March, 2007

When You Care Enough to Defend the Very Best: How the Greeting Card Industry Manages Cultural Criticism

Emily West, *University of Massachusetts Amherst*

When You Care Enough to Defend the Very Best:

How the Greeting Card Industry Manages Cultural Criticism

Emily West
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

This post-print version of the article appears here with permission of the copyright holder Sage Publications. The final published version can be found in *Media, Culture & Society*, *29*(2) (March 2007): 241-261, and in an online database at:
http://mcs.sagepub.com.silk.library.umass.edu:2048/cgi/reprint/29/2/241

Keywords: Cultural Production, Authenticity, Public Relations, Commodity Frontier, Consumers

Abstract:

The American greeting card industry, in particular industry leader Hallmark Cards, makes substantial efforts to deflect cultural critiques in its communications with the public, demonstrating how culture industries actively manage their negative associations with mass culture as well as the public's fears of an advancing 'commodity frontier' (Hochschild, 2003: 30). Hallmark frames its cultural production as creative while de-emphasizing its industrial nature, and whenever possible, aligns itself with the legitimating cultural categories of art and the folk to counter the idea that greeting cards are false, manufactured sentiment. Hallmark also argues that the consumer is sovereign in order to contradict critics' claims that it imposes its mass-produced cards on the public. The way the greeting card industry seeks to manage cultural anxiety about industrialized culture is discussed, as well as the limits of their response.

Dr Emily West is an Assistant Professor in Communication at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Her recent publications appear in The Communication Review and European Journal of Communication. The author thanks Dr Carolyn Marvin and Bethany Klein for feedback, and the SSHRC for funding the research.

Address: Department of Communication, Machmer Hall, 240 Hicks Way, University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Amherst, MA, 01003-9278. Email: ewest@comm.umass.edu Tel: (413) 545-6345. Fax: (413) 545-6399

When it comes to cultural talk about greeting cards, one does not have to look far to encounter deep suspicion, from both scholarly and lay critics. The producers of greeting cards have been compared to insurance salesmen and the 'General Motors of emotion' (Hirshey, 1995: 1), and they are regularly vilified in the columns of etiquette experts and satirized in cartoon strips. These insults illustrate the American greeting card industry's image problem. As Frosh (2001a, 2001b) and Peterson (1997) note in their analyses of the stock photography and country music industries respectively, critics accuse some culture industries of lacking in authenticity. At its most basic level, this inauthenticity can be attributed to the 'mass-producedness' of these cultural products. The division between producers and consumers, the broadcast of cultural products to a large, anonymous mass, the processes of mass production whereby culture is 'industrialized' - all are threats when authenticity is imagined to be defined by distance from the marketplace and proximity to non-commercial expressions of individuality, often thought to be exemplified by fine art and folk practices. Adorno and Horkheimer (1973/1944), in their classic critique of the culture industries, argued that the sphere of culture ought not to be left to the logic of the market. They believed that whereas culture ought to be a force for individual enlightenment and political mobilization, in the hands of capitalists the people would only be manipulated and distracted from their true class interests while producing profits for the captains of industry. In the words of one interpreter, they believed that 'The logic of mass marketing leads to least common denominator goods that produce a conformity of style, marginalize risk taking, and close down interpretation' (Holt, 2002: 3). This Frankfurt School critique of mass culture echoes in scholarly and popular concerns about contemporary culture being alienating, both for its producers as well as for its consumers.

The 'artist' is frequently identified as representing authentic expression, and while mass culture inhabits a fairly distinct cultural sphere from that of the fine arts, this idealized figure continues to haunt those who seek to legitimize industrialized cultural production against its

detractors (Negus and Pickering, 2004; Ryan, 1992). Of course, romantic notions of the artist as a solitary genius who expresses the true essence of the self through his or her work have been deconstructed and discredited by scholars of culture such as Becker (1982) and Baxandall (1988/1972). But the idealized world of fine art serves as an implicit 'ground' for the figured world of the mass culture industries, with their industrial processes of reproduction.

Even for those who do not view high culture as a gold standard for expression, the increasing influence of large culture industries like Hallmark and American Greetings on our everyday lives can be cause for concern for other reasons. Hochschild (2003) argues that American culture has looked to the marketplace to fill more needs, and more intimate needs, over time, and that as a result there is a perceived 'commodity frontier' where people negotiate the use of commercial goods and services in the intimate spheres of life (30). Hochschild uses Durkheim's (1915) binary system of sacred and profane to argue that in contemporary culture, the commodity frontier divides an imagined sacred realm, defined by family and home and individuality, from the profane realm of the market, which is imagined to be cold, impersonal, and homogenizing. For many, greeting cards lie on the 'commodity frontier' that Hochschild describes. They can be understood to be on this frontier not just because their use for interpersonal communication has greatly expanded throughout the twentieth and into the twenty-first century, but because greeting card companies seek to 'help' for what seems to be an ever-expanding list of 'sending situations'. Scholars have observed that a dichotomy between a non-commercial, sacred sphere and a commercial, profaning sphere may be false, and fail to recognize the ways in which these spheres are interdependent and mutually constitutive (Shank, 2004; Miller, 1998). However this study illustrates the rhetorical force of this 'separate spheres' narrative, in the way that it shapes and informs the communications strategies of the greeting card industry, reflecting a broader, ongoing definitional struggle between the culture

industry, its consumers, and critics. The public image of the greeting card industry is a site where value judgments about mass culture are presumed, implied, anticipated, and replied.

While Frankfurt School critiques of the culture industries might appear outdated or irrelevant, a close examination of how greeting card industry leader Hallmark Cards addresses the public suggests that culture industries are far from immune to critiques of mass culture and commercial culture. Hallmark actively manages the tension between interpersonal sentiment and the public, impersonal connotations of industry and the mass market. However, the ultimate impact of mass culture critiques may be more evident among the industry's promotional choices and public relations strategies than in terms of its industrial practices. The ways that different greeting card companies have presented themselves to the public over the last century suggest that this culture industry increasingly manages the 'industrial' component of its image, as images of mass production pose a threat to a business that trades in aesthetic and sentimental content. In addition, the careful branding of different lines at Hallmark Cards illustrates how this sentimental brand is protected from the potentially profaning brush of the mass market, such that cards bound for different kinds of retail outlets carry brands that are more or less recognizably 'Gold Crown'. Both the industrial nature of culture and its mass market destinations are potentially inauthentic aspects of cultural production that are carefully managed in the public eye.

In communicating with the public and the press, representatives of the greeting card industry use a number of rhetorical strategies to combat criticisms of their business, including associating themselves with the legitimating world of fine art. The commonly cited belief that greeting card companies manufacture holidays in order to sell cards is emblematic of the general concern that the products of the cultural industries are artificial and manipulative. Accordingly, the industry is quick to distance itself from the creation of holidays, locating the practice of sending greeting cards within a legitimating 'ancient' history of token exchange. In addition, the greeting card industry highlights

the idea that the consumer is sovereign, and therefore that it is consumers who drive new directions in card production and reject industry missteps, in an attempt to combat the idea that greeting cards impose norms of sentiment on the public. The large greeting card companies like Hallmark highlight their extensive use of audience research and work hard to demonstrate the various ways in which they follow, rather than artificially create, consumer demand.

This paper draws on research conducted with both producers and consumers of greeting cards, using multiple methodologies and multiple sources of data, from 2001-2003. Research with producers included a week-long visit at Hallmark Cards in Kansas City, MO; attending a number of 'Hallmark Writers on Tour' events in Kansas City and Philadelphia where Hallmark writers spoke about their work and fielded questions from interested members of the public; visits to stationery and gift trade shows; studying textual materials relevant to the industry, including the trade papers, press releases, and handbooks aimed at aspiring greeting card writers; and examining archival documents, including the papers of the now defunct Rust Craft and Norcross Greeting Card Companies, once major industry players, located in the archives of the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, DC.

Managing the industrial image

The greeting card industry of today does a great deal of rhetorical work to establish the authenticity of its products to consumers who might wonder about the value of mass-produced sentiment. This effort extends not just to the role of greeting cards in consumers' lives, but to their mode of production. Before examining the public relations strategies used by industry leader Hallmark today, it is instructive to look back to how the Norcross and Rust Craft greeting card companies presented

themselves to the public in corporate films they each produced in the 1950s. The emphasis on the *industrial* aspects of the greeting card companies in these films may have resonated with the reverence for American industry and productivity at the time, but provides a contrast with the industry's presentation of self today which tends to de-emphasize its industrial nature as illustrated by a film shown in the Hallmark Visitors Center, produced in 1994. Both the films made in the 1950s emphasize the technical quality of greeting cards, whereas today Hallmark emphasizes the artistic and emotional authenticity of its products to the public over its industrial conditions of production.

Rust Craft produced 'Rust Craft: Design for Sentiment' in 1955, and 'Norcross Creates a Greeting Card' also dates from the 1950s.[1] Both films, about fifteen to twenty minutes in length, take the viewer through the production process from planning to manufacture. In both films, there is an unmistakable emphasis on the use of the latest technology, the 'best and most modern methods of production' as it is put in the Norcross film ('Norcross Creates a Greeting Card', N.D.). We see many lingering shots of impressive machinery, and technical processes such as colour separation, etching, and scaling. The narrator in the Rust Craft film marvels at how many sheets of paper can be processed every hour, and how the manufacturing department strives for perfection in every task. These films present greeting card production as multi-staged and technological. The viewer observes the literal assembly line on the plant floor, where line-workers fold cards and attach novelties, as well as the assembly-line style of production in the creative department. We learn that the copy, the design, the colouring, and the lettering are executed by separate people, and we see the large editorial committees, fashionable men and women smoking around a conference table, who have the last word on each of these decisions.

In contrast, contemporary public relations on the part of large greeting card companies strive to emphasize the organic, emotional, and creative aspects of production. Paul Barker, Senior Vice President of Creative Product Development at Hallmark has told the press:

> To create that kind of card for today's more demanding, increasingly sophisticated consumer in a rapidly changing culture with more choices than ever before, we have totally redesigned the way we work. Artists, photographers, designers, calligraphers, illustrators, writers and editors work in teams to create compelling products that accurately reflect the emotions people want to express. (Hallmark, 2003a)

While a division of labour still exists for the production of many greeting cards, the emphasis in its representation to the public has shifted from an industrial model of production to an artistic, creative one. Different employees may take responsibility for different components of cards, but now they work in teams instead of in separate departments on opposite ends of the company. This shift is illustrated by the contrast between a Hallmark public relations photograph circa 1940 which shows a sea of women writing or designing cards, heads bent over small, plain desks, while the contemporary picture shows a happy illustrator standing jauntily by a cubicle filled with colourful, fun decorations (Hansen, 2002). It is as if the Hallmark public relations department was reacting to Marxist theories of alienated labour in industrial capitalism in their choice of picture.

'Coming from the Heart', the introductory film shown at the Hallmark Visitors' Center, is an idealized representation of creativity in cultural production. Unlike the 1950s films from Rust Craft and Norcross, very little footage is shot at Hallmark Corporate Headquarters, and at no time do we see cards being passed from one craftsperson to another, or running through the factory floor. Instead, most of the thirteen minute film takes place at Hallmark's creative retreat Kearney Farm

where a group of designers participate in a five day photography workshop. While on the farm, the artists do not appear to be working towards a specific greeting card project. Their task the first day is, with their cameras, 'to think about light itself, how it captures the moments of our days' (Hallmark, 1994). Through exercises like these, the retreat aims to have the artists and photographers from Hallmark 'come to grow a better understanding…of themselves. And their creativity' (Hallmark, 1994).

The Hallmark Visitor's Center does include exhibits about the technical aspects of greeting card production, including an embosser and foil-stamping machines that visitors can watch in action. Yet, the thrust of the film, the Visitor's Center, and the Hallmark press releases is that Hallmark as a company privileges creativity and artistic integrity in the service of producing emotional products. While the twentieth century has seen some changes in the organization of production in the greeting card industry, the shift in the emphasis in representations to the public is out of proportion with how much the experience of producing greeting cards has actually changed.[2] Greeting card companies have increasingly managed their image to de-emphasize the methods of mass production in favor of one of the 'hallmarks' of authenticity – personalized, unfettered artistic freedom.

Branding sentiment

While Hallmark carefully constructs the imagery in its Visitors' Center and press releases, the most powerful communication tool at its disposal is the logo that appears on every card sold. The company is very protective of the Gold Crown (their logo) and brands products differently depending on the product and what kind of retail outlet it will be sold in. Their careful management of the Hallmark brand suggests that while the company is unambiguously involved in the

commercial production of sentiment, they are mindful of the association between the mass market and their emotional products.

Hallmark's current Gold Crown logo, designed in 1949, represents one of the world's most successful and consistently recognized brands (Hall & Anderson, 1979). According to Hallmark (admittedly a biased source), 'nine out of ten consumers are aware of Hallmark greeting cards', 'half of consumers know Hallmark's slogan, "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best", introduced in 1944', and 'four out of ten consumers recall the crown of the Hallmark logo' (Hallmark, 2004). Upon induction into the Marketing Hall of Fame in 1999, it was noted that 'Hallmark remains the leader in the greeting card industry and the Hallmark name, its logo and slogan consistently rank in the upper 90 percents in brand recognition in independent surveys' (New York American Marketing Association, 2000). Hallmark television commercials have instructed consumers to check the back of the card to see if someone 'cared enough to send the very best', and according to some of my interview respondents and audience members at a series of promotional events called Hallmark Writers on Tour, many are happy to comply. It is even quite common to hear that schoolchildren and others who make cards by hand draw their own Gold Crown, or their own version of it, on the back of their homemade cards. It seems clear that Hallmark has quite successfully 'branded sentiment', becoming the Kleenex or Hoover of greeting cards as their brand has become synonymous with the main product they sell.

Hallmark has built up a lot of 'emotional equity' in their brand, and millions associate it with quality and sentiment (Robinette et al., 2001). The company has leveraged its brand into a multimedia empire, particularly with the launch of the Hallmark cable television channel in 2001. It is not surprising, then, that Hallmark is vigilant about where and when the standard Hallmark Gold Crown logo appears. In fact, Hallmark produces four kinds of cards: Hallmark, Expressions from Hallmark, Business Expressions from Hallmark, all incorporating the Gold Crown, and

Ambassador. Hallmark Cards proper appear in Hallmark Gold Crown stores and other specialty stores, major chain drug stores, as well as department stores, college bookstores, and military exchanges (Hallmark, 2004). 'Expressions from Hallmark', created in 1997, releases slightly smaller lines that are sold primarily in mass-channel stores and supermarkets. Finally, a line called Ambassador, begun in 1959, is sold through discount stores that do not sell by brand and substantially cut prices (ibid.). Cards cycle through these lines, meaning that cards are generally not designed specifically for Expressions from Hallmark or Ambassador, but once they are cycled out of the 'core' Hallmark line they are sold in these other lines. Through the use of these three brand identities, Hallmark saves its premier 'Gold Crown' identity for the most legitimate, up-market retail locations, while it completely masks the Hallmark origin of the cards for the 'cheapest' mass market distributors. 'Unsalable product' is apparently 'recycled or destroyed' so that unpopular products do not tarnish Hallmark's image by languishing in disreputable bargain bins (quoted in Hirshey, 1995: 5). Interestingly, American Greetings has an up-market line of products that appear in gift shops and bookstores that is not identified as American Greetings but as 'Winking Moon Press', demonstrating a strategy opposite to that of the Ambassador line but with the same logic.

The fourth brand identity is Business Expressions from Hallmark, the logo used by the Hallmark Loyalty Marketing Group, one of the newest divisions at Hallmark. Hallmark Loyalty produces direct marketing materials for companies, usually in the form of greeting cards that thank customers for their business (Robinette et al., 2001). Hallmark insisted on the 'Business Expressions from Hallmark' logo, which appears embossed on the backs of envelopes and printed on the backs of cards, to keep these communications distinct from cards sent between private individuals, even though the corporate clients would clearly prefer to leverage the emotional capital of the standard Hallmark logo. Those who work at Hallmark Loyalty report that a challenge of their business is simultaneously trying to help a client meet a business goal and protect the emotional equity of the

Hallmark brand. Hallmark Loyalty tries to keep the business or selling content to a minimum on the card itself, preferring to have just an 'emotional message' on it. If a client insists on including a promotion, Hallmark pushes hard to have it on an insert or separate piece of paper. Hallmark Loyalty knows their clients want to take advantage of the positive feeling people hold towards Hallmark and greeting cards in their own direct marketing materials, so they try to deliver that without straying so far from an emotional message that consumers become cynical about Hallmark, or feel that they have been tricked into thinking they are opening a personal expression of sentiment when in fact they get a sales pitch.[3] In this way, the managers of Hallmark Loyalty demonstrate awareness of consumers' perceived 'commodity frontier', leading them to manage the juxtaposition of the personal with the commercial very carefully.

The various Hallmark brands designed for different markets and retail outlets, and the careful separation of sentimental and commercial elements, demonstrate the company's belief that emotional content should be protected from the potentially profaning influence of the mass market, be it in the realm of the card's retail location or its use as a piece of direct marketing. Hallmark is one of America's most successful brands and the company seeks to protect this valuable property by limiting its association with any negative elements of commercial culture. Their careful brand and logo management further demonstrate how critiques of consumer culture are generative in how culture industries design their communications with the public.

Using art to bolster the legitimacy of culture industries

The greeting card business epitomizes mass culture but still aims to associate itself with 'legitimate' culture like fine art. As Becker (1982) observes, 'Because 'art' is an honorific title and being able to

call what you do by that name has some advantages, people often want what they do to be so labeled' (37). This association is especially powerful because the fine arts are widely considered to represent the pinnacle of self expression (Negus and Pickering, 2004; Taylor, 1989). There is a long tradition in the greeting card industry of calling on the legitimating cultural category of art to bolster its claim to authentic cultural production (Shank, 2004, 2000). While greeting card companies resist defining their products as a form of art per se, they seek to associate themselves with that cultural category in other ways in an effort to anticipate and answer accusations of 'industrializing culture'.

Negus (1998) has observed the music industry use 'art' as a legitimating rhetorical device, such as when music labels retain a 'dog (poorly selling artist)' if it has claims to artistic merit, in order to bolster its image as a company invested in artistic integrity, both in the eyes of consumers and the acts that it signs (Negus, 1998: 365). Along the same lines, Frosh (2001b) notes about the stock photography industry:

> Paradoxically, therefore, although it plays safe with standardized, predictable, and formatted photographs, the stock industry's corporate culture also needs to augment the marketability of its images by promoting the name recognition and distinctive signature styles of 'creative' and 'artistic' commercial photographers. (553)

The most prominent American industrial designer of the twentieth century, Raymond Loewy, aspired to recognition from art and design critics during his career, although he ultimately concluded that it was rarely possible to meet his ideal of good design which would 'keep the user happy, the manufacturer in the black, and the aesthete unoffended' (quoted in Potter, 2002: 14). Loewy appealed to the conventions of fine art by having every design that came out of his company labeled as 'his' design, even though the company, apart from in its early years, ran on an industrial model

with a division of labour, with most of the work being carried out by teams of designers employed by him (Potter, 2002: 12).

Similarly in the greeting card industry, the large companies have some card lines featuring the designs of a particular artist, a production arrangement diametrically opposed to the standard process where cards are produced through a division of labour by artists and writers who remain anonymous. At Hallmark, the line called 'Nature's Sketchbook' featuring the work of Dutch nature artist Marjolein Bastin is a good example of this practice. This marketing approach is not new, but has appeared throughout the history of the modern American greeting card (Shank, 2004, 2000; Chase, 1956). Even when the cards are not by a name recognition artist, companies may draw attention to the high art qualities of their cards. For example, Rust Craft's first magazine ad that ran in Life Magazine in 1947 depicted a couple hanging a framed picture on the wall. The copy reads 'Christmas cards your friends will frame! For your Christmas cards…full-colour reproductions of beautiful French etchings…each one a picture lovely enough to frame' (Rust Craft, 1947, 'French etchings').

Hallmark is well known for associating its products with high art, both through the designs featured on actual cards, and by sponsoring artistic endeavours. Company founder Joyce C. Hall is credited with having the foresight to link the Hallmark name with 'legitimate' art through various initiatives, such as featuring a gallery at his flagship store in New York City, and starting the Hallmark International Art Awards Competition to 'build a mass audience for fine painting' (Hall and Anderson, 1979: 189). Sponsoring the Hallmark Hall of Fame was also part of J.C. Hall's plan to associate his cards with legitimate culture. This series of television movies began in 1951 with the first sponsored television special of an original opera called 'Amahl and the Night Visitors' (Hallmark, 2001b). Although today's viewer might associate the Hallmark Hall of Fame with rather predictable, family-friendly morality tales set in various rural American locations (recent productions

certainly follow this formula), in the early years of production the Hallmark Hall of Fame focused on the classics, bringing Shakespeare, Shaw, and Ibsen to the small screen, and earning the series over 80 Emmy awards over the years. Legend has it that in those early years Joyce Hall was warned against producing the classics in favor of going for 'the mass audience', but he stuck to his guns, saying 'I'd rather make eight million good impressions than twenty-eight million bad ones' (Hallmark, 2000a).

In addition to these marketing initiatives, Hall thought the popular medium of greeting cards could bring fine art to the 'masses'. In the Hallmark Visitors' Center, the artists that Hall had the closest collaborations with are featured in pride of place near the beginning of the exhibition. Norman Rockwell, Grandma Moses, Saul Steinberg, and Sir Winston Churchill all had their art reproduced as Hallmark cards, their work straddling the worlds of high and popular art in a way that made them particularly accessible to the card-buying public, while still lending cachet to the Hallmark brand. Although the 'folksy' American iconography of Norman Rockwell and Grandma Moses came to be strongly identified with Hallmark cards, Hall also pursued contemporary international artists, and introduced fine art reproductions on his cards in the late 1940s. He explained:

> We brought to the public the work of Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Rembrandt, Botticelli, Renoir, El Greco, Monet, Gauguin, Cezanne, and Van Gogh. So through the 'unsophisticated art' of greeting cards, the world's great masters were shown to millions of people who might otherwise not have been exposed to them. (Hall & Anderson, 1979: 183-184)

In this passage Hall reveals his awareness that high art and greeting cards are not an obvious or 'natural' combination. He writes, 'Many fine artists who might seem unlikely for greeting cards have

been published by us – Pablo Picasso, Andrew Wyeth, Georgia O'Keefe and Salvador Dali' (Hall and Anderson, 1979: 184). Hallmark did not stop at incorporating fine painting into its cards, but incorporated the writing of recognized literary forces, such as Boris Pasternak, Ogden Nash, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Walt Whitman, and many others, onto some of their cards (Hall and Anderson, 1979). In 2002 Maya Angelou agreed to write for a line of Hallmark social expression items (cards and gifts) called the Life Mosaic Collection, sparking a flurry of media attention. With the Life Mosaic Collection, Hallmark continues the tradition of partnering with artists and writers with a combination of art world respect and mass appeal, the latter of which Angelou has in part because of her frequent appearances on Oprah Winfrey's television talk show. The resulting controversy in the press and among some of her fellow poets highlights a cultural desire to keep 'art' and 'commerce' separate, a boundary which Angelou's greeting card line threatens to blur (Campbell, 2002). The cultural uncertainty about Angelou's collaboration with Hallmark further illustrates the accusations of inauthenticity that the greeting card industry seeks to manage.

Dwight Macdonald (1962/1952), well-known for his mid-century critiques of mass culture, would likely have identified the combination of literature or fine art with the greeting card as evidence of its 'Midcult' or middlebrow status, because of how it blurs the line between mass culture and high culture (59). Not only in appropriating fine art for reproduction on cards, but also in terms of the kind of artists who enjoy particular popularity in the medium of greeting cards - artists with mass appeal such as Norman Rockwell, Marjolein Bastin, Maya Angelou, and Thomas Kinkade - greeting cards arguably embody Macdonald's category of the Midcult. Like Macdonald, Adorno (1991/1975) saw the fusion of high and low art as a troubling characteristic of the culture industry, arguing that the seriousness of high art and the rebelliousness of low art were destroyed in the process.

However, these cards that might have especially troubled Macdonald and Adorno do not represent the typical greeting card. Although literary and fine art cards had, and continue to have, their market, the fact remains that they buck conventional greeting card wisdom. The vast majority of greeting card sentiments should generally *not* read like poetry if they are to convey the industry's signature 'me-to-you message', and designs should support the emotional content, rather than draw undue attention to themselves (Chadwick, 1968: 1). Writers of manuals for freelancers always emphasize that successful greeting cards are more 'design' than 'art', more 'verse' than 'poetry'. Because most consumers purchase cards to represent their own sentiments and relationships, the editorial must be vague enough, and written in plain enough language, that many people can use it to stand in for their own sentiments. Workers in the greeting card industry argue that poetry is too specific to one person's experience, and generally written in language too far removed from the vernacular to be successful in a greeting card. And yet, although cards incorporating the work of these artists and writers constitute a small proportion of the cards produced by Hallmark, the company's public relations materials emphasize their existence because of their associations with the culturally legitimate worlds of fine art and literature.

The culture industry as part of a venerated historical continuum

The greeting card industry also looks to the non-industrial past as a source of authenticity for its current endeavours. Locating modern, mass-produced greeting cards within a narrative of 'social communication throughout the ages' is a prominent rhetorical strategy for defending this culture industry against its would-be mass culture critics. This narrative aims to counter the perception that the industry has falsely stimulated consumer demand for cards, and has replaced genuine emotional

communication with mass-produced, industrialized sentiment. Whereas the greeting card industry sometimes appeals to the legitimating worlds of fine art or high culture for authenticity in its cultural production, in other cases they appeal to the folk practices of pre-industrialized culture.

One of the first displays that one sees at the Hallmark Visitors' Center shows some centuries' old Valentine's gifts, including handmade paper tokens, a glove, and a decorated scarf. This exhibit implicitly establishes these pre-industrial, folk objects as the beginning of the Hallmark company's story of sentiment, a chronological framing of uncertain historical validity. Similarly, despite the willingness of the Rust Craft company to emphasize its industrial prowess in the film 'Rust Craft: Design for Sentiment' (Bay State Film Production, 1955), the film is book-ended by a dialogue between a greeting card shop owner 'Mr. Morse' and a young boy named 'Jimmy', in which the production of greeting cards is framed as a time-honored endeavour. In the opening scenes of the film, Mr. Morse shows Jimmy scrapbooks filled with old-fashioned greeting cards, connecting the contemporary industry with a tale of origins in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and suggesting that cards are historical artifacts worthy of preservation. Once we have 'traveled' to the Dedham, Massachusetts plant to see how Rust Craft produces greeting cards, we return to the shop where Mr. Morse watches Jimmy select a card for his mother and, in a reflective mood, says, 'Yes, just one small boy. But an impulse as old as mankind. This impulse is symbolized in the greeting card displays around the country' (Bay State Film Production, 1955). The greeting card industry may manufacture cards with the latest technologies, the film suggests, but the social uses to which the cards are put are 'ancient'.

Similarly, a Rust Craft press release entitled 'Easter customs throughout the ages' frames the exchange of modern cards as the culminating point of traditions going back to ancient times. The piece begins, 'First Easter greetings took the form of painted eggs, exchanged during an ancient festival held in honor of the pagan goddess of spring, Eostra, from whose name we get the word

"Easter"" (Rust Craft, N.D.). The association with ancient traditions lends previously unappreciated weight to the tradition of exchanging Easter cards. Should anyone feel that the greeting card industry has no business producing religious items, a recent Hallmark press release assures consumers that religious greeting cards are just part of a long and venerable history of printed religious imagery. A timeline produced by Hallmark archivist Sharman Robertson begins in the fifteenth century, when:

> Inventors and pioneers of early hand printing carved religious icons in wood, stamped (or 'printed') them onto vellum paper or linen and sold them at markets and shrines – not as cards, but as pieces of paper that had emotional significance for the buyer. (Hallmark, 2005a)

The strategy of locating greeting card traditions and iconography in a history that pre-dates the industry of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries attempts to combat cynical attitudes toward 'Hallmark holidays', the popular notion that sentimental and holiday card-sending occasions have been manufactured by the greeting card industry in the pursuit of profit. People's distaste for 'Hallmark holidays' suggests a resentment towards large companies like Hallmark dictating when and for what reason they should send cards, in effect creating a social expectation for receiving a greeting card that the consumer must then fulfill. To counter this feeling, Hallmark goes out of its way to persuade consumers that the company does not create holidays, but merely provides a new way to participate in pre-existing traditions. A recent Hallmark press release delicately tries to turn the tables on those who denounce 'Hallmark Holidays', saying:

> While we're honored that people so closely link the Hallmark name with celebrations and special occasions, we can't take credit for creating holidays. Congressional resolutions, proclamations,

> religious observances, cultural traditions, and grassroots leadership by ordinary people create these special days. It's really the public who give occasions like Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day widespread public acceptance as celebration events. (Hallmark, 2003b)

Press releases from Hallmark and the other major player in the industry, American Greetings, repeatedly trace the non-industrial history of various card-sending observances, such as Boss's Day or Grandparents' Day, in an effort to assure audiences (and the media) that they are not in the business of creating holidays just to sell more cards (American Greetings, 2006; Hallmark, 2001a). This rhetorical strategy occasionally leads to bizarre results, such as when Hallmark traces the custom of sending Father's Day cards back to ancient times, saying 'A Babylonian youth named Elmesu carved the first known Father's Day card in clay nearly 4,000 years ago. His special message wished his father good health and a long life', before discussing the official holiday's twentieth century originator (Hallmark, 2002).

The argument consistently offered by Hallmark is that holidays and life events are as ancient as human society itself, and greeting cards merely assist the public in celebrating them. Similar to their use of art, the greeting card industry calls on the past to legitimate their business, and to inoculate the public against the criticism that they are 'commercializing the calendar' (Schmidt, 1991), and therefore promoting an inauthentic cultural practice. By connecting greeting cards to pre-industrial communication rituals, they attempt to distract critics from the fact that the practice of exchanging greeting cards in the form we see them today is virtually inseparable from the industrialization and commercialization of culture.[4]

Consumer sovereignty

Contemporary critics of the culture industries echo the complaints of Adorno and Horkheimer (1973/1944) when they worry that corporations impose mass culture on an unsuspecting public, thereby crowding out other more legitimate or authentic forms of culture. Greeting card corporations like Hallmark seem aware of these critiques, and go to some trouble to persuade observers that they merely respond to consumer demand and seek to fulfill communication needs. This rhetorical strategy locates the authenticity of greeting cards in their use by consumers. Hallmark argues that the consumer is sovereign in the greeting card business by emphasizing their use of market research, and even reporting on their occasional failures to understand consumers' communication needs. In this effort they echo a common strategy used to defend popular culture against its critics, particularly in denigrated culture industries such as Hollywood film and popular music. When their cultural products are criticized for being too violent, sexual, or 'dumb', culture industries often respond with the very fact of their popularity as a defense. Of course, this response does not address what choices consumers and audiences might make were they given a different range of equally accessible and well-promoted options.

Hallmark certainly devotes a considerable amount of research to figuring out what sending situations or relationships might require guidance or assistance. In fact, Hallmark founder Joyce C. Hall was considered something of a market research innovator because of the system he instituted early in the company's history ensuring that exact sales of each card would get back to Hallmark, where the production and distribution of cards could be immediately adjusted according to what sold well and what sold poorly (Hall & Anderson, 1979). While sales figures on existing cards are one of the most important sources of data, Hallmark undertakes (or out-sources) a number of different kinds of research with their consumers. Jay Dittman, Hallmark's Vice President for Consumer Research says:

> A key part of this company's commitment to understanding the consumer is keeping in close touch with people. In one way or another, we are in contact with more than 100,000 consumers a year. We do that in a variety of ways – focus groups, surveys, demographic analysis and studies –- as well as less standard ways – observational shopping; going into homes to see how families celebrate, for example; having people track what they buy. Hallmark is intensely in focus with the consumer. We have to be on trend. Our commitment to consumer needs goes beyond a mere understanding. We don't try to just meet consumer needs – we salute them. (Hallmark, N.D.)

In-person focus groups are undertaken sparingly, as they are expensive, and their results are always triangulated against surveys that access larger, more representative samples. One gets the impression that these focus groups are sometimes used as a major source of inspiration, and that what some of the participants say about their feelings and relationships will show up on new greeting cards soon after. In one press release, Hallmark extensively quotes from participants in online opinion groups who told the company that 'Dad instilled values, taught lessons and was the most important man in their lives' (Hallmark, 2006). Hallmark goes on to say:

> A look at today's Hallmark Father's Day cards reflects what the panel said. One card says 'It didn't matter where you led…I always loved to follow'. Another says, 'Thanks, Dad, for giving me a star to steer by…and a place to always come home to'. (ibid.)

While Hallmark uses focus groups and surveys to inspire their lines, they also use them to publicize new releases. For example, Hallmark released the results of a nationwide 'Girlfriends' survey that was conducted to coincide with the launch of a new line of cards called Fresh Ink, aimed at women

age 18-39 (Hallmark, 2000b). Hallmark used these survey results to legitimate their new line of cards by persuading consumers that the line responded to a genuine communication need among young women that was going unaddressed.

Hallmark is far from shy about letting the media and its customers know about their market research, if not all the details of it. In fact, they seem to aggressively promote their research as a source of authenticity for their products. Press releases frequently report on the results of the latest telephone survey, or what consumers told them in recent focus groups. New lines or trends in greeting cards are often tied to new 'communication needs' or changing tastes among the American public, such as when explaining the growth in cards that focus on religion and spirituality. For example, American Greetings quotes statistics saying that 58% of American say religion is very important to their daily life, and 83% of Americans describe themselves as Christian, and concludes that 'These statistics are clearly major components of the American lifestyle which have prompted American Greetings to create two new Christian card lines' (American Greetings, 2000). In their public relations materials the industry wants to be seen as responding to consumers rather than as representing or promoting any particular kind of lifestyle or preference.

As a result, the industry seems to tread particularly carefully when creating cards for 'brand new' sending situations that have not traditionally been associated with greeting cards. For example, Hallmark released 'recovery-specific' cards for those struggling with or recovering from addictions in 1992, a heavily researched line that appeared in stores under the heading 'Just for Today: Cards of Support and Encouragement' (Hirshey, 1995). A Hallmark employee had the initial idea based on a conversation with an acquaintance whose husband was an alcoholic, but a great deal of both qualitative and quantitative research, along with market testing, was required before the line was widely released. Further, Hallmark likes to point out that they don't always get it right. The failure of the first attempt to release cards for divorce in 1973 is often pointed to as evidence that Hallmark

does not have the power to drive card sales or create communication needs. The story, told with surprising frequency, about their failure to connect with the national mood around divorce has a 'happy ending' for Hallmark, who finally got the timing and the tone of the cards right in 1984 when they released a tentative line of five cards that a year later had blossomed to thirty selections (Bolton, 1985).

Just as the card companies sometimes get it wrong, they also report being surprised by the success of some cards. American Greetings, for example, reports being surprised by how successful cards with the sentiments 'Let's get back together' or 'Let's try again' have been, or the continued popularity of cards for pets (Quigley, 2001: 45). Admitting this to the public has the dual function of 'proving' that consumers are in the driver's seat when it comes to the production of cards, while also suggesting new reasons for using cards to consumers who may not have considered using a greeting card to help heal a rift in a failing relationship, for example, and who may be encouraged to do so when they learn that these kinds of cards are being used by others.

Hallmark was particularly careful to frame its line of inspirational and patriotic cards that they released shortly after the September 11th attacks of 2001 (as well as for its anniversary a year later) as responding to a communication need, rather than taking it upon themselves to encourage Americans to send patriotic cards. In television reports and press releases, Hallmark appears to negotiate their desire to publicize the cards with the potential reaction of those who might see them as taking advantage of a national tragedy in order to invent yet another reason for people to send cards, a twist on cynicism about 'Hallmark holidays'. A feature on CNN explains that Hallmark figured out what the public was feeling and what they would want help in saying directly after September 11th by listening in on online message boards, asking their panel of 600 online survey participants how they felt, and watching the media closely. CNN's reporter states that, 'Creative teams quickly began to discern a new American voice', and we hear from a Hallmark researcher who says, 'I think people

are sensing more authenticity and they don't want anything to sound manufactured', thereby indicating that the industry is more than aware that consumers could perceive their products as inauthentic (Bay et al., 2001). In case anyone should still accuse Hallmark of capitalizing on tragedy in the face of their assurances that they were just listening to consumers, we learn on the CNN report that Hallmark had already come out with a line of 'everyday heroes' cards in the summer of 2001, before the terrorist attacks, in response to a nationwide trend towards distrusting celebrity and valuing people who contribute to their communities (ibid.). Even before September 11th, Hallmark was careful to frame its foray into patriotic cards as consumer-driven, rather than company-driven, explaining that:

> Hallmark began offering these cards that reflect patriotism in direct response to both consumer and retailer demand. Calls from retailers wanting to order such cards, and letters from consumers asking for cards for these patriotic occasions led to forums across the nation to collect views from retailers. That was all it took for the artists and writers at Hallmark to begin working on designs. (Hallmark, N.D.)

Hallmark tries to distance itself from looking like an arbiter of taste or a dictator of feeling by pointing out that it is merely 'giving the people what they want', thereby locating the authenticity of its products in consumer desire and use. They rhetorically use their market research as a form of built-in legitimacy for new products and sending situations, and to hopefully silence those who complain about Hallmark's desire to further infiltrate everyday life with commercial sentiments for more sending situations.

Hallmark also advertises the extent to which consumers respond positively to their cards. This is surely the thinking behind the Hallmark Writers on Tour events. While the promise of meeting

greeting card writers attracts Hallmark fans to the events, consumers are really the stars of the show as half the time is reserved for people to tell stories about how they use cards and what they mean to them. One press release explains:

> We continually get letters from people, asking how Hallmark 'read my mind' or how Hallmark knew so specifically how they felt. That doesn't happen by accident. Extensive research that includes sales analysis, focus groups, commissioned studies and direct conversations with parents with children via the Internet are some of the ways that Hallmark 'reads your mind'. The final step is actual market testing of cards to make sure they are on target. (Hallmark, 2005b)

Discussion

The greeting card industry draws our attention to how it creates cards based on rigorous consumer research, how consumers respond positively to the products they offer, and even evidence of past 'mistakes' to argue that they follow consumer demand, rather than create it. Companies like Hallmark go to such effort in order to shut down, or anticipate critiques that they are manipulating consumer desires and creating 'fake' holidays or sending situations, thereby contributing to an alienating, inauthentic mass culture, and pushing the boundaries of an already advancing commodity frontier. The industry's attention to and anticipation of these critiques indirectly verifies Hochschild's (2003) argument that the 'commodity frontier' is an important feature of contemporary structures of feeling (30).

The responses of the greeting card industry are familiar from similar rhetorical strategies that we hear from the producers of other maligned culture industries such as stock photography (Frosh,

2001a, 2001b) and popular music (Negus, 1998). However, these counter-arguments do not necessarily address the concern that the culture industries limit people's capacity for self-expression, aim for the 'lowest common denominator' in terms of quality, or manipulate consumers into purchasing their goods. After all, Adorno & Horkheimer (1973/1944) never doubted that the products of the culture industries were popular – they just doubted their quality and cultural function. In fact, the extensive market research that Hallmark and American Greetings do would likely only confirm Adorno's (1991/1975) complaint that the culture industries focus their energies on engineering emotional effects on audiences. In the face of appeals to consumer sovereignty from the culture industry, Adorno complained that:

> The customer is not king, as the culture industry would like us to believe, not its subject but its object….The culture industry misuses its concern for the masses in order to duplicate, reinforce and strengthen their mentality, which it presumes is given and unchangeable. How this mentality might be changed is excluded throughout. (1991/1975: 86)

Adorno's beef with the culture industry was that it works within and reinforces existing power structures and consciousness, and does not seek to transform consciousness or counter oppression, which he thought a more authentic folk culture would do. Ultimately this element of the mass culture critique fails to impact participants in culture industries because they are not on board with the proposition that the purpose of culture, including and perhaps especially popular culture, is to transform consciousness by reflecting in a critical way on power relations in the contemporary world. Adorno complains that all the culture industry does is 'give the people what they want', while the culture industries pat themselves on the back for doing so.

What this investigation seeks to show is that critiques of mass culture and consumer culture are not just irrelevant throwbacks that only cultural elites worry about, but ideas that continue to affect cultural producers in terms of how they represent their industries and their products to the public. Contemporary cultural norms of what constitutes authenticity in communication and culture are evident not only in popular critiques of greeting card communication (not elaborated on here), but in the industry's anticipation of and response to these criticisms. In a context where so much culture is industrialized, ideas about authenticity revolve around distance from the market, and the contrast of pre-industrial or high culture with industrialized, mass culture. Producers of greeting cards must make a case for the authenticity of their cultural products and modes of production within a context in which their business is by definition suspected of being inauthentic because of its industrial nature, and its top-down mode of distributing sentiments for purchase to the public. The greeting card industry, like other culture industries, does respond to these critiques but the impact is disproportionately on their promotional strategies in comparison to the actual conditions and outcomes of cultural production.

[1] The exact production date of this film is not available.
[2] Research not reported on here illustrates that an 'industrial' model of production prevails at the large greeting card companies like Hallmark and American Greetings, with a division of labour and precisely guided work. However, some accommodations are made, and rhetoric aimed towards, framing the work of writers and artists as 'creative'.
[3] The claim that they are not 'tricking' consumers must be taken with a grain of salt, however, as the entire format, including the imprinting designed to look like real handwriting, is designed to maximize open rates because it will look like a piece of personal mail.
[4] See Schmidt (1991) and Shank (2004) for histories of the greeting card in which they make similar claims.

References

Adorno, T. W. (1991) 'Culture Industry Reconsidered' pp.86-93 in J. Bernstein (ed) The Culture Industry. London: Routledge. [Original work published 1975]

Adorno, T.W. and M. Horkheimer (1973) 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception' pp.349-385 in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch, and J. Woolacott (eds) Mass Communication and Society. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications. (Original work published 1944)

American Greetings. (2006, September). 'Changing workplace dynamics inspire new Boss's Day cards from American Greetings' Online press release: http://pressroom.americangreetings.com/archives/fall06/bossday06.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 November 2006.

American Greetings. (2000, February 24). 'America's Search For Spirituality Inspires Two New Religious Card Lines From American Greetings' Online press release: http://www.prnewswire.com/cgi bin/micro_stories.pl?ACCT=044150&TICK=AM&STORY=/www/story/02-24-2000/0001148744&EDATE=Feb+24,+2000. Downloaded from the world wide web 26 July 2002.

Baxandall, M. (1988) Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy : A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style, 2nd Ed. New York: Oxford University Press. [Originally published 1972]

Bay, W., Schaffler, R., Hope, G. and S. Lisovicz (2001, December 16) 'What's in the Cards for Hallmark?' CNN Business Usual 6:30, Transcript # 121600CN.V56. Downloaded from www.lexis-nexis.com.

Bay State Film Production, Inc. (1955) Rust Craft Presents: Design for Sentiment. Norcross Greeting Card Collection No.58, Series 3: Rust Craft Company Records, 3k: Films, Folder 58.4. Archives at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, Washington D.C.

Becker, H. (1982) Art Worlds. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Bolton, R. (1985) 'Divorce Cards Can Help When You're at a Loss for Words' Hallmark press release viewed at Hallmark Headquarters, February 2003.

Campbell, S. (2002, January 8) 'A Sellout, or a True Hallmark of a Poet?' The Hartford Courant, p.D1.

Chadwick, H.J. (1968) The Greeting Card Writer's Handbook. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.

Chase, E.D. (1956) The Romance of Greeting Cards. Cambridge: University Press of Cambridge.

Durkheim, E. (1915) The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life. New York: Free Press.

Frosh, P. (2001a) 'Inside the Image Factory: Stock Photography and Cultural Production', Media, Culture & Society 23(5): 625-646.

Frosh, P. (2001b) 'To Thine Own Self Be True: The Discourse of Authenticity in Mass Cultural Production', The Communication Review, 4(4): 541-557.

Hall, J.C. and C. Anderson (1979) When You Care Enough. Hallmark: Kansas City, MO.

Hallmark. (2006, June) 'Dads as Heroes' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room. http://pressroom.hallmark.com/FD_Heroes.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 November 2006.

Hallmark. (2005a, June) 'Religious/Inspirational Card Market Overview' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://pressroom.hallmark.com/christian_products_overview.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 November 2006.

Hallmark. (2005b, March) 'If You Live It, Hallmark Makes It' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://pressroom.hallmark.com/niche_cards.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 November 2006.

Hallmark. (2004, May) 'Hallmark Greeting Card Brands and Distribution Facts' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://www.hallmark.com/Website/hallmark_home.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 31 May 2004.

Hallmark. (2003a, February) 'Creative Captures Emotion: Views from Paul Barker' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room. http://pressroom.hallmark.com/barker_creative_view.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 November 2006.

Hallmark. (2003b, March) 'How a Holiday Becomes a Card-sending Occasion' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://pressroom.hallmark.com/how_holiday_becomes_card_holiday.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 November 2006.

Hallmark. (2002) 'Father's Day Facts 2002' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://www.hallmark.com/Website/hallmark_home.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 9 July 2002.

Hallmark. (2001a, August) 'Grandparents Day 2001' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://www.hallmark.com/Website/hallmark_home.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 July 2002.

Hallmark. (2001b, January) 'Hallmark Hall of Fame at 50' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://www.hallmark.com/Website/hallmark_home.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 17 July 2002.

Hallmark. (2000a, October) 'Hallmark Cards Celebrate Century of Living' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://www.hallmark.com/Website/hallmark_home.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 14 July 2002.

Hallmark. (2000b, June) 'Hallmark Fresh Ink Cards Launches National 'Girlfriends' Survey' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room: http://www.hallmark.com/Website/hallmark_home.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 16 July 2002.

Hallmark. (1994) Coming from the Heart. Film Script available from the Hallmark Visitors' Center, Kansas City, MO.

Hallmark. (N.D.) "'Tis the Season for Patriotism' Online press release from the Hallmark Press Room. http://www.hallmark.com/Website/hallmark_home.html. Downloaded from the world wide web 15 July 2002.

Hansen, E. (2002) 'Culture Change as Part of a Large-scale Redesign' Workshop Presentation for The Human Resource Planning Society, Understanding and Leading Culture Change, October 2002, Boston MA.

Hirshey, G. (1995, July 2) 'Happy [ ] Day to You' New York Times, Section 6, Pg. 20; Magazine Desk. Downloaded from www.lexis-nexis.com. Pagination of citations reflects electronic version.

Hochschild, A.R. (2003) The Commercialization of Intimate Life: Notes from Home and Work. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Holt, D.B. (2002) 'Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding', Journal of Consumer Research 29(1): 70-91.

Macdonald, D. (1962/1952) Against the American Grain. New York: Random House.

Miller, D. (1998) A Theory of Shopping. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Negus, K. (1998) 'Cultural Production and the Corporation: Musical Genres and the Strategic Management of Creativity in the US Recording Industry', Media, Culture & Society 20(3): 359-379.

Negus, K. and M. Pickering (2004) Creativity, Communication and Cultural Value. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

New York American Marketing Association. (2000) 'Marketing Hall of Fame 1999 Inductees', Downloaded 27 May 2004 from the world wide web: http://www.nyama.org/mhf/mhf99.htm.

Norcross Creates a Greeting Card. (N.D. – 1950s). Film in Norcross Greeting Card Collection No.58, Series1: Norcross Company Records, 1920-1981, 1k: Films, Folder 58.1. Archives at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.

Peterson, R.A. (1997) Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Potter, G. (2002) Raymond Loewy: Designs for a Consumer Culture. Wilmington, DE: Hagley Museum and Library.

Quigley, A. (2001, December) 'Playing Their Cards Right: Trend-spotting Keeps American Greetings Ahead of the Curve', Continental (In-flight Magazine): 43-45.

Robinette, S. and C. Brand with V. Lenz (2001) Emotion Marketing: The Hallmark Way of Winning Customers for Life. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rust Craft (N.D.) 'Easter Customs Throughout the Ages' Press release, filed with 1950s advertisements. Norcross Greeting Card Collection No.58, Series 1: Norcross Company Records, Box No.1, Folder 11. Archives at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.

Rust Craft (1947) 'French Etchings' Full page advertisement from Life, 13 October 1947, p.143. Norcross Greeting Card Collection No.58, Series 3: Rust Craft Company Records, Box No.9. Archives at the Smithsonian Museum of American History, Washington, D.C.

Ryan, B. (1992) Making Capital from Culture: The Corporate Form of Capitalist Cultural Production. New York: Walter de Gruyter.

Schmidt, L.E (1991) 'The Commercialization of the Calendar: American Holidays and the Culture of Consumption', The Journal of American History 78(3): 887-916.

Shank, B. (2004) A Token of My Affection: Greeting Cards and American Business Culture. New York: Columbia University Press.

Shank, B. (2000) 'Subject, Commodity, Marketplace: The American Artists Group and the Mass Production of Distinction', Radical History Review 76(Winter): 25-52.

Taylor, C. (1989) Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.