



Maria Rogal

101 Ways to Get Lucky:

in Communicating History and Creating Culture

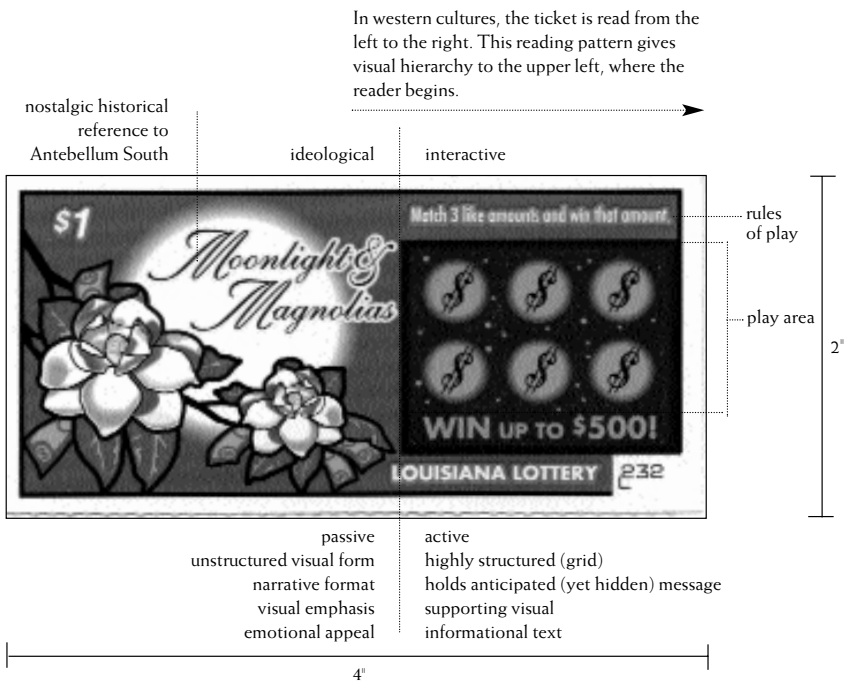
The Role of the Instant Lottery

Maria Rogal is on the faculty of the University of Florida Department of Art where she teaches graphic design. Her research explores material culture and the role and influence of design in this context. She wishes to thank those gamblers at heart who contributed to her ticket collection and assures them, that despite the 4:1 odds, she is not hoarding any big winnings—yet.

"The Lottery, with its weekly pay-out of enormous prizes, was the one public event to which the proles paid serious attention. It was probable that there were some millions of proles for whom the Lottery was the principal if not the only reason for remaining alive. It was their delight, their folly, their anodyne, their intellectual stimulant. Where the Lottery was concerned, even people who could barely read and write seemed capable of intricate calculations and staggering feats of memory. There was a whole tribe of men who made a living simply by selling systems, forecasts and lucky amulets." —George Orwell, 1984

I possess vivid memories of childhood summers spent at my grandparents' neighborhood grocery store outside of Philadelphia where the most popular items were cigarettes, penny candy, and lottery tickets. I relished the purchase of the instant scratch-off lottery tickets most of all. With great anticipation, I would watch the extraction of the coin from the purse or pocket and eye the player scratching off the shiny silver from the ticket on the counter. It was always exciting when someone won, even when it was only the "free ticket" that gave the winner the chance to play again. In this working class neighborhood, playing the lottery offered people excitement, hope, and sometimes a little extra cash. Playing the lottery was the reward for a hard day's work, and on special occasions my grandparents would reward me with a ticket for the same. Many years later, while living in Texas, I discovered the unique role the instant lottery ticket, as an artifact, plays in creating culture and identity and communicating history.

Historically, lotteries have been used to make a myriad of decisions, and references can be traced back to ancient, even Biblical times. Legalized in the founding years of our country, the lottery in the United States has historically been utilized to fund public works projects such as roadways and bridges, libraries, and other public buildings. However, in these early games, one would play for modest reward, and not the multi-million dollar jackpots common today. Real and perceived corruption led to a ban on the lottery in the United States in the 19th century and it was not until 1963, when New Hampshire re-introduced the lottery, that it became legal once again. One can now play to win in 38 states, including the District of Columbia, and in hundreds of nations, and on every continent except Antarctica.



The size of the instant lottery ticket is intimate (the standard ticket measures 4 x 2 inches) yet the image is distant. With few exceptions, images are illustrative and not photographic. This removes them even further from the real, pushing them into the realm of fantasy.

"Formerly, the image illustrated the text (made it clearer); today, the text loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral, an imagination."
—Barthes, *Text and Image*

Ya pays ya money, Ya takes ya chances

Roland Barthes, in *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*, tells the tale of Maupassant, who often lunched at the restaurant in the Eiffel Tower because it was the only place in Paris where he did not have to see it. Barthes speaks of the visibility of the tower, as a monumental object and a universal symbol. Instant lottery tickets are similarly both visible and symbolic, and like all artifacts, provide information about the larger social, economic, and political histories of which they are part.¹ Yet familiarity with these codes often discourages a closer reading of the tickets as cultural and political objects, rendering them virtually invisible. And it is this invisibility that gives them power.

The lottery functions on many levels—it appeals to our most basic desire for success and self-betterment; it offers hope; it is based on chance. The lottery conjures up images of the American dream, where anything can happen in a self-made world. In this dream, success revolves around timing, perseverance, and a stroke of LUCK.

Paralleling the American dream, the lottery provides allusions of a level playing field and equal ground where no one has a better chance of winning than anyone else. Slogans such as "You gotta play to win," "It could be you" and "Got a dream, get a ticket" are intended to tap the emotions, superstitions, and fantasies of the public, shifting the American Dream to focus on chance and opportunity, rather than a strong work ethic. The slogans and advertisements create innocent fantasies of wealth and storybook dreams of riches: despite whatever success one may have achieved, there is always room for more. As a result, the lottery promotes the consumer culture ethos of getting something for nothing.

With the purchase of a ticket the individual can be transformed. As Adrian Forty states in *Objects of Desire*, "The contradictions which exist between our belief systems and everyday experiences are often resolved with the invention of myths and fantasy."² Thus the contradiction, evident in the socio-economic conflict between rich and poor, can be remedied through [the fantasy of] winning the lottery, filling the gap between life as it is, and life as it might be, stirring the imagination to provide dreams of an exciting tomorrow. Cultural myth and advertising messages support the perception that winning the lottery is a literal and metaphorical way out of the "ghetto". The mythology created does not refer to a specific economic class but has broad appeal. It is perhaps now the only ticket in America to "Easy Street."



With the advancement of mass communication technologies this century the world has become increasingly smaller; instantaneous communication allows us to travel globally in seconds. An analysis of instant lottery tickets from France, El Salvador, and the Czech Republic—with images of wheels of fortune and monopoly—supports the concept that a universal visual language exists. Paired with these representations is the universal desire for self-betterment, including the acquisition of money.

The economic impact of lotteries is significant. In the United States of America, state-run lotteries collectively spend over 500 million dollars on advertising each year, promoting the American Dream via billboards, television commercials, vending machines, and pamphlets.³ Mass media brings distant and diverse participants together into a community where they are then subject to the effects of power. Therefore, where and how the lottery is advertised is significant in that it denotes the intended audience(s). While there is no conclusive evidence which points to members of one economic or social class having more propensity to gamble than another, much of the marketing appears in lower income neighborhoods and on billboards along state highways, and well traveled local roads.

The power of marketing

In a capitalist society, the ultimate objective is to make a profit. Adrian Forty states that the “success of capitalism depended upon its capacity to innovate and sell new products. The design alters the way people see commodities.”⁴ The support of the lotteries by the state, as state-run entities, legitimizes and provides authority to legally sanctioned gambling, which is controversial in other contexts.

Advertising for the lottery is circular in nature. While the public is drawn to the instant by way of the larger lottery games (examples being Lotto, Cash 3, and Fantasy 5 whose with results are seen nightly on television), the visibility of instant tickets serve as reminders of the big games.⁵ To stimulate interest in the instant lottery, the games are constantly changing. The introduction of a choice signifies freedom where consumer freedom becomes a substitute for political freedom. This increases the appeal to a broader audience and is designed to increase sales. “Only one model appears to exist for the marketing of the instant game, and that is to operate one game with a given theme and prize structure of an allotted time, end it, and then introduce a new game. The other feature of the instant rub-off game is their simulated play value.” As explained by John Koza of Scientific Games Holding Corporation, “the objective in designing instant games is to keep the player in suspense, believing he has a chance to win as long as possible.”⁶ With the rewards of the instant game significantly less than larger games such as Lotto, the odds of winning increase, raising the appeal of the instant lottery ticket. But the odds can be misleading. For example, 4:1 odds of winning includes free tickets and a wide range of prize money, and does not solely refer to the grand prize.

Language + Form

Storytelling has traditionally been a way to pass on myths, occurring first orally, and then through the practice of mark-making. Today, myths are conveyed through advertising and other mass media, including instant tickets. The use of a vernacular language and images unique to instant lottery tickets (and not other lottery games) serves to engage the audience through the use of cultural and historical images. Moreover, the use of this vernacular language and visual approach signifies an informal quality, speaking to all people.

The positive, narrow representations presented invite the player to identify the tickets with excitement, chance, and money. For example, the semantic and typographic representation of the headline supports the pictorial image to create the always playful and positive attitude of the game. This reverses the traditional dominance of word to image within most advertising. “The text constitutes a parasitic message designed to connote the image, to ‘quicken’ it with one or more second-order signifieds...the image no longer illustrates the words; it is now the words which, structurally, are parasitic on the image...it is not the image which comes to elucidate or ‘realize’ the text, but the latter which comes to sublimate, patheticize or rationalize the image.”⁷

Tickets with names such as *Lucky Fortune*, *Lucky Dog*, and *Cash Cow* are examples of how the naming of a game communicates playfulness and reinforces two seemingly oppositional ideas: to “win money”, and this is “only a game.” Subverting the gambling aspect subsequently shifts the “authority” vested by state support to the background.

multimodal text exists when 2 texts carry different and contradictory meaning, for example the written work carries one meaning and the image another.

text originates from the latin word *textere* meaning to weave; **texts**: complexes of signs which cohere both internally and with the context in and for which they were produced.

vernacular ¹using a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary cultured or foreign language; ²of, relating to, or being a nonstandard language/dialect of a place, region or country; ³of, or relating to, or being characteristic of a period, place or group.



Lucky Fortune
Louisiana



Lucky Dog
Texas



Cash Cow
Pennsylvania

Many states rely heavily on all of their lottery games to support education and other public programs. Increasing lottery funding is integral to increasing state revenue, and is most certainly preferable to higher taxes. The authority of all lottery games increases when the audience is informed that the proceeds are used to support a "good cause" such as education, senior citizens, transportation, or special interests such as sports stadiums. Florida's recent advertising slogan, "When you play, we all win" is indicative of this kind of attitude. The myth here lies in the perception that the money will function as added income for the particular "cause," when in most cases the funds are a built in component of a state's budget, anticipating real lottery revenue. If and when lottery proceeds fall short of expected revenue, the intended beneficiaries also fall short.



A Sense of Place
 Lotteries are a cultural phenomenon. Instant lottery tickets are now sold in vending machines in your local supermarket. Mirroring a convenience-driven society it is ultra-convenient to buy lottery tickets. Whether in vending machines or placed next to the cash register at most convenience stores, at \$1 and \$2 each, instant lottery tickets cost little more than pocket change and are often advertised this way. *Instant lottery ticket vending machine in local grocery store, Gainesville, Florida.*

If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, call: 1-800-742-0443 (NOT A RESULTS LINE) Se Habla Español



The lottery is a euphemism for gambling and for taxation. Ironically, tickets have a hotline listed on the reverse side for those who may have an addiction to gambling. The multi-modality of the tickets is evident through the dichotomy between front (the game), and back (legal rules and regulations of the lottery, including a number for a gambling hotline). Along I-75, gambling addiction helpline information dots the road immediately following the lottery billboards. The dynamic of any vice is to recruit new addicts.

Identity and Representations of the Other

The promotion of stereotypes by instant lottery tickets is effective in linking together different people and groups as a whole, creating and fostering personal and cultural identities often rooted in cliché. Instant lottery tickets create and reinforce identities through the selective use of both text and image. For example, the graphically rendered symbols used to identify the Texas Lottery (a cowboy hat thrown in the air in an act of celebration) and the Florida Lottery (a bright pink flamingo silhouetted against the yellow Florida sun) reinforce and give authority to this particular rendering of history and culture. These "mainstream" images—narrow and stereotypical representations of the real—speak to, and of, one specific audience. Because of this narrow positioning the messages are easily read and understood, requiring little to no interpretation of the image or text. This propagation of stereotypes by an authority (such as the government) renders such specific ideologies of representation credible, and highly problematic.

Perceptual relationships to the viewer

Unlike advertising and other visual communication where the audience is invited to become intimate with the image, the representations on the instant tickets create distance. The audience is an observer of a scene as well as a player. The use of illustrations serve to reinforce the fantastic playfulness of the message. Rarely, if ever, do tickets employ realistic representations such as photographs or photo-realistic illustrations. Photographs, as an index of the "real," convey reality, quickly dissolving the good, clean fun intended by the games.





Ricky Ricardo, Carmen Miranda, Sabado Gigante, and the Gateway to the Americas



Salsa Mania

salsa: ^{1a} spicy sauce of tomatoes, onions and hot peppers; ^{2a} popular music of Latin American origin that has absorbed characteristics of rhythm and blues, jazz and rock.

mania: ¹excitement manifested by mental and physical hyperactivity, disorganization of behavior and elevation of mood; ²excessive or unreasonable enthusiasm.

With its close proximity to Latin America and the Caribbean, Florida's Hispanic population continues to grow and currently figures at 14.2% of the state's total population, and is concentrated primarily in South Florida, where the Hispanic population is estimated at 50%, primarily Cuban-American.⁸ The decision to introduce the *Salsa Mania* ticket into the public arena demonstrates the acceptance by a governmental authority of a particular ethnic group within "American" culture. Beyond providing recognition of a large and influential "minority" population, what does this specific representation communicate? And what are the implications? To investigate this, the ticket can be read on many levels with multiple interpretations. It is therefore necessary to dissect the image.

The ticket shows what is presumed to be a "typical" Hispanic heterosexual couple dancing with each other. The physical relationship between the man and woman is significant. They are distant yet touching. The point of view depicts the woman higher than her partner: she is standing and therefore more powerful than he, who kneels at her feet in a subordinate, worshipful position. Emphasis is placed on the woman as object, as she is visually thrust forward against a dark purple background (patterned with spirals referencing a Latin American motif), the energetic body movements associated with the salsa, or a frenzied mania. She is worshiped for her beauty. Her dark eyes are slanted upwards and her lips are red; she wears a tight red strapless dress accentuating her extreme curves; stiletto heeled red shoes denote her very long slender legs. Her black hair, piled high on her head, is accented with a red flower reminiscent of the renowned Brazilian singer Carmen Miranda. Taken as a whole, this image promotes a stereotype of the wild latin *femme fatale*.

The representation of the man who is her partner relies heavily on past and present media images of Hispanic men. His stylish dress (a vintage jacket, tailored pants, and a hat) is detailed to connote such romantic images of Latino men evident in recent films such as the *Mambo Kings* and memories of TV icon Ricky Ricardo. What message does this send to the public? How do these images create or reinforce cultural and ethnic identity?

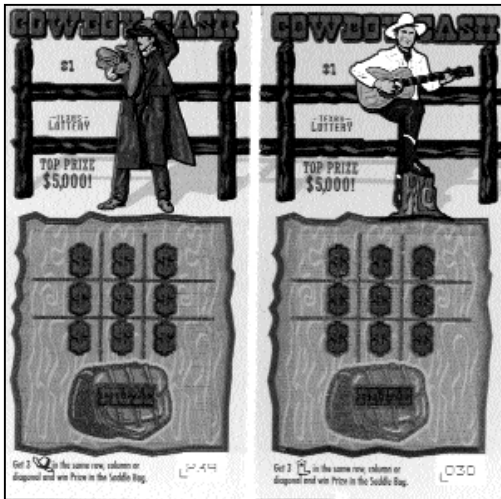
As the player scratches off the conga drums covering the prize area, s/he is cued to look for the maraca symbol. Such symbols support a narrow belief system which equivocally presumes the homogeneity of such a diverse and extensive group. Referencing "Hispanic," whether verbally or, as in this example, through visual iconography, the narrowness of the label renders it virtually meaningless and at the same time powerful through the presumed homogeneity and creation of identity. The color palette utilized on this ticket references the bright colors of the tropics (including parts of Latin America, the Caribbean, and Florida). Ironically, the color of their skin does not follow the same rationale. The couple's skin is pure white, and while accepting this as a graphic translation, the representation carries meaning and value when compared to the anglo cowboy of the Texas *Cowboy Cash* ticket whose skin is a brown/flesh hue.

Old West Whole Enchilada Cattle [Baron] Lone [Star] Hero Texas Culture Oil Southfork

The Cowboy and the Yellow Rose of Texas

In Texas the cowboy is the strongest of icons. He is the legendary Texas hero, anonymous conqueror of the Old West, of Native Americans and Mexicans, of the harsh land and its beasts the cattle and bison, of the old western movies. Cowboys were how the West was won with movie matinee idols and country singers like Gene Autry and Hank Williams. The cowboy is both active and passive, real and iconic. He is there in legend, and larger than life as Big Tex at the Texas State Fair, the largest in the nation. He is seen on billboards along the highway selling everything from trucks to tortillas. And he is active every Saturday night at the rodeo in the Fort Worth stockyards where the role of the cowboy as skillful manipulator of the lasso and master of the bull is reenacted and replayed for enthusiastic audiences. There are few stronger icons than the cowboy, in Texas or in the world.

The cowboy therefore, acts as a signifier for the traditions of the Old West, of the adventurous and pioneer spirit, of manifest destiny. Because the cowboy's original role has changed and is now less relevant to survival or industry, he evokes the romance of the past in a present where romance is forever lacking. At the end of the 20th century, there is very little left to be discovered.



Cowboy Cash

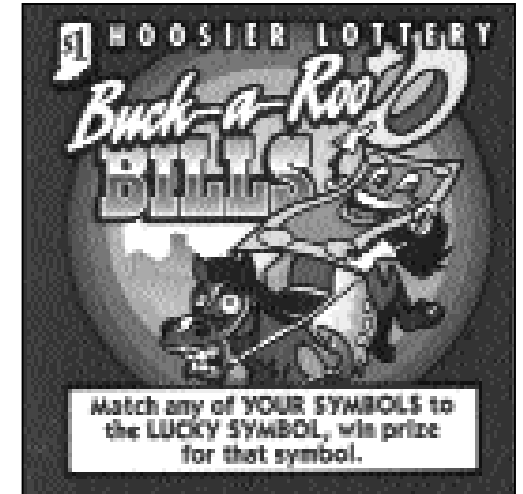
This ticket runs in a series where the audience is introduced to the cowboy in his natural habitat—playing folk songs on the range and carrying his saddle, the tool of his trade. The addition of a horse signifies reliance on nature (the horse as his partner), isolation (the horse as his only companion), and dominance (the horse as his servant). The winning icons on these tickets are indexical of the cowboy: the boot, the horse, and the cowboy hat. The cowboy is the role model for the ideal Texas male. His style has been assimilated as cultural myth in the southwest amongst all ethnic groups—modeled after the American cowboy—and often parodied by those outside of a “western” context. To live in Texas—to visit cities such as Dallas and Fort Worth—is to see the cowboy transformed. The pickup has replaced the horse, miles of highways reflect the open range, and mechanical time dominates natural time of the recent past. As a modern myth, the cowboy rides on as a cultural hero.

The Texas Tripler

The Texas Tripler plays on the brand as identity and commodity. This provides authenticity and approval to the history of the southwestern United States, which relied on cattle as an industry long before oil became a useful commodity. As with the cowboy, branding is symbolic of the old west, where brands marked ownership and wealth.

Who is Pecos Bill and why is he riding a cyclone?

We are introduced to Pecos Bill using his snake lasso to capture elusive money. Pecos Bill rides a cyclone which substitutes for the bucking bull and speaks to the Texans’ challenge to control and survive natural, potentially deadly elements. The cyclone is both real—parts of Texas are known as “Tornado Alley”—and mythical, serving as a metaphor for the Wild Wild West. Each time it touches down it stirs up money.



Buck-a-Roo Bill

The verbal to visual analogy of “buck” from the buck-a-roo of cowboy lore to the buck of the dollar serves to signify money. To compound this perception, Buck-a-roo Bill’s body is coded the shape and color of money, yet enough of the cowboy is visible—the chaps, boots, and spurs—to identify the “cowboy.” His horse is caricatured with bulging eyes, pink lips, and a grimace. All very nice, but what does it mean? Lucky symbols on the card range from a horseshoe to hats of gold, evoking nostalgia for the exploration and chance of the Old West pioneers. What does this tell the reader? Adventure. The horse is in pain but the cowboy is happy—having the time of his life and demonstrating dominance over the animal. The brown desert mesas in the background denote the sense of place of the legendary wild and untamed West.

Pecos Bill, the Texas Tripler, and Buck-a-roo Bill support the patriarchal ideologies of the Old West, including man’s dominance over animals and nature. These contemporary representations lend credibility to historical narratives and cultural myths. And as the cowboy is the metaphor for the male, the Yellow Rose of Texas is embedded as a metaphor for the female, recognized nationally through popular folk songs, ingrained in the public in elementary music classes.



Yellow Rose of Texas

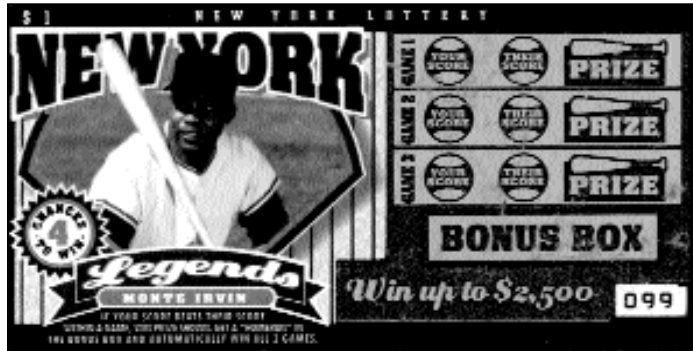
There's a yellow rose in Texas
 I'm goin' back to see
 No other cowboy loves her
 Half as much as me
 She cried so when I left her
 It almost broke my heart
 And if we ever meet again
 We'll never drift apart
 She's the sweetest rose of color
 That Texas ever knew
 Her eyes are like the diamonds
 They sparkle like the dew
 You can talk about your Clementine
 And dream of Rosalie
 But the Yellow Rose of Texas
 Is the only girl for me

She is the sum total of Beauty Queens to have come out of the Lone Star State—the Miss Americas, supermodels, and celebrities. The Yellow Rose is a strong-willed, yet delicate flower, blossoming in the harsh Texas sun. She is symbolic of purity and innocence. Legend has it that the woman called the Yellow Rose of Texas was Mexican president Santa Anna's (1794–1876) anglo mistress.⁹ This symbol, when juxtaposed with the strong cowboy image of the previously described tickets, reinforces a traditional interpretation of the woman as delicate and beautiful, as needing protection while maintaining her feminine allure. Sold for a pricey \$2—colored a vibrant and erotic bright yellow and violet with spectacularly die cut edges—the specialness, value, and delicate nature of the yellow rose is reinforced. Lastly, she reinforces a stereotype of the Texas woman as blonde (yellow) and therefore anglo, a representation excluding pride in women of color. Further, the “anglo” rose ignores Texas' large Mexican American/Hispanic population and its contribution to the state, which has deep associations in México.

New York Legends

Unlike many contemporary representations of “sports heroes” offered to our cultural unconscious—portrayals of an erotic sexuality promoting the cult of the body and excusing bad behavior—the New York Legends game redefines the concept of the sports hero by referencing the sports legend which looks to the past and away from the cult of celebrity. On these tickets several sports figures from the past are depicted, and include representations from a multi-cultural pool of men. Here Monte Irvin, one of the first African-Americans to play in major league baseball (he joined the New York Giants in 1949), is presented to the public as a positive role model. While most of his long career was played out in the Negro and Mexican baseball leagues, Monte Irvin was known as a complete player with a career average of .293, and was one of the first players to integrate Major League baseball. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1973, and through his presence on the ticket, is firmly positioned as a role model.¹⁰

Unique to this series is the photo-realistic illustrations of the players. Unlike cartoon representations or other illustrations, the viewer is presented with real people and real achievements. Different from representations of most contemporary sports figures who are visually associated with the products they endorse (Tiger Woods, Michael Jordan, and Gabrielle Reece for Nike), there are no team or product logos identifiable here. Instead, the importance is placed on each player's achievements, rather than on any sponsorship affiliations. It is important to note, however, that lottery tickets (with the lottery's designation as legalized gambling) cannot be sold to anyone under



18 years of age. Do the tickets and their associated narratives of sports heroes and “role models” have any impact (positive or negative) on children through their parents or other adults? Should we ask if there are similarities in these cards to RJ Reynold’s marketing of the Joe Camel advertisements to adolescents?

This instant ticket features a flamingo couple easily identifiable as male and female by their distinctive sunglasses and hat, driving a pink convertible (ostensibly to the beach since they are traveling with surfboards). A tic-tac-toe game, the winning icon is the sun symbol (also wearing sunglasses), the visual equivalent of *fun in the sun*. Racial neutrality is evident in vibrant pinkness, while sex roles are stereotypically portrayed through apparel. Nothing progressive here. Moreover, the image of Florida as vacation capital is consistently reinforced: the exotic hipness of the pink flamingos, the vanity of the cult of the body, and the reference to the warm sunny beaches. This is an image promoted by the state, with tourism and related industries being of primary importance to the economy and related growth. Having experienced a decline in tourism in the recent past due to violent criminal attacks on tourists, this instant ticket reflects the [potential] “fun” one will experience in the sunshine state. In this typical tourist narrative the real and the fantasy are united in this all-encompassing “magic kingdom.” You don’t even need a passport here.



The lottery’s “Sweetheart Cash” industry, with a new scratch off ticket designed for every occasion. In 1997, Texas promoted a “Happy Mother’s Day” ticket and in 1998, Florida introduced “Sweetheart Cash” just in time for Valentine’s Day with the following promotion:

Florida Lottery has a “Sweetheart” of a deal with the first-ever Valentine’s Day Game! For the first time ever, the Florida Lottery introduced a new instant game just for the Valentine’s Day season. There are several clichés we could use to talk about the new instant game “Sweetheart Cash” like: Sweeter than a heart-shaped box of candy is the Lottery’s new instant game Sweetheart Cash. While candy is sweet on the lips, it shows on the hips, but our new game Sweetheart Cash weighs less than ounce. Roses are red, Violets are blue, the Florida Lottery’s new instant game says “I Love You.” But all we need to ask is: what other Valentine’s gift that costs \$1 could turn into a \$2,500 prize? Only the Lottery’s new instant ticket Sweetheart Cash can fulfill this dream and satisfy your Valentine’s fantasy.

To play Sweetheart Cash, match any of your “heart symbols” to either “lucky symbols.” Win a cash prize for that amount shown. Scratch off a “Cupid” symbol and win that prize automatically, from a free ticket, up to \$2,500! Players can win other prizes ranging from \$1, \$2, \$3, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, \$100, and \$500. Tickets are now on sale at most of the Lottery’s 11,000 retail outlets throughout the state. With Valentine’s Day approaching, this game will be a sweetheart of a deal. Each ticket costs \$1, with overall odds of winning 1 in 3.94.¹¹

In an entertainment obsessed culture, everything can be elevated or reduced to an occasion.



 Endnotes

- 1 Referring to structure and coding of images, all visual communication contains meaning that has roots in the society in which it was created. Likewise, it is given meaning in the society in which it is interpreted. "Visual communication is always coded. It seems transparent only because we know the code already, at least passively—but without knowing what it is we know, without having the means for talking about what it is we do when we read an image. A glance at the stylized arts of other cultures should teach us that the myth of transparency is indeed a myth. We may experience the arts as decorative, exotic, mysterious, but we cannot understand them as communication, as forms of 'writing' unless we are, or become, members of these cultures." Hodge, Robert and Gunther Kress. *Social Semiotics*. (Cornell University Press: 1988), p32. For more information see Kress, Gunther and Theo van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. (Routledge: 1996).
- 2 Forty, Adrian. *Objects of Desire*. (Pantheon Books: 1986), p8.
- 3 Gearey, Robyn. "The Numbers Game." *The New Republic*. (19 May 1997), pp19–24.
- 4 Forty, Adrian. *Objects of Desire*. (Pantheon Books: 1986), p11.
- 5 Florida Lotto is a game in which players choose six numbers from 1 through 49. Tickets are \$1 per play and are available from any Florida Lottery On-line Retailer. Players win Florida Lotto prizes by matching three, four, five or six of the numbers on the same draw, in any order, drawn in the official drawing for the date played. The Florida Lottery can offer starting jackpots of \$7 million to \$8 million, as opposed to previous \$5 million to \$6 million jackpots.

Cash 3 is a game in which the player chooses any three-digit number from 000 through 999. Players who match all three official winning numbers may win up to \$500 for each 51 played, depending on the type of play purchased and the amount wagered.

Fantasy 5 is a game in which players select five numbers from 1 through 26. Tickets are \$1 per play and are available from any On-line Retailer. Players win a prize by matching three, four, or five numbers drawn in the official Fantasy 5 drawing for the date played.

All Fantasy 5 prizes are based on ticket sales for the drawing and are divided equally among the winners in each prize category. 50% of total sales for each drawing is allocated for prize payments (the prize pool). From the prize pool, 60% is used to pay jackpot winners, 10% is used to pay second-prize winners (4-of-5), and 30% is used to pay third-prize winners (3-of-5). The odds of matching all five winning numbers in Fantasy 5 are 1:65,780. The odds of matching four-of-five winning numbers are 1:626.48. The odds of matching three-of-five winning numbers are 1:31.32. Overall odds are 1:29.82. Fantasy 5 pays an average first prize of approximately \$19,894 to an average of 34 winners per drawing. The average second prize is \$31 to an average of 3,646 winners, and the average third prize is \$5 to an average of 72,223 winners. Fantasy 5 prizes are paid in a lump sum. (see Florida Lottery website, www.flalottery.com)
- 6 Clotfelter, Charles D. and Philip J. Cook. *Selling Hope: State Lotteries in America*. (Harvard University Press: 1989), p54. What makes the instant games viable is the current counterfeit-proof instant scratch-off tickets pioneered by Scientific Game Holdings Corporation, the world's leading supplier and creator of this technology. The rub-off layer cannot be seen through to reveal whether the ticket is a winner or altered after this has been scratched off.
- 7 Barthes, Roland. *Image–Music–Text*. Translated by Stephen Heath. (Hill and Wang: 1977), pp25–26.
- 8 Allen, Diane Lacey. "Hispanics in Florida." *Gainesville Sun*. (2 November 1997: Section D), pp1, 5; and University of Florida (Gainesville, FL) Bureau of Economic and Business Research.
- 9 "Santa Anna, Antonio López de." *The Concise Columbia Encyclopedia*. (Columbia University Press and Avon Books: 1983), pp747–748.
- 10 www.totalbaseball.com/story/person/player
- 11 Florida Lottery website, www.flalottery.com, 1997–98.

conclusion

As makers and users of objects in a culture which is increasingly reliant on the visual, it is integral that we be aware of the meaning and implications of the messages around us. Even the most seemingly mundane object plays a role in informing us about our reality, our identity as individuals and as a culture. Dominant, and often equivocal or exclusionary ideologies—when left unquestioned—have historically become accepted and ultimately embedded in culture. Thus these unquestioned belief systems are both (omni)present and absent, visible and invisible. Seemingly integrated into the language and practice of our institutions we proceed into the future, reinforcing what we fail to see.

The sampling of instant tickets depicted in this article are representative of the larger whole. Often we see evidence of a narrow and cursory portrayal of history, of stereotypes of people and events which affect our interpretation of the past and the present. Thematically many of the representations focus on the folk culture and cultural mythology of the United States and exclude women and people of color. Even when they include and embrace traditionally marginalized groups we have to ask toward what end? For what purpose?

Images such as those presented to us on seemingly innocuous scratch off tickets help create our sense of selves and our sense of each other. In a culture which relies more and more on instantly gratifying, entertaining images, rather than on a richer, deeper cultural narrative, an inability to acknowledge their role and analyze their implications are problematic.

How can we understand the implications that the ephemeral, the mundane plays in shaping our belief systems? On all levels, the visual is becoming more and more (pre)dominant in our culture. If we subscribe to the old adage that knowledge is power, wherein literacy and the ability to analyze communication empowers the individual, then we need to make the same connection and commitment to visual literacy in a contemporary context. A culture without an egalitarian approach to visual literacy will be a culture in which those in control of message-making will retain the primary power to shape the future; those without control will become increasingly marginalized, left without a seat at the table.