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A Man Out West is a Man

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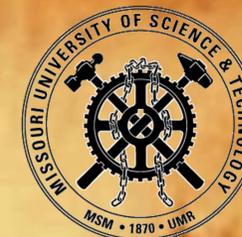
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“A MAN OUT WEST IS A MAN”



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◆ THE GOAL OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO DISCOVER THE ORIGIN OF THE MYTHICAL AND LITERARY COWBOY. ◆

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

- ❖ UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERN CULTURE, OWEN WISTER WROTE THE VIRGINIAN TO REPRESENT THE CULTURE OF THE AMERICAN WEST. WHILE WRITING THE VIRGINIAN, WISTER USED EVENTS FROM HIS PAST TRAVELS INTO THE “WILD WEST,” MEMORIES ABOUT THE REGION, THINGS THAT HE HEARD, AND, OF COURSE, HIS IMAGINATION. THE VIRGINIAN IS SAID TO BE THE QUINTESSENTIAL PICTURE OF A COWBOY THAT MANY PEOPLE YET ADMIRE.
- ❖ ZANE GRAY INTRODUCED HOW RELIGION INFLUENCED COWBOYS AND STILL KEPT THE IMAGE OF THE PERFECT MAN AS SHOWN IN THE VIRGINIAN.
- ❖ WALTER VAN TILBURG CLARK, A WRITER, INTRODUCED THE FACT THAT NOBODY IS PERFECT AND THAT EVEN THE BEST COWBOYS NEED TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THEMSELVES.
- ❖ LOUIS L'AMOUR VIGOROUSLY FOLLOWED THE STANDARDS SET BY WISTER AND CREATED A PICTURE OF A COWBOY WHO IS READY TO SACRIFICE HIS LIFE FOR OTHERS.



WHAT IS A COWBOY?

- ❖ QUALITIES OF THE COWBOY INCLUDE BEING SKILLED ON A RANCH, A HARD WORKER, QUICK ON THE DRAW, BEING A PRECISE SHOOTER, AND KNOWING HOW TO MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH HORSES. COWBOYS, ALSO CALLED COW-PUNCHERS, ARE PEOPLE WHO KNOW HOW TO SURVIVE AND FIGHT FOR THEMSELVES. WEARING HATS, GUNS IN GUN BELTS, HANDKERCHIEFS SAGGING FROM THE THROAT, CARTRIDGE BELTS SLANTED ACROSS HIPS, LEATHER WRISTBANDS, AND BOOTS WITH SPURS ON THEM BROUGHT MUCH ATTENTION FROM THE FEMALE POPULATION. DESPITE THEIR APPEARANCE, NOT ALL COWBOYS ARE PERFECT.

IS A PERFECT COWBOY A PERFECT MAN?

- ❖ A PERFECT COWBOY IS A MAN WHO IS A ROLE MODEL FOR EVERYONE. A STANDARD FOR THE PERFECT COWBOY, SET BY OWEN WISTER, IS IMMENSELY DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH. BEING A PERFECT COWBOY CONSIDERS NOT ONLY BEING QUICK ON DRAW, BUT ALSO BEING GENTLE WITH WOMEN, KNOWING HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH EVERYONE, AND TAKING CARE OF ANIMALS. IN ADDITION, IT MEANS KNOWING HOW TO SURVIVE IN THE WILDERNESS, BEING READY TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR OTHERS, PROTECTING HIS PRIDE AND DIGNITY, AND LASTLY, BEING “MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN PICTURES.” THE BEST EXAMPLE OF THE PERFECT COWBOY IS THE VIRGINIAN!



GOOD

- ❖ THE PERFECT COWBOY IS THE REPRESENTATION OF GOOD THROUGH HONESTY, HELPING OTHERS, SAVING OTHERS, EVEN CHANGING HIMSELF IN ORDER TO BECOME BETTER FOR OTHERS. HE FIGHTS FOR JUSTICE AND GOODNESS AMONG PEOPLE.
- ❖ THE VIRGINIAN STATED THAT “IF A MAN CAN GO JAMMING’ HOT IRONS ON TO LITTLE CALVES AND SLICIN’ PIECES OFF ‘EM WITH HIS KNIFE, AND LIVE ALONG, KEEPIN’ A KINDNESS FOR ANIMALS IN HIS HEART, HE HAS GOT SOME GOOD IN HIM.”



EVIL

- ❖ EVIL IS REPRESENTED THROUGH JEALOUSY AND GREED WHILE LURING OTHERS TO ACCEPT THE SAME FEELINGS. ZANE GRAY ILLUSTRATED EVIL BY SHOWING HOW PEOPLE USED RELIGION TO GAIN POWER AND PERSUADE PEOPLE TO DO WHAT THEY WERE TOLD TO DO.
- ❖ IT IS INTERESTING THAT GRAY THROUGH HIS CHARACTER NAMED BESS, REPRESENTED GOLD AS AN EVIL THING. “YES, I HATE GOLD. FOR IT MAKES MEN MAD. I’VE SEEN THEM DRUNK WITH JOY AND DANCE AND FLING THEMSELVES AROUND. I’VE SEEN THEM CURSE AND RAVE. I’VE SEEN THEM FIGHT LIKE DOGS AND ROLL IN THE DUST. I’VE SEEN THEM KILL EACH OTHER FOR GOLD.”



RELATIONSHIPS WITH HORSES

- ❖ COWBOYS BUILT RELATIONSHIPS WITH THEIR HORSES AS IF THEY WERE THEIR BROTHERS. HORSES WERE NOT JUST WORKING ANIMALS. GOOD HORSES UNDERSTOOD THEIR RIDERS WITHOUT THE COWBOYS SAYING ANYTHING. WHILE RIDING, A HORSE AND A RIDER BECAME ONE.

WESTERN CULTURE TEACHES US NOT ONLY ABOUT WESTERN LIFESTYLE, BUT ALSO ABOUT MORALS

- ❖ THE VIRGINIAN: NO MATTER HOW MUCH EVIL THERE IS IN THE WORLD, THERE ARE ALWAYS GOING TO BE PEOPLE WHO WILL BE READY TO RISK THEIR LIVES FOR YOU.
- ❖ RIDERS OF THE PURPLE SAGE: DO GOOD NO MATTER HOW HARSH AND HOW CRUEL THE WORLD IS TO YOU. THERE ARE ALWAYS PEOPLE WHO WILL RECOGNIZE THAT AND YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO STAND SHOULDER-TO-SHOULDER WITH PEOPLE OF GOOD AND PURE HEARTS.
- ❖ THE OX-BOW INCIDENT: NOBODY IS PERFECT. IF YOU HAVE FRIENDS WHO HAVE A GOOD SOUL AND YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR REASONING FOR THE THINGS THEY DO, YOU MUST KEEP THOSE PEOPLE IN YOUR LIFE, TAKE CARE OF THEM, SHOW THEM THAT YOU CARE ABOUT THEM BECAUSE ONE DAY WHEN YOU NEED THEM, THEY WILL BE THERE FOR YOU.
- ❖ HONDO: WHEN YOU GET A FEELING THAT YOU HAVE FOUND SOMETHING THAT CAN DETERMINE YOUR LIFE’S PATH, IT IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR, NO MATTER HOW BIG THE RISKS MAY BE.

IS IT GOOD TO KILL PEOPLE?

- ❖ DURING THE TIME OF THESE NOVELS, JUSTICE WAS HARSH AND EVEN CALLED FOR WRONG-DOERS TO BE HUNG, BUT HOW CAN THIS BE JUSTIFIED?
- ❖ IF A MAN PASSED THROUGH HIS NEIGHBOR’S LAND THAT WOULD NOT BE WRONG. IF THE NEIGHBOR PUT UP A “NO TRESPASSING” SIGN AND THE MAN STILL WENT ACROSS THE OWNER’S LAND THAT WOULD BE WRONG. HOWEVER, IF A MURDEROUS MAN CROSSED INTO THE NO TRESPASSING ZONE, THEN IT WOULD BE MORAL AND ETHICAL TO VIOLATE THE NO TRESPASSING RULE IN ORDER TO CAPTURE AND PUNISH THE MURDEROUS MAN. HENCE, PEOPLE DO EVIL IN ORDER FOR GOOD TO RESULT.
- ❖ THE LAW IS IN THE HANDS OF THE COURT. THE CONGRESS CREATED THE COURTS, DELEGATES MADE THE CONSTITUTION, AND DELEGATES WERE ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE. THEREFORE, PEOPLE CREATED LAWS, SUCH AS HANGING AN EVIL MAN IN ORDER TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM EVIL, EVEN IF IT CALLED FOR EXTRALEGAL MEASURES.

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