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Westernfilm

(_film, _sjanger) Helten i en westernfilm er vanligvis en revolvermann som kjemper for det gode. Et hevn- og duellmotiv er vanlig, og temaet berører ofte spennet mellom faste normer og normoppløsning. Handlingen foregår vanligvis i tidsrommet 1860-1900 (Faulstich 2008 s. 30). Westernfilmer “are overdetermined by their physical and temporal settings. They must be set in the West, that is, between the Mississippi River and California, usually between 1865 and 1890.” (Barry K. Grant i Mathijs og Mendik 2008 s. 76-77)

André Z. Labarrère deler sjangerens utvikling inn i fire faser: 1903-30: fødsel, 1930-60: glansperiode, 1960-80: nedgang, 1980-99: dvale (2002 s. 486). I perioden 1925-27 ble det lagd minst 570 westernfilmer i USA, men mange av dem har gått tapt (Cohen 2005 s. 30). Sjangerens gullalder var 1940- og 50-tallet (Cohen 2005 s. 58). Amerikansk TV sendte i årene 1958-60 ca. 50 westernserier (s. 43). I perioden 1970-90 ble det i Hollywood produsert færre westernfilmer enn i de ti årene som utgjør 1950-tallet (s. 58).

“Although the Western is considered an exclusively American genre, this is not the case. The French, for example, were making Westerns and exporting them successfully to the United States at least until the First World War – most famously the *Arizona Bill* series, starring Joë Hammond (1912-14). And, of course, later on in the history of this genre the Italians turned to making the so-called spaghetti Westerns (1965-75).” (Hayward 2006 s. 497)

“The Western is, perhaps, the prime means by which America interprets and represents its history to itself. Westerns are set within a certain period of American history, approximately 1860-1900, in which America began to build the nation that it is today and to forge its identity. [...] It investigates the building of a nation and its identity, patriotism, male friendship, honour and revenge, the triumph of good over evil. The popularity of any myth is rooted in its power to reflect and reproduce a society’s beliefs, values and fears in a palatable form. The myth of the Western tells its American audiences, and others, something about themselves and their society. [...] Stories of the Wild West include tales of glory and suffering, sacrifice, love and heroism, and have been a rich source for the growth and development of

the myth. [...] Part of the appeal of the Western is that it was a setting for romance and adventure and that many ways of life were available for people to start afresh or to reinvent themselves. Farmers, cowboys, cavalrymen, miners, Indian fighters, gamblers, gunfighters and railroad builders – all had their own elements of adventure, were contemporary with one another and had their own interests and values. This variety was a rich source for stories of conflicts between those interests and values.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 1)

“Kvegdriften er et av western-sjangerens klassiske motiver. Et annet er konflikten mellom bofaste og kugutter. [...] Et like klassisk westernmotiv er kampen for lov og orden.” (Kjetil Johansen i *Aftenposten Innsikt* nr. 6 i 2022 s. 116) Det mest sentrale er konflikten mellom det ville og sivilisasjonen, der helten befinner seg i grenselandet mellom disse dimensjonene. Sjangeren er preget av motsetningspar: “Wilderness vs. Civilization, Individual vs. Community, Nature vs. Culture etc.)” (Jim Kitses gjengitt fra i Collins, Radner og Collins 1993 s. 244). “Individualism and community values are two conflicting ideals which are constantly reviewed in the Western. [...] The Western deals with the moment in American history when options were open and individuals could be nurtured or threatened by the vast landscape around them.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 5)

Klassiske westernfilmer brukte “unspoiled American landscapes [that] in turn fostered stories involving the frontier, and the Western quickly became a tremendously popular genre. It was also a uniquely American genre, giving U.S. films a way to compete in the growing international market.” (Bordwell og Thompson 2007 s. 321) I det omtalte landskapet lever helten fri og uredde med sin hest og sin revolver, klar til å hjelpe mennesker som lider urett (Faulstich 2008 s. 33). En avsluttende “gunfight” er en av de sterkeste forventningene til en film (Aumont, Bergala m.fl. 2004 s. 100). I sluttscenen synker skurken ned i støvet.

“There are not too many American art forms that are original. Most are derived from European art forms. Other than the western and jazz or blues, that’s all that’s really original.” (Clint Eastwood sitert fra <http://www.clinteastwood.net/>; lesedato 27.11.12) “The Wild West, back in the day, was indeed populated by a multiplicity of nationalities, so perhaps that’s one of the reasons that countries other than the United States feel they have a stake in what seems to be a quintessentially American genre, one inextricably bound up with movie history.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

Farmerne og cowboyene var i konflikt. Bøndene satte opp gjerder som hindret cowboyene i drive sitt kveg fritt rundt, og dette er sentralt konfliktstoff i mange westernfilmer, f.eks. King Baggots *Tumbleweeds* (1925) og King Vidor’s *Man Without a Star* (1955) (Cohen 2005 s. 8-9). Cowboy-myten om den utstøtte og ensomme kan ha litt av sin opprinnelse her. “America has always had an open-secret romance with the outlaw, or the lone criminal figure.” (Fishman og Cavender 1998 s. 129) Samfunnet var i “a tension between barbarism and civilization, a tension historically located in the Western” (Carlsten 2005).

Den amerikanske maleren Frederic Remingtons bilder av cowboys liv fra tiden rundt århundreskiftet 1900 forberedte og la grunnlaget for westernfilmene (Cohen 2005 s. 12-13).

Erobringen av vesten og filmens fødsel foregikk samtidig (Cohen 2005 s. 55).

“If we reduce the western [film], that most elemental of genres, to its own principal elements, it can be described as a story about a lone figure in a landscape.” (Elaine Lennon i <https://offscreen.com/view/year-of-the-gun>; lesedato 07.03.18)

“The abstract dilemma of freedom versus law is concretely embodied in the standard Western plot, which typically pits a lone individual against the forces of society in one form or another. Some Westerns celebrate the rugged individualism of the gunfighter; others show how problematic the life of the outlaw can be and champion the imposition of law and order on the frontier community. One reason the Western has played a central role in American popular culture is the fact that it takes us straight to the heart of the great American experiment – the dilemma of a nation that attempted to found a communal order based on the principle of the freedom of the individual. American democracy is premised on the hope that there is a way out of the freedom/law dilemma, that order and freedom might be made compatible under the rule of law.” (Hrezo og Parrish 2010 s. 21)

“Westernuniverset kan skape treffende analogier for mangt og mye: enten det er heksejakt på kommunister (*High Noon*), lengselen vekk fra etterkrigstidens klamme snusfornuft (*The Wild Bunch*) eller den økende lovløsheten i en globalisert verden (*No Country for Old Men*).” (Ulrik Eriksen i *Morgenbladet* 8.–14. juni 2018 s. 42)

“[T]he makers of *The Great Train Robbery* 1903 [...] despite its reputation as the first Western, probably did not know they were making a Western” (Dyer 2007 s. 92). “In 1903, Edwin Porter made *The Great Train Robbery*, which was not only the first Western film but the first film to use cross-cutting (cutting between simultaneous events in different locations) to tell a story. Since that time, the Western has become a favorite of moviegoers and has greatly expanded the popularity and significance of the Western myth.” (Wright 1977 s. 5) Andre kandidater til å være den første westernfilmen er *A Bluff from a Tenderfoot* (1899), *The Pioneers* (1903), *Kit Carson* (1903) og *Cowboy Justice* (1904) (Dyer 2007 s. 118). “[T]he word ‘Western’ was not used in this sense until around 1910. Edwin S. Porter, who had made *The Great Train Robbery*, none the less regarded the later *Life of a Cowboy* as his first Western.” (Dyer 2007 s. 118)

“Buffalo Bill starred in his own film *The Adventures of Buffalo Bill* (1913). A reformed bank robber, Al Jennings, starred in several early Westerns. However his films did not glamorize the West, rather they told the truth about the sordid money-grabbing practices that were so prevalent (as in *The Lady in the Dugout*, 1918).

These were not the images the public wanted to see, so his career soon ended.” (Hayward 2006 s. 498-499)

“Briefly in the late 1930s there was a big surge once more in production of A-feature Westerns. A first cause was the United States’ isolationism in the face of the war in Europe. The revival of the genre reflects an inward-looking nationalism that is simultaneously nostalgic, having regard for things American but things of the past, in this instance, the nation’s heroic and civilizing expansion into the west. By curious coincidence John Wayne, *the* true grit American as we now know him, finally attained star status in this brief period of production upswing when he starred in Ford’s *Stagecoach* (1939).” (Hayward 2006 s. 502)

“The western film can be dated from Edwin S. Porter’s *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), which set the pattern for many films that followed. D. W. Griffith made a series of highly successful westerns in the years before World War I. [...] The epic western entered its heyday in the 1940s and ’50s with high-quality films by important directors such as [John] Ford (*My Darling Clementine*, 1946), Howard Hawks (*Red River*, 1948), Michael Curtiz (*Santa Fe Trail* and *Virginia City*, both 1940), Fritz Lang (*Western Union*, 1941), William Wellman (*The Ox-Bow Incident*, 1943), King Vidor (*Duel in the Sun*, 1946), and others. Their films were marked by greater artistic self-expression and a somewhat more rigorous historical realism. A new and intently serious western that could treat a wide variety of themes with sensitivity and dramatic realism appeared in the 1950s. Notable among these films were Henry King’s *The Gunfighter* (1950), Anthony Mann’s *Winchester ’73* (1950) and *The Man from Laramie* (1955), Fred Zinnemann’s *High Noon* (1952), Lang’s *Rancho Notorious* (1952), George Stevens’s *Shane* (1953), Nicholas Ray’s *Johnny Guitar* (1954), Samuel Fuller’s *Run of the Arrow* (1956), William Wyler’s *The Big Country* (1958), and Hawks’s *Rio Bravo* (1959). These later westerns tended to dispense with the traditional models of the “good” lawman and the “bad” outlaw and instead treated their main characters as complex and fallible human beings. Westerns explored various moral ambiguities and topical problems by means of dramatic allegories set in the Old West, thereby becoming a completely sophisticated genre in the process. The emphasis on human psychology and motivation continued into the 1960s with such films as Marlon Brando’s *One-Eyed Jacks* (1961), Ford’s *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), and Sam Peckinpah’s *Ride the High Country* (1962), but there was also a new accent on graphically portrayed violence, as in Peckinpah’s *The Wild Bunch* (1969). There was also a shift in sympathy toward the Indians, the previous film depictions of whom were remarkably lacking in both understanding and appreciation. This new sympathy was exemplified in Ford’s *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) and Arthur Penn’s *Little Big Man* (1970).” (<https://www.britannica.com/art/western>; lesedato 01.09.20)

“Because the West was largely monopolized by land-grabbing companies, to take the law into one’s own hands was perceived as a legitimate practice. An outlaw in

these circumstances came to represent freedom in much the same way as the cowboy. The outlaw asserted individual ‘rights’ over the big bosses. Similarly the lonesome lawman was a hero in his standing up to the baddies who threaten to disrupt the community. There was, however, the burgeoning of another type of Western: one that was more socially critical and which set a trend that would be more fully developed in the 1950s. William A. Wellman is credited with being the progenitor of this so-called ‘modern Western’ which, because it deals with social issues, is also described as the psychological Western. In the first of these films, *The Ox-bow Incident* (1943), Wellman polemicizes against the lynch law. The rough justice meted out in Western folklore is severely criticized but not through a goodies-versus-baddies confrontation. Collusion and passivity on the part of ‘decent, ordinary folk’ are as much responsible for the lynching of the innocent men as those baying for their blood. In this uncompromising film Wellman takes to task the ideological functioning of the traditional Western: nostalgic escapism at the service of corporate capitalism. He repeated this in his 1944 film criticizing the White colonization of the West, *Buffalo Bill*.” (Hayward 2006 s. 502-503)

“In *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), Ford has double heroes. The films praises the rough-hewn yet noble heroes who made the settlement of the west possible, but they remain incapable of belonging to the civilised world whose path they have cleared. This figure is symbolised in *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* by the cactus rose, a flower that only blooms in the desert. [...] One of the central motifs in John Ford’s *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* is the contrast between the cactus rose and the references made to real roses. In Ford’s mythology of the West the desert can become a garden. In the majestic landscape of Monument Valley families can establish themselves. The future will survive through marriage, children and civilisation.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 6 og 14)

Thomas H. Ince spilte inn noen av filmene sine på en enorm ranch med ekte urinnvånere (indianere) og cowboyer, filmer som *Blazing the Trail* (1912) og *Custer’s Last Fight* (også 1912) (Cohen 2005 s. 28).

William S. Harts film *The Silent Man* (1917) har en karakteristisk tittel. Cowboyen/ revolvermannen er vanligvis en mann av få ord, en taus type. Anthony Mann har sagt om sine filmer at personene ikke sier hva de føler, for hvis de hadde gjort det, ville det ikke lenger vært westernfilm (gjengitt etter Cohen 2005 s. 71). Cowboyen føler seg mest hjemme i naturen, han kan finne riktig vei ved hjelp av stjernene, og kan skille et ekte fugleskrik fra en indianers imiterte fugleskrik (Cohen 2005 s. 16). Det inngår i hans æreskodeks å dø med støvlene på (Cohen 2005 s. 57). Æreskodeksen krever at visse handlinger utøves selv om de sannsynligvis vil føre til heltens død. For eksempel er det å hevne en drept far en “hellig” plikt (Aumont, Bergala m.fl. 2004 s. 100). Cowboy-helten har ofte en tvetydig status: han er en “good badman” (Cohen 2005 s. 29). Mange westernhelter virker uforstyrrelige og kalde nesten uansett hvor dramatiske og emosjonelle begivenhetene rundt dem er.

De kan ha vært igjennom så mye dramatikk at de ikke lar seg skake opp, og seeren kan oppfatte dette som et mannfolkideal eller som en slags sjelelig skade. Sarkasmer er helt infiltrert i sjangeren (Cohen 2005 s. 47).

“Heltene var steile individualister til hest, som heroisk og lakonisk hjalp de slitne nybyggerne med å bygge landet. Konfliktmønsteret var gjerne svart-hvitt [...] Skurkene var like tydelige: Indianere – som det het før, jernbanebyggere, rancheiere, bosser som hadde overtatt byer, bløtaktige “aristokrater” fra østkysten. “A man’s gotta do what a man’s gotta do!” het det om våre helter. Det endte gjerne med en revolverduell i pionérbyens tomme gate. [...] Symbolet på genren i gammeldags forstand, John Wayne, sendte en gang brev som klaget på at Clint Eastwoods filmer rakk ned på pionérenes samfunnsbyggende innsats. [...] den enklere klassiske western, som på sett og vis hadde fremtidstro og etisk apparat. Nå er livet komplisert i en korrump verden.” (Per Haddal i *Aftenpostens* magasin *Historie* nr. 5 i 2021 s. 142-143)

Cowboyen forflytter seg ikke uten våpenet sitt, det er en slags “metallisk forlengelse av kroppen” (Cohen 2005 s. 85). Våpenet signaliserer både virilitet og virtuositet. Det at vi ser cowboyens rygg forsvinne på slutten av filmen symboliserer ensom uavhengighet og fri individualisme (Cohen 2005 s. 85). Westernhelter som John Wayne og Clint Eastwood inkarnerer den ensomme mann som er fri, uavhengig og selvtilstrekkelig (Mullen 2013 s. 264).

“The classical plot extends from 1930, [...] to the early fifties when both *Shane*, a self-conscious classic of the form, and *Vera Cruz*, a semi-serious satire, were made. The vengeance variation is most heavily represented in the decade of the fifties, with only a few occurrences earlier or later. The professional plot begins in the late fifties and dominates the sixties and seventies to the present.” (Wright 1977 s. 164)

Seven Men from Now (1956; regissert av Bud Boetticher) “is a classical Western narrative, in keeping with the conventions of the period. On a wet and dark night, a lone man – Ben Stride – confronts and kills two outlaws who are hiding out in a cave. Taking the dead men’s horses, Stride rides out and encounters the Greer’s, their wagon axle deep in mud. Coming to their aid, he agrees to accompany them to Flora Vista, a stopover on their journey to California and the town where Stride is expecting to find the remainder of the outlaw gang. En route, the group encounter various threats – hungry Indians, more bandits. They are joined by Masters and Clete (Don “Red” Barry), two rather loathsome characters. Through Masters it is revealed that the outlaw gang have robbed the Silver Springs bank, the former sheriff’s wife was killed in the process. Stride is that former sheriff, seeking vengeance for the death of his wife by killing the seven men who committed the robbery. Masters is happy enough to follow Stride, his plan is to collect the stolen gold once Stride has done away with the outlaws. Unbeknownst to Stride and Masters, John Greer is transporting the stolen money, a secret also kept from his wife. The lecherous Masters and his companion are sent on their way by Stride,

when John is unable to protect his wife from Masters' verbal advances. The film comes to a head in a traditional canyon shoot-out, with only Stride and Annie surviving.” (<https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2017/budd-boetticher/female-resilience-in-seven-men-from-now-1956/>; lesedato 24.09.20)

Annie i *Seven Men from Now* “has many of the qualities we have come to expect of the Western woman. Budd Boetticher has himself commented that women count for little in the Western, outside of what they cause, inspire or represent; “She herself is of no importance”. While Boetticher might be dismissive of his own female characters, he has, perhaps inadvertently, given Annie the most complete and interesting role. Despite his glib remarks, the director has allowed for a woman whose transformative experiences are equal to that of the regular Western male protagonist. [...] Ultimately, Annie proves to be the most resilient character of the film, even more so than Ben Stride. As Stride rides away from her at the conclusion of the film, she is alone, recently widowed, and with everything and nothing before her. Stride departs, yet he is returning to a familiar way of life, his own home town, his old job (albeit with a demotion). Annie has been transformed by the West, while retaining all her Eastern refinements. While Stride has commented that “A man ought to be able to take care of his wife”, Annie has proven without doubt that she can take care of herself. She demonstrates her agency, her “gumption” (a quality highly regarded in this genre, particularly in films of this era), when she has her luggage removed from the stage, she is to stay in town “for a while”. One could hope she will eventually use her new-found agency to leave in pursuit of Stride, with whom she has shared the transformative experience.” (<https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2017/budd-boetticher/female-resilience-in-seven-men-from-now-1956/>; lesedato 24.09.20)

“During the late 1960s and the '70s, low-budget Italian- and Spanish-made western films achieved some commercial success. Sergio Leone was the chief director of such films, and Clint Eastwood, his principal actor in *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) and *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (1966), went on to direct and star in a few notable resuscitations of the western, including *The Outlaw Josey Wales* (1976), *Pale Rider* (1985), and *Unforgiven* (1992). But by the 1980s westerns had almost ceased to be produced in the United States. They were partially replaced by the space epic, a genre in which often all the aspects of a western were utilized but the setting. Kevin Costner's *Dances with Wolves* (1990), another film sympathetic to the Indians, was one of the most commercially successful westerns made late in the 20th century.” (<https://www.britannica.com/art/western>; lesedato 01.09.20)

En vanlig “westernklisjé” er “en fremmed rir inn i byen – for å starte et nytt liv – men innhentes av sin fortid når han må ta side i en lokal konflikt – og ender med å ri ensom ut av byen igjen, inn i solnedgangen [...] Handlingen i “Shane” (1953) blir fremdeles kopiert x antall ganger hvert eneste år. Normale relasjoner er ikke mulig for disse typene. Iallfall ikke uten at de samtidig legger fra seg heltestatusen. Dersom en slik helt skal falle til ro, må han eller hun samtidig “pensjonere” seg. De

må gå fra outsider til insider, noe som ikke alltid er mulig.” (Kjetil Johansen *Aftenposten Innsikt* januar 2012 s. 80)

“There have been remarkably few serious efforts to analyze and interpret the Western myth. It is as though its mass appeal has made it unworthy of dignified scholarly research. From time to time essays have appeared that offer capsule explanations, which generally falls into two categories: the Western as satisfaction of social needs or the Western as satisfaction of psychological needs. Preeminent in the first category is André Bazin, the French critic, who argues that “these Western myths . . . may be reduced to an essential principle: . . . the relation between law and morality” (Bazin, p. 145). Others include David Brian Davis, who believes that the Western represents the conflict of the ethic of work with the ethic of leisure, and Peter Homans, who sees in the Western a legitimation of violence in a context of Puritan control over feelings. Similarly, Robert Warshow finds the significance of the Western to lie in the fact that “it offers a serious orientation to the problem of violence” (Warshow, p. 103).” (Wright 1977 s. 6). Westernfilmene blander virkelighet og fiksjon, vrir på de historiske realitetene, filtrerer myter og realiteter (Cohen 2005 s. 13).

“The western centers on the violent act and ascertains when, if ever, it becomes morally right. [...] The problems posed by these contradictions are solved simply. The western decrees that the violent act can become morally right when it occurs within the confines of a code which allows for executions, revenge killings, and killings in defense of one’s life and property. In the microcosmic western society everyone’s code is the same; thus absolute guilt and innocence are possible because social and moral goodness are the same. [...] Westerns examine those aspects of the code which determine the westerner’s response to situations which demand violence. [...] In the western every man who operates solely with reference to this strict code lives and dies redeemed. He has retained his social and moral honor. The code provides justification; thus it allows for a guiltless existence. On the other hand, we do not know ourselves when, if ever, violence is justifiable. We have great difficulty in forming a personal code and we cannot be sure that this code will conform in any way to the large, impersonal legal code set up to regulate our unwieldy, decaying economic structure. The westerner’s code is at once personal and social – if a man lives by it he both conforms to social norms and retains his personal integrity. It is evident whence comes the satisfaction we get from the western. Momentarily we understand the peace which comes from acting in accord with a coherent moral and social code and forget our fragmented selves. Many critics have seen the western as a glorification of traditional American individualism. On the contrary, the western preaches integration and assimilation and absolute obedience to the laws of the land.” (Judith Hess i <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC01folder/GenreFilms.html>; lesedato 05.12.14)

“Hollywood movies and dime novels notwithstanding, the classic western showdown – also called a walkdown – happened only rarely in the American West.

Rather than coolly confronting each other on a dusty street in a deadly game of quick draw, most men began shooting at each other in drunken brawls or spontaneous arguments. Ambushes and cowardly attacks were far more common than noble showdowns. Nonetheless, southern emigrants brought to the West a crude form of the “code duello,” a highly formalized means of solving disputes between gentlemen with swords or guns that had its origins in European chivalry. By the second half of the 19th century, few Americans still fought duels to solve their problems. Yet, the concept of the duel surely influenced the informal western code of what constituted a legitimate-and legal-gun battle.” (<http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/wild-bill-hickok-fights-first-western-showdown>; lesedato 06.01.17) “The Hero (or Anti-Hero etc.) and the Big Bad stand at opposite ends of the street, hands hovering over their holsters. The camera cuts between their faces, their twitching fingers, the faces of the frightened crowd, and of the combatants framed by the opponent’s legs. Long seconds pass. On a cue known only to the gunfighters, hands slap leather and shots ring out. The outcome is never certain, and any number of Westerns, even in the pre-Post Modern days of the Fifties, played with this trope without subverting it.” (<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/ShowdownAtHighNoon>; lesedato 04.01.17)

Westernfilmer gjenerobrer i fiksjonen og myten et område som geografisk har forsvunnet: det ville vesten (Cohen 2005 s. 55-56). “Westernfilmen er kinoens mest melankolske sjanger.” (Cohen 2005 s. 55) Majestetiske fjell stikker opp av ørkenlandskap som monumenter, eller som gravstøtter for alle som ble drept (Cohen 2005 s. 60-61). Monument Valley mellom Utah og Arizona er kulisse i tallrike filmer, blant andre noen klassikere av John Ford (Kaufmann 2007 s. 57).

“But what about topography? What role does it play in understanding motion pictures from this period? Does this terrain – sometimes hostile and unfriendly, often bucolic and serene – foster the myth of cowboys, rustlers, and Indians? Does it create a faulty and dreamlike reality of nineteenth-century expansion? In short, how significant is the environment in understanding the reality of America's West? These questions – and many more – are posited in a superb anthology that scrutinizes the importance of nature and countryside in popular feature-length photodramas. Edited by Deborah A. Carmichael, *The Landscape of Hollywood Westerns: Ecocriticism in an American Film Genre* [2006] offers twelve interpretations of environmental themes found in Western screenplays. [...] *The Landscape of Hollywood Westerns* explains much about America's obsession with mythic heroes, those men – as the popular song resounds – who want to live in the wide open spaces, under starry skies at night.” (Robert Fyne i <http://muse.jhu.edu/>; lesedato 05.09.13)

“Landskapet har alltid vært viktig i western-sjangeren. John Fords bruk av den enestående Monument Valley på grensa mellom Utah og Arizona er velkjent. Det var nesten som om Ford definerte folks inntrykk av hvordan det så ut i det ville vesten. På den andre siden har spanske høysletter spilt rollen som Amerika i

haugevis av spaghetti-westerns. Uansett, små mennesker som rir gjennom monumentale naturomgivelser slår an tonen; enten det dreier seg om brennhete ørkner, ugjennomtrengelige fjellområder eller snølagte skoger. Vi er på et kontinent under erobring, av folk som av nød og nysgjerrighet forsøker å finne et sted der det er mulig å etablere seg og overleve. [...] Kelly Reichardts film “Meek’s Cutoff” [2010] er på alle måter annerledes. Her er landskapet menneskets verste fiende. Året er 1845, tre familier med spinkle prærievogner forsøker å komme seg gjennom fjellene til Oregon. Speideren Meek har lovet å lede dem gjennom en snarvei. [...] En meget vakker film, dvelende, dialogfattig, en studie i et nesten surrealistisk landskap, med drømmen om det velkjente “livets tre” som bærende symbol. En western for folk som ikke liker westernfilmer.” (*Dagbladet* 7. september 2013 s. 74)

“In a recent study, John Cawelti argues that “the Western affirms the necessity of society” by presenting and resolving “the conflict between key American values like progress and success and the lost virtues of individual honor, heroism, and natural freedom” (Cawelti, p. 80). Finally, Jim Kitses vividly contends that the Western opposes Wilderness to Civilization: “What we are dealing with here, of course, in no less than a national world-view: . . . the isolation of a vast unexplored continent, the slow growth of social forms, the impact of an unremitting New England Puritanism obsessed with the cosmic struggle of good and evil. . . . We can speak of the genre’s celebration of America, of the contrasting images of Garden and Desert, as national myth” (Kitses, pp. 12, 14). [...] The real difficulty with this kind of explanation, however, is that it attempts to interpret a rich and varied mythical form in terms of one specific social or cultural dynamic. The myth is thereby separated from the everyday concerns and actions of most people in the society, who cannot constantly be plagued by that particular psychological strain. Yet it is precisely these everyday concerns and actions that the myth is designed to make more bearable, through the reinforcing power of what we call entertainment.” (Wright 1977 s. 6-7)

Forskeren Will Wright mener de følgende 16 funksjonene kjennetegner westernfilmsjangeren. “Funksjoner” oppfattes her slik det blir innen strukturalismen og Vladimir Propps forskning. Alle funksjonene finnes slett ikke i alle filmer (f.eks. nr. 8 og 16):

- “1. The hero enters a social group.
2. The hero is unknown to the society.
3. The hero is revealed to have an exceptional ability.
4. The society recognizes a difference between themselves and the hero is given a special status.
5. The society does not completely accept the hero.
6. There is a conflict of interests between the villains and the society.
7. The villains are stronger than the society; the society is weak.
8. There is a strong friendship or respect between the hero and a villain.
9. The villains threaten the society.

10. The hero avoids involvement in the conflict.
 11. The villains endanger a friend of the hero.
 12. The hero fights the villains.
 13. The hero defeats the villains.
 14. The society is safe.
 15. The society accepts the hero.
 16. The hero loses or gives up his special status.”
- (Wright 1977 s. 48-49)

Andre relativt stereotype trekk ved westernfilmer er:

- “1. The heroes are professionals.
 2. The heroes undertake a job.
 3. The villains are very strong.
 4. The society is ineffective, incapable of defending itself.
 5. The job involves the heroes in a fight.
 6. The heroes all have special abilities and a special status.
 7. The heroes form a group for the job.
 8. The heroes as a group share respect, affection, and loyalty.
 9. The heroes as a group are independent of society.
 10. The heroes fight the villains.
 11. The heroes defeat the villains.
 12. The heroes stay (or die) together.”
- (Wright 1977 s. 113)

Helten i westernfilmer står midt i spennet mellom ulovlig voldsbruk på den ene siden og samfunnets behov for faste regler og normer på den andre siden:

“Interestingly, the typical Western hero stands between the two thematic poles. At home in the wilderness but naturally inclined toward justice and kindness, the cowboy is often poised between savagery and civilization.” (Bordwell og Thompson 2007 s. 328) Skurkenes vold er ofte mer synlig i filmen enn heltens vold.

“Significantly, in the Western, the image of society is usually that of women and older men. When there are young men who belong to society, they are likely to be small in stature, from the east, or blatant cowards. The heroine, being, it seems, naturally weak and dependent, must rely on the strong man who, by being strong, proves himself worthy of her trust and dependence. In this way women, the bearers of love and morality, are separated conceptually from men, particularly young men, by the strong/weak opposition. To some degree the same is true for older men, the bearers of law, business, and dignity. This conceptual difference between independence and dependence, which in the Western characterizes the difference between men and women, youth and old age, also exists in contemporary social attitudes towards these same groups; in both cases, the difference is felt to be between weakness and strength. Thus, the Western mirrors a distinction that is part of the daily experience of most Americans.” (Wright 1977 s. 139)

“The ritual of the gunfight (in or out of the saloon), the pushing through the saloon swing-doors and swagger up to the bar – all are images that we immediately associate with the genre. All, of course, constitute a massive cover-up of how the West was colonized in the name of capitalism.” (Hayward 2006 s. 499) “Often the narrative depicted the individual fighting against giant corporations (railroad companies, banks, etc.)” (Hayward 2006 s. 502)

“The dilemma of modern liberal-democratic theory is now apparent: it must continue to use the assumptions of possessive individualism, at a time when the structure of the market society no longer provides the necessary conditions for deducing a valid theory of political obligation from those assumptions. Liberal theory must continue to use the assumptions of possessive individualism because they are factually accurate for our possessive market societies. [skriver MacPherson]. The professional Western, as a carrier of the new ideology, must respond to the conceptual need for an autonomous individual in the context of “a system that requires, both in production and consumption, that individuality be suppressed” (Galbraith, p. 329). The blending is accomplished in the films by a new coding of the three basic oppositions of the Western: good/bad, strong/weak, and inside society/outside society. In the classical plot, these three oppositions essentially define the autonomous, market individual – the good, strong hero who is outside and independent of society.” (Wright 1977 s. 182) “[T]he professional plot – in the context of a corporate economy – argues that companionship and respect are to be achieved only by becoming a skilled technician, who joins an elite group of professionals, accepts any job that is offered, and has loyalty only to the integrity of the team, not to any competing social or community values. Thus the Western has presented a series of models of relevant social action in the context of economic institutions.” (Wright 1977 s. 187)

“The meanings of this tradition are to be found in the Western, particularly in the Western film, where the land’s natural beauty is photographed with magnificent significance by such masters as John Ford, Anthony Mann, and John Sturges. In these films, the wilderness/civilization opposition establishes associations with the land that we can then experience in our own contact with it. As we have seen, the land is the hero’s source of strength, both physical and moral; he is an independent and autonomous individual *because* he is part of the land. The strength that makes him unique and necessary to society and the beauty that makes him desirable to the girl are human counterparts to the strength and beauty of the wilderness. Moreover, the weakness of society and the villainy of the villains stem from their ignorance of the wilderness and their identification with the trappings of civilization. Thus, the man who accepts the wilderness, believes in it, and communes with it is stronger than civilization and capable of making it into something worthwhile.” (Wright 1977 s. 189)

“The image of society in these films is again that of a group weak, ineffective, and distinct from its professional protectors. In *Rio Bravo* [1959, regissert av Howard Hawks], Wheeler and his men are considered “amateurs,” “not good enough,” “too worried about their wives and kids” to be of any help in defending law and order. Aside from them, the only members of society – in fact the only ordinary townspeople who are ever seen – are Carlos and his wife, the small, comic, Mexican hotel-saloon owners who chatter and bicker, are useless allies, and seem hardly concerned with the war in their streets. Mattie has to hire her own marshall if justice is to be done; the established law is unable to help and seems uninterested. Even the citizens of Fort Smith – the boardinghouse lady, the horse trader – think she is “wrongheaded,” mistaken in her efforts to capture her father’s killer.” (Wright 1977 s. 100)

Westernfilmen som sjanger “er antimoderne. Den romantiserer det gamle framfor det nye, ære i stedet for institusjoner, integritet på bekostning av kompromiss, og land foran by. [...] [Westernhelten befinner seg i spenningen] mellom nomadeliv og bosatthet, mellom det ville og det kultiverte, og mellom det maskuline og det feminine.” (Ulrik Eriksen i *Dagbladet* 25. november 2007 s. 32-33) De amerikanske regissør-brødrene Joel og Ethan Coens film *True Grit* (2010) “appellerer sterkt til amerikanerne [fordi den tar] de gamle westerntemaene på alvor. Livet er brutalt og forbrytelser skal straffes. Øye for øye, tann for tann.” (*Dagbladet* 16. februar 2011 s. 52)

“Få sjangrer har vært igjennom flere ups and downs enn westernsjangeren. Flere ganger de siste tiåra har den fått sin dødsdom, men like fullt dukker det opp nye filmer som holder den i live. I år har [vi] brødrene Coens nyinnspilling av John Wayne-klassikeren “True Grit” [...] Et av de beste eksemplene på at det fins sterke elementer av kvinnekamp også i en sjanger som ofte kritiseres for å rendyrke machoideologi og sjåvinisme.” (*Dagbladet* 18. juli 2011 s. 2)

“A man with a horse, a man in action, a loner who leaves the woman behind rather than staying. His lust for adventure far outweighs his lust for women. [...] It is very rare for the hero, having once rescued the abducted but pure woman, to go on to marry her. The hero’s job is to make the West safe for the virgins to come out and reproduce, but not with him, that is the job for the rest of the community. He has to ‘move on out’.” (Hayward 2006 s. 503)

“Med Edwin S. Porters *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) var spillefilmen født og samtidig var også den første filmsjangeren skapt. Selv om westernfilmens geografiske plassering stort sett er fremmed for oss er filmenes tema og konflikter som by mot naturen, orden mot lovløshet og individet mot felleskapet noe vi kan relatere oss til. [...] Få filmsjangere er like macho som westernsjangeren. Det handler stort sett om menn og konflikter menn imellom. Kvinner må hovedsakelig spille klisjefulle karakterer. Livet i ville vesten var en beinhard kamp for overlevelse i nådeløs natur og svært få kvinner klarte seg alene under slike forhold.

I den ville vesten hadde kvinner derfor vanligvis to valg: enten å gifte seg eller jobbe som prostituert på et bordell. Men det finnes noen unntak. [...] *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), en av sjangerens viktigste bidrag, er det Claudia Cardinale som har hovedrollen. Kvinnelige hovedroller har kommet og gått fra *Seven Vengeful Women* (1966) til *Bad Girls* (1994)” (Kristian Krogstad i <https://cine.no/2021/06/23/topp-12-sterke-kvinneroller-i-westernfilm/>; lesedato 08.12.21).

“In traditional Westerns women seem to have fallen into two types: the unsullied pioneer heroine, e.g. the virtuous wife, the rancher’s daughter, the schoolteacher; and then the saloon girl. There have been exceptional Westerns where there is a female hero, such as *Johnny Guitar* (1954), and where women are offered opportunities for greater freedom and power. Women’s changing roles in the Western may reflect their changing status in society. In the 1990s women as the central figures in Westerns were in fashion – in 1994 *Bad Girls* starred Madeleine Stowe, Mary Stuart Masterson, Andie McDowell and Drew Barrymore as four prostitutes who, after a killing, flee from town to town and became outlaws. In 1995 Sharon Stone starred in *The Quick and the Dead* (Sam Raimi) playing a vengeful woman (Eastwood-like) who takes part in a gun-fighting competition where the winner is the last person to remain alive. The film also starred Gene Hackman and Leonardo DiCaprio and pays homage to the revenge fantasies of Sergio Leone’s Spaghetti Westerns. It confused reviewers who could not decide whether it was to be taken seriously or was a parody. One reviewer called it ‘a post-modern, post-feminist, post-what have you Western – for what it’s worth’.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 9)

“In the Western very few exceptions exist to the misrepresentation of the frontierswomen. Women are either floozies in the saloon, who are to be driven out of town (not until after good use however) or shot, or pure as the driven snow and totally vulnerable to marauding men and, of course, abducting Indians. In truth, cowgirls did exist, gun-toting just like the men, and dressed in men’s clothes. Indeed, *The Ballad of Little Jo* (Maggie Greenwald, 1993), is based on a real woman whose gender was discovered only after her death.” (Hayward 2006 s. 503) *The Ballad of Little Jo* er en “fact-based feminist Western [...] this has as its central character a woman, Josephine, who, expelled from the safety of New York society in 1866 for an adulterous affair, travels West where she disguises herself as a man, Little Jo, and thrives in the testosterone-fuelled and brutal society of a frontier town.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 17)

Den amerikanske regissøren Ed Harris’ *Appaloosa* (2008) hadde “Feelings get you killed” som en slags undertittel på DVD-coveret, og det samme sies som en av replikkene i filmen. For revolvermenn er det farlig å bli emosjonelt varme; de må holde seg kalde, nøkterne, følelsesløse. Når som helst kan de være i livsfare, og emosjoner får dem ut av balanse. Revolvermannen Virgil Cole blir sårbar når han forelsker seg i en ung, vakker enke. Han og kameraten Everett Hitch skal rydde opp i en småby som tyranniseres av en lovløs bande. Når enken blir bortført, får Cole

problemer med å velge, og dette dilemmaet vedvarer utover i historien selv om det viser seg at enken ikke er trofast mot han. Enken framstår som et “hunddyr” som vil ha den mannen som til enhver tid er den sterkeste (et naturalistisk tema). Filmen har en klassisk westernslutt, der Everett sier i voice-over: “Jeg siktet mot solnedgangen og red vestover i avslappet takt.” (norsk undertekst) Virgil og Everett i *Appaloosa* er begge ordknappe, tause menn. Dette gjelder de fleste revolvermenn i westernfilmer, og derfor fungerer det paradisk med en relativt pratsom skurk slik det finnes i amerikaneren Jim Jarmuschs film *Dead Man* (1995). Morderen Conway Twill prater i vei (og trenger teddybjørnen sin for å få sove).

Den amerikanske regissøren John Ford gjorde skuespilleren John Wayne berømt som westernhelt og brukte han i mange av sine filmer. “[D]et var gjennom westernfilmene Ford gjorde seg mest bemerket – den var hans yndlingsjanger. Ford ga westernfilmen stil og verdighet, og bidro til å oppjustere hele sjangeren. Av de opp imot 150 filmene han regisserte totalt (fra 1917 til 1966), var over 60 westernfilmer. *Stagecoach* (*Siste vogn til Lordsburg*, 1939) og *The Searchers* (*På sporet*, 1956) er ikke bare John Fords mest kjente westernfilmer, men trolig de to mest innflytelsesrike amerikanske westernfilmene overhodet. [...] *The Searchers* er en western der karakterenes utvikling er viktigere enn plottet. Wayne’s erketyriske westernhelt har fått en radikal vending her. Han har blitt en outsider med klare personsplittede, psykopatiske og barbariske trekk.” (Tito Pannaggi i tidsskriftet *Cinematket* nr. 5 i 2013 s. 28-29 og 31) Det er stor forskjell på hvordan indianerne framstilles i John Fords to filmer *Stagecoach* og *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) (Aumont, Bergala m.fl. 2004 s. 93).

“De etablerte religionene har innsett at hvis de skal overleve, må de kommunisere på medias premisser [...] barnefødselen i John Fords “Stagecoach” [er] en fortolkning av Juleevangeliet.” (*Klassekampen* 29. mars 2014 s. 42)

“Da John Fords “Stagecoach” hadde premiere i 1939, innledet den en periode der genren ble dyrket av både studioene, filmskaperne og publikum. Fantastiske filmer som “The Ox-Bow Incident” (William Wellman, 1943), “My Darling Clementine” (John Ford, 1946), “Fort Apache” (John Ford, 1948) og “Red River” (Howard Hawks, 1948) sementerte genrens mange kjennetegn og klisjeer. Tidfestingen mellom 1865 og 1890, det enorme, åpne landskapet, den enslige, heltmodige pistolrytteren, de krigerske indianerne, de hestekyndige cowboyene, og selvsagt den slibrige skurken og hans menn. [...] [I 2007 har westernfilmene] et kritisk, ja nesten kynisk blikk på genrens familiære og eufemistiske troper. Det er som om filmskaperne spekulerer i at publikum ønsker å bli forsikret om at de er for smarte til å kjøpe de gamle mytene. [...] Men mytene titter fram også her, i form av horen med det gode hjertet, den korrupte salooneieren og den rettskafne, treffsikre sheriffen. Mange kommentatorer ser en sammenheng mellom Hollywoods interesse for westernfilmen og USAs krigsdeltakelser. Under Vietnamkrigen kom de revisjonistiske utforskningene av genren fra blant andre Robert Altman (med en sørgmodige “McCabe og Mrs Miller”) og Arthur Penn (med den sosialkritiske

“Little Big Man”), mens både Clint Eastwoods “Unforgiven” og Kevin Costners “Danser med ulver” ble laget i kjølvannet av Gulf-krigen. I et slikt perspektiv er det muligens ikke så underlig at Hollywood igjen fatter interesse for cowboyer og seksløpere. USA er i krig igjen [i Afghanistan og Irak], cowboyer styrer stadig flere land, og verden framstår som mer lovløs og voldelig enn noensinne.” (Ulrik Eriksen i *Dagbladet* 25. november 2007 s. 33)

“Sjangeren ble på 1980-tallet nærmest egenhendig holdt i live av Clint Eastwood, både som regissør og stjerne. Og spagettimytologien klebet til ham når han lakonisk og uutgrunnetlig meide ned fiendene sine. Men med Kevin Costners “Danser med ulver” (1990) skjedde det noe overraskende: Den gamle præriemagien ble gjenskapt i en ambisiøs historie om en soldat som i avsmak for borgerkrigen tas opp blant siouxindianerne. Her var det endelig en westernhelt med idealisme og framtidsdrømmer i behold, spilt av Kevin Costner, som også regisserte. Det ble en verdenssuksess, i motsetning til Costners comeback i sjangeren, “Open Range” (2003), som til gjengjeld står som et fint bevis på at den tradisjonelle westernen – hvor menn med ære og integritet kjemper for rettferdighet – ikke er helt steindød, heller ikke på 2000-tallet. Den fremragende Robert Duvall og Costner selv gir heltene den rette seige værbittheten. Hvordan ser framtidens westernfilmer ut? Blir det feministiske filmer som Kelly Reichardts “Meek’s Cutoff” (2011) eller shownummer som Quentin Tarantinos “Django Unchained” (2012) som gir volden og kynismen forrang? Eller respektfulle pastisjer som Kristian Levnings “The Salvation” (2014)?” (Morten Piil i *Klassekampen* 1. juli 2014 s. 15) En pastisj er en etterligning som ikke er latterliggjørende.

“Det er blitt hevdet at de fleste av Clint Eastwoods filmer er westerner, selv om handlingen er lagt til moderne tid. Det kan diskuteres, men her [i *Gran Torino*, 2008] synes det å være svært godt belegg for påstanden. I filmen møter vi de fleste bestanddelene fra den klassiske westernen, den lovløse gjengen som terroriserer omgivelsene, de uskyldige nybyggerne, gutten som gjennom et overgangsritual blir et ekte mannfolk, det store oppgjøret i sluttscenen og selvfølgelig: Einstøingen som nekter å vike en tomme, tar saken i egne hender og rydder opp.” (Eirik Alver i *Dagbladet* 26. mars 2009 s. 45)

“En “kavalleri-western” har handling fra etter den amerikanske borgerkrigen og den amerikanske armeen i Vesten spiller en sentral rolle. Handlingen kan også foregå under selve borgerkrigen (som f.eks. John Fords *The Horse Soldiers*, 1959), eller eventuelt bare ha kavalleri som redningshjelp i siste sekund (som i *Stagecoach*, 1939). Betegnelsen har også blitt brukt om de av John Fords filmer der skuespiller John Wayne feirer en myte om soldatlivet og kavalleri-offiserenes bragder (*Fort Apache*, 1948; *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, 1950; *Rio Grande*, 1950) (<http://filmlexikon.uni-kiel.de/>; lesedato 12.09.13).

Anthony Mann regisserte en rekke westernfilmer, bl.a. *The Last Frontier* (1955), *The Tin Star* (1957) og *Man of the West* (1958). “All of Mann’s Westerns – unlike

for example John Ford's – suggest deep psychological disturbance ... [they] ... are grounded in a fallen world of existential struggle in which the villains often become the heroes' dark shadows." (Robin Wood sitert fra <https://offscreen.com/view/year-of-the-gun>; lesedato 07.03.18)

“[D]e tidlige 60'ere så western-genren undergå et kulturskifte, og centralt lå spørgsmålet om hvilken type mand der kunne begå sig som helt i kampen mod banditter og uret. Fra et opgør mod idoliseringen af pistolmænd til lovprisning af social velfærd, [...] udsagn om skiftende samfundsværdier. [...] Ved begyndelsen af 1960'erne var western-genrens popularitet støt nedadgående. [...] Genren, der på mange måder var indbegrebet af den amerikanske pionerånd, og som hyldede individets succes, stod nu ansigt til ansigt med et nyt publikum, der havde et helt andet værdisæt, hvor næstekærlighed og fremme af kollektivets rettigheder var samfundets hjerteblod. Mod forventning tog western-genren del i den offentlige debat og blev levende eksempel på fremdrift og nytænkning i dens fejring af alternativer til macho-mænd; typer som kunne udvikle fremfor at ødelægge, var progressive fremfor konservative. Den klassiske cowboy som han var kendt, red mod horisonten en sidste gang for at forsvinde med dagens sidste solstråler.” (Mikkel Frederiksen i <http://atlas-mag.dk/kultur/film-og-tv/en-cowboys-d%C3%B8d>; lesedato 08.05.17)

“[D]en klassiske cowboy-helt, som var en kombination af den frygtløse enspænder, der gik sin egne veje, og machomanden som mænd beundrer, og kvinder bedærer. Grundtesen for cowboyen som helt var, at han aldrig ville lade sig binde, aldrig forblev stationær i sin færden igennem verden; at han forblev en flygtig skikkelse, der var helt sin egen, og aftvang respekt hvor end han befandt sig. [...] Filmen [*The Magnificent Seven*, 1960, regissert av John Sturges] er ivrig efter at efterkomme sin egen pointe, og selvfølgelig træffer Chico det “rigtige” valg til sidst. På trods af muligheden for at rejse videre, giver han et kort *adios*, stiger af hesten, ligger sit pistolbælte fra sig, og ruller ærmerne op for at tage del i arbejdet. Afskeden med de overlevende er heller ikke takketalere, parade, eller tårer af taknemmelighed, snarere et sympatisk farvel. Tydeligt for alle er, at livet som pistolmand er en stakket frist, og byens ældste giver dem nogle få ord med på vejen som føles som en nekrolog: “Only the farmers have won. They remain forever – they are like the land itself... you are like the wind, blowing over the land, and passing on.” *The Magnificent Seven* fokuserer primært på mytologien omkring genrens enspænder: ved at pille ham fra hinanden, ved at vise hans væsen og hans fejl spekulerer filmen i rollens egentlige fremtid, og maler et nøgternt portræt af mennesket bag legenden – et menneske tyngt af afsavn og isolation.” (Mikkel Frederiksen i <http://atlas-mag.dk/kultur/film-og-tv/en-cowboys-d%C3%B8d>; lesedato 08.05.17)

“*The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* [1962] af western-genrens mester John Ford er først og fremmest et klassisk opgør mellem loven og det lovløse element, men er også en fortælling om tidernes skiften, fra selvtægts-rettergang til den demokratisk valgte orden. Spørgsmålet om samfundets udvikling, og helterollens arvtager, er

bevaret i duellen imellem filmens to hovedroller: Tom Doniphon (John Wayne), macho hesteavler, og Ransom Stoddard (James Stewart) som den unge ambitiøse advokat, der endegyldigt vil bringe orden til det vilde vesten. Problemet for dem begge er Liberty Valance (Lee Marvin): lokal bandit, landevejsrøver, og morder som hærger ufortrødent i området omkring landsbyen Shinbone. Doniphon er den eneste afskrækkelse for Liberty, og er dermed de facto sherif. De to troner op i bybilledet, og samfundet lever i de tos skygger, afventende på deres endelige konfrontation. Som handlingen skrider frem, udvikler Ransom sig til en central figur i bybilledet: han lærer de lokale at læse, og diskriminerer ikke på tværs af race og køn. Han lærer dem om demokratiets magt, der tilgodeser folkets ønsker fremfor enevældige tyranner, der hersker med vold og frygt. Ransoms håb er indlemmelse i de forenede stater, og dermed regeringens beskyttelse, men først skal der vælges repræsentanter til stats-konferencen, hvor alle omkringliggende områder skal nominere en delegeret til at varetage deres interesser ved en mulig inklusion i de forenede stater som en ny delstat. Landsbymødet og valget er på mange måder filmens klimaks. Ransom bliver nomineret, og Liberty Valance, med korrupte kvægavlere i ryggen, nominerer sig selv. Som modstander af indlemmelsen i de forenede stater truer han de fremmødte med vold, hvis de ikke stemmer på ham. Med løftet pisk mod publikum bliver han mødt af knusende stilhed, og Ransom bliver valgt med bred enighed. Den næste morgen udkommer den lokale avis med overskriften: "Liberty Valance defeated." Ingen western komplet uden en duel, og *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* er ingen undtagelse. Liberty vil have sin hævn, og Ransom forekommer som et let bytte som en pacifist med skravlet fysik. Stik mod forventning vinder Ransom den ulige duel. I kampens tumult opdager ingen, at Doniphon fra en plads i skyggerne skyder Liberty og redder Ransoms liv. Selvtægtsmanden besejrer måske det fysiske onde, men dagens mand er Ransom, den blide fortaler for demokratiet og folkets bedring. Han er fejret som Libertys overmand i både fysisk og metaforisk forstand [...] dyderne ved samfundsdannelse og velfærd fremfor individets ego og idolisering." (Mikkel Frederiksen i <http://atlas-mag.dk/kultur/film-og-tv/en-cowboys-d%C3%B8d>; lesedato 08.05.17)

Den amerikanske filmregissøren by Arthur Penns *Little Big Man* (1970) har blitt kalt en revisjonistisk western (Stam 1992 s. 26). Andre eksempler på revisjonistiske westernfilmer er Robert Altmans *McCabe & Mrs. Miller* (1971) og Clint Eastwoods *Unforgiven* (1992) (Mikael Godø i *Dagbladet* 16. februar 2011 s. 52). Noen filmer inkluderer økologisk tematikk, f.eks. den amerikanske regissøren Sydney Pollacks *Jeremiah Johnson* (1972).

Westernfilmer deles ofte inn i en A- og en B-kategori. Ifølge Scott Simmon "The A-Western is conscious, pompously conscious, of its responsibility to represent America's essence" (sitert fra Dyer 2007 s. 96).

"Etter hvert begynner enkelte å rokke ved hele sjangerens moralske univers, som i spagettwesternfilmene. Antihelten oppstår, drevet av grådighet og hevntørst i stedet for moralsk rakryggethet, og når hovedpersonene ikke lenger er bare gode,

men også onde og grusomme, er westernsjangeren for alvor blitt kritisk kunst på linje med alle andre verker som setter spørsmålstegn ved det bestående.” (Bjørn Ivar Fyksen i *Klassekampens* bokmagasin 31. oktober 2020 s. 6)

Såkalte spaghetti-westernfilmer har italiensk opprinnelse. “The first Italian Westerns had all-Italian casts and personnel, in fact and in name” (Dyer 2007 s. 134). Først med de italienske westernfilmene blir hovedpersonen en ødelagt, kynisk helt (Faulstich 2008 s. 33). Mange av spaghetti-westernfilmene ble spilt inn i Spania med skuespillere fra en rekke land, inklusiv amerikanske westernskuespillere som ville forlenge sin karriere (Cohen 2005 s. 46). Helten i disse filmene er vanligvis desillusjonert og kynisk.

I en “klassisk” Hollywood-western foregår den personlige hevnen ofte for å fremme en samfunnsinteresse. Kollektive behov sammenfaller med individuelle behov, slik at voldsbruken blir mer legitim enn den er i spaghetti-western der hovedpersonens handlinger ikke (i samme grad) tjener et fellesskap (Sorin 2010 s. 84).

“The violence and overt machismo of the Spaghetti Western were matters of concern when they first appeared. The world of the Spaghetti Western was an almost exclusively male one and women were incidental to the narrative. The films were a celebration of masculinity: men were men and women were women, and ‘knew their place’. The women were shown as either ‘madonnas’ (sisters, mothers, wives) or whores (saloon girls).” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 11)

“Fort Bravo er ett av tre filmsett som omkranser den lille byen Tabernas i provinsen Almeria sørøst i Spania. I flere tiår har området med de røffe fjellformasjonene på horisonten og den tørre, vidstrakte ørkenen rundt blitt brukt som kulisser til over 170 westernfilmer. Internasjonale regissører med westernfilmer som spesialfelt oppdaget regionen for alvor på 1960-tallet. [...] Det Ville Vesten som filmpublikum ble presentert for gjennom westernsjangeren produsert i Spania var veldig ulikt de amerikanske westernfilmene fra siste halvdel av 1900-tallet. De Hollywood-produserte versjonene besto stort sett av rettskafne, hvite tøffinger som beskyttet de svake og sørget for å skape en viss lov og orden i nybygger-samfunnene på prærien. Hovedpersonene i spaghettiwesternfilmer var av en helt motsatt type. De forsvarte ikke forsvarsløse. De sørget ikke for lov og orden. De var tvert imot ofte umoralske dusørjegere. Motivene deres var ofte personlig profitt, begjær eller hevnløst. Og filmene var som regel krydret med vold. [...] Samtidig som spaghettiwesternfilmene gikk sin seiersgang rundt om i verden var Almeria – hvor kassasuksessene ble spilt inn – paradoksalt nok ett av de fattigste områdene i hele Spania. Det var høy arbeidsledighet og mange pakket sakene sine og flyttet til spanske storbyer hvor det var arbeid å få. Men at regionen var fattig gjorde det billig å produsere filmer her. I tillegg var de som ble igjen de fødte cowboyer. Ikke bare var de dyktige ryttere. De fleste var i tillegg mørke i huden og derfor perfekte som stuntmenn og statister i filmer hvor handlingen ofte var lagt til

elven Rio Grande og de andre grenseområdene mellom USA og Mexico.” (Matteo Fagotto i <https://www.klikk.no/historie/det-ville-vesten-vi-kjenner-oppsto-i-spania-7034981>; lesedato 08.12.21)

“In Leone’s West the desert is sterile. The desert provides a suitable setting for a world rooted in violence, greed and cruelty. Leone’s characters inhabit a hostile environment but they are not pioneers interested in opening up a new frontier. There is nothing of the traditional West for self-fulfilment or selfawareness in Leone’s heroes. [...] In *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* a driverless hearse [= begravelsesvogn] appears from nowhere in the middle of the desert. Possibly most significant of all is the fact that the gold is buried inside a grave. Greed and death are inextricably intertwined.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 14)

“Henover tre år i midten af 1960’erne skete der noget nyt i westerngenren. En italiensk instruktør blev verdenskendt, en italiensk komponist skabte film-musikalske evergreens, og en forholdsvis ukendt amerikansk skuespiller med navnet Clint Eastwood, fik sit gennembrud som den ponchoklædte “Man With No Name”. Med sin Dollar-trilogi skød Sergio Leone hul i den amerikanske filmgenre par excellence [...] I *For a Few Dollars More* er det ikke helten, men Colonel Mortimer, spillet af Lee van Cleef, der i filmens slutning rider væk i solnedgangen efter et opgør, hvor hans motiver viser sig noget mere ædle end dem, vores egentlige helt har. Det er hos Leone ikke helt klart, hvem der er de gode og de onde, et forhold der selvfølgelig spilles på i titlen til *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Alle er nogenlunde lige slemme, der er ingen éntydig helteskikkelse. Helten er ikke ubetinget ædel og modig, han kan også være lurvet, kynisk, amoralsk og med en blakket fortid. [...] Leone præsenterer på den måde en ny heltetype, en tavs og barsk antihelt med en vis portion ironisk distance. Den stærke, stille type var set i westerns før, men med Leones helt bliver den gådefulde type introduceret. Ud over at man altså ikke helt ved, hvor man har ham, er han også blevet en form for frelserfigur, der skal lide, inden han ‘genopstår’, hvilket legitimerer den efterfølgende hævn.” (Dorthe Bendtsen i <http://netudgaven.dk/2015/02/spaghetti-westerns-da-sergio-leone-revolutionerede-westerngenren-sammen-med-en-hoej-ukendt-skuespiller-iklaedt-poncho-og-tilsat-cerut/>; lesedato 20.09.16)

“The real-life Americans he [Sergio Leone] saw arriving to liberate Italy at the end of the Second World War ‘upset all my dreams’. Leone saw their weaknesses as well as their strengths [...] In an interview in 1973 Leone rejected Hollywood’s interpretation of the West as a place where the ‘whiter than white redresser of wrongs’ existed. He recognised the ‘real’ West as a “world of violence, fear and instinct – a world of men. If you were ‘honourable’ like the heroes of the traditional Westerns – you would find yourself in the cemetery in no time at all. Life in the West was not pleasant or poetic. Up until the arrival of the railroads the law belonged to the most hard, the most cruel, the most cynical.” ” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 13)

“Spagetti med kruttsmak [...] - Jeg har alltid hatt sans for spagettiwestern-filmenes kombinasjon av opphøyd sjangerfortelling og storfelt musikk som gir helheten opera-aktige dimensjoner, uttaler han [Quentin Tarantino]. [...] Tidlig på 1960-tallet spredte westerntrenden seg til Europa. Det ble lagd cowboyfilmer både i Tyskland (“sauerkraut-westerns”), Frankrike (“camembert-westerns”), Spania (“paella-westerns”), men først og fremst i Italia. Sjangeren ble kalt både pasta-, pizza- og makaroniwestern for den fikk sitt endelige navn: Spagettiwestern. [...] Fra 1963 til 1981 ble 400-500 filmer produsert, mange av dem tatt opp på de spanske høyslettene, som var betydelig mer golde og nådeløse enn John Fords naturstudio, Monument Valley i Utah. [...] Å si at alle spagettiwestern-filmene er mesterverk, ville være å overdrive. Mye drama, patos, hevntørst, tortur og lidelse ble festet til lerretet uten at de kunstneriske kvalitetene var påfallende. Men på sitt beste er Italias westerntradisjon fullt på høyde med den amerikanske. Vi snakker om Sergio Leone. [...] For å slå igjennom i USA kalte Leone og Morricone seg henholdsvis Bob Robertson og Dan Savio. Samtidig ble Italia et hett arbeidsmarked for amerikanske skuespillere; folk som Henry Fonda, Burt Reynolds” (Fredrik Wandrup i *Dagbladet* 27. januar 2013 s. 37)

“Der er zoomet helt ind på ansigtet. Øjnene, den vejrbitte hud, de karakteristiske træk. Der klippes til en øde og støvet gade i en westernby. Der sker ingenting. Absolut ingenting. Man hører blæsten, der fejer gennem byen, prærieulvene der hyler i det fjerne, skiltet der knirker på hængslerne, vindens rusken i prærievognens dug, knasende fodtrin i jord og sand, og sporer, der klinger på hælene af de støvede støvler på de mænd, der bryder det mennesketomme sceneri og tavse nærmer sig bygningen, mens de gør deres pistoler klar. Og så brydes det hele af et pludseligt skud, så flere – og SÅ kommer musikken bragende. Sådan begynder den måske mest kendte af filmene i Dollar-trilogien: *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*. Stilen er typisk for Sergio Leones westerns; ekstreme nærbilleder, fåmælte figurer, langsommelige og lange sekvenser, hvor det kun er stedets lyde, der høres, inden Ennio Morricones musik tager over.” (Dorthe Bendtsen i <http://netudgaven.dk/2015/02/spaghetti-westerns-da-sergio-leone-revolutionerede-westerngenren-sammen-med-en-hoej-ukendt-skuespiller-iklaedt-poncho-og-tilsat-cerut/>; lesedato 22.09.16)

“Selv om det hedder spagettiwesterns, må den spanske indflydelse ikke undervurderes. De fleste locations i Dollar-trilogien findes i Spanien, enten i Almeria-området i Andalusien eller nord for Madrid. Leone har blik for det golde landskabs skønhed og brutalitet. De spanske locations giver et særligt udtryk, der passer til filmenes geografiske placering i områder tæt på den mexicanske grænse; det er nemlig ikke bare det vilde vest, Leone fokuserer på, det er det vilde *syd*vest i New Mexico og Texas. [...] Helten er en rastløs ener, den ensomme ulv, en strejfer eller *drifter*, der alltid er på vej og ikke kan eller vil blive en del af samfundet. Han slår sig ikke ned, han møder ikke kærligheden, stifter ikke familie eller dyrker jorden. Han bliver heller ikke sherif i stedet for de uduelige eller korrupte ordenshåndhævere, han møder på sin vej. Han rejser videre mod nye konflikter og

rider bort, ikke i solnedgangen, men i de golde, støvede og trøstesløse landskaber.” (Dorthe Bendtsen i <http://netudgaven.dk/2015/02/spaghetti-westerns-da-sergio-leone-revolutionerede-westerngenren-sammen-med-en-hoej-ukendt-skuespiller-iklaedt-poncho-og-tilsat-cerut/>; lesedato 22.09.16)

“Ikke bare synet på westerngenren og heltetypen er noget nyt. Det er den visuelle stil også. Leone bruger langsomme, dvælende scener og ekstreme close-ups. Der er nærbilleder af slidte støvler, af hænder ved revolvereskæftet, af øjne der flakker, og af svedperler der triller ned over vejrbidte ansigter med rynker og furer. Det er sjældent smukke mennesker, men særprægede personer med usædvanlige træk. Nærbillederne bliver nærmest til portrætter. [...] Et andet kendetegn er hyppige skift i skala. Billederne veksler mellem nærbilleder og åbne panoramaer, mellem detalje og helhed. Og endda mellem detalje og yderligere zoom på detaljen. I den afsluttende duel i *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* skiftes der f.eks. mellem et vue over kirkegården Sad Hill og de tre personer til den enkelte person og herfra videre til personernes ansigter og øjne eller deres hænder, der langsomt, millimeter for millimeter, bevæger sig nærmere mod revolveren i bæltet. Også i de to andre film er der en sidste duel, hvor der er fokus på ansigter – og støvler (*A Fistful of Dollars*) eller et lommeur (*For a Few Dollars More*).” (Dorthe Bendtsen i <http://netudgaven.dk/2015/02/spaghettiwesterns-da-sergio-leone-revolutionerede-westerngenren-sammen-med-en-hoej-ukendt-skuespiller-iklaedt-poncho-og-tilsat-cerut/>; lesedato 22.09.16)

“For det første foregår de fleste spaghetti western på grensen til Mexico. Du hører som regel suset av vinden over den hete sanden og de store ørkenlandskapene. Europeerne fokuserte for det meste på dette, rett og slett for enkelhets skyld. Vanligvis ble steppene i Spania benyttet for utendørsfotograferingen, da området ligner på grenseområdet mellom Mexico og USA. Bygningene ligner også de som finnes i Mexico. Spaghetti-regissørene skapte karakterer som passet godt til det ugjestmilde landskapet. Dette var røffe mannfolk, like hensynsløse som landskapet. Bare den mest hardbarkede overlevde i dette helvetet. Du ser det tydelig i ansiktene til de spanske statistene som ble hyret til å spille enten landsbyboere eller bandidos. Ansiktene er furet, slitt av vær og vind, uttørket av solen og ofte manglet de ett øye eller noen tenner. Dette er ansiktene til menn som kunne motstå testen det tøffe landskapet de levde i utgjorde. Det er opplagt at disse menneskene bare kunne kontrolleres av rå, brutal styrke. Og overvinnes av en mann som er like sterk, men som benytter klokskap for å tippe oddsen i egen favør. Dette er ikke en verden i svart og hvitt. Dette er en verden i svart og grått.” (Lars Johnsrud i *Kinomagasin* nr. 1 i 2016 s. 12)

“In 1958, 54 feature Westerns were made in Hollywood: in 1962-3 a mere eleven. However, in 1967 annual production reached 37. Between the summer of 1963 and April 1964 the month Leone began filming *A Fistful of Dollars* – 24 Spaghetti Westerns were made and by 1967 annual production of Spaghetti Westerns had

risen to 72. It is clear that the revival of the Hollywood Western was largely due to the success of ‘international Westerns’, especially the Spaghetti Western, and even more importantly the films of Sergio Leone starring Clint Eastwood. The popularity of Leone’s Westerns not only boosted commercial demand but also influenced the content and style of future Hollywood Westerns.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 12)

“Over 600 europeiske westernfilmer ble laget i perioden fra tidlig 60-tallet og til slutten av 70-tallet. Så tidlig som i 1961 produserte italienerne imitasjoner av standard amerikanske westernfilmer. Dette var stort sett lavbudsjettets B-filmer. For det meste produsert i Spania. Nærmere midten av 1960-årene skapte Sergio Leone, sammen med Clint Eastwood, komponist Ennio Moricone og fotograf Massimo Dallamano det som raskt skulle bli kjent som subsjangeren spaghetti western. Tre filmer skapte malen for sjangeren: *A Fistful of Dollars* (*Per un pugno di dollari*) (1964), *For a Few Dollars More* (*Per qualche dollaro in più*) (1965) og *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly* (*Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo*) (1966). Den fremmede dusørjegeren uten navn og som ikke brydde seg om annet enn jakten på gullet og ikke minst hevn, ble alle viktige ingredienser. [...] Både Sergio Corbucci og Sergio Sollima benyttet spaghetti western for å adressere politiske bekymringer. Flere av karakterene ble så populære at de fikk egne serier med filmer: Django, Sartana, Ringo og Sabata er bare noen eksempler. *Django*-serien er et perfekt eksempel på hvor pervers karakteren kunne bli. Sergio Corbuccis *Django* (1966), med Franco Nero i hovedrollen som en lakonisk og gråsprenget revolvermann, hadde hevn som motivasjon.” (Lars Johnsrud i *Kinomagasin* nr. 1 i 2016 s. 12)

“In *A Fistful of Dollars* the primary motivation is the dollar. The town of San Miguel is a place where undertakers make a substantial living. ‘The man with no name’ is not warned off from staying in town because of its violence – far from it – he recognises that ‘There’s money to be made in a town like this’. Leone’s hero kills for profit. He is interested in the price on a man’s head. Leone’s view of the West was that ‘Where life has no value, death sometimes had its price.’ It is significant that there are several references to Judas in the *Dollars Trilogy* (the three Leone films – *A Fistful of Dollars*, *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* and *For a Few Dollars More*). In Christopher Frayling’s *The Spaghetti Western* (1981), he points out that money is seen to be valued for its own sake, something to be possessed – not for what it can be used for. It is not useful but merely a prize.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 7)

“Spaghetti Westerns have long been referred to in passing as pastiche. Michael Parkinson and Clyde Jeavons (1972), for instance, call them, disparagingly, ‘astonishingly popular and lucrative pastiches of the hallowed American Western’, and Edward Buscombe, favourably, ‘highly self-conscious pastiche’ (1992: 75).” (Dyer 2007 s. 102)

Den amerikanske skuespilleren Lee Van Cleef “briljerer med krumpipe, bart, ørnenese og ondt blick i filmer som “Death Rides a Horse” og “The Big Gundown”. Han ble hivd opp i spagettigryta da Sergio Leone lette etter en skuespiller som kunne matche Clint Eastwood. Leone så Van Cleef komme gående på avstand og sa straks: Der er mannen. For Van Cleef, som på det tidspunktet knapt hadde råd til å betale telefonregninga, ble det starten på en ny karriere. Taushet ble hans varemerke. Selv de sparsomme spagetti-manusene barberte han kraftig ned. - Mange tror at jo mer de sier, jo mer oppmerksomhet får de, har han uttalt. - Det er bare tull. Jeg får folk til å se på meg. Jeg behøver ikke snakke. Som det er sagt om italienske westerns kontra amerikanske: Med slike helter, hva skal du med skurker?” (Fredrik Wandrup i *Dagbladet* 27. januar 2013 s. 37)

I Japan “er spagettiwesterns fortsatt ekstremt populære, bortsett fra at de kaller dem “makaroniwesterns”, sier [filmregissør Quentin] Tarantino og ler høyt. Spagettiwesterns er kallenavnet på westernfilmene som ble laget i Italia og Spania på 60-tallet. De fleste på lavbudsjett og med en mer brutal, patosfull, men også ironisk tone enn sine amerikanske forgjengere. Over seks hundre filmer ble laget mellom 1960 og 1980.” (*Dagbladet* 3. oktober 2012 s. 68)

Den amerikanske regissøren Quentin Tarantinos *Django Unchained* (2012) “er spagetti-kitsch i sterk, rød saus, en voldsfest i topphumør som etterligner de italienske westernfilmene fra 1960-årene.” (Søren Birkvad i *Morgenbladet* 22.–28. februar 2013 s. 28) “Tidlig på 80-tallet hadde spaghetti western forsvunnet fullstendig. [...] Den sterkeste revitaliseringen av sjangeren fikk vi med Tarantinos *Django Unchained* i 2012. Basert på karakteren Django, skapt av Sergio Corbucci tilbake i 1966, er ikke Tarantinos film en ren sjangerfilm, selv om den klart kan karakteriseres som en spaghetti western.” (Lars Johnsrud i *Kinomagasin* nr. 1 i 2016 s. 13)

“Det er ikke bare amerikanere som lager westerns, og det er heller ikke alle westernfilmer som utspiller seg i Amerika. Et eksempel på det siste kan være Andreas Prochaskas “The Dark Valley” (2014), hvor handlingen er lagt til østerrikske dalstrøk. Et eksempel på det første er danske Kristian Levrings film [*The Salvation*, 2014]. Her møter vi brødrene Jon og Peter [...] som var soldater i den andre slesvigske krig før de utvandret til USA.” (Kjetil Johansen i *Aftenposten Innsikt* nr. 6 i 2022 s. 117)

“Frayling (1981: xi) notes other culinary terms used to qualify non-American Westerns – Sauerkraut, Paella, Camembert, Chop Suey, Borsch and Curry Westerns – and also that another food term was once used for Hollywood Westerns: oaters.” (Dyer 2007 s. 102) Det mest kjente eksemplet på en italiensk western er *For en håndfull dollar* (*Per un pugno di dollari*, 1964). “Western heroes everywhere win shoot-outs thanks to editing, but in spaghetti Westerns the editing itself constitutes the excitement, a visceral explosion of near-subliminal cuts that stun the eye.” (Dyer 2007 s. 105) En “eastern” er en film med westernlignende

trekk som bl.a. foregår i andre geografiske landskap (Faulstich 2008 s. 33). En “curry-western” er en western produsert i India. “Curry-western-filmer” ble filmet “in the rocky Ramanagara region of the Indian subcontinent, in which the action is interspersed with Bollywood-style musical numbers.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

Det finnes ikke bare spaghetti-western for italienske produksjoner, men også paella- (Spania), surkål- (Tyskland), borscht- (Sovjet og Øst-Europa) og curry-western (India) (Parkinson 2012 s. 63).

“Karl May (1842-1912) var Tysklands svar på Louis Masterson, en uhyre produktiv forfatter, som skrev den ene romanen etter den andre om indianerhøvdingen Winnitou og hans blodsbror, den hvite speideren og jegeren Old Shatterhand. Mays eventyrromaner – som også foregikk i ørkenen og andre eksotiske områder – er solgt i 200 millioner eksemplarer på verdensbasis, og på 1960-tallet ble det produsert en serie sauerkraut-westerns, tatt opp i ensomme fjellområder i Jugoslavia. Regissør var tyskeren Harald Reinl.” (*Dagbladet* 18. januar 2010 s. 48)

I Tyskland etter 2. verdenskrig ble westernfilmer med deres bilder av sterke menn (fysisk og psykisk) spesielt fascinerende for unge menn. Grunnen kan ha vært at disse unge mennene hadde fedre som var “sjelelig knekt, invalide eller som ikke hadde vendt tilbake etter krigen” (Schroer 2007 s. 211-212). Westernfilmene viste et positivt, sterkt mannsbilde, i motsetning til hverdagens menn. Westernheltene var ofte “macho-ikoner” (Martin Weidiger sitert fra Schroer 2007 s. 212). I deres verden gjelder præriens lov, dvs. den sterkeste rett (eller den hurtigstes rett: den som trekker sitt våpen raskest).

På begynnelsen av 1900-tallet produserte det fransk filmselskapet L'Éclipse noen westernfilmer i Camargue-området i Sør-Frankrike, med en karakter kalt Arizona Bill som hovedperson (Brion 2005 s. 15).

“This type of plot – white pioneers struggling against the wilderness itself – has been described as a “Northern,” distinct from the Western” (Bousé 2000 s. 238).

Andre eksempler på westernfilmer:

George Stevens: *Shane* (1953)

Arthur Penn: *The Left Handed Gun* (1958)

Ted Post: *Yuma* (1971)

Clint Eastwood: *Pale Rider* (1985)

Kevin Costner: *Open Range* (2003)

Andrew Dominik: *The Assassination of Jesse James by the Coward Robert Ford* (2007)

Ethan Coen og Joel Coen: *No Country for Old Men* (2007)

“One reason for the continued hold on audiences’ imaginations is the fascination with the ‘Lone Hero’, the ultimate Western archetype. No one knows where he came from or where he is going. He seeks no quarrel but is usually challenged and that challenge must be faced regardless of the consequences. He is almost always shown as heroic but the moral issues in his confrontations are not always completely clear. He is on the side of justice and order but also is intent on defending his honour or reputation. This rather simplified view of a Western’s morality is demonstrated in a classic Western directed by Fred Zinnemann called *High Noon* (1952) where Gary Cooper plays a marshal who has to face confrontation alone, abandoned by the townspeople and despite opposition from his new bride. After the gunfight the hero leaves town and his wife, more understanding now, leaves with him. This film, with the socially conscious allegory of the fearless individual standing up to the threat of oppression, was one of the most influential Westerns of the fifties. The theme of civic responsibility was explored again in a seventies Western – Clint Eastwood’s *High Plains Drifter*. [...] A fearless individual standing up to and defeating oppressive forces is an appealing theme.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 4)

“*Shane* (1953) is directed by George Stevens. [...] The relationship built between Shane and the son of the farming family, Joey, is a poignant one. Joey represents the future, a future that Shane will not be able to share. The tragedy for Shane is that he knows that once he has killed he must leave the valley, riding off alone, destined by his calling to isolation once more. When Joey calls out to Shane as he rides away it is a cry that pleads for Shane to return, because with his departure part of the nobility of the West is rejected. His skills are needed yet ironically rejected by those who benefit most by his expertise with the gun. Shane remains an idealised mythical hero, but heroic because he will not allow himself to be admired by a boy for living by the gun. What is admirable about him is not his skill with a gun but his restraint in using it. What we see in Shane is just how close the hero of the Western has become a tragic figure. His gift – prowess with the gun – has enabled him to survive in a violent wilderness, but has left him doomed to wandering, marked out as an outcast in the civilised world that is overtaking him. He is a figure who embodies and appeals to the best and worst in human nature. [...] Shane represents the traditional view of the honourable lone hero. He is pitted against the villain, Wilson, who wears the badges of villainy – the black hat and the single black glove. Wilson is to be paid for his skills as a gunfighter in cash dollars. Shane earns his place in the community by sweat and toil but is not actually paid for his services as a gunfighter.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 7)

Shane begynner typisk nok med at helten kommer ridende inn i bildet og slutter med at han rir videre til nye utfordringer: “The long introduction of Shane (a series of shots that has him riding past the camera into the landscape, then picked out against it, gradually moving closer to the homestead that is the main location for the film) and his equally long departure (receding into the distance, disappearing over the horizon, with the boy’s voice endlessly repeating his by now iconic name) take a relatively standard element of the Western, the lone cowboy who comes along, sorts things out and then moves on to fresh situations and adventures, and pushes the treatment towards the abstract and mythic.” (Dyer 2007 s. 97)

I Brasil har cangaço-filmer (røverfilmer) fungert som en slags westernfilmer om helters og skurkers liv utenfor loven. Filmene anvender konvensjoner fra amerikanske filmer (Labarrère 2002 s. 547).

“There are Westerns that introduce new (or what are perceived as new) elements to the genre and may thus make the habits of the genre more evident: new angles on subject matter (Native Americans (*Broken Arrow* 1950, *Alien Thunder* 1973, *Dances with Wolves* 1990), women (*Johnny Guitar* 1954, *Heartland* 1979, *The Ballad of Little Joe* 1993)) or new stylistic elements (noir (*Pursued* 1947, *Ramrod* 1947), Gothic (*High Plains Drifter* 1972, *Comes a Horseman* 1978), naturalism (*Will Penny* 1967, *The Culpepper Cattle Company* 1972), ‘acid’ (*The Shooting* 1967, *El topo* 1972, *Dead Man* 1996)).” (Dyer 2007 s. 94) Nicholas Rays *Johnny Guitar* inneholder en duell mellom to kvinner – unikt i westernfilmens historie inntil da (Cohen 2005 s. 83). “A genre so overdetermined in terms of gender as the Western is liable to be thrown out of gear when there are sex role changes: a change in gender role is a change in the generic conventions.” (Dyer 2007 s. 113)

“Acid westerns are not easily defined. They are said to have evolved out of the 1960’s counter-culture’s admiration for spaghetti westerns, which effectively subverted a classic genre through the use of violence. Those who took up this new subgenre did away with (and sometimes even inverted) the formulaic structure of classic westerns – where the good guy rides into town, kills the bad guy and gets the girl – and turned the desert into a place of hallucinatory death and destruction rather than redemption. They kept the deserts, amped up the violence and mixed in surrealism and twists. Each film in the genre is unique, although certain themes can be seen in many of the films: anti-heroes, elevated minorities, dangerous women, psychological instability, twisted religious symbolism, political commentary and open endings. They were made by the counter-culture for the counter-culture and as such represented the insecurity the generation was feeling, dealing with characters in a solipsistic fashion – telling stories in which the experiences of the characters was the most important thing and truth could be done away with for the sake of individual realities. These films are not so much stories as they are portraits of damaged minds. Both made and released in 1966, Monte Hellman’s *The Shooting and Ride in the Whirlwind* are widely considered the trailblazers of the genre.”

(Taryn McCabe i <https://lwlies.com/articles/monte-hellman-birth-of-the-acid-western/>; lesedato 07.10.20)

Den amerikanske skuespilleren og regissøren Tommy Lee Jones' *The Homesman* (2014) "er blitt forstått og diskutert som en feministisk western" (*Dagbladet* 21. mai 2014 s. 44). *The Homesman* rommer noen feministiske ideer, men er også en typisk western: "Hans versjon av den ville vesten er et ensomt og ugjestmildt sted hvor vold og brå død utgjør en evig trussel, og hvor moral og edle hensikter når som helst kan ugyldiggjøres av mer presserende hensyn. I så måte utgjør den en ideell støpeskje for mytologiske fortellinger og figurer, men den altomfattende brutaliteten innebærer også at flertallet av mennesker som ferdes her vil leve utakknemlige liv og omkomme under meningsløse omstendigheter. [...] "The Homesman" løsriver seg aldri helt fra tilfeldighetene og meningsløsheten den tematiserer, men i likhet med så mye annet i denne gjenstridige filmen er dette en helt bevisst avgjørelse." (*Dagbladet* 4. desember 2014 s. 34)

De fleste tradisjonelle westernfilmer problematiserer ikke USAs utryddelse av indianerne, men feirer et triumferende lands muligheter. Overfor indianerne var mange filmer direkte rasistiske, men i løpet av 1970-tallet ble det umulig å lage direkte rasistiske westernfilmer.

USA er grunnlagt som en følge av "en dobbel utryddelse": indianerne og "the Frontier" (Cohen 2005 s. 55). George B. Seitz' *The Vanishing American* (1925) viser indianere som ofre for samfunnsutviklingen. I William Wellmans *Buffalo Bill* (1944) klager en av indianerne over sitt folks bitre skjebne og trusselen om å dø av sult. Etter hvert ble mange regissører sympatisk innstilt overfor indianerne. Ralph Nelsons film *Soldier Blue* (1970) har blitt oppfattet som revisjonistisk. Den handler om en massakre på indianere i Colorado Territory i 1864, "The Sand Creek massacre", der antakelig over 150 indianere ble drept. Filmen viser barn og kvinner som er lemlestet, i noe som minner om 1970-tallet overgrep mot sivile i Vietnam (Cohen 2005 s. 48). En annen film som viser stor sympati for indianernes sak er Kevin Costners *Dances with Wolves* (1990). Filmer som uttrykte ønske om å assimilere indianerne, ble ofte kritisert, f.eks. da John Fords *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) viste en hvit lærerinne som prøver å lære indianerbarn å lese. Den amerikanske regissøren John Ford uttalte ofte at hans sympati var på indianernes side, og de gode offiserene i hans filmer er de som kjenner og respekterer indianerne (Cohen 2005 s. 36).

"In his films [John] Ford developed a sense of the West's historical realities, especially the history of injustices to Native Americans, the subject of *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964)." (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 6) "*Cheyenne Autumn* has its roots in the whitewashing of America's westward expansion that turned into legend by the western genre. In a 1966 interview with future filmmaker Peter Bogdanovich, director John Ford admits "I wanted to make it for a long time. [...] Let's face it, we've treated them very badly – it's a blot on our shield; we've cheated and

robbed, killed, murdered, massacred and everything else, but they kill one white man and, God, out come the troops.” As John Ford was increasingly marginalized in Hollywood, he turned to the Native Americans he loved and respected as his basis for his last western. But as history would have it, the production itself was plagued by the same type of studio meddling John Ford fought against his entire career. As often the case with Ford, *Cheyenne Autumn* is very loosely based on historical fact, this time taking from the Mari Sandoz’s book of the same name. In 1878, the Cheyenne nation has been whittled away from 1,000 to about 300. After their pleas for aid from the United States government are ignored, the Cheyenne rebel by rejecting the United States’ reservation and returning home to their native Dakota on an 1,800-mile trek along with a Quaker teacher, Deborah Wright (Carroll Baker). Captain Thomas Archer (Richard Widmark) pursues them in a journey that takes his troops through multiple seasons and vistas. The film switches perspectives regularly from Archer, who is completely sympathetic to the Cheyenne people while continuing to follow orders, and the Cheyenne themselves, who are presented as frustrated, proud, and at the end of their rope. Archer himself narrates the tale with a sense of contempt for his superiors and sentiment for the Cheyenne.” (Mark Ayala i <https://thenewbev.com/blog/2017/05/cheyenne-autumn/>; lesedato 13.01.24)

Jane Tompkins hevder i *West of Everything: The Inner Life of Westerns* (1992) at “før Kevin Costners “Danser med ulver” fra 1990 har hun ikke funnet en eneste westernfilm der indianerne blir framstilt som mennesker i egen rett.” (Bjørn Ivar Fyksen i *Klassekampens* bokmagasin 31. oktober 2020 s. 6)

Den amerikanske skuespilleren og filmregissøren Kevin Costners film *Dances with Wolves* (1990) “is a western – a rather obvious statement, but its director, Kevin Costner, has created something far removed from the popular western of the 50’s and 60’s. Westerns have not been a fashionable genre for some time, so Costner had problems getting his project off the ground in the first place as it proved to be something the film industry was not too keen to back. [...] Obviously, *Dances With Wolves* belongs to the western genre, but not to the genre which shows the Indians as the “baddies” and the soldiers as the “goodies”. It is more in keeping with *Soldier Blue* and *Little Big Man* and the audience's knowledge of these films aids the suspense of *Dances With Wolves* as there is always the fear of a massacre at the end, a fear which is enhanced by the editing as we cut backwards and forwards between the Indians and the searching soldiers. Costner has used the icons of the western, which raise certain expectations in the audience, and then given us something else. He has used the typical western hero, the resourceful loner. But the representation of the loner in Lieutenant John Dunbar is much more complex. There is something of the dreamer in John Dunbar who wants to see the West before it disappears and who writes down his thoughts and feelings and observations lovingly in a notebook.” (Alan Smithee i <http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~media/DanWolA.html>; lesedato 15.05.14)

I *Dances With Wolves* “Costner has also used a number of other icons from the western, such as the Union soldier, the Indian and the white woman adopted by the Indians. The soldier is usually the one to come to the rescue and a force of good. However, in this film, he is represented as the bringer of ignorance and mindless violence, clearly indicated to us when they mindlessly shoot down Cisco, the horse, and when they viciously beat John Dunbar for “turning Indian”. [...] The Indian is usually the vicious aggressor and a source of evil, but here the Indian is represented as being civilised and living in a close and caring community. The film, however, does not ignore the fact that there were blood-thirsty Indians, and the first ones we meet are fierce and warlike, though even here there is only one who is set on attacking the white man. Our first meeting with the local tribe of Sioux Indians comes in the form of Kicking Bird, and although there is initially a threat, indicated particularly in the music which is low with threatening drum rolls in the background, the encounter is presented in such a way that the audience can tell there is no real threat from this particular Indian. [...] Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the representation of the Indian in this film is the way they are shown to be real people who have relationships like anyone else. This is an aspect of the Indian which is not usually developed. There are small details which give us insights into family life, for instance, the relationship between Kicking Bird and his wife. [...] In this film, the Indian is the victim rather than the aggressor. Even the white woman, who is usually rescued from living with the Indians and therefore from a fate worse than death and returned to her own kind, does not follow the traditional mould. In a scene with Kicking Bird, Stands With A Fist demonstrates her fears of being returned to the white man. The Indians are now her people and she realistically struggles with her long forgotten English when she tries to communicate with John Dunbar.” (Alan Smithee i <http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~media/DanWolA.html>; lesedato 15.05.14)

“*Dances with Wolves* (1990), directed by Kevin Costner, achieved both critical acclaim and popular appeal. The theatrical release was three hours long and the film made much of the fact that it was the first Western to deal with Native Americans with true nobility and dignity. While it was a novel experience hearing authentic dialogue (the Sioux language, Lakota, was carefully researched and reproduced with subtitles), this claim is very much open to question. The film was criticised in *The Evening Standard* for being ‘ideologically conspicuous’ and for ‘white-washing the red man to the point of removing all dignity.’” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 9)

“In a discussion of a scene in the 1990 film *Dances with Wolves* in which the white hero is introduced to his first Lakota man, Louis Owens makes a point critical to an understanding [...] This scene, he notes, “illuminates the crucial Euroamerican fantasy of being inseminated with Indianness, of absorbing and appropriating everything of value in the indigenous world as a prelude to eradicating and replacing the actual Native ...”” (Stam og Raengo 2005 s. 74).

“The manifest destiny ideology that floated implicitly or explicitly throughout virtually all classic Westerns concerned with the settling of the West is here [*i Dances With Wolves*] rewritten as a ruthless imperialism. The traditional structuring antinomy, Civilization vs. Savagery, is mobilized here, but the polarities are reversed as the Sioux become the model civilization. This reversal is most apparent in the final scene in which the heroic Indian warriors recapture Dunbar, now one of their own, and kill off a few soldiers (now defined as savages) in the process. But at the same time, this rewriting of the history of the Western expansion from the perspective of Native Americans is far from an end in itself. The other major project of the narrative, John Dunbar’s self-actualization, is thoroughly intertwined with that rewriting; the virtues of the Sioux of the 1860s are expressed in terms of another ideology generated by White America, specifically a “New Age” mentality that becomes increasingly prominent in the second half of the film, when Dunbar “finds himself.” ” (Collins, Radner og Collins 1993 s. 257-258)

“After Dunbar takes part in the buffalo hunt and the celebration afterward, he watches the tribe move on the next day. The scene begins with a long pan across a breathtaking sunset – a tableau shot in the tradition of the classic Western, in which the Sioux are exquisitely silhouetted as dark figures on the crest of the horizon against the purple sky. This extremely painterly composition, when combined with Dunbar’s voice-over, accords the figures an almost divine status: “It seems everyday ends with a miracle here. And whatever God may be I thank God for this day. To stay any longer would have been useless. We had all the meat we could possibly carry. We had hunted for three days, losing half-a-dozen ponies, and only three men injured. I’d never known a people so eager to laugh, so devoted to family, so dedicated to each other, and the only word that came to mind was harmony.” [...] Once this solidarity is established, there is a pause in the voice-over, and the last shot of the Sioux is followed by a low-angle close-up of Dunbar that monumentalizes him still further as he says, “Many times I’d felt alone, but until this afternoon I’d never felt completely lonely.” [...] The voice-over praises the Sioux, but in the images they are framed as a decorative cluster of Noble Savages, with only the sympathetic White Man receiving the big close-up.” (Collins, Radner og Collins 1993 s. 258)

“*Dances With Wolves* is a long film, three hours, which is necessary for the audience to become involved with the Indians and their way of life and to reflect the length of time it takes for Lieutenant John Dunbar to become *Dances With Wolves*. The countryside is also important in the film and the cinematic techniques used reflect this. During John’s journey to Fort Sedgewick a large number of wide angle shots are used to convey the sheer size and emptiness of the land they are crossing. We see a shot of John on his horse on a hill, surrounded by golden colours – a man in harmony with nature – and the camera pulls back to a wide angle shot which keeps growing until the huge vista of the plain fills the screen. The use of wide angle shots is repeated throughout the film, particularly notable

when John arrives at the Indian village for the first time and we see the scale of the settlement. This technique is also used to good effect to show us the extent of the massacre of the buffalo by the white men.” (Alan Smithee i <http://www.netcomuk.co.uk/~media/DanWolA.html>; lesedato 15.05.14)

“*Dances With Wolves* avoids [...] ironic constructions in its attempt to locate the authentic vision of the past; nonetheless, the seemingly unmediated tableau becomes another kind of mirror, the idealized imaginary in which the troubled hero sees himself, a mirror in which he is magically healed, in harmony, although only in this unrecoverable past.” (Collins, Radner og Collins 1993 s. 259)

“Færre enn forventet ville se sommerens store westernsatsing, “The Lone Ranger” [regissert av Gore Verbinski, 2013]. Etter flere westernskuffelser spørres det om sjangeren er i ferd med å dø. [...] De ensomme cowboyene er stadig mer alene der de rir over prærien. Sommerens westernsatsing på kino, “The Lone Ranger”, har gått dårlig. Det gjorde også to tidligere sommerwesterns, “Cowboys & Aliens” og “Jonah Hex”. Det vil nok få konsekvenser for viljen til å satse mer på samme sjanger blant Hollywoods skvetne investorer. I tidsskriftet *The Atlantic* spørres det om dette kan være slutten for en av filmmediets eldste sjangre – en som alltid har latt amerikanerne nytolke et krittuslammet kapittel av sin egen historie.” (Inger Merete Hobbestad i *Dagbladet* 4. august 2013 s. 2)

“En utfordring med å lage westerns i 2013 er at det er snakk om fortellinger som tradisjonelt har blitt fortalt fra et hvitt, mannlig og maskulint perspektiv – samtidig som de foregår i et multikulturelt landskap, en dels historisk, dels fiktiv verden der de svarte var slaver, indianerne ville, meksikanerne utspekulerte, og kvinner prostituerte eller nybyggerkvinner med behov for beskyttelse. “The Lone Ranger” er ikke helt elegant i forsøket på å kombinere mild moderne politisk korrekthet og gammelmodig barskhet. En annen [utfordring] er at westernfilmene i nesten all sin tid har kommentert sin egen sjanger like mye som sin historiske epoke. Settet av forventninger, om den rakryggede cowboyen mot røkla, ble etablert svært tidlig, og problematisert allerede i “The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance” (1962), der den mer forsiktige, framsynte James Stewart brakte fram tilkortkommenheten i den tradisjonelle cowboyen til John Wayne. I tiåret som fulgte var det Sergio Leone og Sam Peckinpah som revitaliserte sjangeren. Leone brakte det barokke og mystiske tilbake til den ville vesten. Peckinpah var opptatt av vemodet i westernverden, gjerne hos aldrende cowboyer som ser tilbake på et vilt liv og spør seg hva det var godt for. Begge viste fram et voldelig samfunn der ingen var moralsk ulastelig. Begge forholdt seg tydelig til filmhistorien, begge ble inspirasjonskilder for Quentin Tarantino, som med fjorårets “Django Unchained” sto for et av de mer vellykkede nyere westernforsøkene. Men i likhet med “The Lone Ranger” likner Tarantinos film på en ren pastisj, et spill med konvensjoner mer enn historier om folk.” (Inger Merete Hobbestad i *Dagbladet* 4. august 2013 s. 2)

“Westernfilmen er den mest reindyrket amerikanske av alle sjangre. Den ble lenge ansett for å være umulig å eksportere – den var for rotfestet i den amerikanske prærien og villmarken, hvor nybyggere, eventyrere, revolvermenn og indianere førte en ofte livsfarlig tilværelse, mens kontinentets lover fortsatt var i støpeskjeen. Hovedattraksjonen ved den tradisjonelle westernfilmen har alltid vært bildet av den amerikanske drømmen – om et nytt liv i frihet og velstand, bygget med egne hender – med et håp symbolisert av den glødende sola som går ned i vest. Reisen vestover i duvende karavaner er mytologisert utallige ganger. Kan en sjanger som er så organisk knyttet til en nasjonal drøm og et unikt kontinentalt landskap, overføres til andre land? Ja, italienerne – og særlig Sergio Leone – beviste på 1960- og 1970-tallet at sjangerens ritualer etter hvert hadde blitt så velkjente at de tålte en ny stilistisk tolkning uten å bli totalt uthulet eller parodiske. Hos Leone ser man en stilistisk sofistikert blanding av voldsballlett, nærbildeorgie og en galgenhumoristisk umoral – som særlig hersker når den taust forherdede Clint Eastwood er frontfigur.” (Morten Piil i *Klassekampen* 1. juli 2014 s. 14)

Den amerikanske filmregissøren Sam Peckinpahs *The Wild Bunch* (1969) har noen sekvenser med ekstremt mange filmkutt. I sluttmassakeren er det 352 kamerainnstillinger i løpet av 6 minutter og 7 sekunder.

“The Western ‘hero’ who emerges from *The Wild Bunch* has come to resemble that other archetype of American films, the gangster. The violence of the Western, traditionally restrained by the hero’s gentlemanly code, is now allowed to run rampant. In this film it is the violence above all else which characterises the West. Moral confusion is everywhere. The U.S. Cavalry (the heroic rescuers in so many Westerns) is revealed as a mob of bungling fools, and children (so often symbols of innocence) are shown to be amoral. The mythology of the West is exploded and the concept of heroism is challenged. In *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid* (1973), Peckinpah romanticises the character of the famed outlaw hero. He is seen as the personification of freedom and animal vitality in the face of an advancing corrupt civilisation: the last cowboy at the end of the frontier.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 9)

“Kanskje yngre kinogjengere kjenner sjangeren mer fra Sergio Leones spaghetti-westerner, som passer bedre til en kynisk stilbevisst og ironiserende tidsånd enn for eksempel John Fords humanistiske hyllester til den sanne pionerånden. [...] Man har sagt at en kamerakjøring er som skapt til å følge en cowboy eller en indianer i full galopp. Det er noe oppildnende i selve bevegelsen. Ryttere avtegnet i silhuett mot de uendelige viddenes horisont er et annet ikon i sjangeren. Samt den sårbare “homestead”, isolert i ødemarken eller den lille prairiebyens mudrete hovedgate. [...] I den av Fords westernfilmer som i dag nyter mest popularitet, “The Searchers” (1956), snur Wayne på sin mytologiske rettskaffenhet og framstiller en dypt rasistisk og hatefull hevner som aldri kan bli del av det familiesamholdet som ble bygget opp i pionertiden. Sjangerens uskyldsår rant ut allerede på 1950-tallet, da milepæler som “Sheriffen” (1952), med en ensomt kjempende Gary Cooper,

satte dagsordenen for en videre utforskning av westernheltens sammensatte motiver i for eksempel Anthony Manns hevndrama med James Stewart. Samtidig begynte en avheroisering av kampene mot indianerne. 1950-tallet ble et fruktbart tiår for sjangeren, også takket være populære tv-serier, mens det eksperimenterende og fremadskuende 1960-tallet var ikke gunstige for denne typen filmer i Hollywood. Den skiftevis lyriske og ekstremt voldelige Sam Peckinpah ble, med “Ride The High Country” og “Den ville gjengen” den eneste verdige arvtakeren. [...] På 1970-tallet var man intenst revisjonistisk i de krasse bildene av det først og fremst lovløse Vesten: Dick Richards “The Culpepper Cattle Company” (1972) og Robert Bentons “Bad Company”.” (Morten Piil i *Klassekampen* 1. juli 2014 s. 14-15)

TV-serien *Bonanza* (1959-73) har blitt oppfattet som en “domestic Western” fordi den er “family- and domestic-centred” (Creeber 2008 s. 20-21).

Det er lagd mange hybrider av western og andre sjangrer. Et eksempel er Sngmoo Lees *The warrior’s way* (2010), som er en blanding av sverdkampfilm, fantasyfilm og westernfilm (handlingen foregår i en liten by i Det ville vesten, med saloon osv.). Filmen *Bone Tomahawk* (2015; regissert av S. Craig Zahler) er en skrekkwestern.

“Self-awareness in Westerns takes many forms. There are travesty (the Marx Brothers’ *Go West* 1940, *Cat Ballou* 1965, *Carry on Cowboy* 1965, *Shanghai Noon* 2000) and parody (*A Bear of a Story* 1916, *His Bitter Pill* 1916, *The Frozen North* 1922, Buster Keaton’s *Go West* 1925, *Along Came Jones* 1945, *The Paleface* 1948, *Blazing Saddles* 1974; *Rustler’s Rhapsody* 1985) [...] There are Westerns that in dealing with ageing cowboys seem to be writing valedictories for the genre, which means signalling awareness of it even while saying it is dying (*Ride the High Country* 1962, *Monte Walsh* 1970, *Unforgiven* 1992).” (Dyer 2007 s. 94)

Jon Raundalen publiserte i 2009 doktoravhandlingen *Mellom Ersatzprodukt og Massenvirksomhet: Genrefilmen som kulturelt felt i DDR 1966-1976*, som blant annet handler om øst-tyske science fiction- og westernfilmer. I et intervju sa han: “Som sjanger er westernfilmene de mest interessante. [...] Jeg har analysert filmene som skueplasser for konflikten mellom verdenssystemene på populærkulturens område. [...] De hadde noen eventyrlige besøkstall, spesielt westernfilmene. De var enormt populære.” (*Morgenbladet* 6.–12. november 2009 s. 44)

De franske regissørene Jean-Luc Godard og Jean-Pierre Gorins film *Vind fra øst* (1970) er en slags venstreradikal western. Filmen har “solid basis in a specific historical moment (post-May-June 1968) and thus its Maoist response to the PCF, its assertion of armed struggle and the importance of the Third World, visual stereotyping (the film is partly a Western and the union official wears a fancy western frock coat and tie, so we identify him as “revisionist” by his bourgeois clothing), and explicit commentary on the visual/audio track. [...] the film is using images that represent an Italian Western, and that the film will “deconstruct” these

traditional images and cinematic form in general in order to reflect politically on the real contradictions in cinematic practice, in particular on U.S. cultural imperialism.” (Julia Lesage i <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC04folder/WindfromEast.html>; lesedato 05.12.14) I *Vind fra øst* “the visual track shows a “scene” from a western, yet it is compound because it is obviously fake (one character is reading a book) and it is complex because the sound track is commenting on westerns.” (<http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/onlinessays/JC04folder/AudienceResponse.html>; lesedato 05.12.14)

“I den alternative westernfilmen *Meek’s Cutoff* (2010) er det ville vesten gjenspekt fra et Monument Valley der handlingsorienterte menn skyter og rir hester i høyt tempo, til en endeløs prairie der kvinnene utfører hverdagens tunge og rutinepregete sysler, mens selvtilfredse menn skryter og prater piss.” (*Morgenbladet* 3.–9. februar 2017 s. 50) “Something seemed off from the very earliest scenes of “Meek’s Cutoff,” the Western from the director Kelly Reichardt [...] In “Meek’s Cutoff” – based on a true story – three families are guided westbound by the crude, mythomaniac conman Stephen Meek, who seems to have led them astray. The men of the families debate whether Meek is merely incompetent or whether he has actually been hired by the British – who wanted to keep control of the region – deliberately to prevent American settlers from reaching Oregon. Meanwhile, the band journeys through rugged country in fear of being seen by Indians, and then they chance to meet one – an outlier, wandering alone, whom they capture and whom Meek, regaling them with gory tales of Indian massacres, wants to gun down. The Indian’s savior – as shown in a scene of great dramatic power – is one of the women in the group. Ultimately, the travelling band, desperate for water, chooses to follow the Indian’s lead, leaving Meek, as a paid hand, to do little but come along for the ride.” (Richard Brody i <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/richard-brody/true-west-meeks-cutoff>; lesedato 16.12.19)

Sisters Brothers (2018; regissert av Jacques Audiard) handler primært om to leiemordere i 1850-tallets Oregon, men tematiserer blant annet at industrialisering og grådighet skaper miljø-ødeleggelser. Denne filmen er “langt fra en naturalistisk revisjon av sjangeren. Med sin umiddelbart gjenkjennelige ikonografi og struktur, ligner *The Sisters Brothers* mer på ideen om en westernfilm, enn den ligner på en historisk virkelighet (filmen er basert på en kanadisk roman av Patrick DeWitt fra 2011). I de rette hendene er klassiske filmsjangre nettopp lik “tomme patronhylser” som kan fylles med dagens dilemmaer og problemer. Og her er *The Sisters Brothers* på sitt beste. Audiard leker med, utdyper og snur sjangerens troper på hodet for å finne ut av hvordan mannlig usikkerhet og selvbevisste nevroseser ut i et univers der det på død og liv gjelder å handle før man tenker. Finnes det håp for å gjenoppfinne seg selv, finne et bedre levevis, når omgivelsene tilsynelatende presser deg til å opprettholde en mandig status quo?” (Ulrik Eriksen i *Morgenbladet* 22.–28. mars 2019 s. 34)

Posse (1993; regissert av Mario Van Peebles) er en “all black Western about black cowboys. A refugee, Jessie Lee leads a band of deserters to a town where he has a score to settle. On his tail are sadistic Colonel Graham and his ‘Iron Brigade’. Ultimately a final confrontation ensues where all scores are inevitably settled.” (Harvey og Poppy 2001 s. 18)

The Harder They Fall (2021) handler om afroamerikanske skurker i Det ville vesten og miljøet de tilhørte. “Filmskaper Jeymes Samuel har laget en underholdende dynamittgubbe som smeller av rikelig med vittige voldeligheter, tøff dialog og spraglete “ville vesten”-moro. På overflaten er det en enkel, og ganske så klisjefylt, hevnhistorie uten så mange lag i handling og rollefigurer. Men filmen har en dybde som representasjon av svart amerikansk historie, i en sjanger som tradisjonelt har fokusert på hvite cowboyhelter. [...] Et rollegalleri med svarte hovedpersoner har vært sjelden kost i Hollywoods historieglade westernfilmer, og derfor er det betimelig av regissør Jeymes Samuel å befolke sin sjangerfilm med historiske navn som blant annet Nat Love, Rufus Buck, Stagecoach Mary og USAs første svarte “deputy US. Marshall”, Bass Reeves. Samuel har plassert disse virkelige menneskene inn i en fiksjonshistorie som drypper av velkjente western-motiver, oppgjør og scener. [...] Kulissen er byen Redwood, hvor Buck vil lage et tilfluktssted hvor svarte mennesker kan leve i frihet. Det vil si, ikke helt i frihet. Alle må gjøre som Buck og hans kompanjonger Trudy Smith (Regina King) og Cherokee Bill (Lakeith Stanfield) sier. Dette er altså denne klassisk oppbygde sandkassen som er lekeplassen. Utstyrt med lekker saloon, bred hovedgate og hustak det kan skytes fra. [...] Men i disse forslitte Hollywood-kulissene har Jeymes Samuel snekret seg en effektiv arena for sitt oppgjør med den amerikanske rasismen, og den amerikanske filmens utelatelsessynder når det gjelder representasjonen av svarte og amerikansk urbefolkning i historiene som ble fortalt om USAs ville ungdomsår. [...] Og selv om det holdes i bakgrunnen, så ligger det en antivoldsfilm under filmens “glossy” og eksplosjonsglade overflate. Med en slutt som får fram det meningsløse i disse drapene, og som lar fattigdom og undertrykkelse ta sin del av skylden for volden.” (Sigurd Vik i <https://p3.no/filmpolitiet/2021/11/the-harder-they-fall/>; lesedato 13.01.24)

Douglas Brodes bok *Dream West: Politics and Religion in Cowboy Movies* (2013) “demonstrates that the genre (with notable exceptions that he fully covers) was the product of Hollywood liberals who used it to project a progressive agenda on issues such as gun control, environmental protection, respect for non-Christian belief systems, and community cohesion versus rugged individualism. Challenging us to rethink everything we thought we knew about the genre, Brode argues that the Western stands for precisely the opposite of what most people today – whether they love it or hate it – believe to be the essential premise of “the only truly, authentically, and uniquely American narrative form.” (<https://utpress.utexas.edu/books/brode/>; lesedato 21.08.20) I Brodes bok “unusual topics are given intensive attention; gun control, environmentalism, radical politics are all considered within the classical western, and Brode calls upon lesser-known genre entries such as

Wichita, where Joel McCrea's Wyatt ends the film by saying, "If men don't have guns, they can't shoot each other." " (Clayton Dillard i <https://www.slantmagazine.com/film/review-douglas-brodes-dream-west-politics-and-religion-in-cowboy-movies/>; lesedato 18.09.20)

Mary Lea Bandy og Kevin Stoehrs bok *Ride, Boldly Ride* (2012) "examine various forms of genre-revival and genre-revisionism that have recurred over the past half-century, culminating especially in the masterworks of Clint Eastwood. They consider themes such as the inner life of the Western hero, the importance of the natural landscape, the roles played by women, the tension between myth and history, the depiction of the Native American, and the juxtaposing of comedy and tragedy." (<https://www.questia.com/library/120088487/ride-boldly-ride-the-evolution-of-the-american>; lesedato 06.10.20) "Their discussion of hardships within fledgling settler communities disrupts genre clichés about "cowboys and Indians," and refocuses attention on the struggles of white pioneering communities. [...] big-budget films "took the form of trail-blazing and community-building frontier epics, reminding their audiences that a great nation had arisen eventually and successfully from a savage wilderness and a constant struggle against adversity" (102). [...] Bandy and Stoehr also retain a sense of the sublime, and of man's transience on the earth, something that the Western highlights through photographic scale. For instance, in Ford's use of Monument Valley, the authors find "a seemingly eternal canvas against which the variables and vagaries of human existence can be etched" (95). [...] Bandy and Stoehr dissect Howard Hawks's masterpieces *Red River* (1948) and *El Dorado* (1966). This results in an insightful and subtle discussion of quintessential Western themes: the paradox of American empire-building in the first, and the frailty of Western "heroes" in the second. [...] The discussion of infernal themes in *High Plains Drifter* (1973) is especially illuminating, as is the complex reflection on the ending of *Unforgiven* (1992), which provides a somewhat ambiguous coda to Eastwood's career-long portrayal of a mysterious stranger with no name. As the authors note regarding the bloodbath, "[i]n these bullet-ridden final scenes, we are thrown into the central message of the movie, a lesson about the terrifying repercussions of violence, even when such acts seem absolutely necessary – whether in self-defense, in the building of civilization, or for the sake of justified retribution" (260)." (Antonio Barrenechea i <http://sites.bu.edu/impact/previous-issues/impact-vol-3-no-2-summer-2014/>; lesedato 06.10.20)

"Begrepet kontemporær western (eller neo-western) brukes om filmer der handlingen utspiller seg i nyere tid, men hvor temaene og motivkretsen er hentet fra den klassiske sjangerfilmen. Som regel er handlingen lagt til typiske western-landskap. "Wind River" [2017; regissert av Taylor Sheridan] tar oss med til et indianerreservat i Wyoming" (Kjetil Johansen i *Aftenposten Innsikt* nr. 6 i 2022 s. 117).

“I flere tiår ble westernsjangeren jevnlig omtalt som død, døende eller i det minste på vei inn i solnedgangen. Likevel, omtrent som en seiglivet desperado på flukt fra sheriffens oppbud, har sjangeren unnsuppet galgen. Faktum er at westernfilmer ser ut til å ha blitt revitalisert i årene etter årtusenskiftet, selv om produksjonsvolumet kanskje ikke har tatt seg helt opp til høydene fra glansdagene. Årsaken er antagelig at sjangeren er blitt mer variert, tematisk og stilistisk, samtidig som den har beholdt sin distinkte egenart under fornyelsen.” (Kjetil Johansen i *Aftenposten Innsikt* nr. 6 i 2022 s. 114)

Westernkomedien *Vann over ild* (2018; regissert av Joern Utkilen), har blitt kalt en “potetwestern”, og er “en slags samtidswestern, hvor hester er byttet ut med mopeder.” (Le L. Nguyen i *Filmmagasinet* nr. 3 i 2018 s. 42)

Den franske dikteren Ariane Dreyfus har skrevet en diktsamling om westernfilmer, med tittelen *En historie passerer her* (1999) (Cohen 2005 s. 86).

Russiske og øst-europeiske westernfilmer

“Av filmsjangerer er western nok den eldste, og uten tvil den mest populære. Ingenting er mer erkeamerikansk enn en western. Om omvendt. Det finnes knapt noe mer kontra-revolusjonært og dekadent enn en western, i hvert fall sett fra bak jernteppet (selv før jernteppet fantes). Men ved en skjebnens ironi ble det slik at også Sovjetunionen fikk sine westerns. Sjangeren er jo så uimotståelig, med good guys og bad guys og happy endings – for ikke å snakke om action og hester og mektige landskap – at den nye statens ideologer tok den i bruk og fylte malen med eget innhold. Slik skulle folket få underholdning ispedd en dose ideologi. Der den klassiske amerikanske western handlet om å erobre Vesten, dreide den sovjetiske seg om å skape Det nye landet. Det er som regel denne sovjetiske varianten “Red Westerns” viser til, men det snakkes også om såkalte “Easterns”, altså westernfilmer laget i østblokklandene. [...] Både Stalin og Tito var glad i westerns” (fra katalogen for Tromsø International Film Festival i 2012 s. 97).

“The Ostern (Eastern) or Red Western (also known as “Borscht Western”) was the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries’ take on the Western. The term refers to two related genres: Proper Red Westerns, set in America’s ‘Wild West’, such as *Lemonade Joe* (Czechoslovakia, 1964), or the East-German *The Sons of Great Bear* (1966) or *The Oil, the Baby and the Transylvanians* (Romania, 1981), or *A Man from the Boulevard des Capucines* (USSR, 1987), involving radically different themes and genres. These were mostly produced in Eastern European countries like East Germany and Czechoslovakia, rather than USSR. Easterns (Osterns), set usually on the steppes or Asian parts of the USSR, especially during the Russian Revolution or the following Civil War. Examples of these include *The Elusive Avengers* (1966) and its two sequels, *White Sun of the Desert* (1969), *Dauria* (1971), *At Home among Strangers* (1974), *The Burning Miles* (1957), *The Bodyguard* (1979), and *The Sixth* (1981). While obviously influenced by Westerns,

Easterns form a specific genre. The word “Ostern” is derived from the German word Ost, meaning “East”. Red Westerns of the first type are often compared to Spaghetti Westerns, in that they use local scenery to double up for the American West. In particular, Yugoslavia, Mongolia and the Southern USSR were used. Some of the East German films were called Sauerkraut Westerns.” (<https://www.imdb.com/list/ls069175061/>; lesedato 27.06.20)

“East Germany’s state-owned studio DEFA had its own “Indianerfilme” genre, revisionist “Sauerkraut Westerns” in which the villains were white and the Native Americans heroic, often played by strapping Yugoslav actor Gojko Mitic in films such as *The Sons of Great Bear* (1966) and the gloriously titled *Chingachgook, die Große Schlange* (1967), with Saxony-Anhalt providing suitable plains and mountains. During the Cold War, Soviet Russia developed its own “Ostern” (Eastern) genre, also known, inevitably, as “Borscht Westerns”, usually set during the Revolution or the Civil War and filmed in the Urals, but featuring themes and action akin to those of their Hollywood counterparts.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

“Balkan Westerns represent an important part of a cultural phenomenon which took place in the European Eastern bloc during the second half of the 20th Century: the phenomenon of the ‘Red Western’, or the ‘Ostern’. In the Soviet Union, the western was considered a “reactionary genre which praised the white colonialists’ extermination of poor Indians. American westerns were distributed in the USSR only in the 1920s. Some westerns also managed to reach the Soviet screens after 1945, when the Reichsfilmarchiv (Reich Film Archive) was removed from Berlin and taken to Moscow. Then, from the 1950s on to the 1980s, during the last 40 years of communism, there were only 5 (five!) US westerns in the Soviet film distribution system. Nevertheless, because these films were always received with great enthusiasm by the Soviet public, the Party bosses decided to allow Soviet filmmakers to come up with “our own westerns with the right content”. The result was the ‘Red Western’, and there were dozens of them produced in the USSR during that period. Of course no one officially called these films westerns’; they were “heroic adventure movies”. Sometimes they became great box office champions: *Little Red Devils (Tsiteli eshmakunebi, Ivane Perestiani, 1924)*, and its remake *Elusive Avengers ([...] Edmond Keosayan, 1967)*, with the sequel *New Adventures of the Elusive Avengers ([...] 1968)* were great hits. Sometimes the films were real works of art: *13 (Trinadtsat, Mikhail Romm, 1936)*, or *Nobody Wanted to Die (Niekas nenorejo mirti, Vytautas Zalakevicius, 1966)*. In any case, the Red Western had its own history, with a brilliant beginning in the twenties and a sad ending in the late eighties, a history which mirrors, in a way, the story of Soviet society in 20th century. It also mirrors the story of Soviet state censorship [...] Stalin was a film freak and a great admirer of the western. The Russian State Film Archive (Gosfilmofond), founded in 1948 on the base of the Reichsfilmarchiv, contains plenty of evidence of the Great Leader’s passion for westerns. And at least two Soviet ‘red westerns’, *13*, and *Brave People ([...] Konstantin Yudin, 1950)* were made at his direct wishes and orders.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

“If Stalin was the father of the ‘Soviet Red Western’, the ‘Balkan Western’ had three fathers. Their names: Josip Broz Tito, Nikita Sergejevich Khrushchev, and Nicolae Ceaușescu. 1962 was ‘the year when the Balkan western was officially born’. Two events took place during that year, in two separate countries, which, although apparently not connected, are nevertheless both pivotal for the history of the Balkan western. First, in 1962, filmmakers from West Germany decided to film the stories of their compatriot Karl May (1842-1912), who wrote about the Wild West. In the USSR, his writings were not known, but in Germany they were far more popular than the works of James Fenimore Cooper or Thomas Mayne Reid. At the heart of Karl May’s novels there are two characters: one Indian, named Winnetou, and the other white (sometimes Old Surehand, sometimes Old Shatterhand). The first film to be made about their adventures was *The Treasure of Silver Lake* (*Der Schatz im Silbersee*, Harald Reinl, 1962). It is not known whether director Reinl ever supposed that his film would only be the first in a long series of many other pictures featuring the two inseparable friends, but the success of the film had surpassed all expectations and soon, the producers launched the pipeline: from 1962 onwards, almost until the end of the sixties, each year marked the release of at least one new film about Winnetou on European screens. But what has all this got to do with the Balkans? The German producers of the films, like their Italian counterparts who were shooting their ‘Spaghetti westerns’ in Spain, were looking for locations that were both spectacular and cheap. In the beginning, they had also considered Spain but, in the end, they found an even better (and cheaper) place: it was Yugoslavia.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

“After his historical quarrel with Stalin, Tito had started to build his relatively liberal brand of socialism. And he was also a great western admirer. During the 1950s, US westerns were often shown on Yugoslav screens and they were very popular. More than one generation of young Yugoslav boys grew up with these movies. So when the Germans suggested a co-production, the Yugoslav comrades were happy to agree. It proved to be the ideal partnership: the Balkan side was open and friendly, and the Germans were given total production freedom and low prices in addition to fantastic shooting locations in Croatia. Soon enough, Winnetou and his white brother received permanent residency in the “happiest barrack of the socialist camp”. The results pleased everyone. After *The Treasure of Silver Lake* (which also received financing from the French), in 1963, Reinl shot *Winnetou*. Now, along with the French and the Germans, Italy was also credited among the producing countries, and the franchise was on a roll. During that same year, and with the same 3 countries as co-producers, another director, Hugo Fregonese, was called in to shoot *Old Shatterhand* with the same actors [...] Then 1964 saw *Winnetou 2* by Reinl, and Alfred Vohrer’s *Among the vultures*, where Lex Barker was replaced by Stewart Granger. The Yugoslavs were involved in all these films, and not just as the country that provided the locations. All the films credit the Zagreb studio, Jadran Film, immediately after the name of the main German concern, indicating an equal partnership.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

Sovjetunionens leder Nikita Khrushjov “granted the opportunity to screen a real US western in the USSR. The times they were a-changing. In 1959, Khrushchev made his historical visit to the United States, during which he also went to Hollywood, where he met Marilyn Monroe, Frank Capra, and Gary Cooper. A new film agreement was signed then, according to which *The Magnificent Seven* (1960) was purchased for Soviet distribution. *The Magnificent Seven* became a landmark success and a social phenomenon in the Soviet Union. Between 1962 and 1964, the citizens of the USSR never tired of seeing the film. Tickets became impossible to get. Stadiums and other open areas were used for the projection when regular cinemas could no longer cope. All men wanted to dress like cowboys, and since there were no Soviet shops where one could buy jeans, hats and boots, the costumes were all made at home from scrap materials. [...] Party leaders began to grumble. First, they forbade children from watching it. Then, the classic ‘letters from the workers’ started appearing in the central press. Finally, in 1964, just before Khrushchev’s removal from the head of the party, the film was withdrawn from distribution, before its export license had expired. With Khrushchev gone, the communist party bosses decided to make their own response to imperialist propaganda, and encouraged the wide production of ‘Red westerns’, with the ‘reds’ playing the good guys and the ‘whites’ given the parts of villains. Recalling the huge success of Perestiani’s 1924 film *Little Red Devils*, a remake was ordered, which led to the creation of *The Elusive Avengers* in 1967, and, sure enough, the film became a major hit. The Civil War after the Bolshevik revolution became the time and historical arena for Soviet Red Westerns and, before long, Soviet boys started to forget *The Magnificent Seven*.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

Tsjekkeren Josef Mach regisserte i 1966 *Den store hunnbjørnens sønner*, der Dakota-indianere opplever den hvite manns svik når landområder indianerne har blitt lovet likevel erobres av hvite nybyggere. Filmen ble laget i DDR, det sosialistiske Øst-Tyskland (i DEFA-studioet). Det er ingen tvil om at det er urbefolkningen, indianerne, som er heltene, ikke de hvite som er grådige etter land og gull.

“In 1966, comrades from East Germany received the ‘advice’ to try their own hand at making a classical western with reds and whites. This they did, and the result was *The Sons of Great Bear* (*Die Söhne der großen Bärin*, by the Czech director Josef Mach). For this production, the East Germans also went to Yugoslavia, since they wanted to beat their Western compatriots and rivals on the “same battlefield”. Their co-producer was Bosna Film studios in Sarajevo. Sure enough, history had since proved that it was not possible to compete with the West in general, and in film production in particular, but until 1968, the communists did not abandon hope, so the East Germans decided to step into the ring and fight. *The Sons of Great Bear* was the screen adaptation of a novel by Liselotte Welskopf-Henrich, in which the Indians are portrayed as noble, while the whites are all bloodthirsty. This was, of course, an absolute must for the script to be approved. Ironically, the white villain’s

name was Red Fox, but he was not that important. The important thing was that the noble Indian, played by the young, beautiful athlete Gojko Mitić, provided the youth of the socialist bloc with a credible star of their own: Mitić became the instant idol of millions. The success of *The Sons* had satisfied the authorities. Of course, in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, where the film distribution system was wide open for ‘Western westerns’, the film could not compete with other American films of the genre. But in the other, more ‘ideologically unblemished’ states, the box-office results were encouraging.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

“The main difference between *The Sons* and the pictures made at the Jadran studios by the West Germans was in the central element of the plot structure. Winnetou is brave and noble, but he remains in the shadow of his pale-faced brother who is the main hero. The screen adaptations of Karl May’s novels are all about the good white guy who helps the Indians fight against the bad whites. In parentheses it should be noted that while the *Ostern Sons* was shot in Yugoslavia, *Old Surehand* became the first film of its rival West German series to be purchased for distribution in the USSR, during the short period of liberalization between October 1964 and August 1968 (the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia). Changing the title of the film, the Soviets accidentally emphasized its ‘white-guy bias’, naming it *The Faithful Hand, Friend of Indians*. Needless to say, the film was a big hit and made a lot of money for the Soviet distribution system, back in 1968. Despite its reasonable success, the production of *The Sons of Great Bear* marked the end of an ambitious attempt by the East to beat the capitalists at the western genre. After that, the East Germans ceased to travel around the world in search of spectacular locations for big productions aimed at international audiences (*The Sons* never managed to find an audience in the West), and began to stamp their ‘right westerns’ for its own audience, as well as for the benefit of their most friendly markets: the post-1968 ‘normalized’ Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Bulgaria, and Mongolia. Meanwhile, in Yugoslavia, the West Germans continued to actively develop their gold-mine, Winnetou. With Alfred Vohrer’s 1965 production of *Old Surehand*, which was successfully screened even in the Soviet Union, the franchise was well established and the films generally passed, for most of the inexperienced viewers in Europe, as genuine American westerns. Of course, as with the Italian ‘spaghetti westerns’, that was their main intended purpose. Stewart Granger, the ‘absolutely true, absolutely American’ star of *Old Surehand*, was an actor with a clear understanding of the nature of the genre – with him as a central figure what else could they need for convincing the audiences? Stewart Granger, a star of the fifties – *Beau Brummel* (1954), *Scaramouche* (1952) – was not the only Hollywood actor to cross the Atlantic in the early sixties, to revive a genre that was all but dead in America. A little-known Clint Eastwood was another. Unlike Granger, who arrived with great ambitions to re-launch a once brilliant career, Eastwood went to Spain only to spend one summer and earn a little money. Instead, Sergio Leone made him one of the greatest cinematic figures of the second half of the twentieth century. Granger, though, was unable to repeat his triumph.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

“In 1965, Harald Reinl completed the movie *Winnetou 3* in which he attempted to kill Winnetou, believing, apparently, that the series had exhausted itself. Artistically, this is definitely the best film in the series, and it has a well-accomplished look and feel even now, forty years after its creation. In the end, Winnetou sacrifices himself to defend the life of his pale-faced brother, shielding him from the treacherous bullets with his own chest. The Soviet Purchasing Commission did not buy *Winnetou 3* for distribution in the USSR. They may have disagreed with the final sacrifice of the native chief for the benefit of the white hero. Or it may have been for a different, more prosaic reason. In the brief liberal period before August 21, 1968, two West German westerns, shot in Yugoslavia, had been purchased and distributed in the Soviet Union. It is quite likely that the distributors were planning to buy a few more films from the successful series and had no interest in purchasing the film in which Winnetou dies. [...] Harald Reinl was also convinced to return to the beloved hero with *The Valley of Death/ Winnetou und Shatterhand im Tal der Toten*, in 1968. Pierre Brice continued to play the Indian hero in all of these films, and they were all shot in Yugoslavia, the country that had, by then, been hosting ‘cowboys and Indians’ films for nearly a decade.” (Lavrentiev 2013)

“In 1965, Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, who had been the Communist leader of Romania since 1947, died. In his place, the party chose a young dynamic leader, Nicolae Ceausescu who, for a few years, looked poised to become a second Tito. He proclaimed a policy of friendship with all the other socialist countries, ignoring the serious rifts that had, by then, appeared in the communist bloc [...] The late sixties and early seventies were perhaps the best times for Romanian cinema during communism. A lot of films were produced, and there was even some allowance for criticism of classical Stalinism. Films which were banned in Bulgaria, Poland, East Germany, or Czechoslovakia (after 1968) were sometimes shown in Romania. Many westerns also, even some which had been deemed malicious by Soviet film censors could be seen in theaters in Bucharest. Like Tito’s Yugoslavia had done before, Romania also opened its doors to co-productions. Blessed with exquisite natural conditions – mountains, valleys, a wonderful coastline – no worse than in Yugoslavia, the possibility of obtaining virtually free labor and extras (the army was often used for this), Romania became a paradise for Western producers who wanted to get solid results with minimal financial investment. [...] Around the years 1968-1970, the French and the West Germans teamed with Romanian studios to create their own adaptations of Fenimore Cooper’s novels. A number of TV movies were produced at that time: *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Prairie*, *Adventures on the Shores of Ontario*, *Deer Slayer*. Each film had two directors: one from the guests’ side, another from the Romanian. [...] During the last two decades of communism only Romania continued to produce ‘red westerns’; the Bulgarians and the Hungarians (after György Szomjas’ 1976 ‘goulash western’ *The Wind Blows Under Your Feet*) stopped making them. One much later exception is the 1996 film *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* by the Serbian director Srdjan Dragojevic, a great

homage to Yugoslav partisan films (the so-called “Gibanica westerns”).”
(Lavrentiev 2013)

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