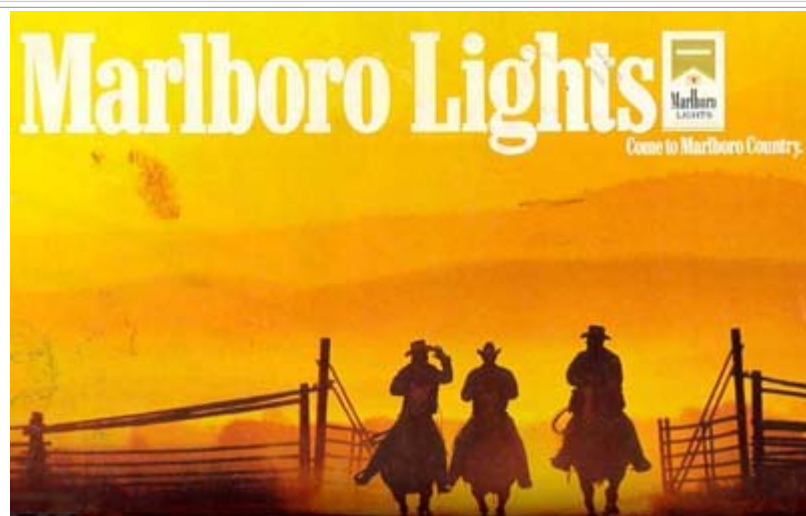


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## The Marlboro Myth



(Time, Vol.147 No. 14, April 1, 1996)

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Smoking is definitely harmful for our health. However, when we read some magazines, we still can find a number of fancy cigarette advertisements which impress people a lot. When people think of Marlboro, they will be reminded of the western cowboys riding on the handsome horses. What exactly do Marlboro advertisements really want to sell? Is it the American cigarette or the masculinity? In the following paragraphs, we will have a deeper discussion about the Marlboro advertisements on magazines to analyze its myth.

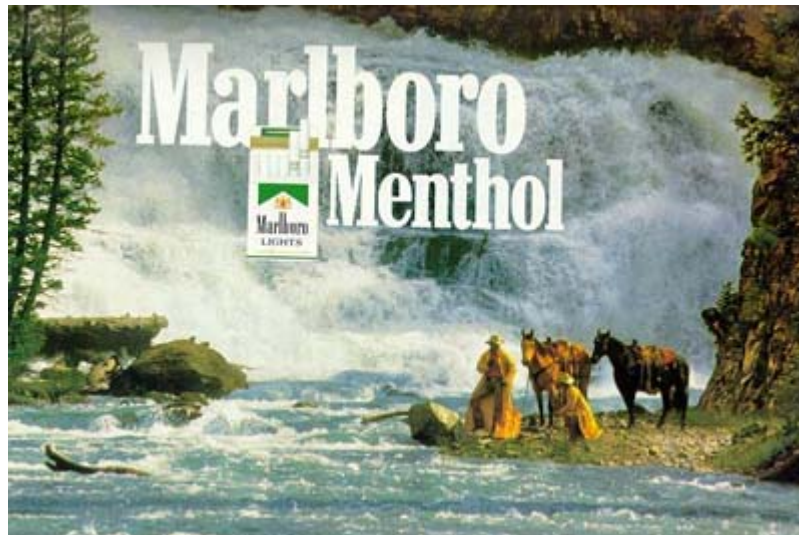
In order to analyze the myth of Marlboro cigarette advertisements create; we have to have a general idea about the types of Marlboro cigarette advertisements. **Marlboro cigarettes have three types: the Marlboro, the Marlboro Lights, and the Marlboro Menthol. The dominant color on the Marlboro pocket is red; on the Marlboro Lights packet, yellow, and on the Marlboro Menthol, green.** Thus, the moods of the advertisements change depending on different types of cigarettes. The mood of the Marlboro is like the general Marlboro advertisements: a cowboy or a group of cowboys accompany with the horses on a broad pasture. On the other hand, the advertisements of the Marlboro Lights and the Marlboro Menthol are a bit different from the characteristic of Marlboro ones. The background color of the Marlboro Lights advertisements is golden. This is similar to the Yellow brand of the Marlboro Lights. Moreover, the Background of the Marlboro Menthol is a green valley. The viridity is resembling the brand of the Marlboro Menthol. In

addition to the colors, the types of the brand of the cigarettes can also be divided by their tastes. The red Marlboro is the heaviest one, so the advertisements focus more on the virility. The obvious examples are the friendship between two men and the brevity of conquering the horse. From the name of the Marlboro Lights, we can know that the taste is not so heavy. Therefore, the advertisements stress the lightness of golden sunlight. From the same formula, the taste of the Marlboro Menthol is cool so the advertisements emphasize the fresh trees and water.

- **Why are there only male cowboys?**

After knowing the types of the Marlboro, we should analyze the significance of the male models showing on the advertisements. Why are there only male cowboys? There are two possible reasons. One is related to the taste of this kind of cigarettes; the other is about the American symbols. According to my friends who have the habit of smoking, the taste of the Marlboro cigarettes is very heavy. Even the Marlboro Lights, the taste of it is still heavier than other brands. Usually, only men would like this heavy taste. Hence, the advertisements with signs of masculinity and virility can appeal to the main male consumers. Next reason for making use of male cowboys is about the American symbols. We know that cowboys in the American West are very famous and they are a natural symbol. Besides, the western scenery can let audience remind of the spirit of the American Pioneers. In the cowboy myth, cowboys are brave, persevering, and innocent. They are the very models of all men in the world; they are the symbol of the America. Besides, the men in the advertisements only ride horses, instead of driving jeeps. The horse riding idea is not only influential but also creative compared with other cigarette advertisements. The creativity is also an important characteristic of Americans. According to above analyses, we can say that the Marlboro cigarettes are not only selling the male identity but also the American identity.

In order to further prove that the Marlboro is **selling male and American identity**, we will discuss more about the slogans and where we can find the Marlboro advertisements. First of all, we can take a look of the Marlboro's slogan, which is "Come to Marlboro Country." The "country" has double meanings. One is the countryside of the West; the other is the nation, the America. No matter which one is right, we can realize that the "country" implies the American identity so the advertisements try to construct an illusive American identity in their



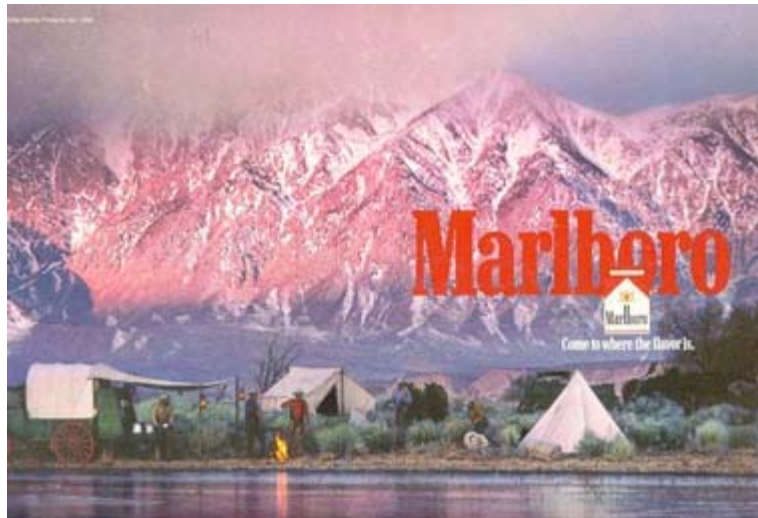
consumers.

Right:  
(Newsweek, Vol.CXXX,  
No.14, Oct.6, 1997)

According to my investigation on the recent magazines in the Science and Foreign Library in Fu-Jen University, the Marlboro advertisements often show on the cover pages of **Magazines** such as Newsweek, TIME, People, Asiaweek, US, Cycle World, U.S.News, and China Times Weekly. If we study carefully, we can find that most readers of these magazines are people above twenty and most of them are male. It is apparent that the Marlboro cigarettes want to attract male consumers more than female ones. That is, the Marlboro cigarettes' myth is to make the consumers identify with those American heroic cowboys.

However, I have some critical thinking toward the Marlboro advertisements. One is that since the Marlboro has strong emphasis on male consumers, if, one day, the company wants to sell cigarettes for female, it will be a big challenge. If they do not want to change their style of advertisements, they may narrow down their consumers. The trite advertisements would not attract people's attention in the future. My another opinion is that no cowboys in the advertisements are smoking. We can think that the cowboys are so powerful and healthy because they do not smoke at all. The cowboy in the advertisement can be the one who gives the Surgeon General's Warning.

Although the Marlboro cigarette has successfully created its American heroic cowboy myth, people still



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keep the right to believe or not to believe. No matter what type of the cigarette is, smoking is evidently pernicious. I hope that people can resist the attraction of those false images, and refuse smoking, like a real hero.