



## Issue No. 24 2014 — The Other Western

### **“I Knew Killing a Man Would Kill You”: *Lucky Luke* Shaped by Myth and History [1]**

By *Annick Pellegrin*

The two most successful creations of American movies are the gangster and the Westerner: men with guns. Guns as physical objects, and the postures associated with their use, form the visual and emotional center of both types of films.

- Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience*, 135

Born in 1946 in the comic magazine *Spirou*, and pre-published in its pages until 1968 (Mellot 21), the comic series *Lucky Luke* recounts the adventures of the phlegmatic and lanky Lucky Luke as he travels across the Wild West together with his talking horse, Jolly Jumper. Although he is a cowboy, Lucky Luke is rarely depicted herding cows and is more often seen serving his country as a court officer, as a “special government employee,” as a sheriff or as a mayor (du Chatenet 697-99). In addition to entirely fictional characters, *Lucky Luke* is known for featuring historical characters, such as Calamity Jane and Jesse James, as well as numerous caricatures of celebrities (Delporte 19-28). Lucky Luke’s physique itself was inspired by that of five actors from the US: Tom Mix, William Hart, Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and Gary Cooper (du Chatenet 697).

While the creator of *Lucky Luke* – the Belgian Morris – collaborated with numerous scriptwriters, *Lucky Luke* was his only comic series (Filippini, “Les « seconds Rôles » dans *Lucky Luke*” 25) and he was the sole artist of the series until he passed away. The series has since been entrusted to other teams of authors and it still enjoys considerable success, under the slightly modified title *Les Aventures de Lucky Luke d’après Morris*. For instance, 450 000 copies of the album *Cavalier seul* (Pennac, Benacquista

and Achdé) were printed in 2012, making it the second biggest print run for Franco-Belgian comics that year (Ratier). Although *Lucky Luke* enjoys an undeniable ongoing success, the years between 1955 and 1977 are considered to be the golden years of the series. This period corresponds to Morris's collaboration with Frenchman Goscinny (Filippini, "Les quatre Vies de Lucky Luke" 35), who was the scriptwriter of numerous successful series such as *Astérix*.

Robert Warshow describes the hero of western film as a lonely, honourable figure for whom "love is at best an irrelevance"; to him, western film is a genre that allows little variation and to which "the image of a single man who wears a gun on his thigh" is central (Warshow 137 & 40). The violence inherent in such films is such that "the Westerner could not fulfill himself if the moment did not finally come when he can shoot his enemy down" (Warshow 140, 46 & 53). Although in many ways Lucky Luke corresponds to Warshow's description, the fact that the former has never killed anyone is central to the plot of James Huth's 2009 film adaptation of the comic series. This fact is first mentioned when Lucky Luke returns to Daisy Town, his hometown. Several villains taunt the hero about this perceived lack and Pat Poker eventually succeeds in provoking Lucky Luke, who then challenges him to a duel and shoots him. Thinking he has killed Pat Poker, and encouraged by governor Coop, the guilt-ridden Lucky Luke hangs up his Colt and begins living the life of a family man. When it transpires that Coop set Lucky Luke up, the former explains that he knew that Lucky Luke could only be destroyed from the inside: "I knew killing a man would kill you" (Huth). The closing credits, however, state that Lucky Luke *did* kill a man once: his own doppelgänger, Mad Jim (Huth; Morris, "Le Sosie de Lucky Luke" 48/10). It is also known that Lucky Luke killed the Dalton brothers and Phil Defer (Morris, "Entretien avec Morris" 11; du Chatenet 699; Morris, "Lucky Luke et Phil Defer "Le Fauchoux"" 36/7-11; Morris *Hors-la-loi*). [2]

If "[y]ou can't live in the West without a gun" (Huth), if Lucky Luke is "the man who shoots faster than his own shadow," and if he killed Mad Jim, Phil Defer and the Dalton brothers, why is it that the film insists that Lucky Luke cannot kill? [3] How can a western feature duels and executions but almost no deaths (Chatenet and Guillot 37)? In the film, we are told that Lucky Luke's parents were shot before his eyes when he was a child, and that he swore never to kill (Huth). However, I suggest that the answers are to be found in the comic series. Huth's film comes after some forty-four *Lucky Luke* albums [4] containing either numerous short stories or book-length stories (Filippini, "Les quatre Vies de Lucky Luke" 32) and

it is only one in a long line of screen adaptations (Morris, "Entretien avec Morris" 7; Uncredited, "La Consécration de l'écran" 121). If the film captures an entire universe in approximately two hours, this universe was built over some six decades and *Lucky Luke* was shaped as much by history as by the character's own myth. In this essay I therefore propose to explain why killing a man would kill Lucky Luke, by considering the historical context of the creation of this comic series, its inner workings and its myth.

### ***Lucky Luke* and History**

There are two very distinct histories that shaped the series. The first one is the history of the US Wild West as seen in the stories. According to Morris, there is no strict historical veracity in the series insofar as the various adventures are set in a period ranging from the end of the US civil war to the end of the nineteenth century, while the high period of westerns is 1880 (Pasamonik, "Lucky Luke" 10). As mentioned previously, there are also numerous historical figures that appear in the series and while it is true that Morris and Goscinny took some liberties with the chronology in *Lucky Luke*, the series is nonetheless set in a historical context and backed by considerable research. As Morris explained:

The history of the conquest of the West is such a highly coloured and incredible period .... Reality is stranger than fiction! So why try and imagine characters or events when we can draw them from history? Of course, one needs to know how to use the sources with great license: it is important to make things funny, which they were not necessarily in reality. (Morris, "Morris" 206)

This history is so important to *Lucky Luke* that in July 2013 the magazine *Historia* released a special issue dedicated to the events that inspired Morris and Goscinny in eleven Lucky Luke albums (Various). However, as Morris himself suggests, some poetic license was necessary in order to turn an often-violent history into an amusing story; and what Goscinny sought in history was the anecdote that he could use to develop his script (Couvreur, "Hank Bully" 89).

The "other" history that shaped *Lucky Luke* is that of Belgium and France, in relation to each other, and in relation to the US. Although it may be less obvious in the plots of the various albums, this history had a much more

direct influence on the series. While Morris and Goscinny could take liberties with the history of the Wild West, they could not escape the reality of the times in which they were living. For instance, it comes as no surprise that such a series emanated from Belgium at the time that it did: it was first published shortly after the liberation of Belgium and only a couple of years before the beginning of the Marshall plan (Ory 71). It is therefore the product of a time when the presence and influence of the US could be strongly felt in western Europe. In fact, Morris, together with Jijé and Franquin formed a very important nucleus of Belgian comic authors who travelled to the US in 1948 (Sadoul 43; Mellot 5) and it was during this journey that Morris and Goscinny – two lovers of the film western – met (Pellegrin; Schwartz, “SCHWARTZ” 4). These authors, their years in North America and their encounter with Goscinny, were so catalytic for Franco-Belgian comic production that part of the trip has been recounted in the album *Gringos Locos* (Yann and Schwartz; Yann, “Destination Disney!” 55). The accuracy of this work may have been contested but the importance of its subject matter is undeniable (Uncredited “Lorg”; Yann “11 Réponses”). As Schwartz puts it, with this work “[w]e broach the subject of our [Franco-Belgian comics professionals’] common heritage, our collective unconscious” (Schwartz, “Destination Disney!” 59).

Paradoxically, it is precisely because of the historical context of creation of the series that Lucky Luke cannot kill. Prior to WWII, the comics market in France was dominated by publications originating from the US (Ory 73). After the end of the war, the conditions were perfect for this market domination to resume but discussions regarding the protection of young readers against violence in film and literature started as early as 1945 in France. These discussions lead to the passing of a law regulating the sale of publications intended for young people on the 16th of July 1949 (Ory 74-75). Specifically, the law stated that publications for children and adolescents:

must not feature any illustration, any story, any column, any section, any insertion presenting in a positive light banditry, lying, theft, laziness, cowardice, hatred, debauchery or any acts characterised [as] crimes or offences or that could demoralise children or young people. (Auriol 7006 article 2)

In addition to the moral protection of young readers, there were several discussions about the inclusion of an article protecting France from dumping practices (Ory 76). “[A]ll the publications that are harmful for our youth come from the USA and only from the USA” declared

communist representative André Pierrard during the discussions leading up to the passing of the law (Ory 78). For Stanislas Faure, article thirteen “is the expression of the protectionism that forms the very basis of the text” (Faure 117) and according to Dayez, this protectionism aimed primarily to ebb the flow of US comics in France (Dayez, “Bye bye Tarzan!” 29). Although no article was included regarding a required percentage of French content in childrens’ publications in the end, the law nonetheless had repercussions for foreign publications as well (Ory 76-80): these could not be imported if they did not satisfy the requirements of the second article (Auriol 7008 article 13).

The weekly *Spirou* began being sold in France in 1946 (Ory 82-83). As a foreign publication for children, *Spirou* was affected by article thirteen in France; as a Belgian publication, it faced the possibility of the passing of a similar law at home (Faure 125). Dupuis, *Spirou*’s publisher, therefore took several measures in order to continue to sell this magazine. They removed all US comic series from *Spirou*, by stopping them altogether, or by moving them to their radio guide *Le Moustique*, which was not sold in France (Dayez, “Increvable Red Ryder!” 25; Dayez, “Bye bye Tarzan!” 29). Dupuis also practised self-censorship so as to avoid any difficulties with French authorities (Ory 82-83; Faure 126). Homicide being both a crime and a violent act, Lucky Luke could no longer kill if Dupuis wanted to continue to export *Spirou* to France.

Given these restrictions, we must wonder about the deaths of the Dalton brothers, Mad Jim and Phil Defer. In the case of Mad Jim’s death, the short story “Le Sosie de Lucky Luke” was pre-published in *Spirou* from December 1947 to May 1948 – more than a year before the passing of the law – and was therefore not affected by it (Morris, “Le Sosie de Lucky Luke” 18). In the case of *Hors-la-loi*, the story was pre-published in *Spirou* from September 1951 to April 1952 (Morris, “Hors-la-loi” 5; Morris, “Hors la loi” 2) – after the law had been passed. While Bob Dalton was shot in the forehead in the magazine, the story was altered for its release in album form (Morris, “Entretien avec Morris” 11). The difference in the treatment of the same story could be explained by the attitude of the surveillance commission to different publication formats. Indeed, in 1959 they stated that the “presentation [of violent stories] not in episodes as in *Spirou*, but in the form of albums, significantly heightens [their] harmfulness” (Faure 125). Finally, in the case of Phil Defer, the short story was pre-published in *Le Moustique* (in 1954), which was not subject to the French law. In the album, although Phil Defer is shot (Figure 1), it is later revealed that he was not killed (Pasamonik, “Portraits” 14; Morris, “Lucky Luke et Phil

Defer" 36/7-11 & 37/2). These three cases are exceptions and since Gosciny's first *Lucky Luke* album, the cowboy has not killed anyone (du Chatenet 699).



**Figure 1. Lucky Luke Shooting Phil Defer**

*LUCKY LUKE ET PHIL DE FER*

© DUPUIS 1956- by MORRIS

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Aside from the censorship of any scene depicting Lucky Luke killing someone, some of Morris's drawings were modified either at the request of the surveillance commission or that of Dupuis (Morris, "Entretien avec Morris" 11). The most famous example is possibly that of the album *Billy the Kid*, from which a frame depicting Billy the Kid as a baby suckling on a revolver (Figure 2) (Morris and Gosciny, *Billy the Kid* 3/5) was removed after having been published in *Spirou* and as an album (Uncredited, "1981" 60). This first edition having been banned from importation into France, the following edition saw the revolver replaced with a bottle and it was not until 1981 that the original frame was reinstated (du Chatenet 682; Uncredited, "1981" 60; Pasamonik, "Ma Dalton" 109). Another well-known example of the strict control exerted on *Lucky Luke* is the cover of the preceding album (Morris and Gosciny *Les Rivaux de Painful Gulch*), for which Morris had to redo the cover three times due to the

presence of alcohol and shootings (Morris, “Entretien avec Morris” 11; du Chatenet 756). Morris also reported that Dupuis used to ask him to redraw any hanging scenes in which a rope could be seen (Morris, “Entretien avec Morris” 11). Finally, although “guns constitute the visible moral center of the Western movie” (Warshow 139) and despite the fact that in the series itself a cowboy without a gun is considered to be “scandalous” and “indecent” (Couvreur, “Coyote Will” 50), Goscinny had to justify the need for his characters to own revolvers and expressed his frustration with the surveillance commission, stating that he and Morris sometimes considered “a bloodbath in order to vent [their] frustration” (du Chatenet 685).



**Figure 2. Censored frame from *Billy the Kid***

*BILLY THE KID*

© DUPUIS 1962 - by Goscinny and Morris

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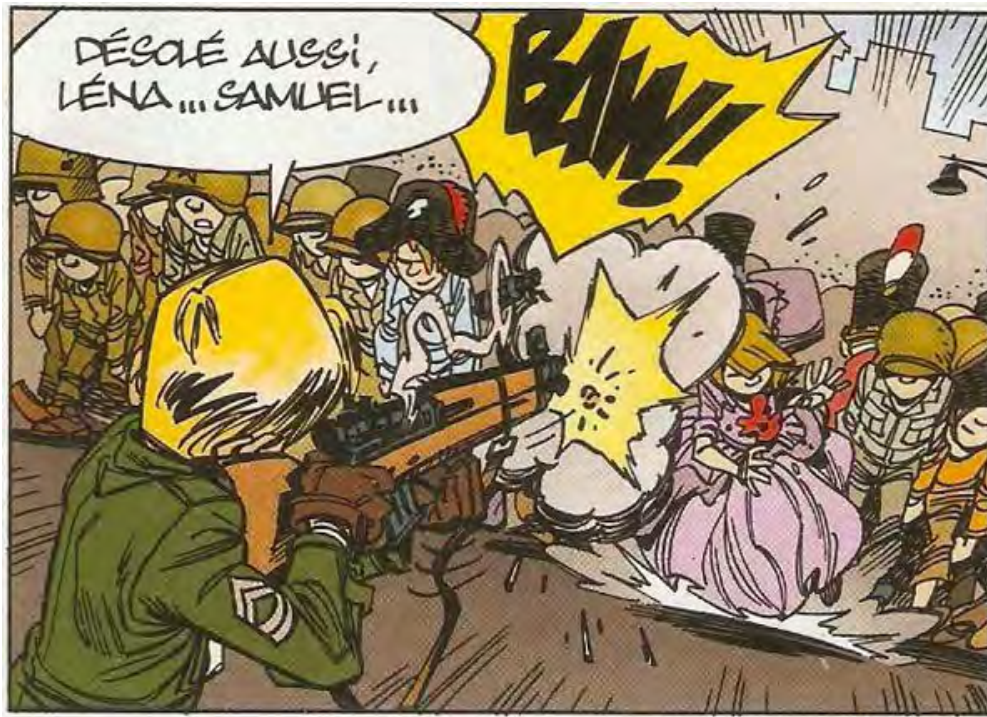
The fact that *Spirou* was a foreign publication no doubt affected the degree to which it was under surveillance in France. Indeed, *Spirou's* great rival, *Le Journal de Tintin* (the magazine in which the famous Belgian comic series *Tintin* was pre-published) could avoid article thirteen of the law because it was co-published with Dargaud, a French publisher (Faure

121). Morris and Goscinny themselves experienced a difference when they took *Lucky Luke* away from Spirou and Dupuis to publish it with Dargaud and in the magazine *Pilote* – home of *Astérix* – where Goscinny was editor-in-chief (Mellot 21). In the stories published in *Spirou*, Morris sometimes drew saloon dancers in various states of undress, although he knew they would be rubbed out or painted over. As a result, these albums contain several frames with very few characters in the background (Morris, “Morris” 209). In comparison, the saloons in the albums published by Dargaud seem more “real” as cancan dancers were no longer being edited out of the frames (Morris, “Entretien avec Morris” 9 & 11; Gielle 21).

### Inner Workings and Myth

Since 2010, *Lucky Luke* is once again being pre-published in *Spirou* (Dayez, “Les 60 Ans de Lucky Luke” 29), alongside series such as *Seuls*. First pre-published in *Spirou* in 2006 and labelled a “slasher ... for kids,” that is to say a children’s horror series in which a sharp tool is used to slash people, *Seuls* is becoming a Dupuis bestseller (Vehlmann “Seuls t2”; Vehlmann, “VEHLMANN” 4). Not only does this series contain depictions of violent deaths, including children shooting other children (Figure 3), but it in fact recounts the adventures of dead children in limbo (Gazzotti and Vehlmann, “Les Cairns rouges” 206; Gazzotti and Vehlmann, “Au Cœur du maelström” 254; Gazzotti and Vehlmann, “Les Terres basses 1/6” 14; Vehlmann “Vehlmann au micro d’Edmond Morrel”). Given the difference between Dupuis and Dargaud at the time when *Lucky Luke* moved to *Pilote*, present-day *Spirou*’s openness to more macabre themes, and Goscinny’s and Morris’s frustration with the restrictions they faced, we must wonder why *Lucky Luke* did not gradually become more violent.





**Figure 3. Saul killing other children in *Seuls***

*Seuls 7 – Les Terres Basses*

© Dupuis 2012, by Vehlmann & Gazzotti

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Although Gosciny was frustrated with the restrictions imposed on him and on Morris, he did not in fact wish to make *Lucky Luke* a violent series. Quite the contrary, he once declared “[w]ith Astérix or with Lucky Luke, I have in common the abhorrence of violence. Which has forced me to solve their problems without killing the villain” (du Chatenet 939). Lucky Luke therefore relies more on his reputation as an excellent and fast marksman than on using these skills: in all of the albums scripted by Gosciny, only once does Lucky Luke hurt a man – hitting one of his fingers with a bullet (Morris and Gosciny, *Tortillas pour les Dalton* 41 / 4; du Chatenet 823). Instead of targeting villains directly, Lucky Luke prefers to disarm them or to intimidate them by demonstrating his skills (du Chatenet 823). Lucky Luke’s avoidance of inflicting death is therefore not solely due to legal requirements, but also to the authors’ preferences, as they turned the series into “a complete parody” of westerns (Morris, “Morris” 203; Chatenet and Guillot 38-39; du Chatenet 681 & 807; Mellot 21).

An additional factor that prevented Lucky Luke from reverting to killing later on is myth and the inner workings of the series. Roland Barthes

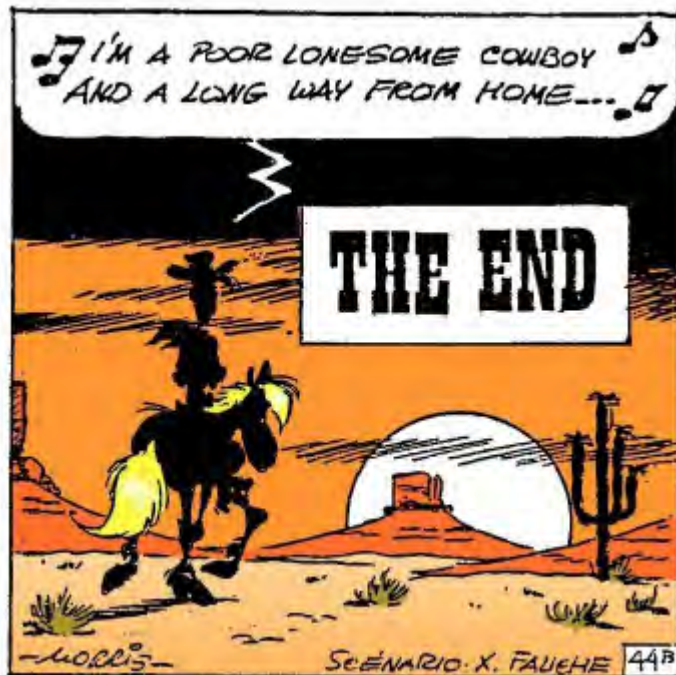
describes myth as a robbery, as myth takes away the original meaning of language to endow it with new meanings. This robbery, however, is not complete since myth does not erase the original meaning, but only deforms it by adding a layer of meaning and by capturing an essential quality (Barthes 230-31). Aside from myth – to which I will return shortly – Umberto Eco's study of *Superman* is useful to explain the inner workings of *Lucky Luke*, although the two series are quite distinct. Eco analyses the comic book hero in relation to two other kinds of heroes: the mythical hero and the novel hero. The former is defined by what he has already accomplished and cannot depart from this essentialised image. The latter, for his part, is more human and unpredictable (Eco 135-36). Eco argues that the comic book hero is torn between these two models: he needs to be mythical "and must therefore necessarily remain set as an emblem that makes him easily recognisable" but he must also behave like a novel hero as the series is being marketed in the same way as a novel (Eco 136). The need for set and mythical character traits is, paradoxically, due to the very nature of these comics *as series*: each accomplishment signals the acquisition of more experience and the passing of time, bringing the hero closer to death. Such changes affect the myth as well as the novel since the death of the hero would entail the end of the series (Eco 139).

According to Eco, the authors of *Superman* resolved this issue by blurring the narrative timeline: the stories are not created in a clear chronological order but rather start as if all the other episodes had never occurred, thus creating the impression of an eternal present (Eco 144 & 49). All the instalments of a series usually follow the same pattern, with very few variables from one closed episode to another and our enjoyment of these series derives from the reiteration of these well-known patterns (Eco 153-62). In other words, it derives from the reaffirmation of the myth. Similarly, Warshow argues that the film western

is an art form for connoisseurs, where the spectator derives his pleasure from the appreciation of minor variations within the working out of a pre-established order. One does not want too much novelty: it comes as a shock ... when the hero is made to operate without a gun ... and our uneasiness is allayed only when he is finally compelled to put his "pacifism" aside.  
(Warshow 146-47)

In the *Lucky Luke* series, since Goscinny's first script, Lucky Luke always rides into the sunset singing "I'm a poor lonesome cowboy" in the last frame (Uncredited, "Le Rituel du coucher de soleil" 20). This frame

(Figure 4) both signals the end of the adventure and ensures the eternal repetition of the present: the stories always end in the same manner and the next story can start as if the previous one never happened. While *Lucky Luke* satisfies the need for minimal variation and respects many of the conventions referred to by Warshaw, explicit violence and death are not part of its pattern.



**Figure 4.** The final frame of *Belle Starr*

*BELLE STARR*

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Speaking about his sources and the inner workings of the series, Goscinny explained that he and Morris had “two sources of inspiration for Lucky Luke, on the one hand the history of the Wild West, and on the other the parody of films.... To these two categories of inspiration, we must add a third: the Daltons. For [him], it is an exercise in style since the story is always the same: they escape and are brought back” (du Chatenet 738). These Daltons are the Dalton cousins mentioned earlier and they illustrate the needs of the series as distinct from those of the film western. They first appear very briefly as the cousins of the dead Dalton brothers (Morris and Goscinny, *Lucky Luke contre Joss Jamon* 33/8) and then return as the title characters of the following album (Morris and Goscinny *Les Cousins Dalton*). Although they are the better known Daltons (Chatenet and

Guillot 36), in reality Goscinny created them to replace the very popular but dead Dalton brothers (Pasamonik, "Les Dalton" 39; Bisson 61).

Although the Dalton cousins are officially distinct from the Dalton brothers, the former display the same lack of intelligence, the same facial features and the same staircase-like range of heights as the latter: they are identical, save for the change in their first names. The repetition of these characters' misdeeds and of their capture by Lucky Luke enables an "endlessly repetitive cycle" (Pasamonik, "Les Dalton" 40; Eco 144, 49, 53, 62) and they are so central to the series that they are more popular than Lucky Luke himself (Bisson 61). The Daltons' popularity is such that they appear as the main antagonists in approximately a third of the albums scripted by Goscinny (Uncredited, "Les meilleurs Ennemis" 41); the singer Joe Dassin recorded a song about them in the late 1960s (Dassin; Uncredited, "Tagada, tagada..." 41); and *Lucky Luke* first entered the chart of *Spirou's* top series after the Daltons (re)entered the series (Chatenet and Guillot 36). The resurrection of the Daltons and their contribution to the series only show how important it is for *Lucky Luke* to retain its characters: "[w]hen a character is so well executed, it would be a shame not to bring him back one day" (Uncredited, "Bis" 81). In addition to the pragmatic necessity of keeping characters alive in order to drive the series, I argue that by the time Morris and Goscinny could have attempted to bring more violence into *Lucky Luke*, this cowboy's myth had already been set as distinct from that of the western film hero. Making Lucky Luke a killer again would go against the set pattern of the series and take away from his image. Joe Dalton himself knows this and assures his brothers that Lucky Luke would not kill them because he has not killed anyone since Mad Jim's death (Morris and Fauche 26/4).

On the question of why Lucky Luke is single, Morris stated:

if he were to fall in love, it would be a catastrophe. Can you picture me telling the story of a cowboy who has settled in a little farm with his wife, his children, his slippers? In a film it's possible. The handsome cowboy rides into the sunset with his sweetheart... But Lucky Luke, I need him for the next episode! (Morris, "Entretien avec Morris" 14)

This declaration is particularly interesting in light of Warshow's analysis and of what happens in James Huth's film. On the matter of the "irrelevance" of love in Western film, Warshow observes that "when the Westerner leaves the prostitute for a virtuous woman – for love – he is in

fact forsaking a way of life” (Warshow 137 & 38). It is true that Huth’s film is replete with both blatant and discrete references to *Lucky Luke* albums, from the cameo appearance of Dr Doxey (Morris *L’Élixir du docteur Doxey*), the reproduction of the thick blanket of cigar smoke in the meeting room (Morris and Goscinny *Les Dalton se rachètent* 4/1) and the inclusion of Lucky Luke’s very first appearance (Figure 5) in the form of a framed painting (Morris, *Arizona* 7/14; Morris, “Entretien avec Morris” 8) to the use of title characters of *Lucky Luke* albums: Pat Poker, Billy the Kid, Calamity Jane, Jesse James and Belle Starr (Morris *Lucky Luke contre Pat Poker*; Morris and Goscinny *Billy the Kid*; Morris and Goscinny *Calamity Jane*; Morris and Goscinny *Jesse James*; Morris and Fauche). The lead actor, Jean Dujardin, strikes poses and uses lines that are typically associated with Lucky Luke. One of the film’s main plotlines – building the railway in order to connect the West and the East of the US – comes from the first *Lucky Luke* album scripted by Goscinny (Morris and Goscinny *Des Rails sur la prairie*; Couvreur, “Black Wilson” 19) and Pat Poker fakes his own death in the series (Morris, “Nettoyage à Red City” 18-21). With these numerous references to iconic scenes and characters, Huth’s film is well inscribed in the *Lucky Luke* myth as it draws extensively from the *Lucky Luke* universe. However, it appears to depart considerably from the series when Lucky Luke falls in love and starts a domestic life on a farm with former saloon dancer Belle Starr (Huth).



**Figure 5. Lucky Luke’s first appearance**

## ARIZONA

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It is possible that the fact that this is a standalone film allows Huth to take such liberties, while the comic series cannot allow Lucky Luke to fall in love. Yet, I believe Huth's film in reality displays a much deeper understanding of the *Lucky Luke* myth and in fact reinforces it. It is no accident that Lucky Luke adopts this new lifestyle after hanging up his Colt. Belle played a central part in Coop's plan: she replaced the bullets in Lucky Luke's gun with pressurised capsules while giving him a lap dance shortly before his duel with Pat Poker. Coop later encouraged Lucky Luke to start "a new life, without guns, without violence" (Huth) and to leave for Europe with Belle, all with the ulterior motive of removing an obstacle to banditry in Daisy Town: Lucky Luke. Coop therefore seeks to destroy Lucky Luke by pushing him to behave exactly in the way Morris described as contrary to the cowboy's myth, or in Warshow's terms, by pushing him to "forsak[e] a way of life" (Warshow 138). [5] Lucky Luke's myth, the image that his name evokes, is that of a *lonesome* cowboy who shoots faster than his own shadow and who works to serve his country. Therefore, when Lucky Luke hangs up his Colt, he is a broken man who chooses to forget who he is as a myth; his new life with Belle is part of this choice. In the years following the passing of the law of the 16th of July 1949, killing a man would have killed *Lucky Luke* because the series would have died of censorship. Nowadays, killing a man would kill *Lucky Luke* because the authors need to be able to reuse characters such as the Daltons: the rarity of death enables the series to continue from the novelistic perspective. As for Lucky Luke, the character, killing a man would unravel the myth that was forged by the series' own history. It is precisely this mythical dimension of the character that Huth explores in his film. From the moment Lucky Luke shoots Pat Poker until the time he understands that he has been set up, he behaves in an atypical manner. In the end, however, Huth's film reaffirms Lucky Luke's myth by "setting things right": we know that Lucky Luke did not truly kill Pat Poker and the film ends with the single hero riding into the horizon singing "I'm a poor lonesome cowboy."

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## Endnotes

1. Many thanks to J&J for ten years well spent.
2. Although the term “Dalton brothers” usually refers to Joe, Jack, William and Averell Dalton, in this article, it refers to Bob, Grat, Bill and Emmett Dalton. Joe, Jack, William and Averell Dalton are here referred to as the “Dalton cousins”. Further clarifications are provided in the subsection “Inner Workings and Myth”.
3. All quotations from French sources are my translation, except for those from Huth’s film. The latter are official translations as they appear in the English subtitles.
4. An album is usually an A4 hardcover book – typically consisting of 48 to 62 pages – containing either several short stories of the same series or a book-length story. The content of albums is often material that has been pre-published in a magazine such as *Spirou*. The *Lucky Luke* series consists of both short stories and album-length stories.
5. The fact that Belle used to be a saloon dancer does not preclude her from having the role of the virtuous woman that Warshow speaks of inasmuch as she is depicted as a victim of Pat Poker and as someone who has always loved Lucky Luke.

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