanent meanings. Rather it will continue to be defined and redefined by all of those individuals who view themselves as cowboys, and the groups with whom they interact. Those who fulfill the cowboy role will promote their definitions, and the public in turn will construct theirs. The resulting "definition of the situation" will hinge upon the mutual understandings which emerge from this process.³³

NOTES

1. In Oregon the term "Buckaroo" is an acceptable term to describe the cowboy. In other areas, for example in the Flint Hills, it is a derogatory term for a phony "show cowboy."

2. Teresa Jordan, Cowgirls: Women of the American West (New York: Anchor Books, 1982), XXVI; Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd edition (USA: World Publishing Company, 1978), 327, defined the cowboy as "a ranch worker who rides horseback much of the time on his job of herding and tending cattle."

3. Jack Bynum, "The American Cowboy: An Institutionalized Subculture," in Jack Bynum (ed.), Applied Sociology (Massachusetts: Copley Publishing, 1986), 117-120; Elizabeth Lawrence also provides an excellent review of cowboy culture in Rodeo: An Anthropologist Looks at the Wild and the Tame (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

4. Some even contend that the cowboy is already extinct. For example, anthropologist, William Haviland, contends that while some elements of cowboy culture have survived to the present "... the cowboy himself has long since vanished." William Haviland, Anthropology (New York, 1984), 620.

5. Herbert Blumer, Symbolic Interactionism (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1969), 4.

6. It is possible that demeanor is so important to the definition of the cowboy role that it may even override such factors as gender, race, and ethnic identity. Most Americans typically do not consider women, blacks, Mexican Americans, and Native Americans as authentic cowboys. However, if the above groups adopt essential elements of cowboy demeanor, and some of their members have, it is very difficult to deny their legitimacy as "real" cowboys.

7. William Forbis, The Cowboys (New York: Time-Life Books, 1973), 218.

8. David Dary, Cowboy Culture: A Saga of Five Centuries (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 276.

9. Owen Wister, The Virginian (New York: MacMillan, 1902).

10. Dary, Cowboy Culture, 334.

11. Russell Martin, Cowboy: The Enduring Myth of the Wild West (New York: Stuart, Tabori and Chang, 1983), 39.

12. Caleb Pirtle, XII: The American Cowboy (Birmingham: Oxmoor House, 1975), 153.

13. Erving Goffman, Interaction Ritual (New York: Anchor Press, 1967), 77.

14. W.I. Thomas, The Unadjusted Girl (Boston: Little, Brown, 1931), 41-50.

15. Dary, Cowboy Culture, 14.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid., 205.

18. Forbis, The Cowboys, 23.

19. Dary, Cowboy Culture, 240.

20. Jim Hoy, "Cowboy Pants," KS. Magazine (March 1987), 36-39.

21. Ibid.

22. Martin, Cowboy, 352. Martin has remarked "the image of the American cowboy has become so multifaceted and pervasive that virtually anyone can become a cowboy as long as he has a hat."

23. Hoy, "Cowboy Pants," 36.

24. In western states where the cowboy image is strong, businessmen, bankers, lawyers, and professors who may have no connection to the cattle industry, had adopted elements of cowboy attire as well, especially the jeans, boots, and hat.

25. Kansas City Star (11 November 1985), 6A.

26. George H. Mead, Mind, Self and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), 149.

27. Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (New York: Anchor Press, 1959), 65.

28. Wallace Stegner, Wolf Willow: A History, a Story and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 130.

29. Ibid.

30. See Ramon Adams, Western Words: A Dictionary of the American West (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968).

31. Terry G. Jordan, Trails to Texas: Southern Roots of Western Cattle Ranching (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981), 50.

32. Forbis, The Cowboys.

33. Thomas, The Unadjusted Girl, 41-50.