

SPAGHETTI
WESTERNS
AT THE
CROSSROADS

STUDIES IN RELOCATION,
TRANSITION AND APPROPRIATION

EDITED BY
AUSTIN FISHER



Spaghetti Westerns at the Crossroads

Studies in Relocation, Transition and
Appropriation

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EDINBURGH
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Edinburgh University Press Ltd
The Tun – Holyrood Road,
12(2f) Jackson's Entry,
Edinburgh EH8 8PJ

Typeset in 11/13 Adobe Sabon by
IDSUK (DataConnection) Ltd, and
printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon CR0 4YY

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 0 7486 9545 4 (hardback)
ISBN 978 0 7486 9546 1 (webready PDF)
ISBN 978 1 4744 0998 8 (epub)

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Contents

List of Figures	v
Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	i
<i>Austin Fisher</i>	
1. The Quiet Man Gets Noisy: Sergio Leone, the Italian Western and Ireland	13
<i>Christopher Frayling</i>	
Part I Trans-genre Roots	
2. Pietro Germi, Hybridity and the Roots of the Italo-Western	49
<i>Pasquale Iannone</i>	
3. Malaysian Pirates, American Cowboys and the Marginalised Outlaw: Constructing Other-ed Adventurers in Italian Film	67
<i>Aliza S. Wong</i>	
Part II Ethnic Identities, Transnational Politics	
4. Spectacles of Insurgency: Witnessing the Revolution as Incoherent Text	89
<i>David Hyman and Patrick Wynne</i>	
5. Emancipation <i>all'italiana</i> : Giuseppe Colizzi and the Representation of African Americans in Italian Westerns	103
<i>Lee Broughton</i>	
6. Corbucci Unchained: Miike, Tarantino and the Postmodern Discursivity of Exploitation Cinema	125
<i>Mikel J. Koven</i>	

Part III Asian Crossovers

7. Bounty Hunters, *Yakuzas* and *Rōnins*: Intercultural Transformations between the Italian Western and the Japanese Swordfight Film in the 1960s 147
Thomas Klein
8. Spaghetti Westerns and Asian Cinema: Perspectives on Global Cultural Flows 166
Ivo Ritzer
9. Cowboys and Indians: Transnational Borrowings in the Indian Masala Western 185
Iain Robert Smith

Part IV Routes of Relocation, Transition and Appropriation

10. For a Few Comic Strips More: Reinterpreting the Spaghetti Western through the Comic Book 213
William Grady
11. Transit to East Germany: the Distribution and Reception of *Once Upon a Time in the West* in the German Democratic Republic 239
Rosemary Stott
12. Spaghetti Westerns and the 'Afterlife' of a Hollywood Genre 262
Pete Falconer

- Filmography 279
- Notes on the Contributors 290
- Index 293

Figures

I.1	<i>The Good, the Bad, the Weird</i> deploys Spaghetti Western stylistics within a Manchurian action schema	5
2.1	Bandits head off across the Sicilian landscape leaving one man dead in <i>In the Name of the Law</i>	58
2.2, 2.3, 2.4	The protagonists are met with hostility upon their arrival in town in Geremi's <i>In the Name of the Law</i> and Sergio Leone's <i>A Fistful of Dollars</i>	60
2.5, 2.6	Striking diagonal compositions in <i>The Bandit of Tacca del Lupo</i>	63
6.1	Jamie Foxx and Franco Nero share a prolonged two-shot in <i>Django Unchained</i>	135
6.2	Django's outlandish outfit is suggestive of Gainsborough's 'The Blue Boy' (<i>Django Unchained</i>)	137
7.1	Shiba and Kikyô prepare for the showdown in <i>Three Outlaw Samurai</i>	156
7.2	Shiba stands in front of the peasants, who are powerless to do anything, with the petition in <i>Three Outlaw Samurai</i>	157
7.3, 7.4	The widescreen composition as the hero arrives in town in <i>Zatoichi on the Road</i> foreshadows that of <i>Django</i>	159
9.1	<i>Khote Sikkay</i> adopts Sergio Leone-style composition	194
9.2	Shera and Rakesh evoke the Tonto–Lone Ranger relationship in <i>Kaala Sona</i>	198

9.3	The villain in <i>Sholay</i> , modelled on El Indio from <i>For a Few Dollars More</i>	201
9.4	Neeta performs in <i>Wanted: Dead or Alive</i>	204
10.1	<i>Loveless</i> replicates the form of a Spaghetti Western showdown	221
10.2	Alejandro Jodorowsky and François Boucq's <i>Bouncer: Raising Cain</i> utilises the visual language of the Spaghetti Western's flashback sequences	223
10.3	Jean Giraud's <i>Blueberry</i> artwork registers the influence of Hollywood landscapes. From <i>La piste des Sioux</i>	225
10.4	The more surreal and arid imagery of later <i>Blueberry</i> comics. From <i>Ballade pour un cercueil</i>	228
10.5	The hallucinatory artwork of the 1974 <i>Blueberry</i> album, <i>Le hors-la-loi</i>	232
11.1	East German poster for <i>Spiel mir das Lied vom Tod/Once Upon a Time in the West</i>	244
11.2	Poster for <i>Osceola</i> , featuring Gojko Mitić	248

Acknowledgements

This volume emerged from the inaugural *Spaghetti Cinema* festival and conference in April 2013. Huge thanks are therefore due to Garry Whannel and the Research Institute for Media, Art and Design at the University of Bedfordshire for supporting the event. I am also indebted to Johnny Walker for providing invaluable advice at an early stage of the book's conception, and to Gillian Leslie and all at Edinburgh University Press for their warm and enthusiastic support (not to mention their patience). Many other people have helped this volume to see the light of day, and I am very grateful to all of them. These include Luke Hockley, Gavin Stewart, Carlota Larrea, Catherine Grant, Chelsea Wessels, Flavia Laviosa and Matt Smith. Finally, and obviously, thanks must go to the thirteen scholars whose work this book comprises. Each of them has opened new and fascinating avenues of investigation.

A section of Chapter 1 previously appeared in Christopher Frayling's *Sergio Leone: Something to Do with Death* (Faber & Faber: 2000), and is reproduced with the kind permission of Faber & Faber and Farrar Straus & Giroux. An expanded version of Chapter 5 has previously appeared in Lee Broughton's *The Euro Western: Reframing Gender, Race and the 'Other' in Film* (I. B. Tauris, 2015). A section of Chapter 8 was previously published in the *Journal of Italian Cinema & Media Studies*, 2: 1, published by Intellect.

Introduction

Austin Fisher

In many ways, the remit of this book revolves around an obvious proposition. The Spaghetti Western, as a transatlantic meeting place, is of necessity a cinematic category to be considered in international contexts, the hundreds of films which the category comprises documenting shifts in Italy's cultural outlook, as the reference points of American popular culture became ever more visible in the post-war years. Yet an Italo-American focus tells only a fraction of a story in which myriad strands of influence converged within, and continue to emanate from, this amorphous group of films. Spaghetti Western is a classification constantly in transit between cultures, genres and conceptions of taste, and its patterns of production, distribution and consumption display diverse acts of 'border crossing' and translation. By appraising a broad selection of films – from the internationally famed works of Sergio Leone to the cult cachet of Sergio Corbucci and the more obscure outputs of such directors as Giuseppe Colizzi and Ferdinando Baldi – this volume seeks to reconsider the cultural significance of the Italian Western, its position within global cinema and its continuing trends of reception and appropriation around the globe.

Scholarly volumes are always at pains to stress their timeliness in relation to trends within their broader disciplines, and in this respect this one is no different. What Mette Hjort has termed Film Studies' 'transnational turn' (2010: 13) highlights a desire to understand the ways in which cinema has offered a means to document the movement of peoples and identities across perceived cultural and spatial boundaries. A medium whose development through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has coincided with a marked historical fluctuation of inherited borders, cinema has been pertinently described by Tom Conley as 'the privileged geopolitical medium ... at once local and global' (2013: x). Thus, what might at first appear to be a merely modish application of 'trans-' prefixes – 'transnational', 'transcultural', 'translocal' – in fact signifies wider

historical approaches to cinematic output that scrutinise nationally-constituted discourses and thereby seek to understand the complexities of specific cultural-political moments. Even such a seemingly nationally-based discipline as Italian Film Studies increasingly embraces these concerns, recognising and interrogating the unstable, movable nature of the 'national' referent in a globalised era, and thereby questioning notions of a local industry talking to or for its nation state. The *Journal of Italian Cinema and Media Studies*, for example, introduces its inaugural edition with a mission statement that places Italian cinema 'within the realm of a post-national and trans-cultural debate ... transcending geo-ethnic land and sea borders and moving away from merely celebratory local cinematic experiences' (Laviosa 2013: 4).

Such undertakings are also characteristic of recent scholarship around the Western genre, whose well-worn tropes are increasingly studied for how they have been decoupled from their supposed roots in US culture. Multifarious strands of international Westerns are being repositioned within a polycentric cultural landscape (rather than one approaching the USA as the genre's 'centre'), revealing the Western to be a malleable space of cultural blending that has traversed national and political boundaries. Recent research into how the genre has obtained diverse meanings upon contact with particular historical, cultural and political contexts includes volumes edited by Miller and Van Riper (2013), Klein et al. (2012) and Higgins et al. (2015), along with special journal editions of *Frames* (Iverson 2013) and *Transformations* (Cooke et al. 2014). As Miller and Van Riper explain, issues central to the Western's dynamics such as imperialism, industrialisation, the relationship between individual and community, and the rights of indigenous peoples are not unique to the USA or to the late nineteenth century: 'They were, and are, part of the shared experience of all expansionist nations, and the international appeal of the Western rests, in part, on the potential for the historical experiences of one culture to resonate with audiences from another' (Miller and Van Riper 2013: xiv).

The approach summarised in the quotation above makes a valuable point about the genre's cross-cultural appeal, but still positions the Western genre as one that originated in the USA, to then be embraced and adapted by other cultures: 'a genre with its roots on the late-nineteenth-century American frontier ... relocated to other frontiers' (Miller and Van Riper 2013: xvi). Neil Campbell goes a step further down this transnational route, arguing that 'the West' breaks away from notions of 'rootedness' in the USA altogether, constantly renewing and transforming itself in various cultural forms. Campbell applies Mary Louise Pratt's notion of interlocking 'contact zones' to escape

approaches that identify a single point of generic origin: ‘To examine the West in the twenty-first century is to think of it as always already transnational, a more routed and complex rendition, a traveling concept whose meanings move between cultures, crossing, bridging, and intruding simultaneously’ (Campbell 2008: 4). Indeed, this line of enquiry is now flourishing, with recent scholarship following Campbell’s lead by examining how the Western narrative format and its various iconographies have been deployed for the negotiation of multifarious national and sub-cultural identities since before Hollywood’s golden age. To cite just a few notable examples, this includes studies of pre-World War I Westerns shot in the French Camargue region (Wessels 2014), socialist-era Hungarian Westerns (Simonyi 2013), Latin American ‘Third’ Westerns (Wessels 2015) and Australian outback Westerns (Cooke 2014, Wessels 2014). Such approaches allow for a broader picture to emerge: one of alternative trajectories from generic building blocks, which emerge from no single point of origin and thus result not in American Westerns and copies of (or reactions to) American Westerns, but instead countless global offshoots of a format that has by the whims of historical circumstance become known as a ‘Western’ due to the economic hegemony of the USA in the first half of the twentieth century.¹

By focusing on the globally-oriented origins and legacies of Westerns produced or co-produced by Italian studios, this volume seeks to engage with these evolving fields of enquiry, addressing routes of cultural, political and ethnic relocation that lie at the heart of the ‘Spaghetti’ Western phenomenon. By analysing these films’ processes of production, distribution and consumption as sites of dynamic cultural exchange wherein supposed boundaries become blurred, the book aims to widen the socio-historical debate around this much-loved *filone*.² It is for precisely this reason that this volume does not reject the USA as one of its contextual reference points (as do Miller and Van Riper, for example, whose remit is ‘Westerns produced outside the United States’ (2013: xvi)), since this would paradoxically serve to perpetuate a US-centric perspective by dividing the Western into ‘American’ and ‘others’. If, as Campbell argues, the Western was never firmly moored to US national experience in the first place, then the Spaghetti Westerns must be considered a constituent part of this continuum, rather than an anomalous reaction to a founding text. Though the Italian Western has become one of the most culturally visible variants to contemporary eyes, it is nevertheless one of many manifestations of an innately transcultural genre.

In my own past work on the Spaghetti Western (Fisher 2010, 2011), I approached the films as historical documents, following well-established fields of academic enquiry that analyse film’s role

in negotiating, questioning and shaping conceptions of the past and its relationship to the present.³ I specifically investigated the connection between the politicised strands of this *filone* that emerged in the second half of the 1960s and the contemporaneous ideological ferments that were erupting in Italian factories and university campuses, in response to global events in the various theatres of conflict at the height of the Cold War. The function of such films as *A Bullet for the General* (*Quién sabe?*, Damiano Damiani, 1966), *Face to Face* (*Faccia a faccia*, Sergio Sollima, 1967) and *Tepepa* (Giulio Petroni, 1969) was, for the purposes of my study, one of registering the immediate concerns, confusions and conflicts of the films' time and place. Yet, particularly given the extraordinarily long and influential reception tail of the Spaghetti Western, such an approach raises an important question: if this *filone* is indeed to be read as a document of 'time and place', which times and which places? The immediate concerns of 1960s and 1970s Italy are certainly pivotal to an understanding of these films' cultural-political significance, but so too are their varied antecedents and legacies in Italian neorealism, French comic books, Japanese *chanbara* films, Bollywood, Eastern Bloc film distribution and the contemporary cinema of Quentin Tarantino.⁴ It is to be hoped that, by examining these and other disparate contexts, this volume will go some way to enriching our comprehension of this broad vista.

This is by no means to say that scholarship on the Spaghetti Western has hitherto been manacled to the concerns of a narrowly Italian milieu: far from it. Dimitris Eleftheriotis influentially approached this *filone* as one that highlights 'the accelerated mobility of cultural products around the world and their increasing detachment from national contexts' (Eleftheriotis 2001: 98). Indeed, the various scholarly trends outlined above increasingly converge to throw light on the diverse contexts of the Spaghetti Western's transnational production histories, reception patterns and afterlives. David Martin-Jones's examination of *Django Kill ... If You Live, Shoot!* (*Se sei vivo, spara!*, Giulio Questi, 1967), for example, considers how the film spoke to diverse shared experiences of the Cold War era, and thus offered 'open-ended transnational political resonances for different audiences around the world' (Martin-Jones 2011: 180). In a similar vein, Christopher Robé analyses the Spaghetti Western's politicised strands for how they provide an understanding of cultural flows between 'First' and 'Third' world markets (Robé 2014). Michelle Cho's study of *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* (*Choŭnnom, Nappŭnnom, Isanghannom*, Kim Jee-woon, 2008) adopts a more culturally-specific approach, by examining the film's merging of overt



Figure I.1: *The Good, the Bad, the Weird* (2008) deploys Spaghetti Western stylistics within a Manchurian action schema.

quotations from Sergio Leone's 'Dollars' trilogy with equally explicit references to Manchurian action films such as *Break Up the Chain* (*Yonghwa chusik hoesa*, Lee Manhee, 1971). Cho compellingly links *The Good, the Bad, the Weird*'s historical setting in Manchuria during Korea's period of Japanese occupation to the region's broader status as a liminal frontier land with a 'hallowed position of being one of the Korean independence movement's sites of development [and] an important symbolic role as the birthplace of Korean nationalism' (Cho 2015: 53). Thus, in this context, the Spaghetti Western's 'transnational' legacy is one of co-optation for the task of negotiating an East Asian national identity.

Cho's approach highlights an important point: that, while the analysis of Italian Westerns' innately 'transnational' aspects provides insight into the films' ongoing global significance, it is through situating particular manifestations of this process in their historical and cultural 'moments' (locally, regionally, nationally or industrially) that we can best obtain a meaningful apperception of this point. If the 'trans-' prefix is to avoid becoming a merely trendy scholarly accoutrement, it should work to aid understanding of complexities within specific national, local and sub-cultural contexts. As Will Higbee and Song Hwee Lim have argued, a 'critical transnationalism' is one that interrogates 'how these film-making activities negotiate with the national on all levels – from cultural policy to financial sources, from the multiculturalism of difference to how it reconfigures the nation's image of itself' (Higbee and Lim 2010: 18). This volume can only scratch the surface of the Spaghetti

Western's multifarious paths of hybridity and its continuing global reach across perceived boundaries of genre, nation and identity. The analysis offered in these pages, however, seeks to advance this field of enquiry by offering a set of case studies grounded firmly in their historical, cultural and political circumstances.

The volume opens with an extended piece from the undisputed father of scholarly enquiry into the Spaghetti Western, Sir Christopher Frayling. Frayling's seminal book *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone* (1981) has surely been a key inspiration for all subsequent serious analysis of this *filone*: this one included. It is therefore apt that his latest work opens proceedings, both providing new perspectives on the *filone's* cross-cultural significance and offering methodological challenges for the chapters that follow. Four sections then progress from the Spaghetti Western's antecedents to its legacies. In Part I, two chapters uncovering hitherto overlooked inspirations and influences (from post-war neorealism and nineteenth-century literature) illuminate the complex interweaving of cultural reference points in Italy prior to the 1960s. Part II then considers the diverse ways in which this *filone* addressed issues of ethnicity and identity through three chapters that reconsider its position vis-à-vis the global politics of its era. Part III interrogates oft-drawn parallels between the Spaghetti Western and Asian cinema, by charting complex routes of reinterpretation that belie linear readings of cultural influence, and by introducing the perspective of the *filone's* extensive appropriation in India. Finally, Part IV assesses three further examples of how the Spaghetti Western's legacies have been negotiated as its global distribution left its mark on East German censorship, on French comic books, and, finally, on the contemporary Hollywood Western.

Christopher Frayling's chapter charts a personal journey, continuing his pioneering work questioning conceptions of 'authenticity' by looking at how Italian Westerns responded to well-established ethnic images within Hollywood Westerns which were themselves 'inauthentic' in the first place: those of 'Irishness'. Considering whether the contemporaneity of Ireland's 'Troubles' with both a growing fascination with anti-colonialist movements in Western Europe and the zenith of the Italian Western might have played a role, Frayling investigates the hitherto overlooked issue of how images of Irishness filtered through into Italy's version of the genre. As Italians forged their own interpretation of the Western myth, transposing numerous elements from Hollywood while cutting the genre adrift from its nation-building imperative, Frayling asks, in what form did the Hollywood genre's ubiquitous negotiation with a stereotyped Irish ethnicity survive, and what significance

did this hold in this cultural moment? He discovers, intriguingly, that a secondary (or even tertiary) conception of ‘Irishness’ abounds in the Spaghetti Western. Taking Sergio Leone’s *Duck, You Sucker!* (*Giù la testa*, 1971) as a key case study, Frayling charts the labyrinthine intertextual journey through Hollywood’s representations of Irish culture on which Leone and his crew embarked: most pertinently, through the films of John Ford. He concludes that in the Italian Western, ‘Irishness’ exists as part of a larger signifying structure surrounding a reworked, magnified and updated cinematic imaginary, rather than a purposeful reference to contemporary events in Ireland. Frayling thus lays down a gauntlet to beware of drawing direct parallels between films and the contemporary events that surround them too readily.

Part I opens with Pasquale Iannone’s study of Western tropes in Italian cinema’s ‘neorealist’ phase. Taking as his key case studies *In the Name of the Law* (*In nome della legge*, Pietro Germi, 1949) and *The Bandit of Tacca del Lupo* (*Il brigante di Tacca del Lupo*, Pietro Germi, 1952), Iannone explores the complex ways in which Germi worked references to American genres into his work, thereby debunking approaches presupposing an Italian neorealism separated from ‘popular’ cinema, and demonstrating an oft-overlooked precursor to the Spaghetti Westerns of the 1960s and 1970s. Identifying in Germi’s two films a representational equivalence between the Italian South and the American West, this chapter charts a lineage of tales of banditry that blended the international and the local. Aliza Wong then identifies the influence on Spaghetti Western director Sergio Sollima of Emilio Salgari’s nineteenth-century hero Sandokan. Drawing a detailed line of continuity from this iconic character of Italian children’s literature to the postcolonial heroes of Sollima’s *westerns all’italiana*, Wong illustrates a genealogy of ‘Other-ed’ hero archetypes who, through their resistance to imperialist might, were designed to appeal to revolutionary sentiments within Italian national identity from the *Risorgimento* onwards. By extending the focus to Sollima’s own ‘Sandokan’ television series, Wong’s analysis also identifies a melding of the Spaghetti Western’s anarchic borderlands and the primitive wilds of South-East Asia, through which Sollima sought to expound anti-imperialist rhetoric. This chapter thus uncovers continuities in imagined, exotic spaces offering Italians a politicised outlet for fantasy fulfilment.

Part II begins with David Hyman and Patrick Wynne’s response to my analysis of the popular politics of the Spaghetti Western (Fisher 2011). Taking *A Professional Gun* (*Il mercenario*, Sergio Corbucci, 1968) as their key example, they argue that the ‘incoherence’ I identified as a political weakness of this *filone*’s ‘insurgency’ variant is rather a

manifestation of decontextualised transnational bricolage that, by blurring the boundary between ‘text’ and ‘paratext’, allows us to appreciate the possibilities open to an audience for creative participation within revolutionary discourses.⁵ The film is therefore read as a temporal dislocation that exists within images of the Mexican Revolution, and as a conduit through which a plurality of fluid meanings open up for the fomenting of a revolutionary sensibility.

Lee Broughton’s chapter then offers an alternative take on representations of ethnicity in the Spaghetti Western. While much has been written about this *filone’s* portrayal of Mexican ethnicity, this chapter examines its representation of African Americans, and asks what this might tell us about the politics of race in Italy and the USA in the 1960s. Specifically, Broughton identifies in the films of Giuseppe Colizzi a lineage from the *commedia dell’arte* and Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of the ‘carnavalesque’, through which the Spaghetti Western facilitates an inclusive racial discourse that found a particular resonance in an era of mass protest. Part II then ends with Mikel J. Koven’s study of this *filone’s* extraordinarily influential afterlife, interrogating a critical commonplace that labels the cinema of Quentin Tarantino (as well as that of his collaborators such as Miike Takashi) ‘postmodern’. Examining the precise implications of this term, Koven identifies in Tarantino’s curation of the Spaghetthis’ afterlife a particular kind of postmodern engagement, examining *Django Unchained* (2012) not as reductive pastiche (as many critics hold), but rather as an ironic ‘language of grindhouse cinema allusions’. The chapter thus identifies, charts and examines a complex web of references traversing cultural boundaries, which ultimately provides a subversive ‘paracinematic’ discourse.

Part III appraises three overlapping instances of appropriation in Asian film industries. Firstly, Thomas Klein revisits the Japanese *chanbara*, or ‘sword film’. Challenging notions that focus solely on the kinship between the Japanese format and the US Western, Klein instead charts the *chanbara’s* relationship to the Italian version. In the equivalence between the outlaw heroes of the Spaghetti Western and the ‘sword film’, he identifies documents of Italy’s and Japan’s respective processes of post-war Americanisation. Ivo Ritzer then takes the Italian Western’s iterative negotiation with Asian identities as a case study to chart multidimensional routes of cultural transfer. Deploying scholarly approaches around the ‘transnational’, he frames the Italian Western as a junction in a global network of cultural exchange, both borrowing from and influencing Asian cinematic discourses. Using *The Warrior’s Way* (Sngmoo Lee, 2010) as a key example, he therefore sees the Italian

Western's most significant legacy to be its decoupling of the Western from its ideological and historical reference points, freeing the format up for myriad, heterogeneous cultural contexts.

To conclude Part III, Iain Robert Smith continues this methodological focus on processes of cultural transfer, by examining how the Spaghetti Western has played a part in the negotiation of cosmopolitan identities within Indian cinema. By focusing on the network of transnational borrowings that resulted in the 'Curry' or 'Masala' Western, Smith goes beyond 'unidirectional models of cross-cultural influence' to illuminate the networks through which cultures overlap, and the transformations that result from combinations, borrowings and exchanges across national contexts. He also compellingly enters into the debates outlined at the start of this Introduction, eschewing approaches that interpret 'international' Westerns as translations of the genre designed to conform to the specificities of local cultural practices. Deploying a memetic model of cultural hybridisation, he argues for close attention to the specifics of historical context, while warning against the privileging of national signifiers and the attendant misrepresentation of complex negotiations with global cultural flows and exchanges.

Part IV opens with William Grady holding a common point of throwaway critical reference for the Spaghetti Western – the comic book – up to close scrutiny. Relocating this *filone* in a continuum of subversive, surreal treatments of the Wild West, Grady identifies a more substantive alienation effect in both the Spaghetti Western and the Western comic book, whereby familiar generic space is 'made strange' in both formats. Further, by assessing the Spaghetti's influence on later comic books from around the world, Grady's study illuminates another transcultural exchange that took place around this nomadic *filone*. Focusing in particular on the French *bande dessinée*, the chapter charts a rich history of transnational negotiation with the Wild West. In the *Blueberry* series, Grady presents a fascinating tension between appropriation of, and resistance to, US popular culture, making reference to French national crises while becoming mediated through the surreality of the Spaghetti Western. Rosemary Stott then illuminates the Spaghetti Western's hitherto under-researched patterns of release and 'official' reception in the German Democratic Republic, identifying a conduit for transcultural currents that were crossing the Iron Curtain at the height of the Cold War. Taking *Once Upon a Time in the West* (*C'era una volta il West*, Sergio Leone, 1968) as a case study, her chapter uncovers a process of international cultural transfer causing this object of cultural production to be repositioned as it

entered a new, state-controlled, reception context. Stott's key insight concerns the film's borderline acceptability for the East German censors, which marked a shift in the selection criteria for foreign imports upon its release in 1981. Once again, we see the Spaghetti Western providing us with insights into larger processes of cultural-political change, as this *filone* obtains fresh meanings in a new cultural backdrop: this time, one of ideologically-driven aversion to the Classical Western genre. This case study therefore offers insights into the peculiarities of this cultural moment, when East German authorities were juggling the appeal of Western culture with socialist ideological imperatives.

Finally, the volume closes with Pete Falconer's interrogation of the ever-disputed 'death' of the Western. Considering how the genre and its attendant tropes have functioned since its departure from mainstream production, Falconer uses the Spaghetti Western as a touchstone for understanding the implications for how the Western more broadly is produced and understood to the present day. By analysing varying levels of familiarity with the genre's traditions, Falconer holds that the Italian Western makes the genre 'strange', and alienates the viewer from the world of the Wild West. This final chapter thus makes a compelling case for how the seemingly familiar codes of the Western have in fact been rendered alien in differing ways upon contact with various contexts, and thereby offers insights into the representational practices of twenty-first-century Westerns such as *Appaloosa* (Ed Harris, 2008), *3:10 to Yuma* (James Mangold, 2007) and *True Grit* (Ethan and Joel Cohen, 2010): films that insistently place themselves in a long-gone past through painstaking attention to historical details. Falconer's intervention illuminates the extent to which the Spaghetti Western has come to hold sway over the dominant lexicon of the Western genre's cultural memory.

Falconer's chapter is therefore an apt note on which to end this volume. Throughout the book, the Spaghetti Western is approached as a unit of culture that has traversed space and time, encompassing temporal journeys as well as physical ones within 'transcultural' readings. Taken together, and through their very diversity, the various chapters attest to this *filone's* survival instinct, as it has adapted and morphed in response to multifarious cultural conditions, and continues to do so in an era when familiarity with the larger Western genre and its traditions can no longer be assumed. This collection therefore seeks to advance scholarly debates around both the significance of Italy's popular cinema of the 1960s and 1970s and its ongoing influences on our contemporary culture.

NOTES

1. Iain Robert Smith's chapter in this volume further explores this scholarly trend with specific reference to the Indian 'Curry' or 'Masala' Western, and situates the tendency within the Western's 'cultural roots controversy' as outlined by Christopher Frayling ([1981] 1998: 121–40), which branded international Westerns as culturally 'inauthentic'.
2. The word '*flone*' is generally preferred to 'genre' in scholarship around popular Italian cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, as a way of distinguishing this industrial context from that of Hollywood. This of course runs the risk of making rather broad generalisations about both the popular cinema of the USA and the scholarly field of 'genre studies', both of which are vast and heterogeneous: a trap into which I have fallen in the past (Fisher 2011: 36). This caveat notwithstanding, '*flone*' remains a useful descriptor for this set of culturally- and temporally-specific production and distribution practices, in which numerous trends of very rapid replication would ebb and flow according to the whims of the market, often existing for only a short period before ceasing to be profitable.
3. The work of Marc Ferro ([1977] 1988) and Pierre Sorlin (1980), for example, influentially investigated how cinematic representations of the past illuminate films' contemporary condition.
4. While my own work has considered the uses made of the Spaghetti Western by Quentin Tarantino, this was done purely to back up an argument that, divorced from their immediate contexts, the films are stripped of their intended political meanings (Fisher 2011: 193–201). I now consider this to be an oversimplification, since detailed analysis of the cultural moments in which the films have been distributed and received is just as valuable in the appraisal of their ongoing cultural significance. Had *Django Unchained* (2012) been released before I wrote the book in question, I like to think that I would have approached the subject somewhat differently. Mikel Koven does precisely this in these pages.
5. This is indeed a justified criticism of my previous work. I argued too forcefully and too defensively for the necessity of political coherence within the films' texts. Hyman and Wynne's chapter therefore offers a valuable entry point into a re-evaluation of the Spaghetti Western's politics.

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The Quiet Man Gets Noisy: Sergio Leone, the Italian Western and Ireland¹

Christopher Frayling

Many commentaries on the Italian Western have contrasted – implicitly or explicitly – the ‘authentic’ Hollywood Western, as part of a folk culture, with the ‘inauthentic’ Italian Western, as part of an entrepreneurial culture. The Hollywood Western is the real thing; the Italian product is ersatz: an example of hybridity, with Hollywood as the original plant. But what of ‘inauthentic’ Italian Westerns, if such they were, responding to images within Hollywood Westerns which themselves were palpably inauthentic in the first place? This chapter started life with the thought that images of Irish people in Italian Westerns might be an example of just such a phenomenon: part of a hall of mirrors, rather than of ‘other’ and ‘self’; a reflection of a reflection, which is not how the issue of identity is usually addressed.

As Joseph M. Curran wrote in *Hibernian Green on the Silver Screen*:

The Irish have indeed lost most of their ethnic distinctiveness in today’s America, but a good deal of what has been lost can be found in the movies. Despite their factual distortion, movies since the days of Edison reveal a lot about how America *perceived* the Irish, how that perception gradually changed and what role moviemakers had in changing it. (Curran 1989: 121)

Maybe this was a case of a perception of a perception ...

Then I read three texts about the role of Irish immigrants in the myths and realities of the American Wild West: the book *How the*

Irish Won the West by broadcaster Myles Dungan (Dungan 2006, 1–10, 160–254) and the articles ‘Seeing is Believing’ and ‘Land Beyond the Waves’ in *A Mass for Jesse James* by cultural commentator Fintan O’Toole (O’Toole 1990: 16–22, 82–5); plus an analysis of the main differences, within cultural history, between ideas of ‘the West’ in America (a land of promise, which was there to be ‘won’, once upon a time in the west) and ideas of ‘the West’ in Ireland during the Irish Literary Revival (a land which was lost, and waiting to be rediscovered, once upon a time when there was the west) – ‘Synge, Country and Western: the Myth of the West in Irish and American Culture’ by the cultural theorist Luke Gibbons (Gibbons 1996: 23–36). Then someone sent me a cutting from the Irish *Daily Star* of 30 January 1990, headlined ‘Gunslinger Clint Eastwood is descended from the Lord Mayor of Dublin’: ‘Clint Eastwood is believed to be descended from Alderman John Eastwood, mayor of Dublin in 1679’, thus ‘on the opposite side of the fence to the stubble-jawed outlaw of the Spaghetti Westerns’. The elision of history (1679) and myth (‘Gunslinger Clint Eastwood’) – not to mention the casual inaccuracy (‘stubble-jawed outlaw’) – seemed by now to be part of the story being told. Maybe the Man with No Name was *Irish* ...

It occurred to me, after thinking about these pieces, that it would be interesting to look more closely at the depiction of Irish people in *Italian* Westerns rather than the more usually studied American ones: after all, both Italy and the Republic of Ireland were largely Catholic countries; the Irish historically played a major role in the evolution of the urban frontier in America – sometimes as the sons and daughters of the gangs of New York – as well as in entrepreneurship on the Western frontier and in the US Cavalry during the ‘Indian Wars’; Irish-American filmmakers (most notably, John Ford and Raoul Walsh) and actors (such as William S. Hart, Harry Carey Sr and Tim McCoy) had made decisive contributions to the American Western genre in film (see Brennan and O’Neill 2007: 66–78, 104–14); and, where topicality or timeliness was concerned, there was the prominence being given in the media to the ‘Troubles’ in the North of Ireland from autumn 1968 onwards – precisely the same time as the most radical of the Italian Westerns were being made and released. Another North, another South (see Bew and Gillespie 1999: 2–46). Actually, the headlines started a little earlier with the blowing-up in March 1966 of the top half of the Nelson Pillar in O’Connell Street in Dublin – a monument which had somehow survived the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent Civil War – by a splinter group of disenfranchised Republicans. This attracted considerably more publicity than the official 50th anniversary of the Rising itself.

October and November 1968: the Civil Rights marches in Derry, which ‘opened up’ the modern Ulster crisis. January 1969: the transition from Civil Rights as the key issue to age-old nationalist and religious animosities. August 1969: the sharp deterioration into sectarian conflict and the decision to send in British troops. December 1969–January 1970: the split within the IRA between the ‘Officials’ and the ‘Provisionals’ – the name being a deliberate echo of the Easter 1916 Proclamation of the ‘Provisional Government of the Irish Republic’. April 1970: the first major clash between Nationalists and the British army. June 1970: the first military action by the Provisionals. August 1971: the introduction of internment without trial. September 1971: the hundredth victim killed. January 1972: thirteen men shot by members of the Parachute Regiment during a Civil Rights rally in Derry on ‘Bloody Sunday’, with heated arguments about who fired first and a steep rise in recruitment to the Provisionals. The annual Derry marches to commemorate the Easter Rising – in March 1970 and April 1971 – proved particular flashpoints.

In short, the ‘Troubles’, and the contested meanings and legacy of Easter 1916, were very much in the news on the continent of Europe in the late 1960s. In Italy, the events listed above tended to be treated in the press as a struggle for liberation: on a par with simultaneous struggles in what was then known as the Third World, only closer to home.² Maybe there would be some reflection of this in the Italian Westerns, matching the ways in which these films reflected other concerns of the New Left, as studied by Austin Fisher (Fisher 2011: 77–160) and myself (Frayling [1981] 1998: 217–44). Fisher (2011: 151) cites the French commentator Gérard Chaliand writing about youthful versions of the New Left at the time. His account was based on eyewitness observations:

The anti-imperialist movement which condemned the wars waged by the West was, apparently paradoxically, *fascinated* by armed struggle and guerrilla warfare. This young left absorbed pell-mell into its imagination fragments of the Spanish Civil War [especially from the film *For Whom the Bell Tolls*], the October Revolution [Eisenstein’s film *October* was reissued in 1967], the resistance to Nazism [several directors of Italian Westerns recalled this], the Mexican Revolution, the Long March [in China] and Che Guevara ... In France after 1968, Third Worldism, hitherto involving relatively few people, capitalised on the recruits from the May Movement ... [In] West Germany and Italy, terrorist-type movements made their appearance modelled on [the Latin American model of] the Tupamaros in Uruguay ... The Red Army faction,

the Baader-Meinhof Group and the Red Brigades thought that they could use a spiral of violence and repression to mobilise the masses by showing them that the democratic state is in fact repressive and unpopular. Great names lent their voices (Sartre, Genet) to ... this mishmash of populism and anti-Imperialist Third Worldism. (Chaliand 1989: 217-21)

It was a time when there was much talk of 'fascism' in the Italian political establishment; of Togliatti's 'historic compromise' between socialism and the middle class; an increasing disillusionment with formal politics and at the same time discussion about the 'imperialism' of American forces in South-East Asia and in some countries of Latin America. A time when the writings of Frantz Fanon – especially *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks* – were very fashionable on university and college campuses, as were the recently translated writings of Herbert Marcuse, and of others who argued that since the working class in Western Europe and America had become so thoroughly absorbed into capitalism, the political energy had shifted to capitalism's supplying bases in the Third World. In Western Europe, there was the '*rivoluzione mancata*', the revolution that might have been; in the Third World, there was the possibility of *real* revolution. Maybe there was one about to happen in Ireland. There were earnest seminars on the neglected importance of culture in the early writings of Karl Marx, such as the *Grundrisse*. A time when the famous poster of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, with his beard, long hair, beret and defiant gaze – known to many, after *Sergeant Pepper*, as 'Che in the sky with jacket' – was pinned to student walls all over Europe, sometimes next to Clint Eastwood with his poncho, stubble and cigar, and soon to be joined by Bob Dylan in his 'outlaw' phase on the cover of *John Wesley Harding*. The 'Che' photograph, suitably cropped, had been published and widely distributed for the first time by the left-wing Italian publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, without crediting the original photographer Alberto 'Korda' Diaz Gutiérrez.³ And, finally, it was a time when, according to Jean-Luc Godard's collaborator J.-P. Gorin, 'every Marxist on the block wanted to make a Western'. After May 1968, student leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit went to Rome to prepare a 'left-wing Western ... about miners on strike, who fight against their masters, about the boss with his gang of thugs who attacks the workers, the workers who take over the mine, and so on. At one point, there was to have been a duel' (Frayling, 1993: 27). Of course there was. Maybe Ireland should be added to the list of fragments on the minds of some of the generation whom Jean-Luc

Godard dubbed the ‘children of Karl Marx and Coca-Cola’. I can remember that after a performance in London by a visiting Italian theatre troupe, in spring 1972, there was a collection on behalf of the Provisional IRA.

Perhaps this is more than a question of the *image* of Irish people in film and popular culture, then: a question, too, of how some Italian films responded to social unrest not at home in Italy (studied by Fisher), but in another corner of Western Europe; social unrest that was topical and – in its civil rights phase at least – presumably of some interest to radical Italian students who were simultaneously demonstrating in the streets of Rome. In other words, if ‘Mexico’ sometimes stood for South-East Asia and Central America in Italian Westerns, and the political stance of a few screenwriters/directors stood for *Italian* left-wing concerns of the moment, was there a place as well for other (less theoretical) issues from one of the outer reaches of Europe? Were the ‘Troubles’ as fashionable as the other causes in Chaliand’s eclectic list? After all, one Italian Western responded, albeit belatedly, to the assassination of Irish-American President Kennedy – *The Price of Power* (*Il prezzo del potere*, Tonino Valerii, 1969) – by transposing the tragic events which took place in Dallas in 1963 to a main street in post-Civil War Dallas in 1881 during the era of Reconstruction: in this, the legacy of the naïve President (a red-haired Van Johnson, ex-matinée idol, of Swedish-Dutch extraction), his race reforms and the gospel of peace, is thwarted by a syndicate of nasty and influential Southern politicians.

The main purpose of Dungan’s book is to explore the historical contribution of Irish-born immigrants to *rural* America in the era depicted in the traditional Western, but he introduces his study by outlining the two basic stereotypes of the Irish – thanks to Hollywood and popular literature – in stories set in nineteenth-century America.

First, on the urban frontier, particularly in the eastern cities of Boston and New York, when America was going through her growing pains: the wheeler-dealers of local politics; the corrupt elections on behalf of the Irish Democratic Party and the rise of the Tammany Hall political machine and the local bosses; Catholic Irish in a Protestant American ‘nativist’ culture, and the tensions this created – less a melting-pot than vegetable soup with all the ingredients remaining separate. Dungan writes:

The classic image of the nineteenth-century Irish immigrant to the USA is of the peasant fleeing economic and political serfdom and sailing to North America in an unseaworthy ‘coffin ship’ – the indigent vassal on a leaking vessel. He (for the stereotypical

Irish emigrant is male) would arrive in Boston or New York, stick close to his own, settle in an eastern urban ghetto and endure poverty and bigotry at the hands of the dominant WASP culture. He would probably become political fodder for an Irish Democratic Party ward heeler, probably become a trade union activist and his children and grandchildren might, slowly and painstakingly, climb the political and economic ladder. (Dungan 2006: 4–5)

Or they might – according to Hollywood – if they were played by James Cagney, become gangsters, growing up in the crowded Hell’s Kitchen district of the Lower East Side – counselled by a local priest played by Pat O’Brien or Spencer Tracy – both of them ... Irish Mafia. Cagney’s Tom Powers in *The Public Enemy* (William A. Wellman, 1931) was based on the real-life Bugs Moran; Vincent ‘Mad Dog’ Coll inspired other gangster films of the era. Or they might work in vaudeville like George M. Cohan, with the sentimental songs of Ernest R. Ball (‘Mother Machree’, ‘When Irish Eyes are Smiling’, ‘A Little Bit of Heaven (Shure They Call It Ireland)’) as background music. Or become pugilists such as ‘Gentleman Jim’ Corbett or John L. Sullivan. Or they might become policemen on the beat – from *Riley the Cop* (John Ford, 1928) via Lieutenant Finlay in *Crossfire* (Edward Dmytryk, 1947) to Harry Callahan in *Dirty Harry* (Don Siegel, 1971) – in countless films set on city streets. Several screen Irish joined the armed forces, serving for example in the Fighting 69th in the trenches of the First World War. The prominent role played by Irish Catholics in the Legion of Decency and the post-Code administration helped to ensure that the stereotypes did not get out of hand, and that rags-to-riches stories remained on the whole optimistic.⁴

Then, on the *rural* frontier – since ‘a significant percentage didn’t remain on the eastern seaboard’ (Dungan 2006: 5) – where Irish immigrants became working cowboys or railroad workers, sergeants or other ranks in the Far Western outposts of the US Cavalry, having joined the army during the American Civil War. These were the sorts of character played by Victor McLaglen in John Ford’s ‘Cavalry’ trilogy – Sergeant Mulcahy and Sergeant Quincannon – keen on bluster and the bottle, with a short fuse and a taste for slapstick fistfights or ‘donnybrooks’, very sentimental and with a heart of gold. Thirty of the men who died at Little Big Horn were born in Ireland, 140 members of Colonel Custer’s 7th Cavalry – out of a total of 800 – were also Irish, and that is not counting the second-generation immigrants, born in the USA of Irish parents. An officer of the 4th Cavalry observed of his Irish

troops: 'I prefer the Irish; they were more intelligent and resourceful as a rule' – which does rather challenge the Fordian stereotype.⁵

Dungan then looks at some of the Irish individuals who made an important mark – in non-military settings – on the rural frontier: the 'Silver Kings' of Virginia City chronicled by Mark Twain, and the 'Copper Kings' of Montana, mining entrepreneurs and tycoons; Thomas Fitzpatrick – mountain man, Indian agent and friend of Jedediah Smith; several members of the Donner Party of covered-wagon pioneers, who famously became marooned in the snow of the High Sierras in 1854, with gruesome consequences; Oscar Wilde lecturing the miners in Leadville, Colorado in April 1892 about the decorative arts and being asked by members of his audience 'who shot' Benvenuto Cellini; and the courtesan Lola Montez, born either in Limerick in 1818 or in Grange, Co. Sligo in 1821 though she never admitted to either the date or the exact place. The list also includes several of the participants in the 'Lincoln County War', in New Mexico in the late 1870s: on one side, Lawrence Murphy from Wexford, James Dolan from Loughrea, Sheriff William Brady from Cavan town and John H. Riley from Kerry, forming the Murphy–Dolan–Riley ranching and retail combine; on the other side the Englishman John Henry Tunstall (from South London), the Scots-Canadian Presbyterian Alexander McSween and, as a Regulator, Henry McCarty or McCarthy or Henry Antrim – better known as Billy the Kid when he changed his name to William Bonney, born in the Five Points of New York City (or maybe, according to some contemporary accounts, in Ireland) to an Irish immigrant family. Very few Hollywood films, says Dungan, have stressed the Irishness – even the England *versus* Irishness – of the conflict. Only *Young Guns* (Christopher Cain, 1988) – made when identity politics had moved centre stage – offers an exception, with Jack Palance attempting an Irish accent as Murphy, location filming in New Mexico, Billy played by Emilio Estevez (whose grandmother was Irish and who was the great-grandson of a Famine immigrant), and Terence Stamp as Tunstall (who in fact was shot at the age of twenty-four and was thus an unlikely candidate to become Billy's kindly surrogate father). Billy the Kid was killed by another Irish-American, Pat Garrett, on 14 July 1881 (Dungan 2006: 206–54). Other Irish celebrities in the West included Captain Thomas Mayne Reid (born in Co. Down), who between 1848 and 1883 wrote seventy adventure novels – many set in the Southwest – including the best-selling *The Scalp-Hunters* (1860), and in the process became one of the first to mythologise the Far West and *its* maverick heroes: an Irish Karl May, except that he had actually worked as a fur-trader and

fought in the Mexican–American War during the decade he spent in America. Add to this Frank Butler, sharpshooter husband and manager of Annie Oakley, who worked with Buffalo Bill for seventeen years, and the character portrayed in the musical *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946). Buffalo Bill liked to claim Irish ancestry as well. Frank Harris, born in Galway, wrote a semi-autobiographical novel *Reminiscences as a Cowboy* which formed the basis of *Cowboy* (Delmer Daves, 1958) with Jack Lemmon in the Greenhorn Harris role as a Chicago hotel clerk who dreams of riding the range. Dungan’s robust study does not include Wild West characters of so-called ‘Scotch-Irish’ extraction such as Davy Crockett (fifteen of those who died in the Alamo were Irish), Kit Carson, Sam Houston and the Civil War General Ulysses S. Grant, and the Confederates Thomas ‘Stonewall’ Jackson and J. E. B. Stuart.⁶ Dungan is concerned mainly with Catholic immigrants from south of today’s line.

The articles by Fintan O’Toole, about *A Mass for Jesse James*, concern a former parish priest in Asdee near the North Kerry coast who on 4 April every year until 1959 would say a solemn Requiem Mass for the repose of the souls of Frank and Jesse, whose grandfather left the village in 1847 (the year Jesse was born in Montana). The surviving members of the Irish branch of the family, who had stayed in Asdee, would join in the prayers. Jesse, he would remind the congregation, was shot in the back by Bob Ford – also Irish – as he nailed a simple icon of the Virgin Mary to his cabin wall (the James family were, in fact, Protestants). For O’Toole, this strange commemoration was a tribute ‘to the abiding power in Ireland of the images and icons of the American myth’, ‘a dramatised version of someone else’s dramatised version of ourselves’ (O’Toole 1990: 16–22, 82–5).⁷ The Jesse James Tavern, next door to St Mary’s Church where the Masses were said, still contains colour photographs of John Wayne and Clint Eastwood above the bar.

So I wondered if any of this rich mix of history, myth and movie stereotyping – as well as contemporaneous events in the North of Ireland – had somehow filtered into the Italian Western of the 1960s and early 1970s and, if so, in what particular forms. The earliest Spanish and/or Italian Westerns of 1963–5 tended to try to emulate traditional American Westerns – by then an endangered species – in the hope that Italian audiences would think that was what they were. They included *The Secret of Captain O’Hara* (*El secreto del capitán O’Hara*, Arturo Ruiz Castillo, 1965), a formulaic cavalry-versus-Indians Western; *Buffalo Bill* (*Buffalo Bill, l’eroe del far west*, Mario Costa/John W. Fordson, 1964); *Billy the Kid* (*Fuera de la ley*, León Klimovsky, 1964)

with Francisco Martínez Celeiro/George Martin in the lead role; and *Son of Jesse James (Solo contro tutti*, Antonio del Amo, 1965), with Claudio Undari/Robert Hundar. The novelist Alberto Moravia in a January 1967 review article noted that during this early phase of the European Western, the process of ‘Italianisation’ had not yet really begun (Moravia 2010: 645–7). Nor, it should be added, was there anything remotely Irish about the Italian versions of the Billy the Kid and Jesse James legends. The companion-piece to Sergio Leone’s *A Fistful of Dollars (Per un pugno di dollari*, 1964) – Mario Caiano’s/Mike Perkins’s *Bullets Don’t Argue (Le pistole non discutono*, 1964), also produced by Jolly Films – was a reworking of the Billy the Kid and OK Corral stories with Pat Garrett (Rod Cameron) tracking the Clanton brothers George (Angel Aranda) and Billy (Horst Frank) into Mexico. Caiano himself recalled of this film that it was ‘a traditional film that followed all the classic schemes of the American Western’ (Grant 2011: 42–3). Garrett was not presented as Irish-American, but then again he never was in the Hollywood versions either.

After this initial phase – and indeed during it – Italian Westerns never showed much interest in the melting-pot of different waves of immigration, or the significance of the Frontier in American political rhetoric, or the promise/winning of the West, or even the sense of a burgeoning community in frontier towns. There was to be no transformation of the desert into a garden. Italian and Spanish filmmakers were detached from these ‘foundation myths’, even when they were emulating Hollywood films. So the image of Irish people was likely to be very different, and for very different purposes – perhaps reflecting/subverting the predominant Hollywood images for European consumption. One aspect of history they certainly *did* absorb was the ‘code duello’ – regulating the rituals of pistol duels – which was drawn up in Ireland in 1777. There was certainly no shortage of ritualised duels in Italian Westerns.

In researching this, I felt an affinity with another book I had recently been reading: *Hogarth’s Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century English Art* by Guyanese-born David Dabydeen (1987). When this book was first announced, many art historians were surprised by its title. Black people in Hogarth’s paintings? Surely there were only one or two, and they were in the background. Actually, Dabydeen had found and analysed examples in two dozen paintings – servants, pages, street-vendors, chambermaids, companions and others: it was just that nobody had noticed them before, or if they had they had not considered them worthy of comment. *Hogarth’s Blacks* started to put this particular record straight.

The first thing that struck me was the use of Irish surnames: in Sergio Leone's Westerns, Baby 'Red' Cavanagh (his first Irishman with curly red hair in *For a Few Dollars More* (*Per qualche dollaro in più*, 1965), in league with a crooked sheriff), Bill Carson and Arch Stanton (the name next to the grave) in *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (*Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo*, 1966), not to mention Sean Mallory in *Duck, You Sucker* (*Giù la testa*, 1971) and Jimmy O'Donnell the Union organiser played by Treat Williams in *Once Upon a Time in America* (1984). The name 'Mallory' was most likely derived from the Gregory Peck character, the mountaineer Captain Keith Mallory, in *The Guns of Navarone* (J. Lee Thompson, 1961), and it led in Italy to *My Name is Mallory* (*Il mio nome è Mallory ... M come morte*, Mario Moroni, 1971) with the American Robert Woods in the title role. *Once Upon a Time in America*, in its earliest pre-production phase 1967–9, was to have been centred on the conflicts between Irish and Jewish immigrant gangsters in 1920s New York *before* the Italians arrived and turned crime into big business. Then there were the surnames Corbett in *The Big Gundown* (*La resa dei conti*, Sergio Sollima, 1967) and Ryan in *Death Rides a Horse* (*Da uomo a uomo*, Giulio Petroni, 1967) – both played by Lee Van Cleef – or the former lawman Murph (Walter Rilla) in *Day of Anger* (*I giorni dell'ira*, Tonino Valerii, 1967) and the Rev. Riley (Adolfo Lastretti) in *Find a Place to Die* (*Joe ... cercati un posto per morire!*, Giuliano Carnimeo, 1968): a phoney 'wandering missionary', conman and pervert, like a fair number of priests in Spaghetti Westerns (though monks (and Mormons) tended to be better treated). In *They Call Me Trinity* (*Lo chiamavano Trinità ...*, Enzo Barboni, 1970), Sheriff Bud Spencer's assistant in Alliance City is called Jonathan Swift. In these cases, such Irish flavour as there was came largely through the characters' names and appearance rather than plot, dialogue or characterisation.

Then, in the 1970s – coinciding with reports of the 'Troubles' – Lynn Redgrave played Mary O'Donnell, a distant version of her real-life sister Vanessa, as an intense, bespectacled, virginal, red-haired Irish colleen-journalist who takes the Mexican Revolution much more seriously than the other lead characters in *Don't Turn the Other Cheek* (*¡Viva la muerte ... tua!*, Duccio Tessari, 1971); this was a send-up of the recent, more radical Italian Westerns written or suggested by Franco Solinas. In the final sequence, Lynn Redgrave yells an uncharacteristic expletive at her two mercenary companions (Franco Nero as conman Orlansky, Eli Wallach as cowardly Lozola posing as revolutionary leader 'El Salvador') and resolves to find another revolution to write about in Guatemala, while her companions ride off in

disgust. O'Donnell seems well-intentioned, but the cynical Orlansky is convinced that she is 'someone who creates an idol and then destroys him': a celebrity-stalker who masks her careerism with apparent revolutionary commitment. This was followed by Lynne Frederick playing Emanuelle 'Bunny' O'Neill, a pregnant prostitute (her first name is a clue) who survives a vigilante attack on a flyblown Western town, only to be viciously treated by a psychopathic bandit called Chaco who looks and behaves like Charles Manson (Tomas Milian) in Lucio Fulci's late entry *Four of the Apocalypse (I quattro dell'apocalisse, 1975)*, very loosely based on two Bret Harte stories 'The Luck of Roaring Camp' and 'The Outcasts of Poker Flat'. In the original Harte, the prostitute was called 'Duchess'. 'Bunny' O'Neill eventually dies while giving birth, and her lover Stubby (Fabio Testi) takes his protracted, cruel revenge on Chaco. Fabio Testi also starred in *China 9, Liberty 37 (Amore, piombo e furore, Monte Hellman, 1978)*, opposite Jenny Agutter as Catherine, the conflicted wife of grizzled Warren Oates. She has an Irish accent throughout, but this is never explained. In *White Apache (Bianco Apache, Bruno Mattei, 1987)*, the central character is an Irish boy who is the sole survivor of an Indian massacre and is brought up by the Apaches to become Shining Sky (Sebastian Harrison, son of Richard), a man who does not quite fit into either American or Apache society. Cowboy turns Indian this time, in a variation on *Little Big Man* (Arthur Penn, 1970). There were certainly more explicitly Irish figures in Italian Westerns, post-1968 – first male, then female.

One of the most significant is featured in *The Return of Sabata (È tornato Sabata... hai chiuso un'altra volta!)*, directed by Gianfranco Parolini/Frank Kramer at Elios Studios in 1971. Sabata (Lee Van Cleef) is reduced to showing off his gun-stunts in a circus, and finds himself in Hobsonville, Texas. Hobsonville, he soon discovers, is being run by a corrupt Irishman, a leprechaun-figure usually dressed in a three-piece tweed suit, bowler hat and chianti-red hair, called Joseph McLintock: a name derived from the character played by John Wayne in the relatively recent Andrew V. McLaglen comedy *Western McLintock!* (1963). *McLintock!* also starred Maureen O'Hara as Wayne's estranged wife, and was a reworking for more senior citizens of *The Taming of the Shrew* – the same distant literary source as John Ford's *The Quiet Man* (1952). McLaglen had been assistant director on *The Quiet Man*, and *McLintock!* tried hard, in its sprawling way, to appear neo-Fordian. Hobsonville, in *The Return of Sabata*, resembles Lawrence Murphy's Lincoln town (in some versions of the Billy the Kid story, notably *Chisum* – also directed by McLaglen). Joseph