

# Western, Go Home! Sergio Leone and the “Death of the Western” in American Film Criticism

---

WILLIAM MCCLAIN

*I am showing the Old West as it really was . . . Americans treat westerns with too much rhetoric.*

—Sergio Leone (qtd. in “Hi-Ho, Denaro!” 57)

WHEN ITALIAN DIRECTOR SERGIO LEONE’S *A Fistful of Dollars* arrived in the United States in early 1967, the American film industry and the critics who observed it were in a state of ferment. Critics could sense that the American cinema was changing and that its old pieties and genres, often spoken of in the same breath, were in a vital sense dying out. Among them, the Western was perhaps the greatest barometer—the genre long seen as most uniquely American, most assuredly linked to the national character and mythology, seemed to be evolving into a new, rougher beast. And for critics, Sergio Leone’s films were clearly part of the problem. Leone’s *Dollars* trilogy, starting with *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964, US release: January 1967) and continuing with *For a Few Dollars More* (1965, US release: May 1967) and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966, US release: December, 1967), was neither the entirety nor the beginning of the “spaghetti Western” cycle in Italy,<sup>1</sup> but for Americans Leone’s films represented the true beginning of the Italian invasion of their privileged cultural form (Liehm 186). Hindsight tempts one to simply question critics’ judgment: after all, Leone’s films have been vindicated by continued popular and critical interest, and their place in the now sturdy family tree of post-studio revisionist Westerns suggests their healthy influence on the evolution of the Western genre. Christopher Frayling,

in his noted book on the Italian spaghetti Western, describes American critical reception of the spaghetti Western cycle as to “a large extent, confined to a sterile debate about the ‘cultural roots’ of the American/Hollywood Western.” He remarks that few critics dared admit that they were, in fact, “bored with an exhausted Hollywood genre.” Pauline Kael, he notes, was willing to acknowledge this critical ennui and thus appreciate how a film such as Akira Kurosawa’s *Yojimbo* (1961) “could exploit Western conventions while debunking its morality” (39). This revisionist project, Frayling argues along with many others (e.g., Bondanella 255), was the key to Leone’s success and, to some degree, to that of the spaghetti Western genre as a whole.

The term “sterile debate,” however, effaces the almost venomous hostility that greeted Leone’s *Dollars* trilogy in American critical circles. Critics found the *Dollars* films deeply problematic on a number of levels: their unusually graphic and cynical violence, their ambivalent relationship to historical and generic “realism,” and their relationship to the history of the Western genre as a whole. However, film critics of the time were not merely displeased by these films’ perceived aesthetic flaws: they were bitterly resistant to what they saw as an existential threat to the Western genre and to some extent their understanding of the American cinema as a whole, for in Leone’s films critics found echoes, and perhaps causes, of deeply disturbing trends in domestic film culture—trends that would later culminate in what would be dubbed the “New Hollywood.” However, Leone’s films

---

WILLIAM MCCLAIN is a doctoral fellow at the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.

seem to have had a uniquely distasteful element for American critics of the late 1960s beyond their place in broader shifts in American film culture, for whereas films such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) split critics into hotly contentious camps, the *Dollars* films were simply generally excoriated. Our goal here is not to say that critics of the period were defending critical good taste against the barbarians at the gates or that they somehow didn't "get it." Rather, we seek an understanding of a moment in the history of the American popular critical institutions wherein critics attempted to resist aesthetic change, refused to acknowledge emerging artistic norms as legitimate, and in so doing attempted to defend the Western genre as an institution against Leone's illegitimate revisionism and the wider developments it typified. Ultimately, this holding action reveals not only a great deal about the Western but also potential insights into the nature of film criticism and the concept of genre itself.

The difficulty arises from the fact that we are dealing with the Western genre in conflict with itself, but it is the Western in separate, contemporaneous spheres: the understanding of films that seemed to lay claim to a genre and the critical construction of the genre itself. If we wish to truly understand this conflict, we must of necessity remain at least agnostic as to the "true" nature of the Western genre, or for that matter the legitimacy of various methods of defining it. As such, Rick Altman's semantic/syntactic/pragmatic approach to the construction of genre provides a solid method for analyzing critical understanding of the Western and its relationship to Leone's films. In his oft-anthologized essay on the topic, Altman describes the semantic/syntactic approach to genre as one that seeks the constituent elements of genres within film texts themselves and in primarily linguistic terms:

While there is anything but general agreement on the exact frontier separating semantic from syntactic views, we can as a whole distinguish between generic definitions that depend on a list of common traits, attitudes,

characters, shots, locations, sets, and the like—thus stressing the semantic elements that make up the genre—and definitions that play up instead certain constitutive relationships between undesignated and variable placeholders—relationships that might be called the genre's fundamental syntax. (Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach" 634)

An approach so firmly rooted in the film text and inter-text, however, is not without its shortcomings, as Altman himself observes in his later book *Film/Genre*. Thus he introduces a third term to his genre equation: pragmatics. In short, pragmatic analysis appreciates that genres are continually defined, used, and redefined by "multiple users of various sorts—not only various spectator groups, but producers, distributors, exhibitors, cultural agencies, and many others as well—pragmatics recognizes that familiar patterns, such as genres, owe their very existence to multiplicity" (Altman, *Film/Genre* 210).

As such, one might be tempted to place Altman's pragmatics in the tradition of Todorov's analysis of historical versus theoretical genres (Todorov, *The Fantastic*) or Steve Neale's insistence on the importance of Hollywood's own discourse—perhaps most famously in his critique of previous critics' understanding of the melodrama (Neale, "Melo Talk"). Rather than locating genre in film texts (singularly or collectively), Neale asserts the importance of the "indication and circulation of what the [film] industry considers to be the generic framework—or frameworks—most appropriate to the viewing of a film," as embodied by Hollywood's address to its audience through advertising and publicity (Neale, *Genre and Hollywood* 39). In the case of the melodrama, Neale challenges critics' identification of the melodrama with "feminine genres" such as the woman's film through a historical investigation of Hollywood industry discourse of the 1920s through the 1950s. Based on his findings, he asserts that for Hollywood of that period the term *melodrama* was understood to refer to action and adventure films—decidedly masculine genres

(Neale, "Melo Talk" 69). For Neale, this means that critics' association of melodrama with women's films was simply mistaken, overruled by Hollywood's own authority. Thus, Neale, like Todorov, ultimately returns to a single, bedrock generic location. Whereas Todorov ultimately asserts the primacy of traditional understandings of genre, Neale regards the focus on Hollywood's discourse as a corrective for critics' tendency to efface the complexities of genre as it functioned historically. However, Altman argues against the tendency of most genre theoreticians who ultimately rely on such an "exclusionary discourse" whereby genres are located at the level of "the author(s) or the text(s) or the audience or generic institutions . . . within a fundamentally monological framework. . . . a surprising situation, given the range of variables used to define individual genres" (*Film/Genre* 85). No single location can ultimately claim preeminence as the "true" location of a genre, and genre, therefore, legitimately and fully exists in multiple forms in multiple locales simultaneously. Among these diverse locations, critics form one of the key material institutions that support generic formations (91).

Thus, to study the Western as a genre, it is necessary to study it as *also* an object of industrial and critical discourse and to address those discourses, even though they form only two potential spheres of generic construction among many, and heterogeneous spheres at that.<sup>2</sup> In studying the film industry, we will examine United Artists' own efforts to situate the *Dollars* films through their marketing as well as following more general industrial discourse surrounding the films through the pages of *Variety*.<sup>3</sup> In fact, *Variety* occupies an interesting hybrid space between the film industry and the practice of film critics. In this practice, critics assert, employ, popularize, and defend both the use of genre as a meaningful term applied to any given film or group of films (which is to say, its extensive character) and the criteria used to determine membership in said group and, perhaps most importantly, what said criteria "mean" (the genre's intensive character).

As we shall see, the creation and understanding of genre is not a disinterested, ahistorical process, but neither should it be characterized as somehow cynical. Rather, the creation of genres in critical discourse, and the assertion of authority over them, must first and foremost be seen as a Foucauldian move to create knowledge and thus simultaneously to assert power, authority, and control over textual interpretation and a field of textual objects. As such, film critics claim the power not only to describe the genre but also to legitimate changes to its character and canon. In fact, Altman observes that the "regenrification process," the move by critics to redefine a genre extensively and/or intensively, is one of the most essential parts of the "critical arsenal" (82). In the case of Leone's *Dollars* trilogy, critics essentially employed the opposite tactic. As we shall see, by rejecting Leone's films as Westerns, despite the films' prima facie claim to that status, they attempted to *de-generify* them.

### A Ready-Made Super Franchise

Before turning to critics' responses to the *Dollars* trilogy, we would do well by contextualizing the *Dollars* trilogy in terms of United Artists' positioning of the films through marketing. In fact, this positioning appears to have resonated strongly with critical construction of the *Dollars* films, at the very least strongly discouraging critics from categorizing them as European art films. When the first of the *Dollars* films, *A Fistful of Dollars*, arrived in the United States, it was already a major box office success abroad ("Italo Western's"; Wollemborg C7) and had even acquired some notoriety in the American press.<sup>4</sup> In fact, by the time UA acquired the American rights to *A Fistful of Dollars*, it was able to purchase rights to its sequels as well ("UA Pays 900G"). Thus, when UA released *A Fistful of Dollars* in January of 1967, they advertised not for a single film, but for a franchise. Indeed, the film's most common tag line was "A *Fistful of Dollars* is the first motion picture of its kind. It won't be the last." However, the conve-



Photo 1: Clint Eastwood as the Man with No Name and Marianne Koch as Marisol in Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964).

nient existence of ready-to-release sequels was not the only motivation behind this approach; UA was also attempting to nurture a new “super-franchise” based on the model of the virtually unprecedented success of its James Bond films (“UA Gambles”; Balio 285). Indeed, the trade press recognized the box office success of *A Fistful of Dollars* and *For a Few Dollars More* as proof-positive that they were heir-apparent to the British super-agent’s box office windfall (“*Few Dollars More* Runs 30% Ahead”).<sup>5</sup>

Unsurprisingly, UA’s marketing focused on “Bondian” aspects of Leone’s *Dollars* trilogy—flashy violence, cosmopolitan flair, and of course, a fashion-plate hero defined by a hyper-masculine personal style—and even employed similar tactics to put their preferred construction of the films’ style across (Balio 253).<sup>6</sup> Some months prior to the US release of the Bond films, UA distributed a “James Bond Handbook” that detailed “the super-sleuth’s preferences—i.e., his women, his liquor, his arsenal, his clothes, and so on” as a means for familiarizing American audiences with the Bond character and mythos (Balio 259). A program for *A Fistful of Dollars* clearly echoes this approach, with its description of Clint Eastwood as the “Man with No Name” in atomized detail: “This short cigar belongs to a man with no name. . . . This poncho belongs to a man with no name. . . . This long gun belongs to a man with no name.” It positions these traits explicitly as “stylish” and notes that the film’s “final accolade came when [European] youngsters started wearing ponchos and Levis.” Moreover, it directly made

the connection to Bond, defining Eastwood’s character “as fresh and formidable a hero . . . as James Bond” (Program for *A Fistful of Dollars*).<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, although spaghetti Westerns often downplayed their Italian origin and attempted to “pass” as American product, UA emphasized the film’s European pedigree, perhaps again to recapture the international flair of the Bond films, even as it worked to position the films well outside of the art house circuit that usually exhibited such imports. Critics seemed responsive to UA’s marketing efforts. Many noted the James Bond connection (e.g., Herbstman)—indeed, the few positive reviews of the Leone films generally compared them favorably to Bond (e.g., Rev. of *Per Un Pugno Di Dollari*; Rev. of *Per Qualche Dollaro in Piu*; Buchanan). Furthermore, it was a rare critic who missed the opportunity to emulate UA’s publicity and describe the “Man with No Name’s” unique style: his poncho, his mule, his cigar, his leathered face. However, to whatever degree this campaign did help critics to position the film, it did so by associating the *Dollars* trilogy with the flashy violence, cynical chic, and “high concept” indifference to subtleties of plot that characterized its cinematic godfather. In short, UA announced that this was no European art film; it was pure, kinetic entertainment served in a glossy blockbuster wrapper. Although the success of this approach at the box office cannot be doubted, it certainly seems to have encouraged critics to view the film as being intentionally superficial and glibly super-violent and as such may have proved the film’s critical undoing.

## Violence without Reason, History without Spirit: Critical Understanding of the Dollars Trilogy

Three main issues unite critical response to the *Dollars* films in the years contemporaneous with their release: violence, realism, and the question of their “revision or reversion” of the Western genre. No critic, however, fails to foreground the films’ violence. In fact, the American press challenged the violence in *A Fistful of Dollars* even before its American release. Bosley Crowther noted the “disquieting lot of violence and sadism” that seemed to have infected the recent (circa 1966) profusion of American Westerns. Worse yet, the film that helped inspire them was on its way: “early next year is coming the film that helped to goad this wild parade. It is *A Fistful of Dollars* . . . don’t say you haven’t been warned” (Crowther, “Back in the Saddle” D1). Ultimately, all three *Dollars* films would be intensely criticized for their violence (e.g., Rev. of *For a Few Dollars More*, Cue; “Western Grand Guignol”; Rev. of *Per Un Pugno Di Dollari*; and Leech). Some, apparently indifferent to Crowther’s observation on the state of American cinema, attributed this violence to the films’ foreignness: One writer described *A Fistful of Dollars* as created by “an Italian director, and a German, an Italian, and a Spaniard as co-producers—all of them, judging from results, combining their ethnic know-how in mayhem” (“New Formula” 95). Others repeated the connection to the James Bond films, seeing in the *Dollars* films enormously exaggerated violence in the “spirit of the Ian Fleming skein of things” (Rev. of *Per Un Pugno Di Dollari* 7; c.f. Crowther “Back in the Saddle”). The issue, however, was not merely that the film was violent; it was violent in such an illegitimate fashion that it became a “bad film” in almost every sense of the phrase.

To make matters worse, Leone’s films were not simply aberrant, but edge-cases of a growing trend: by 1967 Hollywood cinema, critics observed, was becoming increasingly and disturbingly violent (Prince, *Savage Cinema* 17). Following the erosion and eventual collapse of

the Production Code, Hollywood’s traditional censorship regime, the introduction of the Code and Rating Administration (CARA) rating system gave filmmakers license to a new range in their depiction of previously unacceptable content (Prince, *Savage Cinema* 12–16; *Classical Film Violence* 196–204). Films such as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and later *The Wild Bunch* (1969) were hotly debated among critics, as was the influence of European imports that seemed to be introducing even more lurid forms of violence and sex to the American screen. Matters grew to such a head that the federal government again threatened to become involved in motion picture censorship (Monaco 62–64). Nor were American critics absent from the breach. Bosley Crowther, the *New York Times*’s long-standing film critic, went on a veritable crusade against *Bonnie and Clyde*, publishing multiple articles attacking the film for everything from historical inaccuracy to dulling the American public’s moral sensibilities (“Screen: *For a Few Dollars More*” 18; c.f. Crowther “*Bonnie and Clyde*,” “A Smash at Violence”). Page Cook went so far as to warn that there was “evil in the tone of the writing, acting, and direction” of *Bonnie and Clyde* (24). Yet, what for Crowther and Cook represented potentially both cause and symptom of some form of moral or social decay became for other critics the overture to a brave new American cinema capable of handling complex, mature subject matter (e.g., “Hollywood: The Shock of Freedom”; Kael, “*Bonnie and Clyde*”; Johnson). Although critics remained divided as to the value and meaning of this new film violence, they clearly did not believe that Leone had monopolized it.

Nor had Leone introduced graphic violence to the Western genre itself, although here he might at least claim some pride of place. As Crowther’s critique of the “violence and sadism” found specifically in recent Westerns suggests, violence was a familiar element of the genre well before the late 1960s. A reviewer for the *Los Angeles Times* described Leone as having “obviously studied and adopted the most sadistic excesses of Hollywood’s Western directors—Anthony Mann, John Ford, Raoul

Walsh, William Wellman, Sam Peckinpah, etc.—and gave them one worse” (Scheuer). As such a litany of some of the Western genre’s leading lights suggests, critics were not blind to the fact that the Western had been since time immemorial an intensely violent genre, but this was somehow not merely *more*; it was qualitatively different. Specifically, the violence in Leone’s films was often described as “cynical,” both in theme and in intention. One writer for *Time* described Leone’s “surefire formula” as “Be mean, mean, mean. Don’t punch cattle, punch a few women instead. Never waste a punch when a knee in the groin will do” (“Hi-Ho, Denaro!” 56; c.f. Rev. of *For a Few Dollars More, Cue*; Nova). In fact, director Robert Aldrich defended his film *The Dirty Dozen* (1967), in which he argues violence is “inherent in some characters,” by contrasting it with *A Fistful of Dollars*’ use of violence as mere “extra titillation” (Windeler 65). Crowther even goes so far as to suggest that the films are so obviously cynical in their use of violence that they may constitute a positive social menace (“Screen: ‘For a Few Dollars More’”). Yet a feature article in *Variety* questioned the critical approbation of the bloody *Dollars* films and suggested that other forces were at work:

A curious sidelight to the current discussion of on-screen violence is the fact that one of the most blasted of recent pix, the Italian-made *A Fistful of Dollars*, was based directly on Akira Kurosawa’s Japanese film, *Yojimbo*. And, though the amount of blood-letting was about equal in both films, some of those most upset about *Dollars* were high on *Yojimbo*. Could this mean that, after all, it isn’t the amount of violence that matters, but the quality of the picture itself? (“Degree of Violence”)

Quality, of course, is a loaded term, but critics clearly thought the *Dollars* films lacked *something* necessary to contain and motivate their violence. Ironically, that something was not the West, but the Western.

Although historical realism in the Western genre is a treacherous topic in the best of

circumstances, determining the historical pedigree of Leone’s films nonetheless proved intriguing to American critics. In general, they treated the *Dollars* films as guilty until proven innocent, and then still probably guilty. The Western, for American audiences, was not only one more genre; it was a—perhaps *the*—national genre. In a feature article in *Life*, Don Moser noted that “Americans have always regarded the cowboy as a national symbol and the movies have made him so all around the world” (104). According to Moser, the Western, in the form of books, movies, and even personal style, was a worldwide phenomenon and had become a global myth: “Why has the cowboy bulldogged all creation? ‘The Western,’ explains a foreign critic, ‘is the modern *Odyssey*’” (104).<sup>8</sup> However, simply because the appeal of the Western was understood to be universal does not mean that its production could be. Perhaps nothing better demonstrates how closely American critics identified the Western with American national culture than the degree of knee-slapping comic absurdity they found in the very thought of an Italian Western with an international cast. The exotic worlds created in Culver City and Burbank might arch an amused critical eyebrow, but the very thought of *Italians making Westerns* was final proof that there were, in fact, more wonders in the world than Horatio’s philosophies could ever comprehend—and that was not a good thing (e.g., “Hi-Ho, Denaro!”; “The Via Veneto Kid”; Scheuer). This is not to say that all American critics were unaware of the long history of European Westerns (c.f. Landry 7, 12; Bloom D24), but rather that they viewed the Western as, in final analysis, irremovably and fundamentally American.

For this very reason, it is surprising that many critics were nonetheless greatly impressed by the realism of the *Dollars* films; however, one must temper this by acknowledging what construction of realism was in force. As mentioned previously, these critics located the realism of Leone’s Westerns in their attention to historical detail,<sup>9</sup> which is to say costume, setting, and iconography in general—

realism at a purely semantic level. One critic described *A Fistful of Dollars* by noting that “[t]here is something very authentic in the frontier town in which it is set. One can almost feel and smell the dust and austerity” (Herbstman; c.f. Leech, A-22; Rev. of *Per Qualche Dollaro in Piu*). Even writers who were otherwise critical of the films’ violence and mocking of the ontological contradiction of an Italian Western sometimes took a moment to describe Sergio Leone’s vast research into the American West and allow him at least the status of a well-informed amateur (“Hi-Ho, Denaro!”). For some critics, this attention to iconographic detail was adequate to overrule any question of the films’ national paternity and establish it firmly as a legitimate Western (e.g., Rev. of *Per Un Pugno Di Dollari* 7), but most nonetheless challenged the films’ “authenticity.” As one writer put it, despite all the period detail, a *Dollars* film “never quite looks like the American West” (Mahoney; c.f. Munroe, “*Fistful of Action Offered in Dollars*,” “Violence Marks Second *Dollars*”). Ironically, these were often the same critics who expressed genuine appreciation for the historical realism of Leone’s Westerns! Of course, the Western genre has always been more than a mere chronicle. As Moser’s earlier description suggests, critics appreciated that the Western was rooted in a historical reality but nonetheless understood that the genre was a stylization of that reality. Thus, it is telling that few critics seek to specify exactly what about Leone’s *Dollars* films makes them seem so “not quite right.” The complication here was not only at the semantic level, at least not at the level of historical accuracy, but something less definite and yet somehow more vital—for even if Leone captured what critics believed to be the material aspect of historical realism, they nonetheless missed the spirit; they were, as one critic described the spaghetti Western genre as a whole, “long on gore and short on lore” (“Hi-Ho, Denaro!” 57).

Semantically, critics generally asserted that Leone’s films were clearly members of the Western genre, and indeed the films’ historical realism seemed to mark them as rather conser-

vative in this regard, but at another level something was somehow amiss—the horses and hats and guns remained, but the story and the themes seemed vastly different. However, one should not slavishly follow Altman’s model and assume that the conflict therefore took place on a purely syntactic plane, for at that level critics were deeply conflicted as to how the *Dollars* trilogy related to the genre and whether its alleged innovations were truly “new” to the Western. As one writer described it, the question of “[w]hether it is a revision of, or a reversion to, old formula” had become common “debate fodder” (Landry 7). Later critics would generally take the *Dollars* films’ revisionism for granted or at least collapse the distinction that critics of the time made into the single term, but the “revisionist” title that would later earn Leone praise and a certain *auteurist* regard was used primarily as a weapon of censure during the years of the *Dollars* trilogy’s American release. In fact, whether critics saw these films as “revision,” “reversion,” or a mixture of both, they nonetheless found little reason to redeem them. In this, critics were responding to more than Leone’s films: there was a sense among critics that the Western genre, and indeed Hollywood as a whole, was changing, and almost certainly for the worse.

That is not to say that critics were hostile to genre revision in general, nor were they blind to the very real changes in the Western genre that had taken place during the decade leading up to the release of Leone’s films. In fact, these earlier revisions were seen as proof of the genre’s healthy growth. In 1963 William K. Everson offered a celebration of the sixtieth year of the American film Western<sup>10</sup> as a vital and continually revitalized genre (74). The so-called adult Westerns of the last decade had revised, and thereby modernized, the genre, offering:

No longer merely a schoolboy’s vision of adventure, it offers a kind of adult wish fulfillment, a flashback to land of uncluttered horizons, to a time when a sense of honor and a strong right arm were sufficient to overcome the severest hardships and the basest villains. (74)

However, although certainly a revision, this approach to the Western offered what critics saw as a legitimate permutation of the genre. As Kael described them, these films, though different, were still a part of what one might call the “royal road” of the Western: “The original *Stagecoach* had a mixture of revelry and reverence about the American past that made the picture seem almost like folk art; we wanted to believe in it even if we didn’t. That’s what *Ride the High Country* had, too” (“Saddle Sore” 38). The Western genre had changed during the 1950s and 60s, no doubt, but critics still found the authentically “folk” core of the genre generally intact, and it was to this core of meaning that they referred the true lineage of the Western. Leone’s films simply did not seem to draw on that tradition. For those who cast them as primarily revisionist, they were simply illegitimately so. Judy Stone observed the vastness of the departure:

Unlike traditional Westerns with their black-and-white morality and all loose ends neatly tied together, *Fistful* offers no straightforward plot exposition. The stranger manipulates the enmity between the two rival gangs, but that aside his character and motivations are cloudy from beginning to end. (91)

Or, as Crowther described *A Fistful of Dollars*, “The Man with No Name” was “not the kind of hero we’re accustomed to see in Western films. He’s a selfish and vicious non-conformist toward the inviolable moral code.” Crowther goes on to condemn the film as “a dangerous

over-turning of the apple cart” of the traditional Western and its universe (“New Western Anti-Hero” D5). Kael, writing on *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, expressed the point explicitly: “this huge Italian Western . . . imitates the externals of American Westerns . . . [but] the Western theme is missing” (Rev. of *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*).

Yet not all critics saw Leone’s work, or his hero, in such a revisionist vein. Many, in fact, cast Leone’s films, particularly *A Fistful of Dollars*, as overly derivative of the Western genre, particularly the antihero tradition (e.g., Herbstman; Rev. of *Per Un Pugno Di Dollari*; Rev. of *Fistful of Dollars*, Cue; Crowther, “Screen: *A Fistful of Dollars* Opens”). As one writer put it, “The amazement inherent in the business being racked up by *Fistful of Dollars* lies in the fact that everything, but everything, has been seen before on the screen. . . . the oldest kind of old hat . . . *Fistful* is basically old Western, only more so” (Landry 7; c.f. Munroe “*Fistful of Action*”; “Daring to be Different”; Champlin). More than simply a stripped-down version, these films were “elemental” with “a lofty disdain for sense and authenticity” that harkened back to the silent cinema (“Western Grand Guignol”). One might expect that this approach would engender a more positive critical view of the *Dollars* films, and indeed Altman’s account of “regenification” would indicate that such an attempt to place Leone’s works in line with a more ancient canon could be a necessary first step in asserting their membership in the Western genre in more affirmative terms (Alt-



Photo 2: Clint Eastwood returns as the Man with No Name in Sergio Leone’s *For A Few Dollars More* (1965).



man, *Film/Genre* 78–80). However, even those who found the Western in the *Dollars* trilogy's pedigree still generally denied it their approval. Moreover, these two lines, the revisionist and the reversionist, should not be understood as mutually exclusive. Although critics often trended strongly toward one side of the debate or the other, they usually approached the film through a combination of both. In fact, Bosley Crowther, who generally argued strongly from what we are here describing as the revisionist camp, reviewed *A Fistful of Dollars* as "prototypical" a film as *The Virginian* (1929) with "just about every Western cliché," while clearly revisionist in that its protagonist "is in no way devoted to justice or aiding the good against the bad . . . [he is] an icy and cynical gunman" (Crowther, "Screen: *A Fistful of Dollars*" 29; c.f. Crowther "A New Western Anti-Hero"). It is, in fact, in this divided approach that the split becomes most obvious: critics thought the films walked and talked like Westerns at both a semantic and, in many ways, a syntactic level, but smelled strongly of something far different.

### The Death of the Western

Although violence remained a key concern for film critics in 1967, one should not conflate their concern with violence entirely with a fear of its probable social effects—the issue was aesthetic as much as it was social, and it is on this plane that the connection to Leone and the Western becomes explicit. In an article titled "Our Misanthropic Movies," David Denby described what he saw as "the progressive coarsening of sensibility now evident throughout American cinema" matched to an explosion of "meaningless violence, filmed with blood-gushing realism" and "very little clear-sighted affection for human beings and practically no effort to recognize and honor their better qualities" (144; c.f. Crowther, "Movies to Kill People By"). The issue was not simply that films were more violent; it was that they seemed cynically violent—both in tone and in what critics saw as the motives of filmmakers who they argued used a façade of gritty realism to justify sheer

exploitation. Naturally, this trend was closely linked to Leone's films, particularly in the character of the "Man with No Name," who was described as "an attempt to foist on the public an idea that if you create a character who is faceless enough and kills often enough, the result is a new-type cinematic hero and an 'in' film" (Rev. of *For a Few Dollars More*, *Cue*). Thus, when critics spoke of Leone's revisionism, they referred what they saw to an even broader phenomenon: the emptying of such films of their more traditional themes and meanings, often undertaken in what they believed to be a more or less cynical guise of "realism" that rejected grand thematic gestures in favor of moral ambiguity or, perhaps, indifference.

This is hardly the only possible reading of Leone's trilogy. For Italian audiences, it has often been observed that the spaghetti Westerns were seen as explicitly political and yet still directed at a mythological plane (e.g., Micciché). As director Sergio Corbucci described it, they deflated the American myths *because* they were myths: "Soon the Americans will understand how things are. For the time being, they remain attached to honest fights and legal duels" (qtd. in Liehm 187). This is not to say that American critics did not view the Western as a mythical or stylized form. Moser went so far as to assert that "the Western movie is probably the most stylized dramatic form since Greek tragedy," and he then goes on to describe how such Western tropes as the fast-draw and gunfight were developed explicitly to "make things more chivalric and dramatic" (108). The difference between these two positions is simple—Moser celebrates the myth, and does so in its capacity as myth. The relationship between American mythology and the Western film, what might be described as the anthropological definition of the American Western, was not simply descriptive; it was seen by critics such as Moser, Crowther, and Kael as a positive generic criteria. The "adult" Westerns had revised the Western genre, but they had done so in a way that respected certain thematic underpinnings: most centrally that the Western is, and should be, a historical morality play based on the

questions of the frontier, the role of the individual in society, the (dis)continuity of contemporary American society with its mythological past, and of course the morals, meaning, and consequences of just versus unjust violence. Leone's films as these critics understood them simply did not engage with this generic foundation.<sup>11</sup> They were, in short, not revised versions of the Western's moral universe that justifiably changed some of the valiances of the respective elements—they destroyed that universe. They were “nihilistic Westerns” (Rev. of *For a Few Dollars More*, *Box Office*).

Yet although the Western genre was thus besieged, its identity seems to have only further solidified. Naturally, the “Western genre” as an intellectual concept already had a long history among American film and literary critics, and the period under consideration, the mid- to late 1960s and early 1970s, was no exception. Robert Warshaw's 1954 essay on the Western hero reappeared in 1962 in his book *The Immediate Experience*, and one might reasonably argue that his concept of “connoisseurship” contains the seeds of a rather conservative understanding of genre. Generally speaking, however, popular film criticism seemed to be dominated by a vaguer, if still largely anthropological, sense of the Western genre based at least indirectly on Frederick Jackson Turner's “Frontier Thesis” and Henry Nash Smith's study of the “Western myth” in *Virgin Land*. Among these critics, there was clearly a strong sense of the Western genre as defined, at heart, by the themes of the frontier, the nation, and a certain moral

universe and a sense that this intertextual narrative performed vital cultural “work” for American society, concepts that would later be solidified in John Cawelti's *The Six-Gun Mystique* and Will Wright's *Sixguns and Society*. And this work was grievously threatened. In fact, by February 1974, Pauline Kael announced that the Western, after a long and vigorous life, had died. No more were the “simple, masculine values that the Westerner stood for . . . ancient and noble . . . this mythic hero [that] symbolized American democracy and virtue and justice.” Gone was that “ritualized dream of the past that we clung to,” its universe of “good against evil,” and its distinct world: “the horses, the hats, the spurs and leather vests . . . a reminder of an unspoiled country that the hero was fighting to keep from being destroyed.” “A few more Westerns may straggle in,” Kael wrote, “but the Western is dead” (“Street Western” 100).

### Legacy of the Bad Western

The critical trends outlined thus far support the assertion that the common ground shared by all the attacks on the *Dollars* trilogy was a sense that the films were not simply bad films, but *bad* Westerns. This places the critical understanding of the Western in an interesting double-bind: for to be “bad Westerns” they must first be admitted as Westerns and then fail as such. One need only return to Kael's account of the Western on the eve of its death to see that Leone's works were a creature very different from her understanding of the genre, and yet they still bore a



Photo 3: Clint Eastwood as Blondie (The Good) aka the Man with No Name in Sergio Leone's *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966).

family resemblance that made them all the more alien. As noted before, the Western was understood to be, at heart, a genre of violence, but that violence was carefully contained within a stylized structure and was motivated within that structure by the moral/historical play presumed to be at the genre's heart. In the eyes of critics of the time, the films of the *Dollars* trilogy were not morality plays, or at most provisional ones, for there seemed to be no "good" moral position, and thus by rejecting the *Dollars* films' violence as cynical, they were fundamentally rejecting the lack of rationale for said violence. Most importantly, what one might call the Western's "issues" were absent. The "Man with No Name" was not clearing the wilderness or purifying the civilized world; in fact, he "stood" for nothing—his victories and defeats were purely personal. No matter how Leone dressed him up, he was simply not a traditional Western hero, not even a true antihero as critics understood them; he was just a man with a talent for killing, and the opportunity to do so.

One may see this point confirmed by the terms of the *Dollars* films' eventual critical redemption. As early as the mid-1970s, the times, for Sergio Leone and the spaghetti Western as a whole, had changed. Actually, to some extent one might say these films helped change the times. Mira Liehm argues that, by the early 1970s, "[i]mages of violence became commonplace . . . especially after Sam Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* . . . [y]et their beginnings go back to Leone, who endowed violence with the splendor of operatic stylization and choreography" (186).<sup>12</sup> Richard Jameson also eulogized the appearance of Leone's films in terms of their brand of violence and cynicism: "*A Fistful of Dollars* won general audiences for its stylish embellishments of the new sadism and a narrower, more discerning audience for the perverse originality of the man whose talent embraced most if not all of the proceeding categories—Sergio Leone" (8). More importantly, where once Leone's brand of revisionism was seen as illegitimate, it had become the zenith of the critical reception of his art.<sup>13</sup> Stuart Kaminsky, writing in the *Velvet Light*

*Trap*, observed that "[t]o begin with, Leone and his fellows are no more interested in what could or did happen in the American West than they are in showing any view of surface reality. Leone's Westerns are comic nightmares about existence" (31). He then goes on to enumerate the themes of the Italian Western, many of which remain to this day critical touchstones for their discussion: their "world of magic and horror," the inevitability of mankind's Hobbesian state and the "sham" of religion and civilization, and the vital importance of "style." Character is central, and plot, as such, is essentially meaningless. These characters' almost pro forma obsession with money is defined as a critique of an American brand of capitalism built on the ruins of the frontiersman's solitary self-reliance (and its inherent justification of anti-communal, pro-individual attitudes). Italian Westerns are, at heart, an "exploration" and re-evaluation of a "mythic world": the Western (31–34).

Frayling, in his discussion of the "spaghetti Western" cycle as a "hybrid cultural form" created within a specific national and institutional context, argues that the cycle emerged out of a production culture that was both highly trained in the style of Hollywood production and cynical of "values which the 'classical' Hollywood Western had epitomized" (66). Critics seemed to detect as much, but their reaction to Leone's films was more than the rejection of a cinematic cuckoo's egg. As mentioned earlier, one must not approach the negative critical reaction to Leone's *Dollars* films in terms of it being "right" or "wrong," and yet in a very real sense these critics were right. They sensed that Leone's Westerns attacked the genre at its very heart, and later critics confirmed this fact by celebrating it. Kael, too, was perhaps right in her assessment that the Western, as she knew it, had died. These critics found it impossible to relate Leone's films to their ritualized, anthropological understanding of the Western genre's moral/mythical history of the American nation, and thus although they were forced to acknowledge that the *Dollars* films claimed the West-

ern genre, they worked to delegitimize them as a “failed” Western.

Typically, the history of the Western as a critical genre has been understood as characterized by its rather strict reliance on the text as key to the genre’s properties (Altman, *Film/Genre* 86). This account suggests that such an understanding is incomplete. Critics saw certain semantic and syntactic elements that were *necessary* to the Western genre in Leone’s films, but in isolation, these were not *sufficient* to identify the Western or its normative standards. Instead, critics located the authentic, and essential, heart of the Western in its presumed cultural utility, and although this function required certain semantic and syntactic traits, it was not precisely coterminous with them. Genre theory had doubled back on itself—rather than understanding the Western as a group of texts or a generic inter-text that could be described as performing a certain ritual function, critics defined the Western by that ritual function. It is possible that the Western is, or perhaps one might join Kael in saying “was,” more or less unique in this sense because it was understood to be a “national” genre whose social role was as a result especially salient.<sup>14</sup> One must wonder too if the Western’s longevity, above and beyond its ability to “conflate semantic and syntactic concerns” (60–63), is not also rooted in this sense of its national/mythical necessity. In any case, the rejection of Sergio Leone’s *Dollars* films by American critics must surely be seen as proof that these critics were, to some extent, attempting to defend the Western genre as both an aesthetic and social institution and thus were practicing a certain pragmatic analysis of their own.

## NOTES

The author would like to express his thanks to Drew Anthony Sanders Morton, David O’Grady, and the reviewers of the *Journal of Film and Video* for their excellent suggestions in revising this article. However, the author must reserve the greatest share of his gratitude for Jan-Christopher Horak, without whose advice and encouragement this article would simply not have been possible.

1. Liehm estimates that roughly 300 spaghetti Westerns were made in Italy between 1964 and 1972 (186).

2. This is a somewhat unique approach and must of course, in light of Altman’s pragmatics, be understood as necessarily partial.

3. We do not, however, wish to suggest that *Variety* can be simply and wholly identified with Hollywood discourse as a whole, but rather that it represents one voice among many within Hollywood.

4. In part, because of the film’s famous legal problems. Although initially released in 1964, *A Fistful of Dollars*’ arrival in the United States was delayed until early 1967, partially because of ongoing litigation—for one, Akira Kurosawa was not blind to the fact that the film had borrowed freely from the plot of his film *Yojimbo*, and he ultimately won a considerable share of *A Fistful of Dollars*’ profits. See “Rome Column” and “UA Cautious on Link to Italo *Fistful*.”

5. This was by no means simply an invention of the fertile imaginations of UA’s marketing department: many have argued that Leone consciously attempted to graft a Bondian aesthetic onto the traditional American Western in his *Dollars* trilogy (Liehm 185). The connection Liehm draws, however, seems somewhat ambiguous. Liehm cites the rather famous interview with Leone in which he observes, “Why are James Bond’s adventures so successful? Simply because at least fifty scenes out of sixty hold the audience in suspense. Americans have always represented the West in an extremely romantic form: the horse always arrived on command” (originally qtd. in De Fornari 12).

6. For a detailed examination of the marketing of the James Bond franchise, see Balio’s *United Artists: The Company That Changed the Film Industry* 253–74. For more on the “Bond aesthetic,” see Monaco 192–93 and Vincent LeBratto’s discussion of and interview with Bond production designer Ken Adam in *By Design* 35–48. For more on the emergence of the “action blockbuster” in Hollywood, see Schatz.

7. It is worth noting that this approach was doubly motivated by a desire to increase Eastwood’s star power and of course a desire, at least for *A Fistful of Dollars*, to create an American connection through him as the sole member of the cast who was at all known in the United States.

8. The “foreign critic” in question is, one assumes, André Bazin.

9. Trade magazines also encouraged distributors to follow this approach in their marketing. *Box Office* advised “exhibits of the folklore of the Old Southwest on their bandits, bounty hunters and history to promote interest in the film” (Rev. of *For a Few Dollars More*).

10. He offers *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) as the first Western.

11. This may also help explain how a critic like Kael who defended the centrality of violence in *Bonnie and Clyde* still excoriated the *Dollars* films—indifference to violence and suffering was already a well-established trait of the gangster film, even if the films themselves could be considered revisionist (Kael “Crime and

Poetry”; Prince “Hemorrhaging”). For more on *Bonnie and Clyde* as a genre hybrid, see Kinder.

12. Barry Forshaw, writing more recently, also connects Leone’s *Dollars* films to the emergence of the “New Hollywood” sensibility: “When the Westerns of Sergio Leone began to make their mark . . . the violence of the Italian Western . . . became the norm in the genre, and altered forever the face of the American western; and most significantly of all, audiences had the impression they were being presented with something closer to the real West” (88–89).

13. It is interesting to note to what degree the elevation of Leone to genre-revising *auteur* status seemed necessary to elevate these films from “bad” Westerns to “good” *auteur* works.

14. One excellent direction for further study would be to return to this period and attempt to determine how the concept of genre itself, as an aesthetic and anthropological critical category, was changing during these years, and whether other Hollywood genres were considered to have become increasingly alienated from some authentic “folk” roots. A connection to the emergence of CARA and Hollywood’s increasing interest in identifying and marketing to diverse audiences in this period also seem immediately relevant to this perceived loss of an “American” public/audience.

## REFERENCES

- Altman, Rick. *Film/Genre*. London: BFI, 1999. Print.
- . “A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre.” *Film Theory and Criticism*. 5th ed. Ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford UP, 1999. 630–41. Print.
- Balio, Tino. *United Artists: The Company That Changed the Film Industry*. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1987. Print.
- Bloom, Mary. “Connoisseur of Italian Westerns.” *Los Angeles Times* 7 Apr. 1968: D24. Print.
- Bondanella, Peter. *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*. 3rd ed. New York: Continuum International, 2001. Print.
- Buchanan, Lauren. Rev. of *A Fistful of Dollars*. *Motion Picture Herald* 4 Jan. 1967. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Cawelti, John G. *The Six-Gun Mystique*. Bowling Green: Bowling Green UP, 1970. Print.
- Champlin, Charles. “Good, Bad, Ugly Playing City-wide.” *Los Angeles Times* 12 Jan. 1968. *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Cook, Page. “Bonnie and Clyde.” *Films in Review* 18.8 (1967): 500–05. Rpt. in *Focus on Bonnie and Clyde*. Ed. John Cawelti. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973. 23–24. Print.
- Crowther, Bosley. “Back in the Saddle Again.” *New York Times* 27 Nov. 1966: D1. Print.
- . “Bonnie and Clyde.” *New York Times* 14 Aug. 1967: 68. Print.
- . “Movies to Kill People By.” *New York Times* 9 July 1967: 65. Print.
- . “A New Western Anti-Hero.” *New York Times* 5 Feb. 1967: D5. Print.
- . “Screen: *A Fistful of Dollars* Opens.” *New York Times* 2 Feb. 1967: 29. Print.
- . “Screen: *For a Few Dollars More* Opens.” *New York Times* 4 July 1967: 18. Print.
- . “A Smash at Violence.” *New York Times* 30 July 1967: 10. Print.
- “Daring to be Different.” *Time* 10 Feb. 1967. *Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- De Fornari, Oreste. *Sergio Leone*. Milan: Moizzi, 1977. Print.
- “Degree of Violence.” *Variety* 30 Aug. 1967. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Denby, David. “Our Misanthropic Movies.” *Atlantic Monthly* Nov. 1971: 144+. Print.
- Everson, William K. “The 60-Year Saga of the Horse Opera.” *New York Times Magazine* 14 Apr. 1963: 74+. Print.
- Rev. of *A Fistful of Dollars*. *Cue* 18 Feb. 1967. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Rev. of *For a Few Dollars More*. *Box Office* 22 May 1967. *For a Few Dollars More* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Rev. of *For a Few Dollars More*. *Cue* 15 July 1967. *For a Few Dollars More* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- “*Few Dollars More* Runs 30% Ahead of First Dubbed Italo-Made Western, So UA ‘Bond’ Analogy Makes Out.” *Variety* 31 May 1967: 4. Print.
- Forshaw, Barry. *Italian Cinema: Arthouse to Exploitation*. Harpenden, Herts.: Pocket Essentials, 2006. Print.
- Frayling, Christopher. *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone*. Rev. ed. New York: I. B. Taurus, 1998. Print.
- Rev. of *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. *Cue* 27 Jan. 1968. *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- “Hi-Ho, Denaro!” *Time* 4 Aug. 1967: 56–57. Print.
- Herbstman, Mandel. Rev. of *A Fistful of Dollars*. *Film Daily* 28 Dec. 1966. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File,

- Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- "Hollywood: The Shock of Freedom." *Time* 8 Dec. 1967: 66–76. Print.
- "Italo Western's Click in Paris; 'Passes' as Yank." *Variety* 13 Apr. 1966. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Jameson, Richard T. "Something to Do with Death." *Film Comment* 9.2 (1973): 8–16. Print.
- Johnson, Albert. "Bonnie and Clyde." *Film Quarterly* 21.2 (Winter 1967–68): 45–48. Rpt. in *Focus on Bonnie and Clyde*. Ed. John Cawelti. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973. 31–37. Print.
- Kael, Pauline. "Bonnie and Clyde." *New Yorker* 21 Oct. 1967: 147–48. Print.
- . "Crime and Poetry." *The Bonnie and Clyde Book*. Ed. Sandra Wake and Nicola Hayden. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972. 195–215. Print.
- . Rev. of *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*. *New Yorker* 1 Mar. 1968. *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- . "Saddle Sore." *The New Republic* 5 Aug. 1967: 38–41. Print.
- . "The Street Western." *New Yorker* 25 Feb. 1974: 100+. Print.
- Kaminsky, Stuart M. "Once Upon a Time in Italy: The Italian Western Beyond Leone." *The Velvet Light Trap* 12 (Spring 1974): 31–33. Print.
- Kinder, Marsha. "Violence American Style: The Narrative Orchestration of Violent Attractions." *Violence and American Cinema*. Ed. J. David Slocum. New York: Routledge, 2001. 63–100.
- Landry, Robert. "It's Murder, Italian Style: *Fistful* Excites Dollars & Talk." *Variety* 8 Feb. 1967: 7, 12. Print.
- LeBratto, Vincent. *By Design: Interviews with Film Production Designers*. Westport: Praeger, 1992. Print.
- Leech, Clyde. "Fistful Is Tough, Gory Drama." *Los Angeles Herald-Examiner* 19 Jan. 1967: A-22. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Liehm, Mira. *Passion and Defiance: Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984. Print.
- Mahoney, John. "'Few Dollars More' Looms Good B.O. For United Artists." *Hollywood Reporter* 4 May 1967. *For a Few Dollars More* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Miccichè, Lino. *Il cinema italiano degli anni '60*. Venice: Marsilio, 1975. Print.
- Monaco, Paul. *The Sixties*. New York: Scribner's, 2000. Print.
- Moser, Don. "Western Hero." *Life* 20 Dec. 1963: 100–09. Print.
- Munroe, Dale. "Fistful of Action Offered in 'Dollars.'" *Citizen News* 19 Jan. 1967. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- . "Violence Marks Second 'Dollars.'" *Citizen News* 26 May 1967. *For a Few Dollars More* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Neale, Steve. *Genre and Hollywood*. New York: Routledge: 2000. Print.
- . "Melo Talk: On the Meaning and Use of the Term 'Melodrama' in the American Trade Press." *Velvet Light Trap* 32 (1993): 66–89. Print.
- "New Formula for Violence." *Life* 14 Apr. 1967: 95. Print.
- Nova, Craig. "The Marquis Would Love Them (Violence, Italian Western Style)." *Canyon Crier* 10 Aug. 1967. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Rev. of *Per Un Pugno Di Dollari/For a Fistful of Dollars*. *Variety* 18 Nov. 1964: pp. 7+. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Rev. of *Per Qualche Dollaro in Piu/For a Few Dollars More*. *Variety* 16 Feb. 1966. *For a Few Dollars More* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Prince, Stephen. *Classical Film Violence: Designing and Regulating Brutality in Hollywood Cinema, 1930–1968*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2003. Print.
- . "The Hemorrhaging of American Cinema: *Bonnie and Clyde's* Legacy of Cinematic Violence." *Arthur Penn's Bonnie and Clyde*. Ed. Lester D. Friedman. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 127–47. Print.
- . *Savage Cinema: Sam Peckinpah and the Rise of Ultraviolent Movies*. Austin: U of Texas P, 1998. Print.
- Program for *A Fistful of Dollars*. *Fistful of Dollars* Collection, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- "Rome Column." *Hollywood Reporter* 22 Dec. 1965. Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Schatz, Thomas. *Old Hollywood/New Hollywood: Ritual, Art, and Industry*. Ann Arbor, MD: UMI Research P, 1981. Print.
- Scheuer, Philip K. "Sadistic *Fistful of Dollars* Bleeds to Death in Killings." *Los Angeles Times* 19 Jan. 1967. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.

- Smith, Henry Nash. *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1950. Print.
- Stone, Judy. "Don't Laugh at My Mule, Mister." *New York Times* 22 Jan. 1967: 91. Print.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic*. Trans. Richard Howard. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1975. Print.
- . *Genres in Discourse*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. Print.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*. New York: Holt, 1921. Print.
- "UA Cautious on Link to Italo *Fistful*; Faces Slap from Akira Kurosawa." *Variety* 13 July 1966. *A Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA. Print.
- "UA Gambles Dollars Good as Bonds; Out of Italian West, Box Office Raiders." *Variety* 28 Dec. 1966. *Fistful of Dollars* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Los Angeles, CA. Print.
- "UA Pays 900G for Rights to Italo 'Dollars.'" *Hollywood Reporter* 28 Feb. 1966. For a Few Dollars More Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- "The Via Veneto Kid." *Newsweek* 24 July 1967. *For a Few Dollars More* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Warsaw, Robert. *The Immediate Experience*. New York: Doubleday, 1962. Print.
- "Western Grand Guignol." *Time* 21 July 1967. *For a Few Dollars More* Clipping File, Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, Beverly Hills, CA. Print.
- Windeler, Robert. "Aldrich: Shut Up and Take Your Lumps?" *New York Times* 3 Sept. 1967: 65. Print.
- Wright, Will. *Sixguns & Society*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1975. Print.
- Wollemberg, Leo J. "Cowboy Movies Italian Style." *Los Angeles Times* 28 July 1965: C7. Print.

Copyright of Journal of Film & Video is the property of University Film and Video Association and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.