



## Issue No. 24 2014 — The Other Western

### **“Do I look Mexican?”: Translating the Western Beyond National Borders**

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Just as it is commonplace to observe that a text is not read or translated in the same way depending on where and in what era one lives, similarly, for film, the shift or translation from one form to the other, in different places, and at different times, demands new responses and new readings.

– Michael Cronin (25)

In this article, I will examine the movement of films and generic concepts beyond national contexts. The Spanish and Italian productions I will discuss here provide an interesting case study because they are moving within and around several traditions: the national context of Spain, the spaghetti western and its Italian connections, and the influence of the Hollywood western. None of these aspects can be isolated, but their interactions and overcodings, particularly emphasized in the *translation* of the films as they move outside of Spain and Italy, illuminate the transnational movement of the genre.

The focus here on movement is what makes the idea of translation useful for this context, as translation, at its most basic level, deals with the movement from one language or context to another: each of these films is impacted by a variety of factors in making this transition. I am not arguing there is an original and a translated “version” of each film; generic characteristics are not derived from a single tradition, but are rather the result of fragmentation and localized influence. The versions I am focusing on here, which are translated in some form for English-

speaking audiences, are a product of this fragmentation. This is because of the way that generic features are changed, recalled, or rewritten through the act of translation, and how these characteristics are constantly being modified as the film event circulates.

The spaghetti western provides a strong case study for considering the western as a transnational and translated genre for three reasons: first, although it was conventionally considered “Italian,” it involved significant Spanish and American contributions; second, these films primarily achieved international popularity through their translation into different languages for a variety of national and international audiences; and third, the films represent a network of influences that set up a reciprocal relationship between dominant and non-dominant traditions within the larger form of the western.

The films I will examine here are not traditional “spaghetti westerns” (epitomized by the Man with No Name trilogy by Sergio Leone) so much as films on the “fringe” of this well-documented and analyzed group of films. *Revenge of Trinity*, or *La Collera del Vento*, a Spanish-Italian collaboration, focuses exclusively on farm workers rights in rural Andalusia, transporting stereotypical western figures to the story of a workers uprising. *800 Bullets*, a film that directly addresses the legacy of the spaghetti western from a modern Spanish viewpoint, focuses on the global impact of the western genre. I have chosen these films for their positions just outside the tradition of the spaghetti western in order to show how they are shaped by several national influences. My interest here is to complicate the one-directional model often utilized in scholarship on the spaghetti western, which places the primary emphasis on defining these films only in relation to the Hollywood western.

Christopher Frayling, in *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone*, defines the spaghetti western in an Italian context, arguing that the genre serves as a “critical cinema” in relation to the Hollywood western and its treatment of American myth. While acknowledging the Spanish contributions, as well as the popularity of the western around Europe, Frayling primarily focuses on the way that these “Italian” westerns employ two main strategies of critical cinema through their use of the Hollywood genre: shocking the spectator into questioning what he or she is seeing, and compelling the spectator into recognizing ideas to think about after the film is over (xxiii). This “shocking” of the spectator is a Brechtian strategy, and Frayling argues that making the generic conventions more explicit “lay bare the device” to encourage

audiences to “question the visual conventions being used” (xxv). Using Sergio Leone as his primary example, Frayling challenges some of the formulaic readings of the genre (such as John G. Cawelti) to suggest that critical cinema creates a detachment from the Hollywood western through the way the films “deconstruct” and “rearrange” familiar generic images and themes (xxv). What Frayling’s approach to the spaghetti western as a critical cinema suggests, then, is the way that it works in *relation to* the Hollywood western even if that relationship is defined through critical distance. However, I would like to argue something different: that the spaghetti western translates a number of influences from varied national contexts, and subsumes them under a broad Italian label. This is not to say that considering the “critical” nature of these films isn’t important, but in moving away from this well-developed reading, I would like to focus on the national and international influences that are often overlooked in this critical framework. By focusing on the way that the spaghetti western works in relation to the Hollywood western, Frayling’s approach overlooks the other influences at work here and sets up a narrow, one-sided, relationship between these films and Hollywood.

Before continuing, it’s important to describe how I will use the nebulous term “transnational” in this argument. From the 1980s, this term has been used with varying degrees of specificity in reference to the relationship between “national” and “global” film. For my purposes, the openness of a transnational approach allows me to take into account geopolitical, cultural, and financial aspects of each production in order to situate the films amongst and between dominant national traditions. The prefix “trans” communicates movement, across or beyond national borders; as Nataša Ďurovičová explains, this framework allows consideration of “geopolitical forms” and “social relations,” which is useful for considering the films in this article as both local and global products (x).

### **Translation and circulation: the globalized western, the localized western**

Early translation theories were not concerned with accurate representation and translation of language, rather, they focused on appropriation for the enrichment of ideas in terms of the translator’s own culture and language. In this way, early translators, such as Saint Jerome and Cicero, viewed translation as a way of “bettering” the original text, without concern for the exploitation of the original ideas (Schulte and Biguenet 2). However, this view shifted in the middle of the eighteenth

century, with writers such as Denis Diderot and D'Alembert stressing the importance of the original source as a "guiding principle" (Schulte and Biguenet 3). With this shift, the amount of writing on translation increased during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, emphasizing different details in the process, such as the role of the scholar (Matthew Arnold), debating the value of multiple translations (Wilhelm von Humboldt), and translation methodologies (Goethe and Benjamin, to name just two). What this very brief overview shows is not only the range of theories and approaches within translation, but also the shifting in focus between source, translation, translator, and scholar (context). Crucially, translation involves a tension between reproduction and recreation - what George Steiner calls "the dialectic of unison and plurality" (235).

I am borrowing from some early translation theorists here, who are writing about language and literary form. Most scholarly works dealing with translation in film approach the topic from one of two ways. First, there are a number of approaches looking specifically at translation in terms of dubbing and subtitling (see for example Egoyan and Balfour's *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film*). Second, translation is often discussed thematically, as in Cronin's *Translation goes to the Movies*, where the focus is on how translation appears onscreen or as a point of narrative interest in the film. Of these two approaches, my model for translation is more in line with Cronin's thematic approach, but I am interested specifically in translation as a way of looking at genre, rather than limiting the focus to language, themes, or narrative aspects. This allows my analysis to include geopolitical, cultural, and financial considerations, while prioritizing genre as the focus.

In looking at early westerns, Rick Altman connects the cultural assumptions to the specific context of the time, to argue that the genre didn't spring forth "fully formed" with *The Great Train Robbery*, but rather was the result of a mix of genres coming together at a particular historical moment (86). By opening up genre to the idea of "cross-pollination," Altman offers a way of thinking about genre hybridity in terms of the influences that occur across and between genres, citing the non-western projects of John Ford or the singing cowboys of the thirties as examples, which also extends to thinking about how this process might be influenced by translation. Translation helps us understand the dynamic aspects of film genre in the context of transnational encounters, to consider how the western genre is altered through the cross-pollination that occurs when aspects of the films are translated for new audiences.

The films under analysis in this article provide an example of the way that the genre of the western is constituted by reciprocal relationships, which draw on the tension between reproduction and recreation found in translation, here found in reading global films as westerns without always returning to Hollywood as the origin. First, the spaghetti western, as an established group of films within the genre, has its own history of being read as a reaction to the Hollywood western, what Frayling refers to as critical cinema. Austin Fisher, for example, reads Italian westerns in terms of the positioning of the United States in Italy's post-war film industry. Discussing *À El Chunchu, quien sabe?* (Damiano Damiani, 1966), Fisher writes:

Clearly, on the one hand, the film registers a space for resistance against the ostensibly hegemonic codes of US cinema within what is commonly branded the "popular" in Italy's post-war film industry. Paradoxically, however, by adopting, appropriating and re-working those same codes so carefully throughout its running time, the filmmakers' cinematic language can also be said to affirm the dominance of Hollywood in the semiotic marketplace. (195)

What Fisher's reading illuminates in terms of my own argument is two things: first, the way in which the western registers a reaction to US expansion (thus, drawing on the US as critical in forming the themes of the spaghetti western), and second, the dominance of Hollywood coding in post-war cinema and the responses of particular global filmmakers. Fisher thus reads the film, and the spaghetti western tradition in general, as both resisting as well as affirming Hollywood dominance. These two interactions create a relationship between the spaghetti western and Hollywood, which forms the basis of the transnational encounter where the movement of the Hollywood western and its coding to an Italian context involve an act of translation.

But what about the reverse of this translation? Here, I am examining films that are, if we follow the implication that there is a linear move from Hollywood to Italy, moving outside a specific national context (such as Italy or the United States) through translation; either literally, through their reformatting for English-speaking markets, or through the use of national elements of the western in new contexts. These films challenge such a linear view, because of the impossibility of identifying a national origin point, or "source" material, as they draw on a network of

influences in and out of a Hollywood sphere. Clearly, there are elements of Hollywood that are developed through translation, but there are also aspects which are a product of the specific context of the film. These cannot be wholly erased in the cross-cultural act of translation, as I will show in my reading of *La Collera del Vento*, but they can be reconfigured for new audiences. In this way, I would argue that the transnational encounter reshapes generic understandings, by continually circulating and diversifying what we associate with the western.

Before moving to the films, I would like to briefly point out an example of the localized nature of translating the western. Peter J. Bloom traces the character of the “good badman” from early French “Camembert” westerns to contemporary Algerian film to demonstrate an “ongoing historical process in which the subversion of dominant meanings is a dynamic system of meaning production nearly simultaneous with the reception of the speech act” (214). Bloom uses the framework of crowd psychology to analyze the space of the cinema hall as “a scene of potential insurrection, or rather, of political and social resistance both in the gathering of communities at the theater and ... through the interpretation of the narrative film experience” (205). Looking at the popularity of American westerns, such as those starring William S. Hart or Tom Mix, in French territories such as North Africa and Algeria, Bloom argues that the sensationalism of the western, dismissed by French authorities as cheap entertainment, became a sort of rallying point for resistance against colonialism through the localized reception of the “good badman” figure, as a hero existing outside / against the law. Here, translation worked on two levels: first, in the translation of the intertitles into French, and second, in the ignorance or (Bloom argues, willful) misunderstanding of these intertitles by North African and Algerian audiences. By recognizing and claiming these “good badman” heroes as representative of their struggles, despite intertitles that might employ these characters to other ends, the films moved from entertainment to creating local political narratives.

Bloom’s argument first serves as a reiteration of the nature of translation in terms of the changes that arise from moving material from one cultural/linguistic context to another, and second, it specifically points to the way that the western, through translation, became relevant in local contexts. This example of the political relevance of the genre in French territories also emphasizes the way that translation reveals (and conceals) the subversion of dominant meanings in localized contexts. It is with this in mind, then, that I will move to examining the films, in order to show

how their translation and circulation, in terms of both language and genre, illustrates the malleability of the western in different political, social, and cultural contexts.

### **The politics of translation: *Trinity* meets *La Collera del Vento***

*They Call Me Trinity*, made in 1970, introduced a comedic element to the spaghetti western model of Leone and Corbucci. The film and its sequel, *Trinity is Still My Name*, were successful both domestically in Italy and abroad, and introduced Terrence Hill as the bean-loving gunslinger Trinity. Hill, who grew up in Germany and previously starred in some adaptations of Karl May's "western" stories, found stardom in the role of Trinity, later appearing in productions such as *My Name is Nobody*, with Henry Fonda. The first two *Trinity* films developed a franchise that was domestically and internationally viable. As a result, *La Collera del Vento*, a film starring Hill made prior to *They Call Me Trinity* but released after its success, was translated for audiences interested in seeing Hill in a *Trinity* western, through post-production changes to the title, music, and narrative. Directed by Mario Camus, *La Collera del Vento* tells the story of two gunslinger "brothers," hired by an Andalusian landlord, Don Antonio, to kill two villagers he believes are inciting his workers into rebellion. Marco (played by Hill), the more experienced of the two gunslingers, arrives in the village and is mistaken by the locals for a man sent to help them rise up against the unfair working conditions. The translation of the film emphasizes *La Collera del Vento* as a popular western in the *Trinity* vein, when, in actuality, the film's primary message is deeply political for a specific local audience.

We can see the first level of translation in looking at the titles of the film. The most direct translation, linguistically, would be something along the lines of *The Wrath of the Wind* or *The Wind's Anger*. However, in English-speaking markets, the film was either titled *Revenge of Trinity* (the version I will be focusing on) or *Trinity Sees Red*. The presence of Hill in the starring role made branding the film part of the Trinity series an easy marketing move, but the highly political content of the film presented a challenge to audiences expecting the comedic touch of the first two *Trinity* films. As Frayling points out, the translation *Trinity Sees Red* does allude to the political content (the villagers seem to be rallying around a Marxist model), as do posters for the film under this title, which feature a red flag waving behind Hill's face. However, since the popularity of the first two *Trinity* films was largely due to their comedic take on the spaghetti

western model, the political narrative disappointed audience expectations with its focus on revolution, rather than humor (Frayling 239).

Another way that the film was translated in terms of attracting the *Trinity* market was through changes to the musical theme “Free,” by Augusto Martelli. In the Spanish version, the theme is instrumental, however, the English translation features lyrics sung by Martelli in heavily accented English. This makes “Free” similar to the themes featured in the openings of *They Call Me Trinity* (by Franco Micalizzi) and *Trinity is Still My Name*; jaunty lyrics over a melody that is at the same time sweeping and upbeat. What is particularly interesting here is the way the lyrics of “Free” seem at odds with *Revenge of Trinity*, as Martelli croons:

*Free, free to live my life the way I think I should  
Free, free to be the man that no one understood*

...

*Oh, free to do the things I thought would never be  
Free to see the world in all its ecstasy  
This must be heaven  
Free, I'm so happy to be free*

But the narrative of *Revenge of Trinity* is, in fact, all about the lack of freedom. The theme doesn't play until nearly six minutes into the film, when Marco and his brother have already accepted Don Antonio's offer and are on the train to the village. What little freedom the brothers did have, as hired guns, is clearly compromised after the mysterious job offer that specifically instructs them on where to appear and how to act. The villagers are seeking freedom from the oppression of Don Antonio, but their “freedom” is simply better wages in their current employment. Even Don Antonio is not “free” from the system, as he is subject to both the acts of his fellow landowners and the constraints of his family connections, evidenced by the forceful opinions of his sons in terms of how to deal with the villagers. In this way, the inclusion of the lyrics here serves as a puzzling counterpoint to the oppression found throughout the film. As it plays over the closing of the film, immediately following Marco's murder, the song seems to imply that perhaps Marco has finally found freedom in death. Yet, the absence of these lyrics in the Spanish language version suggests that their inclusion is intended to develop the connection to the *Trinity* series, which arguably downplays the political aspects of the film by subsuming it into the spaghetti western tradition.

This puts genre in conversation with translation, because the movement



from a Spanish audience to an English-speaking one emphasizes the (global) *western* aspects, as opposed to the (local) Spanish politics. The use of translation to market the film as a spaghetti western in the vein of *They Call Me Trinity* seems at odds with not only the deeply political focus of the film, but also its very Spanish context. Spaghetti westerns are often either set in a nondescript and unidentified dusty landscape (recalling the American West) or specifically identified as being set in the United States or Mexico. *Revenge of Trinity*, on the other hand, is set in Andalusia at the end of the nineteenth century, and uses the specific context of the conflict between local laborers and the aristocrats to form its political narrative. Frayling goes so far as to point out that the film is a western “despite the location!” (239). Made while Franco was still in power, the film was not only subject to intense censorship when it was released in Spain, but also draws on the current political climate to lend weight to the themes of oppression.

We can see this specifically in the emphasis on Marco as the lone gunfighter, who takes very little action throughout the film and, as a character, seems secondary to the struggle of the workers. I say “seems” here because all versions of the film have sustained serious cuts, first under pressure from Italian financial backers and then for the Spanish censors. Even with these cuts, however, the film spends the majority of the narrative focusing on the organization, education, and uprising of the laborers against the powerful landowners. Long takes are devoted to speeches by the group leader, espousing the need for a “classless society”:

We should no longer accept injustice – we should rise up, and fight for our liberty, our dignity, and our rights. We bear within ourselves a new world, a world full of promise. Ruins and destruction do not frighten us, for we have built everything with our own hands – palaces and churches, roads and bridges; *we will destroy them all if need be to rebuild a more beautiful world.*  
(Frayling 239, emphasis his)

That this kind of speech was allowed to pass censors in Franco’s Spain speaks to the perception of the western as primarily an entertainment genre, rather than a space of protest or resistance. In many ways, this is perhaps where tying the film to the *Trinity* series is beneficial; the presence of Hill as a gunfighter seems to provide a distraction from the more sensitive political narrative.

Like the early westerns in Algeria and North Africa, *Revenge of Trinity*

provides an example of the way the western as a global genre is malleable in its response to local concerns. While Frayling admits that the film is not “politically sophisticated,” he recognizes the importance of “a film about an anarchist uprising in Andalusia” being “seen by cinemagoers in Franco’s Spain” (242). I would credit this to the western aspects of the film, which, thanks to the popularity of spaghetti westerns at the time of its release, seemed to protect the narrative from too much scrutiny. In translating *La Collera del Vento* to fit with the *Trinity* series, we could say that a Spanish western was subsumed into a spaghetti western series in order to attract audiences of Hollywood westerns. Of course, analysis of the film itself challenges such a linear categorization, as the translation doesn’t ultimately remove the focus on Spanish worker uprisings nor does it add the comedic elements typical of the *Trinity* films. However, in assigning any of these broad labels to the film, *La Collera del Vento* adds to each tradition: retaining a subversive message under Franco’s censors by drawing on the spaghetti western and bringing overtly political content to the comedic *Trinity* spaghetti westerns. By recognizing the film in terms of its movement between these traditions and the ways in which it challenges homogenizing labels, we can see its contributions to defining the genre of the western.

### **Translating genre: the international attraction of *800 Bullets***

In the same way that the Hollywood western is often connected to American identity, the spaghetti western has been connected by scholars such as Wagstaff, Frayling, and Eleftheriotis to Italy and a sense of national identity. However, it is worth examining the transnational elements here to acknowledge the ways in which national boundaries are far from hard and fast. Each of the films discussed here is a product of more than a single nation, through financing and co-productions, translation, or the blending of national traditions. To provide a final illustration of this, we can look at Álex De La Iglesia’s 2002 film *800 Bullets*, which directly reflects on the international attraction of the spaghetti western through the translation of generic elements in a modern context.

*800 Bullets* is set in the Spanish locale of spaghetti westerns, the iconic towns where once Sergio Leone filmed Clint Eastwood roaming the streets with blazing guns. De La Iglesia’s Spanish production, however, takes place in the present day, where the sets are all but ghost towns, home to aging actors and stuntmen performing “Wild West” shows for

increasingly small groups of tourists. The leader of this group, Julián Torralba, was once a famous stunt director, standing in for Clint Eastwood and responsible for designing complex stunts. However, the opening of the film depicts a stunt gone horribly awry, in which one of the stuntmen is killed. This man is revealed to be Julián's son, and the accident results in the estrangement of Julián from his family, including his grandson Carlos, whom he has never met. When Carlos finds an old picture of his grandfather in costume, he begs his grandmother to tell him the truth about his father's occupation, and eventually runs away from a school ski trip to find his grandfather. When Laura, Carlos' mother, discovers where her son has gone and who he is with, she is furious. She seeks revenge by pushing her company to buy up Texas-Hollywood, the stunt town, for a tourist resort, a plan that would push Julián and his friends out of their home and livelihood. A desperate Julián ultimately stages a modern showdown on the dusty streets in a fight for his legacy.

With a Spanish director, financing, and mostly Spanish cast, *800 Bullets* emphasizes the often-overlooked Spanish involvement in the production of one of Italy's most famous genres. By playfully recalling the very generic conventions that made spaghetti westerns famous, the film serves as a reflection of the globalized nature of these productions. From the Spanish crews who worked on the films, to the German and Japanese tourist-fans that still trickle through Almería, *800 Bullets* presents a portrait of the spaghetti western that challenges its classification as an Italian national product. In doing so, the film points to the international nature of the western, by giving equal importance to Ennio Morricone, Clint Eastwood, and fans from around the world. The film thus becomes a "marked" example of transnationality, to borrow from Mette Hjort, in which the "authors" of the film "intentionally direct the attention of the viewers towards various transnational properties that encourage thinking about transnationality" (14). In *800 Bullets*, this is accomplished through repeated references to the western around the world, where the generic clichés of the western are translated for a modern, international audience.

For example, the opening of the film, which focuses on the failed stunt that kills Julián's son, draws the viewer in by setting up a clear tension between the modern setting of the film and the use of traditional generic elements. In the first shot, a stagecoach drives across the desert, as bandits ominously watch from above. When the bandits move in to attack, the drivers and passengers desperately try to fight back. However, as the horses gallop into the distance and bodies fly over the sand, the dusty clouds part to reveal a large light and the director rising from his chair in

apparent frustration. By beginning with a fairly standard western chase scene, but then cutting to reveal the scene as an elaborate stunt gone horribly awry, the opening of the film both aligns itself with the western genre but also makes a clear break in revealing the filmmaking process, which also serves to situate the film in the present tense.

The film's position as both a western and a film *about* westerns is emphasized in the title sequence, which runs across the screen as dust moves in to cover Julián's face. The theme music is a reworking of Morricone's famous *Man with No Name* theme, with the iconic five notes playing against a different musical backdrop as the faces and names of the cast are presented in sharp relief on the screen. The title sequence here again returns to emphasizing generic clichés, as one character is seen walking, gun in hand, across a dusty landscape, while the next strides through the swinging doors of a darkened saloon. But again, this is interrupted with the introduction of Carmen Maura, who plays Laura. Maura, a well-known Spanish actress with no previous ties to the western tradition, is depicted stepping out of a car, and then smoking a cigarette, while wearing modern business attire. This sets up the central tension of the film, between the "dying" lifestyle of the western village and the modernity of Maura's character. Caught in the middle is Carlos, who is initially introduced dressed in costume, shooting a rifle from the rooftop, before appearing in modern clothes, eating candy. The remaining credits play with the stylized spaghetti western shoot out, complete with Leone-esque extreme close-ups on the eyes, intercut with the details of the guns and long shots of two figures on an empty street. Here, the transnationalism of the film is revealed in the translation of the music of a famous Italian composer and the visual style of an Italian director into a new context: to introduce a modern cast and crew that is almost entirely Spanish.

Additionally, the nationalities and numbers of visitors provide the cast of Texas-Hollywood with a kind of measure of the global popularity of the western, a visual reminder of the many localized contexts the western has been translated for. At the beginning of the film, when the only audiences they seem to attract are small groups of Americans, the crew reminisces about the old days, when there would be "whole coaches" of Japanese tourists, or hordes of German fans. These days, Julián and his crew lament, the fans are all about the "pirates in Seville." This shift in popularity from the western towns to pirate adventures functions as a sly reference to the shift in popular tastes that has left the western to be repeatedly declared a "dead" genre over the years. The small groups of

tourists depicted at the beginning of the film seem bored, from a crying baby interrupting a fight scene to a group demanding to see the “Mexican” town. To the latter request, a frustrated Julián responds with, “do I look Mexican?” which again winks at the use of Spanish extras to stand-in as Mexican villagers (or Indians, as they continue to do in Texas-Hollywood) in countless spaghetti westerns. The fans in the film provide a continual reminder of the legacy of the spaghetti western, specifically, as the different nationalities have all chosen to make the trek to Almería to get a personal look at the setting of the films. In the end, the film offers a hopeful message in terms of the western, as just after Julián tells Carlos “if there’s no public, there’s no show,” a coach full of Japanese tourists arrives to rejuvenate the performance. In this way, the fans and tourists illustrate not only the international appeal of the western but also point to the ebb and flow of its popularity.

What *800 Bullets* illustrates, then, is the network of international influences at work in analyzing the legacy of the spaghetti western. On one level, it provides a challenge to thinking about the spaghetti western within national boundaries or as wholly Italian, through emphasizing the Spanish and American elements that were translated or borrowed in these productions. At the same time, the film serves as a reflection of the transnational nature of these films, by bringing all of these influences together overtly to directly comment on the state of the genre. Finally, the film reflects on the state of the global western, through the depiction of the international fans and the tension between the generic clichés and modern filmmaking, seen in the opening credits. This makes *800 Bullets* more than a modern Spanish western, because the marked transnationalism allows the film to play explicitly with everything from the Spanish involvement, the influence of Hollywood, and the fan culture surrounding the genre. Beyond translation in terms of language or marketing for specific localized contexts, *800 Bullets* translates the western genre itself for a modern and international audience.

## Conclusion

This article has focused on movement, both between and among national contexts, in terms of language, distribution, production, and generic traditions, to argue that the western is more than just a generic form that is relevant and adaptable to different national contexts. While there are certainly “national” iterations of the western, films like *800 Bullets* or *La Collera del Vento* are not products of one national production company or

specifically meant for one national audience. These films were made to be translated and distributed with commercial success beyond national borders, and, more importantly, represent a network of influences that set up a reciprocal relationship between the dominant traditions within the western: the Hollywood western and the spaghetti western.

In examining the way that genre is shaped by transnationalism and translation here, I have only provided one small sample in terms of context. Frayling argues that “Spaghetti Westerns represent *one* tradition that must be taken into account – a tradition that has been neglected in attempts to relate the Western exclusively to the expectations of American audiences without reference to non-American – one might even say un-American – products” (286). At the same time that the spaghetti western is often *only* read in terms of the Hollywood western and America, many of the films that fall just outside the “spaghetti” label are also homogenized into this category. By revising the way that we view these relationships between films and national contexts, it is possible to rethink the western as a transnational genre, where even films tied to a particular national context become products of the circulation and translation of generic elements.

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**Chelsea Wessels** recently defended her PhD thesis at the University of St Andrews. Her research de-centers notions of the Western genre as an American form, pointing out the interrelation of national and global factors that have led to the emergence and the adoption of the western as a political and popular genre. She is currently teaching in the United States.

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