

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**FRONTIER JUSTICE:
COWBOY ETHICS AND THE BUSH DOCTRINE
OF PREEMPTION**

**BY
HOLIDAY DMITRI
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**FACULTY ADVISOR: TERRY NICHOLS CLARK
PRECEPTOR: ELIZABETH DAVIES**

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates how an American popular culture icon, the cowboy, functions as a tool for President George W. Bush to both illustrate and legitimize the preemptive use of military force in his administration's foreign policy doctrine. The Bush Doctrine of Preemption holds that the traditional strategies of deterrence and containment are no longer sufficient. In the new war against terrorism, the Bush Doctrine calls for a new military and political strategy of preemption in dealing with rogue states harboring terrorists and developing weapons of mass destruction. The Bush Doctrine is characterized by five factors: 1) a call for "moral clarity"; 2) a lack of toleration for non-alignment in the campaign against terrorism; 3) a strategy of "offensive defense"; 4) a unilateral implementation of action when necessary; and 5) a desire to promote international justice. My thesis offers an analysis of how the Bush Doctrine applies "cowboy ethics" to justify U.S. military intervention. Cowboy ethics are comprised of five similar qualities: 1) holding a sense of moral providence; 2) viewing the world in terms of a good/evil dichotomy; 3) a belief in the right to anticipatory self-defense; 4) a willingness to act alone; and 5) a sense of duty to defend the weak. My principal argument is that President Bush cultivates cowboy ethics as a means to pronounce and justify America's foreign policy actions as done for the moral good rather than for imperialistic purposes. The Bush Doctrine of Preemption dictates that America should not wait to be attacked, but move proactively to disrupt and defeat global outlaws – an ideology congruent with cowboy ethics.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction	1
I. Reading a Connection between U.S. Foreign Policy and Cowboy Ethics	1
II. Understanding the Mythic Cowboy	4
Chapter Two: Cowboy Ethics and the Bush Doctrine	10
I. An Action of Moral Providence	12
II. Good versus Evil	15
III. Offense as Defense	18
IV. My Way or the Highway	22
V. Defenders of Civilization	25
Chapter Three: The Cowboy Way	29
I. The National Hero	30
II. The Common Man	32
III. The Justice Fighter	34
IV. The Man of Action	37
Bibliography	42

Chapter One

Introduction

I. Reading a Connection between U.S. Foreign Policy and Cowboy Ethics

In this paper, I seek to analyze an approach used by President George W. Bush to justify his administration's foreign policies and practices. I am not here concerned with providing a geopolitical framework for assessing the effectiveness of the Bush Doctrine; rather, I am interested in understanding how the administration's assertive foreign policy priorities are being enunciated and justified as morally upright to the American public. To counter Americans' distrust of their government as an imperialist power, the administration tries to reassure the American people by presenting their foreign policy as legitimate.¹ This approach of legitimizing U.S. foreign policy by disassociating it with imperialistic desires is the strategy I wish to explore in my work.

Moreover, my paper will focus on the policy of preemption² contained in the Bush Doctrine, for at the heart of the doctrine lies an underlying moral justification for the use of preemptive strike (Welch 2003, 1). Simply put, the doctrine attempts to affirm the legitimacy of preemption by claiming that the United States must act now militarily or pay dearly for inaction later (The White House 2002, 13-16). Preemption, the doctrine asserts, could itself be a defense against the menacing obstacles (i.e. terrorists and rogue

¹ In the first chapter of *U.S. Foreign Policy Since 1945*, Alan P. Dobson and Steve Marsh described the rift between democratic principles and U.S. foreign policy that created a new problem post-WWII, i.e. "the imperial presidency" (Dobson and Marsh 2001, 1-17).

² I use Richard Haass's definition of preemptive use of force as coming against a backdrop of tactical intelligence or warning indicating imminent military action by an adversary (Haass 1999, 52). The United States, like other countries, has practiced preemption in the past – that right is written into the UN Charter and isn't a new idea. However, basically saying that preemption is America's primary objective is new (Sick 2002, 4-6).

states) thwarting international order and threatening U.S. interests and its model of freedom and democracy (The White House 2002, 13-16). The Bush Doctrine suggests that in some cases, attacking the bad guys first is *not only* the morally right thing for the United States to do; but it is also *the duty* of the United States (The White House 2002, vi). The crux of the Bush Doctrine states that the United States, as the world's benevolent superpower, has a responsibility to protect its allies by deterring global aggression (The White House 2002, iv-vi).

I argue that in order to facilitate the pursuit of national goals, the Bush Doctrine applies a set of organizing principles – what I refer to as “cowboy ethics” – to pronounce and to justify America’s foreign policy actions as done for the moral good rather than for imperialistic purposes. In this paper, I compare the five qualities comprising cowboy ethics to the corresponding five factors of the Bush Doctrine.³ My goal is to offer an explanation of *how* and *why* cowboy ethics are used to justify the Bush Doctrine.

As the main conduit between government and its citizens, the president serves the paramount role of articulating the nation’s priorities and its role in world affairs (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 296). But in regards to vocalizing the government’s ideological stance or concrete actions, it matters little if the president’s own speechwriters and advisors develop his language and speeches (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). Instead, what matters is that the president permits particular words and ideas to be put into his mouth. As Norman Podhoretz noted, “in speaking those words, he assumes responsibility for them, and thereby makes them his own as surely – well, almost as

³ The five qualities of both “cowboy ethics” and the Bush Doctrine are my own assertions. I came up with these factors while researching the Bush Doctrine and the ethos of the cowboy.

surely – as if he were their original author” (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*).

I will analyze President Bush’s use of cowboy ethics as demonstrated by his forward-leaning foreign policy action plan. My work will not extend to other tactical means by which Bush may implement cowboy imagery, such as personal attire and mannerism.⁴ These additional tactics are important in defining Bush’s cowboyism; in many ways, they shape his public image. However, I have necessarily limited myself to evaluating Bush’s rhetoric and actions concerning U.S. foreign policy⁵ in this paper, as it is impossible in a study of this size to thoroughly research these additional factors. While Bush’s cowboyisms may contribute to the public perception of him as a cowboy, I believe that the president is not just playing dress-up. On the contrary, there are also strong, more meaningful correlations between his foreign policy plan and cowboy ethics. These correlations are what I will examine in the following chapter.

⁴ I include as part of this mental image, Bush’s affinity for boots, Stetsons and large belt buckles. (Straub 2002, *Latest ‘Cowboy President’ Shoots from Hip*). Additionally, Bush is known to “walk Texan.” “He throws out his knees and holds his arms bent and away from his body in the classic pose of the cowboy or sheriff who may have to reach for his pistol at any moment,” wrote syndicated columnist Mary McGrory (McGrory 2002, B5).

⁵ Even when structured into a coherent ideology, the relationship between rhetoric and action is difficult to establish at a general level (Dobson and Marsh 2001, 16). Some scholars see ideology and action as a casual relationship. For this paper, however, I will analyze the ideology behind the Bush Doctrine as both a tool for justifying action and as one of a number of important variables in the explanation of the Bush administration’s U.S. foreign policy behavior.

II. Understanding the Mythic Cowboy

I approach the study of the “mythic cowboy”⁶ as a malleable image in American culture, an “invisible man” from America’s past⁷ representing not one person, but a cultural image. Rather than focus on an individual or a circumscribed group, I will borrow the technique of the myth and symbol school. The myth and symbol method is an established technique of literary criticism, American studies, and popular culture scholarship, which focuses upon aspects of culture shared by large segments of the population who relate to literature and popular culture in parallel ways (Walle 2000, 17). This approach is based on the belief that an overarching entity (usually envisioned as “national character”) exists and that it predisposes many, if not most, people in a society to respond in roughly parallel ways to certain examples of art, literature, and popular culture (Walle 2000, 47). According to scholar Alf H. Walle, the myth and symbol method can be summarized in three parts (Walle 2000, 181):

- a. It possesses a willingness to analyze various genre of literature, film, and popular culture (or deal with several genres simultaneously) as required by a research project.
- b. It analyzes the content of literature, film, and popular culture in order to explore and interpret culture via an analysis of motifs, character developments, etc. and how they evolve or remain stable in different times and places.
- c. A relatively long time frame is used in order to spot trends, inconsistencies, and to project the future.

⁶ I use the word “mythic” to describe the fictional cowboy, as opposed to the real-life individual. The interrelationship of the cowboy myth and cowboy history is explained in Robert V. Hine’s *The American West: An Interpretive History* (1973), esp. chap. 9. In this paper I tend to equate the terms “cowboy” and “mythic cowboy” and use them interchangeably. Some readers may object and point to important distinctions. I equate the terms because it represents the American notion of what cowboys are, or are supposed to be (Savage 1979, 22).

⁷ In *The Cowboy Hero*, William Savage wrote that the cowboy “remains the invisible man in our national past” (Savage 1979, 3).

I use the myth and symbol method to posit that American popular culture embodies distinctively American themes (i.e. myths and symbols) about the cowboy. The myth and symbol method is the best means of pursuing the sort of data analysis needed for my work. With the “closing” of the frontier as a geographical entity,⁸ many scholars felt that the frontier was turned into a set of symbols – a “mythic space”⁹ – that outweighed its importance as a real place for most Americans. Two classic examples of scholars who use the myth and symbol methodology in analyzing the cowboy are Henry Nash Smith and Richard Slotkin.^{10 and 11}

Smith’s *Virgin Land: The American West as Myth and Symbol* (1950) was seen as the definitive treatment of the subject prior to the 1960s. As the title suggests, *Virgin Land* focused on the image of the frontier and its impact upon American self-identity. Smith argued that American culture was impacted profoundly by the nineteenth-century West, which embodied group memories of an earlier, a simpler and a happier state of society that survived as a force in American thought and politics (Smith *rev. ed.* 1978, 124). According to Smith, much of the symbolism provided a number of myths and symbols¹² that positively impacted American worldview, providing “a garden of Eden;

⁸ The 1890 census officially declared the frontier closed when the mushrooming population had settled previously open areas (Etulain 1999, 6).

⁹ Richard Slotkin defined “mythic space” as “a pseudo-historical (or pseudo-real) setting that is powerfully associated with stories and concerns rooted in the culture’s myth/ideological tradition” (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 234).

¹⁰ Those seeking an overview of the method may also want to consult Robert Sklar’s “The Problem of American Studies ‘Philosophy’: A Bibliography of New Directions.” *American Quarterly*. v. 27. 1975. 245-262.

¹¹ It is important to note that Smith and Slotkin’s predecessor, Frederick Jackson Turner, remains perhaps the most influential scholar of writing about the frontier today. It was Turner’s 1893 address on “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” that gave rise to a whole new school of frontier historians including Smith and Slotkin (Etulain 1999, 3-14).

¹² Smith and his followers, however, have written little about their methodological premises. As Alan Trachtenberg has stated of *Virgin Land*: “Its informing theory nowhere gets a theoretical exposition: the book prefers to exemplify rather than theorize” (From “Myth, History and

heroic, bigger than life heroes; the adventure of empire building; bountiful opportunities” (Walle 2000, 49-50). Smith’s preface in *Virgin Land* urged that symbols and myths designate larger or smaller units of the same kind of thing: an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image (Smith *rev. ed.* 1978, vii-xii).

While Slotkin agreed with Smith that the frontier as a symbol was paramount to the explanation of American history and national character, unlike Smith’s upbeat treatment of the West, Slotkin traced the destructive development of the system of ideological formulations that constituted this mythic space (Walle 2000, 183). Slotkin revised the myth and symbol method by undercutting the conventional view within the school of thought of that time spearheaded by Smith.¹³ Today Slotkin’s work¹⁴ represents the modern application of the myth method (Walle 2000, 49). His research focuses upon the negative impact of the Western movement, such as the destruction of the wilderness and the exploitation of the native people (Walle 2000, 181). Slotkin noted that these consequences were also the legacy of the West (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 30).

As demonstrated, both Slotkin and Smith offer precedent for my research on the mythic cowboy by examining symbols and myths as images, which at best reflect empirical fact, but are never themselves factual (Smith *rev. ed.* 1978, viii). Smith wrote that as images, symbols and myths were mental constructs existing “in a different plane” from empirical fact (Smith *rev. ed.* 1978, vii). Likewise, in my paper, I will use the

Literature in *Virgin Land*,” read at a meeting of the American Studies Association of Northern California, Stanford University, Aug. 30, 1967. Quoted in Kuklick 1972, *Myth and Symbol in American Studies*)

¹³ While Smith focused on the symbolic “virgin land” theme, Slotkin was concerned with the “race war”/“savage war” theme, which he believed addressed political concerns (i.e. the use of force and the right of conquest) (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 33).

¹⁴ Slotkin’s body of work on the West includes *Regeneration Through Violence* (1973), *The Fatal Environment* (1985) and *Gunfighter Nation* (1992).

mental constructs of the cowboy, his image – rather than real life – to shed light on cowboy ethics. Employing the myth and symbol method, I will analyze an array of popular culture media on the cowboy in order to explore and interpret cowboy ethics via an analysis of motifs and character developments. For the purpose of this paper, I will confine my research to the image of the mythic cowboy and exclude from my analysis historical data on the actual life of the nineteenth-century cowhand. For today, it isn't so much the real-life hardships of the historic cowpuncher that Americans have come to know and love (Carlson 2000, 206-207). Historical facts are not helpful in creating, for most Americans, the type of hero they want to have – i.e., the type of hero who can adequately reflect their culture.¹⁵

Additionally, to thoroughly understand the mythic cowboy, it is necessary to recognize the dominant influence of popular culture¹⁶ – that is, the belief and value structures of a national audience – in defining the cowboy (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 24). Whole libraries of dime novels and miles of celluloid have been made and devoted to the legendary Western figure (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 24). Western fiction, however, did not have as much of an impact as the genre of the Western film in entrenching notions of “cowboyism” (Savage 1979, 22). Hence, for my analysis of the mythic cowboy, I will

¹⁵ As Paul H. Carlson wrote in *The Cowboy Way*, “One must ask, what influence does the truth have on the image of the mythic cowboy? The response is certainly a resounding ‘None!’ [...] The [mythic cowboy] refuses to disappear because it appeals to a subconscious yearning that many of us steadfastly – perhaps romantically – refuse to give up completely. It wells from so deeply within us that without it and our other myths we could not exist” (Carlson 2000, 206).

¹⁶ By the 1920s, institutions of mass and commercial media had become so ubiquitous that it is fair to characterize it as the clearest expression of America’s “national culture” (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 10).

primarily reference celluloid cowboys and scholarly works on the subject.¹⁷ For in a sense, it was television and Hollywood cinema that transformed the cowboy into the “romantic figure of mythical proportions” (Carlson 2000, 18).

Moreover, rather than representing a single historical or fictional figure, the mythic cowboy reflects a cultural composite (Frantz and Choate *rev. ed.* 1968, 70-71). In the Western film genre, the cowboy is textually evinced through larger-than-life characters depicted by actors such as Gary Cooper in *High Noon* (1952), Alan Ladd in *Shane* (1953), and John Wayne in *Stagecoach* (1939). The classic cowboy hero – that is, as he existed before World War II – resorted to violence only when he was provoked or when some evil threatened a weaker person who could mount no adequate defense (Savage 1979, 33). Hollywood’s first cowboys, whom arose from the 1920s to the 1950s, were strong and silent – rarely given to rhetorical violence (Savage 1979, 33). For example, in *High Noon*, Cooper’s cowboy stands alone and does relatively little killing before leaving town – as does Ladd’s heroic protagonist in *Shane*.

Nonetheless, there is a distinction in the type of cowboy one may envision. Some such as Smith envision the cowboy as a hero of the frontiers – an honorable and dependable knight-in-leather-chaps. Others like Slotkin see him as an ill-mannered, chauvinistic and pushy fellow – a hubristic individual willing to use violence to get what he wants.¹⁸ A changing worldview in the 1960s gave rise to Slotkin’s new sort of

¹⁷ This emphasis is justified by the centrality of film in modern culture and by the pervasive influence of movies on the language of both literature and politics (See Roger C. Schank’s *Dynamic Memory*. Cambridge UP. 1983. 2-3, 26, 40-41).

¹⁸ Susan Faludi believed that American identity has always contained competing models. Even the original frontiersman, the cowboy’s immediate ancestor, had two faces. Faludi noted, “He was either Daniel Boone or Davy Crockett – that is, either the man who rode into the wilderness to build and nurture a society, or the man who ventured out only to collect and count the pelts” (Faludi 2003, 9).

Western action figures (Walle 2000, 50).¹⁹ Subsequently in the 1970s and 1980s, the cowboy achieved a reputation, largely unsavory, which he has never quite lived down (Frantz and Choate *rev. ed.* 1968, 8).²⁰ A new trend began in packaging the Western movie; the modern cowboy created a recognizable Western sub-genre (Walle 2000, 169).

For my paper, however, I will use the classic (i.e. pre-1960s) version of the cowboy (i.e. the mythic cowboy) to shed light on a modern phenomenon. I borrow from the romantic ideals of the early 20th century cowboy in my construal of cowboy ethics, not only because is it the one Bush refers to in justifying his foreign policy decisions, but also because he is the figure most Americans visualize when they imagine the cowboy (Savage 1979, 4).

¹⁹ Terms like “fatalistic” and “antiheroic” to describe these new Westerns were taken from John Cawelti’s *Six-Gun Mystique* (*rev. ed.* 1984). In the fatalistic films the heroes are incapable of effectively dealing with modern society, even though they are superior to it. By refusing to compromise, the hero has no choice but to die. Opposite the fatalistic subgenre of the Western, is the antiheroic version, where survival of the cowboy is won at the price of sacrificing personal integrity. In the antiheroic Westerns, the cowboy commits atrocities for reasons that are disturbingly understandable, and he is presented as both the victim of social pressures and the perpetrator of injustice. Other cowboy scholars use different terminology. For instance, Slotkin’s *Gunfighter Nation* described the traditional Westerns as “town-tamer” and “outlaw” films, and the later variations as the “psychological” and the “gunfighter” Westerns. Regardless of these descriptive titles, however, the later Westerns in both cases depict the same sort of cowboy persona.

²⁰ Anthony Lejeune called the “essence” of the classic Westerns like *Shane* – “youth recalled, hope undimmed, the land beginning again, morning in America; everything we loved in real Westerns and find totally missing in spaghetti Westerns” (Lejeune 1989, 23-26). These Italian-made spaghetti films increased the storyline’s level of violence, and lost the morality of the classic cowboy.

Chapter Two Cowboy Ethics and the Bush Doctrine

In this chapter, I will argue that the ideology behind the Bush Doctrine of Preemption²¹ is congruent with an honorable form of frontier justice called “cowboy ethics.” By cowboy ethics I refer to the duty-bound system of unwritten moral standards of the mythic cowboy, i.e. the “Code of the West” set forth in the lawless backdrop of the western wilderness (Fishwick 1952, 78). Cowboy ethics means standing for “what’s right.” As cowboy author Baxter Black elaborated, “It is the embodiment of doing the right thing. If something needs doing and you have a choice between doing the right thing and taking the easy way out, you do the right thing” (Mills 2003, 4).

To sell the Bush Doctrine to the American people, Bush must justify the legitimacy of his foreign policy decisions.²² Conveniently, the vision of the active, justice-loving cowboy accommodates a worldview that facilitates rationalizing military intervention in foreign countries (Emmert 1996, 14). Slotkin believed that the cowboy image could be used to invoke the myth of the West to morally justify political actions on

²¹ The intellectual origins of the Bush Doctrine did not emerge on September 11, 2001. During the first Gulf War, Bush’s father, former President George H.W. Bush, had talked about a “new world order” in his State of the Union speech on January 29, 1991. In 1992, then-Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Paul Wolfowitz supervised the drafting of a policy statement on America's new mission in the post-Cold War era. The draft affirmed that coalitions “hold considerable promise for promoting collective action,” but went on to say that the United States “should expect future coalitions to be ad hoc assemblies” formed to deal with a particular crisis that may not outlive the resolution of that crisis (Wolfowitz 1992, *Defense Planning Guidance*). The 46-page classified document stated that what was most important was “the sense that the world order is ultimately backed by the United States” and that “the United States should be postured to act independently when collective action cannot be orchestrated” or in a crisis that calls for a immediate response (Wolfowitz 1992, *Defense Planning Guidance*).

the stage of historical conflict (Slotkin 1998, 3). By implementing cowboy ethics, President Bush integrates the myth of the West and the cowboy's sense of "moral clarity" into his foreign policy plan.²³ By accentuating the morality involved in the Bush Doctrine, the president can disassociate his administration with imperialistic desires many Americans may deem as unprincipled.²⁴

I argue that at the heart of cowboy ethics is morality, a principle relating to the four other key features of cowboy ethics: viewing the world in terms of a good/evil dichotomy, a belief in the right to anticipatory self-defense, a willingness to act alone, and a desire to promote international justice. In this chapter, I offer a cross-disciplinary analysis in exploring how cowboy ethics have been incorporated into communicating the Bush Doctrine of Preemption.

²² How a state intervenes forcibly in the affairs of another and the justification it offers say much about the character of its foreign policy and of the values and character of the state itself (Dobson and Marsh 2001, 125).

²³ Norman Podhoretz wrote that what gave the new strategic formula greatness was "the incandescent moral clarity informing it" (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*).

²⁴ For a critique of the Bush Doctrine's imperialistic intentions, see David Welch's "The Ironic Irrationality of a Doctrine of Preemption" (2003). Richard Falk also wrote in *The New Bush Doctrine*, "Bush declared with moral fervor that 'our enemies ... have been caught seeking these terrible weapons.' It never occurs to our leaders that these weapons are no less terrible when in the hands of the United States, especially when their use is explicitly contemplated as a sensible policy option" (Falk 2002, *The New Bush Doctrine*).

I. An Action of Moral Providence

The first and principal defining factor of cowboy ethics is an embracement of a sense of “moral providence.”²⁵ The romanticized cowboy was said to be a man of superior moral character. This upholding of a higher set of standards is seen in the classic cowboy films like those of John Wayne. On film, Wayne is the hard man, gentle with friends and family, who perceives evil and eradicates it (Savage 1979, 28). Wayne the cowboy epitomizes superior morality; he does not waver (Savage 1979, 28). As a cowboy, he doesn’t just emphasize morality, he also asserts himself as a guardian of justice whose moral clarity arises from a “higher calling.” While he acts brutally, he does so “justifiably within the context of the plot” with outlaws and desperadoes (Emmert 1996, 31). Wayne’s movies, along with other Western classics, have captured the essence of the Western hero’s character: “his unshakable moral confidence in the face of evil” (Bernstein 2003, 5). In other words, moral providence serves as the guiding light behind the cowboy’s action.

Moral providence also guides the Bush administration’s objectives of U.S. global engagement. Podhoretz wrote that having previously been unsure as to why he should have been chosen to become president, Bush had “a kind of revelation” on September 11, 2001 that “God” had “put him in the Oval Office for a purpose”; He had put him there to lead a war against the evil of terrorism (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). At the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C. on February 6, 2003, Bush embraced that sense of moral providence: “We also can be confident in the ways of

²⁵ By referring to “moral providence,” I mean a higher calling. A born-again Christian, Bush’s vision of postmodern geopolitics is underwritten by a now-familiar strong message of evangelical moralism (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). Bush uses “providence” to refer to *God*, whereas the cowboy applies it to refer to the guidance *Nature* grants him.

providence, even when they are far from our understanding. Events aren't moved by blind change and chance. Behind all of life and all of history there is a dedication and purpose set by the hand of a just and faithful God, and that hope will never be shaken" (quoted in Loven 2003, A20).²⁶ *The Washington Post's* Bob Woodward deemed that Bush sees his job and responsibility as president as driven by a "faith in his instincts" (Woodward 2002, 342). The president felt that the United States needed a plan, a vision, to educate the American people to be prepared for another attack (Woodward 2002, 41).²⁷ "The vision thing matters," Bush noted (quoted in Woodward 2002, 342).²⁸ Such talk led Thomas Mann, presidential scholar at the Brookings Institution, to describe Bush's higher calling as "almost a sense of providential calling," which affords him "great confidence in what [he's] doing, a righteousness" (quoted in Kornblut 2003, 16).

Both the cowboy and Bush believe that morality could not be compromised. While the war on terrorism had its practical explanations, the Bush Doctrine stresses its moral dimensions as well (Woodward 2002, 131). Bush reaffirmed this idea in his State of the Union speech. "The liberty we prize is not America's gift of the world, it is God's

²⁶ This led religion professor Martin E. Marty to write in the March 10, 2003 issue of *Newsweek*. "The problem isn't with Bush's sincerity, but with his evident conviction that he's doing God's will" (quoted in Barnes 2003, *God and Man in the Oval Office*).

²⁷ In 1987, *Newsweek* ran a cover story about then vice president George H. W. Bush under the headline "Bush Battles the Wimp Factor." *The Boston Globe's* Anne E. Kornblut wrote that the criticism deeply stung the elder Bush, who has been known to mention it to *Newsweek* staffers in the years since, but it also taught his son a lesson. Current advisors to George W. Bush have carefully studied his father's political playbook, and more or less done the opposite. No one can accuse this President Bush of being a wimp - or of lacking the 'vision thing,' the other charge that dogged his father (Kornblut 2003, 16).

²⁸ Quote taken from Woodward's *Bush at War* (2002). The information, including quotes, obtained from *Bush at War* include contemporaneous notes taken during more than 50 National Security Council and other meetings where the most important decisions were discussed and made. Many direct quotations of the president and the war cabinet members come from these notes. Other personal notes, memos, calendars, written internal chronologies, transcripts and other documents also were the basis for direct quotation and other parts of *Bush at War* (Woodward 2002, xi).

gift to humanity,” he said (quoted in Barnes 2003, *God and Man in the Oval Office*). In contemplating his administration’s geopolitical vision for America’s future, Bush frequently emphasizes the importance of morality in defining the country’s role in the world:

There is a value system that cannot be compromised – God-given values. These aren’t United States-created values. These are values of freedom and the human condition and mothers loving their children. What’s very important as we articulate foreign policy through our diplomacy and military action is that it never looks like we are creating – we are the author of these values” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 131).

The full scope of the Bush Doctrine is laid out in *Present Dangers: Crisis and Opportunity in American Foreign and Defense Policy* (2000), a collection of works providing the blueprint of Bush’s foreign policy plan (Barry 2002, *PNAC’S Present Dangers*). In *Present Dangers*, William J. Bennett contended that U.S. foreign policy needed a strong moral component²⁹ that should not be strictly defined by national or economic interests (Barry 2002, *PNAC’S Present Dangers*). In addition, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz added that America’s moral vision must marry the ability “to take a hard-headed and clear-eyed view of the world” (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 335).

²⁹ Like the president, particular “hardliners” (e.g. Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle) within the Bush arsenal also promote the use of military force to achieve “moral clarity.” This policy is comprehensively laid out in *Present Dangers* (2000).

II. Good versus Evil

The second defining factor of cowboy ethics is viewing the world in terms of a good-evil dichotomy. John G. Cawelti characterized the Western genre as supplying simple stories in which plot and characterization follow clear-cut lines: good characters versus bad characters, with good usually winning (Emmert 1996, 1). The classic cowboy story “must have clearly opposing players” as well as a set of rules indicating “which actions are legitimate and which are not” (Cawelti 1974, 124). Savage elaborated, “There is no accommodation, no compromise, only the sort of wisdom that allows consideration of the world in stark contrasts of black and white” (Savage 1979, 28). Finally, at the end of the Westerns, the good old cowboy wins a clear-cut victory over a menacing evil (Emmert 1996, 1). Thus, the standard Western plot paints a vivid picture of a moral divide among parties by using moral absolutes like “good” and “evil.”

Fittingly, one of the pillars of the Bush Doctrine is a rejection of moral relativism (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). To be precise, the Bush Doctrine embraces a stark, dualistic and triumphal worldview. In the Bush administration’s war on terrorism, the president has figuratively drawn a black-and-white map on which each country must choose a color. As the president declared: “I view this current conflict as either us versus them [or] evil versus good. And there is no in between” (quoted in Schneider 2002, *A Reagan Echo*). Bush applied his moral absolutism to the United States’ current political scene when he insisted there was evil in the world, and the United States must call evil by its name.³⁰ Reiterating his belief in moral absolutism, Bush

³⁰ From his West Point speech, Bush said: “We are in a conflict between good and evil, and America will call evil by its name” (quoted in Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). In another incident, while making a brief statement to the press, Bush referred to “evil” or “evildoers” seven times (Woodward 2002, 94). Bush pinned Iran, Iraq and North Koreans as the

declared in his West Point speech that different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). If states support or harbor terrorists, rooting out terrorism would require aggressive action *not only* against the terrorists, *but also* against states that break the norms of civilized behavior (The White House 2002, 15).

Furthermore, the Bush Doctrine insists on zero-tolerance for non-alignment in the campaign against terrorism (DeYoung 2001, A01). President Bush's remark to the nation on September 11, 2001, put forth this belief: "We will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them" (quoted in Kuniholm 2002, *9/11, the Great Game*). The president had repeatedly made clear that people are either "with us or against us": "From this day forward, any nation that continues to harbor or support terrorism will be regarded by the United States as a hostile regime" (quoted in PBS Online 2003, *The Evolution of the Bush Doctrine*). Bush argued that those driven by enmity or by a need to dominate would not respond to reason or goodwill, but would instead acquire weapons of mass destruction to be used as threats offensively to achieve the aggressive designs of their regimes (The White House 2002, 14). This led Bush to declare that, "What was decided was, the doctrine is, if you harbor [terrorists], feed them, house them, you're just as guilty, and you will be held to account" (quoted in Woodward 2002, 73). "If the line isn't clear and there aren't clear consequences," Bush had mentioned, "people migrate to the wrong side of the line" (quoted in Woodward 2002, 90). Therefore the Bush Doctrine concluded, in the war

"evil ones" in his "axis of evil" State of Union address on January 29, 2002 condemning Iran, Iraq and North Korea: "States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world" (quoted in Schneider 2002, *A Reagan Echo*).

against terrorism there can be no moderates, only those for or against the United States (Dodge 2002, *Storming the Desert*).

Just like the classic Western, Bush the cowboy neither accommodates nor negotiates with the bad guy.³¹ Westerns stuck to a clear black and white pattern to simplify conflict (Emmert 1996, 7). In this film genre, the good guy wears the white hat and the bad guy dons the black one (Schneider 2002, *A Reagan Echo*).³² All qualities, good and bad, are intensified and accentuated in the life of the Wild West (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 50). Accordingly, cowboy ethics behold the world in stark contrast of black and white; there is good and then there is evil. Like the cowboy, who was the good guy fighting the bad men, the Bush Doctrine sees the role of the United States as that of a “benevolent hegemony” (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 289-305). The underlying ideological principle of the Bush Doctrine is that American power is a force of good: “There is no doubt in my mind we’re doing the right thing. Not one doubt,” said Bush (quoted in Woodward 2002, 256). America’s responsibility to history was “to answer these attacks and rid the world of evil” (Bush 2001, *National Day of Prayer*). To put it in Bush’s rhetoric, the war on terrorism was a showdown in the “monumental struggle of good versus evil” (quoted in Sandalow 2001, A7). At the core of the Bush Doctrine was the

³¹ I am here referring to Bush’s image as an unwavering politician. In actuality, Bush *has* compromised in several policy negotiations. For instance, he opposed creating a separate department of homeland security but then embraced it when it was inevitable. In addition, he dropped school vouchers from his education package the instant he knew he could not win. And when it appeared that his proposed \$726 billion tax cut would not survive in Congress intact, Bush preemptively lowered his target figure by one-third – acting as though he had always hoped for a tax cut totaling \$550 billion (Kornblut 2003, 16).

³² This is an exaggeration, but it is commonly known that in Westerns the good guys wear the white hats and the bad guys wear the black hats: “There was good and evil, and the two were easily discernible by the color of their Stetsons” (Haley 2003, B-07).

belief that America is destined to be a force of good in the world (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 289-305).

III. Offense as Defense

The third factor of cowboy ethics is a belief in the right to anticipatory self-defense. According to Cawelti, the sanitization of violence is an essential feature of Westerns. The cowboy's use of violence was justified, because violence was not only the vehicle for conflict resolution, but also for protection of higher values: peace, law, and domestic harmony (Cawelti 1974, 250). The "savage" in the Western – either an Indian or an outlaw – was usually thought of as more violent than the cowboy hero (Cawelti *rev. ed.* 1984, 53-54). In the traditional Western a very strong distinction was made between good violence (perpetrated by the cowboy) and the bad violence (used by the villains in pursuit of their evil aims) (Cawelti *rev. ed.* 1984, 15). One of the major organizing principles of the Western "is to so characterize the villains that the hero is both intellectually and emotionally justified in destroying them" (Cawelti *rev. ed.* 1984, 14). The cowboy is seen as heroic, because "he has the wisdom to know when and against whom to exhibit that violence" (Savage 1979, 32). Moreover, while the hero was usually portrayed as very reluctant to enter into violence – if he had to fight, he used his fists, and if someone shot at him, he shot back, but only to wound (Savage 1979, 33).³³

Similarly, the Bush Doctrine follows a strategy of "offensive defense," noting that the United States would have to use any means necessary in order to protect itself from

³³ It was the postwar cowboy who killed regularly, noted Savage (Savage 1979, 33). Of course, once the classic cowboy used his six-gun, his shootout skills were still glorified (Cawelti *rev. ed.* 1984, 15).

harm – including using force first (Dodge 2002, 4).³⁴ Following the World Trade Center and Pentagon terrorist attacks, Bush outlined a major shift in U.S. foreign policy from containment³⁵ to preemption: “Our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives” (quoted in PBS Online 2003, *The Evolution of the Bush Doctrine*). The Bush Doctrine argued that older foreign policies would not be effective in dealing with non-democratic regimes such as Iraq and with non-state actors such as Al Qaeda.³⁶ The president described the enemy as one America had never before encountered, an enemy who operated in the shadows. “This is an enemy that tries to hide, but it won’t be able to hide forever,” said Bush (quoted in Woodward 2002, 45). Thus, the central tenet of the United States’ new strategic posture dictated that America would not wait to be attacked, but move proactively to disrupt and defeat terrorists and tyrants (The White House 2002, 6). Because of the immediacy of today’s threats and the magnitude of potential harm that could be caused by these adversaries’ choices of

³⁴ Bush’s *National Security Strategy* noted that international law recognized that nations need not suffer an attack before they can lawfully take action to defend themselves against forces that present an imminent danger of attack, nothing that scholars often conditioned “the legitimacy of preemption on the existence of an imminent threat” (White House 2002, 15). However, administration officials have stressed that the kind of preemptive actions that are envisaged by the Bush Doctrine are not exclusively military; nevertheless it clearly allows for armed strikes as a last resort.

³⁵ As originally used by George Kennan, *containment* is “the main element of any United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies ... designed to present the Russians with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world” (Kennan 1951, 99, 104).

³⁶ In *After Victory* (2001), John Ikenberry acknowledged that democratic states had a built-in advantage in the process of ensuring predictability and accountability over non-democracies. “When a state is open and transparent to outside states, it reduces the surprises and allows other states to monitor the domestic decision making that attends the exercise of power,” noted the author (Ikenberry 2001, 62). Ikenberry, however, felt that even in the case of non-democracies, mechanisms could be created in the process of bonding (Ikenberry 2001, 61).

weapons, the United States could not permit its enemies to strike first (The White House 2002, 15).

These threats led the Bush administration to develop a strategy of offensive defense. When it comes to dealing with totalitarian regimes and terrorist organizations, the United States could not expect the bad guys to be good citizens in the international community. More to the point, rogue states and terrorists would not play by existing rules of the game (The White House 2002, 15). Bush noted, “If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long. [...] The war on terror will not be won on the defensive (quoted in Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). “This is the time for self-defense,” the president declared during a meeting with his senior advisors, according to National Security Council notes. “We have to make it clear [...] this is showtime” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 31). The United States could not place its security in jeopardy by dealing with actors operating outside the conventions of international law by acquiring or selling dangerous weapons. As Wolfowitz stated, while laws, judges, and trials are what the country “wants for our domestic political process ... foreign policy decisions cannot be subject to that kind of rule of law” (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 334).

The Bush Doctrine developed a storyline linking America’s own role and character to the historical and natural forces at work for the cowboy in the Wild West.³⁷ Using cowboy ethics was for the frontiersman a means to justify that might was right (Emmert 1996, 15). Like the cowboy, the nature of the threat America faced would

³⁷ For another perspective on this, Slotkin wrote that politicians adopt the Western to rationalize America’s development into an imperial Great Power by asserting “a similar privilege for the use of armed force and to justify, in the name of national security, the evasion, abuse, or overriding of

dictate the country's action. Defending the United States against its enemies is the "first and fundamental commitment of the federal government," asserted the administration's *National Security Strategy* (The White House 2002, iv). Accordingly, in the war against terrorism, Bush could not defend America and its friends "by hoping for the best" (quoted in Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). As the president elaborated, "We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrant, who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties, and then systematically break them" (quoted in Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). Like the cowboy, Bush communicates the moral motives for his right to preempt. Bush claimed that the right to self-defense should extend to authorizing preemptive attacks against potential aggressors, cutting them off before they are able to launch strikes against the United States (Woodward 2002, 30). In order to safeguard the security and liberty being threatened by the terrorists, the United States had little choice but to abide by the Code of the West, i.e. the cowboy's duty-bound system of moral standards. "Our security will require all Americans to be forward-looking and resolute, to be ready for preemptive action when necessary to defend our liberty and to defend our lives" said Bush (quoted in PBS Online 2003, *The Evolution of the Bush Doctrine*). Bush prepared the ground for preemptive action by developing a justification that an attack against Iraq and Afghanistan would be acts of self-defense. *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* released in September 2002 stated that sometimes "[America's] best defense is a good offense" (The White House 2002, 6). In this fashion, the Bush Doctrine was a call to strike first and strike hard.³⁸

the official procedures and social institutions through which the American public registers consent" (Slotkin 1998, 349-353).

³⁸ Tom Barry discussed Bush's "war for peace" doctrine in *PNAC's Presents Dangers*. He compared Bush's foreign policy to Teddy Roosevelt's model of "conservative internationalism,"

IV. My Way or the Highway

The fourth component of cowboy ethics is a willingness to act alone when necessary. The cowboy is the American hero because he is a man who acts out of conviction, bred with a sense of place, and loyal to those who put their trust in him (Fields 2003, A19). For instance, in the classic cowboy movie *High Noon* (1952), Gary Cooper plays Will Kane, a retired marshal ready to leave on his honeymoon with his Quaker bride, when he learns that bad guy Frank Miller has been released from jail. Miller, as Kane is told, is coming into town to kill him. Despite protestation from his wife and the townspeople, Kane will not leave town; rather, he *cannot* for he must face up to evil. In order to take out Miller the “diplomatic” way, Kane tries to round up a posse to arrest Miller. He moves methodically to his allies, asking each one for help. But each – for his personal reason – refuse. And so Kane must go at it alone, asserting the need for preemptive violence to prevent atrocities, which he believes are certain to follow Miller’s return (Slotkin 1998, 393).

Likewise, Bush’s unilateral implementation of action at the United Nations led *The Pittsburgh-Post Gazette’s* national security writer Jack Kelly to compare him to the lonely but brave Will Kane.³⁹ “Bush’s U.N. speech on Saddam Hussein eerily resembled the script of the greatest Western of all time, *High Noon*,” wrote Jack Kelly, comparing

opening with a relevant quote from Roosevelt: “Warlike intervention by civilized powers would contribute directly to the peace of the world” (Barry 2002, *PNAC’s Presents Dangers*).

³⁹ Taken as a political film, *High Noon* yields a multifaceted analysis. This is hardly the first time a reference to *High Noon* linked the movie to U.S. policy decisions. In 1955, Harry Schein proclaimed *High Noon* to be “the most convincing and likewise, certainly the most honest explanation of American foreign policy” (Schein 1955, 316). In his analysis of *High Noon*, Gary Cooper was America; the town was the United Nations; the bad guys were Russia, China, and North Korea; and Grace Kelly represented pacifists everywhere.

the president to Cooper's lone character (Kelly 2002, B-3).⁴⁰ At his speech at Hadleyville on the Hudson, Bush declared that the United Nation's credibility was at stake. He believed that if the United Nations would not enforce its own rules, it would become as irrelevant as its impotent predecessor, the League of Nations (Kelly 2002, B-3).⁴¹ Bush demanded that the United Nations "show some backbone" (quoted in Kornblut 2003, 16). "We cannot stand by and do nothing while dangers gather," declared the president. "We must stand up for our security, and for the permanent rights and hopes of mankind. By heritage and by choice, the United States of America will make that stand. Delegates to the United Nations, you have the power to make that stand as well" (quoted in Kelly 2002, B-3). As Wolfowitz pointed out, leaders can't always be diplomatic – "as a practical and moral point, principles count" (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 323). In a case where normal allies are unhelpful, unilateral action was sometimes the only right way to defend oneself from imminent danger of attack (The White House 2002, 6).

As follows, the Bush Doctrine does not tolerate non-alignment in the campaign against terrorism. The president declared that in the war against terrorism, it was "a black and white choice with no gray" in countries choosing sides (Woodward 2002, 47). While the United States will constantly strive to enlist the support of the international community, the United States will not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise our

⁴⁰ Drawing a parallel to the classic cowboy film, Bush (re: Kane) prepares for a confrontation with Hussein (re: Frank Miller). He tries to recruit a posse, but the town's citizens (re: America's ally nations), but is deserted by his allies. Bush doesn't rush to the showdown (re: war), but moves methodically, letting others (re: the United Nations) know he wants their help. But they decline, and so Bush must face the bad guys alone.

⁴¹ Cochairman of the Council on Foreign Relation's task force on post conflict Iraq, James Schlesinger described the situation: "What I think is clear is that given the test to which the United Nations was subjected during particularly the second – so-called second resolution – that the United Nations failed that test, we would, if we went back, we would fall into the endless

right of self-defense by acting preemptively, stated the *National Security Strategy* (White House 2002, 6). The Bush Doctrine insists that issues need not be dealt with multilaterally (Zoellick 2000, 69). On the question of multilateralism versus unilateralism in America's foreign policy, Richard Perle⁴² stated in a January 25, 2003 interview that, "we cannot abdicate responsibility for our own security. Multilateralism is preferable ... but if the only way you can get a consensus is by abandoning your most fundamental interests, then it is not helpful" (quoted in PBS Online/Frontline 2003, *Evolution of the Bush Doctrine*). Likewise, the president did not want other countries dictating terms or conditions for the war on terrorism. "At some point," he said, "we may be the only ones left. That's okay with me" (quoted in Woodward 2002, 81).

Bush's "go-it-alone foreign policy" (Grossman 2003, 1) is akin to the "individualism" promoted in cowboy ethics (Savage 1979, 152). In "The Cowboy: America's Contribution to the World's Mythology," Marshall W. Fishwick wrote that with the cowboy "the love of freedom is a passion, and the willingness to accept the accompanying responsibility a dogma" (Fishwick 1952, 92). Ron Grossman wrote on the president: "His is a vision of pioneer America, where sturdy frontiersmen didn't wait for the government. They went out and tamed the wilderness with their own two hands" (Grossman 2003, 5). Like the cowboy, Bush accepted the fight thrust upon him, believing that it was more important to enforce respect than to earn it – even if it meant

diplomatic wrangles that the prime minister referred to and that would be ill advised. It would be an exercise in frustration" (quoted in Online NewsHour 2003, *After the War*).

⁴² Perle served in the Reagan administration from 1981 to 1987 as Assistant Secretary of Defense for international security policy and was chairman of the Defense Policy Board, an influential group of advisers to the Pentagon. He stepped down from the chairmanship after questions were raised about a potential conflict of interest regarding his private business dealings.

standing alone and turning his back on the system.⁴³ The United States must be postured to act independently when collective action cannot be achieved or in a crisis that calls for an immediate response (The White House 2002, 6). Bush had to prove that a strong actor like the United States was willing to clearly signal that despite absent support it would, on occasions where morality was at stake, go it alone. “My attitude all along was, if we have to go it alone, we’ll go it alone; but I’d rather not,” Bush said (quoted in Woodward 2002, 45).

V. Defenders of Civilization

The fifth element of cowboy ethics is a sense of duty to defend the weak. Like Alan Ladd in *Shane*, the mythic cowboy is a defender of innocents against the bad guys (Fields 2002, A19). In the popular 1953 Western, the cowboy Shane is a “good man with a gun” who is the sole vindicator of the “liberties of the people,” the “indispensable man” in the quest for progress (Slotkin 1998, 396). Shane rides into town, guns down the evildoers, and then rides out, leaving behind the belief that civilization has been preserved (Emmert 1996, 13). *Shane* follows one key point of cowboy ethics – namely, those who have the power to act have the responsibility to act, usually in the name of the community, but if need be against the will of the community (Slotkin 1998, 399). *Shane* represented the nobility and sacrifice of the cowboy, who must exercise his power against

⁴³ Bypassing the United Nations to invade Iraq is only the latest example of Bush’s single-minded approach toward the international community. He walked away from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, an agreement that had codified U.S.-Russian nuclear reductions for decades, over the objections of the Russians and just about everyone else. He refused to pay minimal lip service to the Kyoto agreement on global warming – an arguably unnecessary move, since it never would have been ratified in the Senate anyway. He made it clear that the United States would not consider joining the International Criminal Court, a decision that even some Democrats agreed

civilization's opponents (Slotkin 1998, 400). Everyone knows what the cowboy is supposed to do, and he does it (Fishwick 1952, 91). "To his code [...] he is faithful to the end," stated Fishwick (Fishwick 1952, 92).

Similarly, the Bush Doctrine declared that the United States should also enforce justice – though in America's case, on an international scale. "We build a world of justice, or we will live in a world of coercion," said Bush during a visit to Berlin on May 23, 2002 (quoted in *The White House 2002*, 9). The Bush Doctrine stated that in a world where evil dictators still hang on to power, the seeds of global war might again be planted and allowed to grow (*The White House 2002*, v). Thus, the president believed that if the enemy were not contained, civilization would be at risk (Kuniholm 2002, *9/11, the Great Game*). In his speech to Congress on September 20, 2001, Bush outlined a vision of strong American leadership in the world:

Freedom and fear are at war. The advance of human freedom – the great achievement of our time, and the great hope of every time – now depends on us. Our nation – this generation – will lift a dark threat of violence from our people and our future. We will rally the world to this cause by our efforts, by our courage. We will not tire, we will not falter, and we will not fail (quoted in PBS Online 2003, *The Evolution of the Bush Doctrine*).

The Bush Doctrine advocates a duty to defend the weak, a sense of responsibility to protect weaker countries that are unable to adequately defend themselves: "[The] values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society – and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages" (*The White House 2002*, iv). As stated in

was wise, but that added to the perception, especially at the U.N., that Bush is a unilateralist

The National Security Strategy, America should use its position of “unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence” to “extend the benefits of freedom across the globe” (The White House 2002, iv). “I wanted us to be viewed as the liberator,” Bush said about Afghanistan (quoted in Woodward 2002, 340). In order to defend the “decent folks,” the United States must stand up to the challenge of doing the right thing. Bush suggested that the toppling of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein’s regime earlier this year was not done strictly for strategic or defensive purposes, but to help the weak – “beneath that, as far as I’m concerned, there is immense suffering [in Iraq]” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 339). “This is a human condition that we must worry about,” said Bush (quoted in Woodward 2002, 340). As Bennett acknowledged, the history of American involvement abroad has been characterized by its generosity and humanitarian acts – even toward nations it has defeated in war (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 294).⁴⁴ “America is not interested in territorial conquest, subjugation of others, or world domination,” Bennett claimed, adding, “The record shows that in the overwhelming number of instances America has been a liberating force from oppression” (Kagan and Kristol 2000, 294).⁴⁵

In regards to Bush’s duty to fight the war on terrorism, cowboy ethics can be applied. Like the Western gunfighter who dispenses justice in a hostile world, the Bush Doctrine bestowed America the authority to be the moral “watchdog of the world” in the

(Kornblut 2003, 16).

⁴⁴ As in the case with Iraq, because of American intervention Saddam Hussein’s regime was overthrown and the possibility for a civilized form of governance exists for the first time in 30 years (Krauthammer 2003, A25). With the threat from Hussein now eliminated, Kuwait’s future is secure (Krauthammer 2003, A25).

⁴⁵ As Bush had said, the goal was the creation of democracy in Iraq, or as Central Command General Tommy Franks listed in his announced war aims, “to help the Iraqi people create conditions for a transition to a representative self-government” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 357).

post-Cold War globe.⁴⁶ In the old Westerns, the cowboy was the man who restored the “disturbed” universe by self-asserting universal justice; Fishwick wrote that the cowboy “conjures up an image of America’s untarnished natural nobleman roaming about in [his] never-never land, where [he] makes the laws and metes out the justice” (Fishwick 1952, 91). Akin to cowboy ethics, the Bush Doctrine supports the responsibility of the United States to administer justice and preserve the peace (The White House 2002, v). Violence becomes a way of solving problems (Savage 1979, 32). Like the cowboy, the Bush Doctrine asserts that the United States must retain its freedom to act against serious dangers in order to protect its people and others from harm. In an interview with Woodward, Bush questioned how the civilized world could just stand by while evil dictators abuse their people (Woodward 2002, 340). “Maybe it’s my religion, but I feel passionate about this,” he explained. “We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent,” the president promised in his West Point speech on June 1, 2002 (The White House 2002, 1).

⁴⁶ Slotkin believed that the cowboy was a mythic archetype that became transformed into an ideology justifying America’s role as the “watchdog of the World” after WWII (Walle 2000, 50).

Chapter Three The Cowboy Way

Hans Gruber: “You know my name, but who are you? Just another American who saw too many movies as a child? Another orphan of a bankrupt culture who thinks he’s John Wayne, Rambo, Marshall Dillon?”

John McClane: “I was always kind of partial to Roy Rogers, actually.”

Hans Gruber: “Do you really think you have a chance against us, Mr. Cowboy?”

John McClane: “Yippee ki-yay, motherfucker!”

- From *Die Hard* (1988)

Of all the Western heroes, the most dominant one today is the cowboy (Smith *rev. ed.* 1978, 109). The cowboy is evocative of a significant period in American history, and that is also his function (Savage 1979, 38). Despite the closing of the literal frontier, the cowboy’s story carries on in the new American frontier because he contributes an integral part to America’s self-identity (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 4, 24). The cowboy has transcended time – lasting for more than a century as an icon⁴⁷ – by evoking the image of America in the past (Savage 1979, 38). This led Savage to conclude that America’s acceptance of the cowboy was indicative of his stature as a myth (Savage 1979, 3).

Because of the cowboy’s ubiquitous presence in the American mythos, Bush is thus able to utilize cowboy ethics as a tactical tool for communicating his administration’s foreign policy actions. The cowboy’s “Code of the West” allows Bush to allude to the past Americans romanticize, while making a strong argument for the

foreign policy actions he supports today.⁴⁸ In this concluding chapter, I will elaborate why adopting cowboy ethics become useful in enunciating the Bush Doctrine, as described by the National Hero, the Common Man, the Justice Fighter, and the Man of Action.

I. The National Hero

Because of the prevailing American image of the cowboy, politicians can use the Western hero as a tool to control public opinion (Emmert 1996, 13-14). For example, William Henry Harrison campaigned on his Indian-fighting laurels to gain the presidency in 1840 (Slotkin 1998, 644). In 1900, “Rough Rider” Theodore Roosevelt was crowned with the title “cowboy president,”⁴⁹ despite the fact that he came from a wealthy and socially prominent family in the East. And Ronald Reagan, identified as a B-Western cowboy actor, capitalized on his public identity linking him to more heroic Western movie star like John Wayne (Slotkin 1998, 644).⁵⁰ The cowboy suggests to Americans what they have been and what they might yet become (Savage 1979, 38).

It is particularly important for the president to be able to relate to the American people in order to successfully disseminate his administration’s ideas rapidly and widely (Fisher 1982, 46). The public wants political leaders who – both in their public persona

⁴⁷ The cowboy is an integral part of American popular culture as evidenced in the dime novel, nineteenth-century historical romance, the stage melodrama, the Wild West show, the movie, the modern paperback and TV miniseries (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 25).

⁴⁸ Slotkin described how the Reagan presidency used the mythic cowboy in the political arena. “Reagan had a legitimate claim on this kind of heroic aura,” he wrote (Slotkin 1998, 644).

⁴⁹ When President McKinley was assassinated in 1901, leading Roosevelt to assume his duties, Sen. Mark Hanna of Ohio was led to lament of the colorful Easterner, “Now that damn cowboy is President.” (Straub 2002, *Latest ‘Cowboy President’ Shoots from Hip*).

⁵⁰ In the 1984 convention, clips of John Wayne were used to introduce a film celebrating Reagan’s life and achievements in his first term (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 644).

and in their politics – reflect the values inherent in the national mythology⁵¹ (Fishwick 1952, 84). Yet for a mythology of this sort to become real, it needs to be performed by actors (Fisher 1982, 46). Accordingly, presidents must celebrate – rather, embody – the national mythology that lies at the base of mass public opinion. Scholar Walter Fisher summed up this idea:

Presidential heroes need to be romantic figures, but they need to be more than that. A romantic figure need only be an adventurous, colorful, daring, and impassioned exponent of certain American ideals, such as individualism, achievement, and success. To be an American hero, one must not only display these qualities, one must also be visionary and mythic, a subject for folklore and legend. The American hero evokes the image of the American Dream, of the ways people and things are when the spirit of America transcends the moment, and her destiny is manifest. The American hero is the symbolic embodiment of this dream in a single person, most predominantly, in certain presidents (Fisher 1982, 46).

It seems fitting then that the cowboy is used to draw a presidential portrait of the American hero (Fishwick 1952, 84). As an integral part of the American national mythology, the cowboy has a certain political utility as an item of cultural value (Emmert 1996, 14). The cowboy remains the compelling archetype of an American national hero and the most popular historical and mythical character from the country's past (Frantz and Choate *rev. ed.* 1968, 8). He plays an important role in American politics because he signifies the traits the American people look for in the symbolic leader of their country: leadership, bravery, plainspoken integrity, loyalty, staunch individualism and moral authority (Fishwick 1952, 77-92). Thus, the use of the mythic cowboy image lends to the politician the status of a hero (Slotkin 1998, 644).

⁵¹ I use Slotkin's definition: "The mythology of a nation is an intelligible mask ... of national character" (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1973, 3). Thus, Slotkin suggested mythology to be a secondary

II. The Common Man

Additionally, cowboy ethics also serve another purpose for the Bush Doctrine. It can first of all act as a means for communicating Bush's foreign policy decisions to the public (Slotkin 1998, 644). The cowboy offers Bush a tactical tool to articulate to a diverse population his message in a plainspoken way and its widespread acceptance (Florig, *The Power of Presidential Ideologies*⁵²). For much of the public, cowboy ethic has broader appeal than rhetoric explaining complex strategies and dry statistics.⁵³ That is, the cowboy can simplify the complexities of communicating policy issues and explaining multifaceted policy decisions (Emmert 1996, 14).

Utilizing cowboy ethics, Bush additionally takes on the image of the trustworthy "common man," a "man of the people" whom Americans see their image and spirit in (Waterman et. al 1999, 24-31). The president's use of the vernacular and the simplicity involved in how he talks and sees the world, are elements that promote the Bush Doctrine.⁵⁴ As the cowboy is ascribed with unsubtlety and moral simplicity (Mills 2003, 4), he is also valued for being a "straight shooter" (Gatchel 2001, 6C).⁵⁵ In a similar way,

variable that is impacted by national character, the primary variable.

⁵² In 1992 Dennis Florig published *The Power of Presidential Ideologies*, a study of presidential administrations, their ideas, and their policies, covering presidents from Franklin Roosevelt through the first George Bush. Florig has updated the original version of his book online with new text, graphics and links. No copyright date, however, was found in Florig's online version.

⁵³ I bring to attention "Reaganomics." By borrowing from the cowboy story, Ronald Reagan described how a magical growth of American wealth, power and virtue would derive from the close linkage of his "bonanza economics" (Slotkin 1998, 645).

⁵⁴ For example, Bush has said that Saddam Hussein "crawfished" to escape U.N. sanctions, and that America would "smoke" Taliban operatives "out of their caves" (quoted in Milibank and Loeb 2003, A01).

⁵⁵ Straight shooters adhere to such old-fashioned concepts as keeping their word and doing what they believe to be right regardless of the consequences (Gatchel 2001, 6C). "I think the fact of the matter is that he cuts to the chase [...] Oftentimes, you can get so tangled up in nuances and the

Bush is commonly known for his poor command of the language and his stark black-and-white view of the world (Podhoretz 2002, *In Praise of the Bush Doctrine*). Bush has said that he used such straightforward language to communicate to the public the direction America was heading in the war against terrorism (Woodward 2002, 100).⁵⁶ For instance, on the eve of the failed effort earlier this year to win U.N. support for military action against Iraq, Bush stated, “It’s time for people to show their cards” (quoted in Milibank and Loeb 2003, A01). Like a cowboy, “he calls the shots like he sees them” (Fields 2003, A19). Revisiting the tough-talk of the Old West, during a press conference Bush again invoked the talk of the cowboy, when a reporter asked “Do you want bin Laden dead?” To which the president responded, “There’s an old poster out West, I recall, that says, ‘Wanted: Dead or Alive’” (quoted in Schneider 2001, *A Reagan Echo*).

Bush’s forthright language and simple phrases may indeed speak to Americans. In an account of the president’s August 2001 vacation, *Los Angeles Times* reporter Ronald Brownstein attempted a complex articulation of Bush’s presidential image. Brownstein wrote that “Bush is taciturn where Clinton was loquacious,” acknowledging that “part of that may reflect his staff’s uncertainty about his skills at delivering formal speeches or sparring with the press in news conferences” (Brownstein 2001, A8). He elaborated: “The White House seems to be telling voters that Bush may be a man of fewer words than his predecessor, but at least you can always trust his words. In White

fine points of diplomacy of dealing with these kind of issues,” said Vice President Dick Cheney about Bush on NBC’s “Meet the Press” (quoted in Mills 2003, 4).

⁵⁶ “A lot of times you get out here and you know something is going to happen or you’re thinking about something,” Bush recalled. “And you get asked a question and it just, it pops out. I’m not very guarded in that sense sometimes ... It was a little bit bravado, but it was also an understanding [...] that in self-defense of America that ‘Dead or Alive,’ that it’s legal” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 100-101).

House iconography, Bush is Gary Cooper to Clinton's Elmer Gantry" (Brownstein 2001, A8).⁵⁷

III. The Justice Fighter

As a mythic representation of American origins, the cowboy's story implied that violence was a necessary part of the process through which American society was formed and through which its democratic values are defended and enforced (Slotkin 1998, 352). In *The Cowboy Hero*, Savage described the legendary Western hero as "a guardian, a righter of wrongs, or, at the very least, a perceptive and philosophical observer of the human condition" (Savage 1979, 20). At a time when the frontier was a No Man's Land, there were no official laws governing the pioneers (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 14). Thus, the cowboy's code was the survival of morality and civilized behavior in a remote location where policing and legal institutions were sketchy, weak or non-existent (Slotkin 1998, 352). Because he was schooled in the ways of nature (i.e. he learned first-hand how to survive in the wilderness), he gained a unique vision of frontier justice (Savage 1979, 24). That is, the cowboy learned that in order to defend himself from the bad guys, he had to learn to defend himself by learning to think like the enemy.⁵⁸

Likewise in the new war against terrorism, the United States had to think like bin Laden and Hussein in order to understand what the other side – what Bush administration referred to as the "evildoers" – might be thinking or doing (Woodward 2002, 132).

⁵⁷ Brownstein is referring to the sinner-preacher immortalized in the Sinclair Lewis novel. *Elmer Gantry* tells of the American heartland's attraction to a wide-smiling, womanizing man who sweeps through the Corn Belt with a thunderous indictment of sin – while doing all that he decries.

“We’re in for a difficult struggle; it is a new kind of war,” Bush asserted. “We’re facing an enemy we never faced before” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 96). The president said in an interview, “It was the continuation of understanding the frame of mind of the enemy. In order to win a war, you must understand the enemy” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 125). In concurrence, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Richard Myers described America’s previous wars as “conventional,” while Afghanistan was a different kind of conflict (Woodward 2002, 220).⁵⁹ The argument is that when fighting the bad guys, good men may have to “fight dirty” like the enemy.

Cawelti argued that the cowboy story was a predictable story for viewers/readers to easily recognize the conventions of the genre: the lawman will inevitably save the day (Emmert 1996, 6). It was a belief the president held as well. On the night of March 17, 2003, Bush delivered a nationally televised address from the Oval Office to announce the war and, likewise, America’s success: “Now that conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force. [...] We will defend our freedom, we will bring freedom to others *and we will prevail*” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 356-357, emphasis added).

At the same time, as a fighter for justice, the classic cowboy’s used of power could be trusted because his ethos made him impregnable to corruption (Cawelti 1974, 250). Like the cowboy, whose use of violence was justified as it was used for the

⁵⁸ As another perspective, Slotkin noted in *Gunfighter Nation* that one of the “moral truths” of the frontier experience was its exemplification of the principle that violence was a justifiable instrument of American progress (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 77).

⁵⁹ “If you try to quantify what we’re doing today in terms of previous conventional wars, you’re making a huge mistake. That is ‘old think’ and that will not help you analyze what we’re doing now,” said General Myers in a press conference (quoted in Woodward 2002, 220).

protection of higher values, America, the “indispensable nation,”⁶⁰ had to use assertive force when confronting its enemies. Unless the United States was prepared to shed its real power and influence (rather than act “polite” in international relations), would-be challengers of the international order will still hurt weaker parties. To allay the American public’s fear that the United States is an empire builder,⁶¹ cowboy ethics are again employed. Bush, a self-described “crusader for justice” (Schneider 2002, *A Reagan Echo*), claimed that the United States wasn’t out to rule over another party. The Bush administration insists they do not want to maintain political control of Iraq or Afghanistan.⁶² They have stressed that the U.S. role would only be to provide stability and security as Iraq established a more permanent government.⁶³

Like the mythic cowboy, who was the type of man who takes care of business and then leaves town (as seen in *High Noon* and *Shane*), Bush also wanted the bad guys out of town. “The people of Iraq are perfectly capable of running Iraq,” the president said. “The U.S. will help in a transition” (quoted in Online NewsHour 2003, *U.S. Officials Weigh Post-War Iraq*). *The National Security Strategy* document went on to declare that America sought “conditions in which all nations and all societies can choose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty” (The White House 2002, iv). Therefore, the cowboy cannot be an imperialist.

⁶⁰ This phrase is commonly attributed to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

⁶¹ For an example, please see Gary Sick’s “Imperial Moments” (2002).

⁶² In an interview with FOX News, Wolfowitz stressed the goal for Iraqi self-governance. “Our goal has to be to transfer authority and operations of a government as quickly as possible, not to some other external authority but to the Iraqi people,” he said (quoted in Online NewsHour 2003, *U.S. Officials Weigh Post-War Iraq*).

⁶³ In fact, in just the three months since the end of the Iraq war, the Pentagon has announced the essential evacuation of the U.S. military from its air bases in Saudi Arabia, from the demilitarized zone in Korea and from the vast Incirlik air base in Turkey (Krauthammer 2003, *The Sleepy Superpower Awakes*).

Thus, Bush has adopted the Code of the West, i.e. cowboy ethics, as a means to legitimize U.S. foreign policy by disassociating it with imperialistic desires. “I do believe there is the image of America out there that we are so materialistic, that we’re almost hedonistic, that we don’t have values,” the president noted (quoted in Woodward 2002, 38-39). By implementing the codes of the cowboy, a symbolic figure representing the myth of the West, the Bush Doctrine attempts to go against the impression of imperialism.⁶⁴

IV. The Man of Action

Additionally, cowboy ethics can be a useful instrument of policy for its use of decisive action by rationalizing acting proactively. “In popular entertainments there is seldom doubt about what his responses will be in a given situation,” wrote Savage about the cowboy (Savage 1979, 4). This response of the mythic cowboy is dictated by cowboy ethics. For while the cowboy’s gun is “the symbol of quick and decisive action” (Fishwick 1952, 81), as Cawelti pointed out, one of the most important rules of the Western was that the hero could not use violence without certain justifications (Cawelti 1974, 124).

Bush justifies his “call to action” by demonstrating that America had a duty to protect democracy and freedom (The White House 2002, iv). America was willing to stand tough against all foreign enemies.⁶⁵ The set of codes brought forth by cowboy

⁶⁴ This of course is not always the case. For instance, Slotkin calls such use of the cowboy mythology as “destructive.” It appears that he frowns upon Theodore Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, three presidents whom selectively rewrote the Western myth “for their own needs, desires and political projects” (Slotkin 1998, 652-658).

⁶⁵ Bush’s decisiveness action to remove Saddam Hussein had conservative scholars like William F. Buckley and Jonah Goldberg from the *National Review* comparing him to other political

ethics can be used to morally enunciate action. “Wishful thinking,” Bush once said to members of the Reichstag, “might bring comfort, but not security” (Fields 2002, A19). For Bush, noble sentiments alone do not amount to much, the United States has to be ready to act: “Confident action that will yield positive results provides kind of a slipstream into which reluctant nations and leaders can get behind and show themselves that there has been [...] something positive has happened toward peace” stated Bush in an interview (quoted in Woodward 2002, 341).⁶⁶ In other words, the United States must be prepared to defeat enemy plans (The White House 2002, iv-vi). As the president explained in the *National Security Strategy*, “History will judge harshly those who saw this coming danger but failed to act. In the new world we have entered, the only path to peace and security is the path of action” (The White House 2002, ii).

To defend the United States, Bush had to show that he meant business.⁶⁷ Americans must be ready to use preemptive action to defend its citizens’ liberty and lives. For instance, when the United Nations announced on March 17, 2003 that they would let the second resolution on weapons inspection die without a vote, Bush went on national television that night to announce: “The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 356). Two days later, the official war in Iraq began. “At the end of the day,” said Perle, “we

“cowboys” who “acted, unafraid, in doing so” (quote from Buckley’s “High Noon in Europe” (2003)). See also Goldberg’s “The Cowboy Way” (2003).

⁶⁶ Brookings Institution presidential scholar Thomas Mann declared, “He’s ambitious, he’s decisive, and he doesn’t have second thoughts. He’s not a man prone to great reflection or internal debate” (quoted in Kornblut 2003, 16).

⁶⁷ Bush said in an interview that he felt the responsibility to show resolve: “I had to show the American people the resolve of a commander in chief that was going to do whatever it took to win. No yielding. No equivocation. No, you know, lawyering [sic] this thing to death, that we’re after ‘em. And that was not only for domestic, for the people at home to see. It was also vitally important for the rest of the world to watch” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 96).

have to defend the American people, and if no one else is with us, then we will defend ourselves alone. No American president can concede that responsibility to a coalition or to anyone else” (quoted in DeYoung 2001, A01).

Provocation was one tool of the Bush Doctrine (Woodward 2000, 145). The Bush administration continually talks tough in the war on terror waged against Afghanistan and Iraq.⁶⁸ In an interview, Bush had expressed his duty as president to be provocative and “to provoke people into – to force decisions, and to make sure it’s clear in everybody’s mind where we’re headed” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 144). Such bellicose actions led journalist Jaime Glazov to assert that had the president been polite and civil, the United States might still be stuck with an unacceptable status quo (Glazov 2002, *The Bush Doctrine*). In concurrence, William Schneider wrote, “In some ways, Bush’s tough policy appears to be working. [...] Our enemies are all acting scared” (Schneider 2002, *A Reagan Echo*).⁶⁹

Cowboy ethics, whether used as rhetorical flourishes or actual policy decisions, reaffirms the legitimacy of an American preventive strike and emphasizes the Bush Doctrine’s notion from his September 20, 2001 speech that “if you are not with us, you are against us” (quoted in Glazov 2002, *The Bush Doctrine*). Simply put, there can be no acceptable compromise with the forces of evil; there can be no reasonable restraint on the forces of good.

⁶⁸ A good example comes from Perle, who told a journalist, “We could deliver a short message [to other hostile regimes in the Middle East]: ‘You’re next’” (Flynn 2003, 3). In another incident, the president raised a few eyebrows with one of his provocations. Taunting the militants who had been attacking U.S. troops since the toppling of Hussein’s regime, Bush promised to “deal with them harshly” if attacks continued (quoted in Milibank and Vernon 2003, A01). “Bring ‘em on,” goaded he president; he asserted that American forces in Iraq were “plenty tough” to deal with their threats (quoted in Milibank and Vernon 2003, A01).

For President George W. Bush, the negative connotations associated with the Western story may be less important than the positive ones. In this paper, I showed how Bush adopts common sense cowboy codes through the Bush Doctrine. But perhaps “adopt” is not the most accurate description. Bush may – at least partially – borrow from cowboy ethics *instinctually*. Like the cowboy who was more concerned with doing and not thinking (Fishwick 1952, 86), Bush’s instincts were described by Woodward in *Bush at War* as his “second religion” (Woodward 2002, 342). According to the *Washington Post* reporter, the president’s impulse was his “natural and spontaneous conclusions and judgments” (Woodward 2002, 342).

Those who have observed Bush as governor have watched his transformation with amazement – although there are different views of how and why he has evolved over the last 2 1/2 years in Washington (Kornblut 2003, 16). Bruce Buchanan, a professor at the University of Texas in Austin who has studied the Bush family political dynasty for decades, said, “Really, it’s always been ‘my way or the highway’; it just wasn’t talked about or written about as much as his impatience was” when Bush was governor (quoted in Kornblut 2003, 16). Likewise, Bush called it his “gut reaction coming out” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 16). “Why I came up with these specific words, maybe it was an echo of the past ... I don’t know why. I’ll tell you this – we didn’t sit around massaging the words. I got up there and just spoke,” he said (quoted in Woodward 2002, 16).

At the same time, the president realizes the need for public support. Bush noted: “I

⁶⁹ Notably, both the Glazov and Schneider articles were written before the start of the regime-

am a product of the Vietnam era. I remember presidents trying to wage wars that were very unpopular, and the nation split. And I felt like, I had the job of making sure the American people understood” (quoted in Woodward 2002, 95).

Bush’s strain of cowboyism is most pronounced in his foreign policy, which has been infused with increasing muscularity over time (Kornblut 2003, 16). In particular, policy makers at the Pentagon have encouraged Bush to use his natural boldness and stubbornness to enhance American power (Kornblut 2003, 16). Strength, they believe, should be wielded visibly and purposefully in order to protect national interests – especially after September 11th (Kornblut 2003, 16). In an interview with Woodward, Bush said he “instinctively knew that we were going to have to think differently” about how to fight terrorism (quoted in Woodward 2002, 50).

If cowboy ethic does succeed in persuading the American citizens as to the legitimacy of the Bush Doctrine, then Bush *and* the old-school cowboy image both win. While common sense may indicate that as the United States ages and turns more global, the importance of the nineteenth century frontier as a vehicle of self-determination will slowly diminish. This, however, does not appear to be the case. History gives us no reason to suppose that the masses will ever cease to mythologize and mystify the origin and history of our societies (Slotkin *rev. ed.* 1998, 654). Accordingly, the cowboy still speaks to and arouses public interest, suggesting perhaps that the key elements of his myth is drawn from the language of the “common” people – and not from the inner circles of academia.⁷⁰

change in Iraq. However, I would argue that the basic point could still be made today.

⁷⁰ While myths are the historian’s “principle enemies,” the historian’s stock influence seldom extends into society beyond the texts he writes for the scholarly types, wrote William Savage in *The Cowboy Hero*. “The public will preserve its myths elsewhere” he claimed (Savage 1979, 4).

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