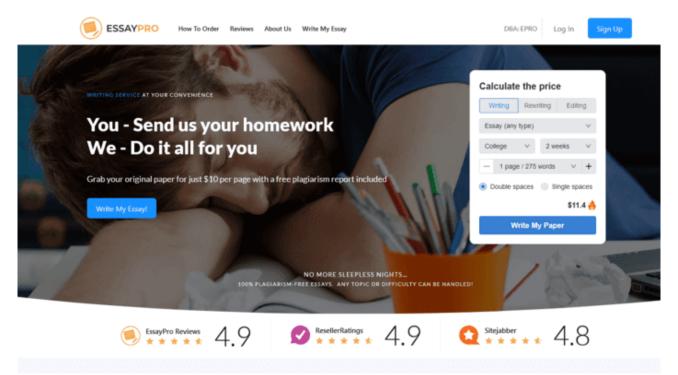
Stereo-typical Characteristics of the Old West Lawman



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Marshall Matt Dillon - Stereo-typical Characteristics of the Old West Lawman
The sound of pounding horse hooves and the piercing ricochet of a gunshot break the silence over the radio. As theme music begins to play, an announcers voice is heard, Around Dodge City and in the territory out West, theres just one way to handle the killers and the spoilers, and thats with the US Marshall and the smell of gun smoke. (Radio Spirits) Thus begins the program Gunsmoke, a program in which the hero, United States Marshall Matt Dillon, personifies the stereotypical old-west lawman through his lonely, compassionate, and judge-mental character.
At the beginning of every episode, Dillon begins by making an opening statement, where he identifies himself as, Matt Dillon, United States Marshall a man watchful and a little lonely. (Radio Spirits) In Johnny Reb, this loneliness is portrayed though a private conversation with Kitty, the saloon manager. In this dialogue, Kitty is expressing her desires for a normal life with a house, husband, and children. These desires, while mutual for both Dillon and Kitty are fantasies because they both know that they will never get out

of the West. While, A body does get mighty lonely (Johnny Reb), Dillon understand that the western man is a wanderer, always searching for that mythical pot-of-gold at the end of

the rainbow. Also his life consists of co-existing with other lawmen, gunfighters, and saloon girls for friends and of remembrances of loved ones spread across the country, seldom heard from. (Ben Tollivers Stud).

Possibly because they were lonely, or because they were gentlemen, the typical western lawman was very compassionate. The listener sees this trait through Matt Dillon in virtually every episode. In Ben Tollivers Stud Dillons compassion was toward Tolliver who was mistreated by his former boss. It was shown toward Mrs. Crail in Johnny Reb whom he thought was getting robbed by an outlaw, and in Twenty-twenty toward his friend Troy Carver. Dillon felt so much compassion in this particular episode that it led him to break his promise not to get involved in Carvers business, in an attempt to save his life.

Yet even though Dillon was compassionate, he was also quite judge-mental, another characteristic of the typical hero of the West. By falsely assuming men killed other men (Ben Tollivers Stud), and automatically assuming that if a man has a record he is up to no good and a liar, (Johnny Reb) Dillon portrays his judgments in a negative manner.

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