



**THE FILMS OF**  
**SERGIO LEONE**

ROBERT C. CUMBOW



*The Films of  
Sergio Leone*

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## Acknowledgments

So many people have, over the years, made a difference to my experience and vision of the films of Sergio Leone that it is impossible to thank them all properly, and daunting even to try to list them all. But I must make the effort. They earned it.

The story starts one day in 1978, when, after watching *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* for the umpteenth time, at The Cinema in Olympia, Washington, I remarked to proprietor Nancy Duncan that someone ought to write a book on Sergio Leone. “Why don’t you?” she replied.

A couple of articles constituted dry runs at the subject. Then, in the early ’80s, I took a shot at a book, to be called *Sergio Leone’s West*. The plan had to change when Leone began work on his longtime dream project, *Once Upon a Time in America*. So I revised an already completed manuscript, and in 1987 *Once Upon a Time: The Films of Sergio Leone* saw the light of day as the first full-length book on Leone’s work. There had been articles here and there, one monograph in French and one in Italian, and chapter-length discussions in Christopher Frayling’s *Spaghetti Westerns* and Laurence Staig and Tony Williams’s *Italian Western: The Opera of Violence*. But mine was the first effort at a book-length consideration of Leone’s films, what makes them work, and what makes them fascinate us.

It was not without its warts. That first edition was written at a time when information on Leone, his work, and Italian Westerns in general was in short supply and unreliable. Even prints of the films contained misspelled names, characters assigned to the wrong actors, insufficient credit crawls or none at all. For names of characters and lines of dialogue, one had to rely on what one heard—or thought one heard—on an often badly dubbed soundtrack, and scribbled down, barely legibly, in a dark movie house.

As Sergio Leone went from a stylistic oddity of film history, appreciated by a fistful of followers, to a household word and an acclaimed influential cinematic original, I became increasingly painfully aware of—and embarrassed by—the errors and inadequacies of the 1987 edition. But nearly two decades would pass before I got the opportunity to revise the book. During that interim, as the age of the Internet brought fans together and made information more readily available, detailed information on the films and the talent behind them became abundant, and I am pleased and honored at last to present this revised, enhanced, and corrected edition—*The Films of Sergio Leone*.

I repeat here the names of those I thanked in 1987 for their help in making this book happen in the first place: Nancy Duncan, R. C. Dale, Anna White, Bill McCallum, Stephanie Ogle, Douglas Holm, Ernest Callenbach, Stuart Kaminsky, Leonard Maltin, Danny Peary, Richard T. Jameson, Kathleen Murphy, and Steven Buss—all of whom provided help, encouragement, and inspiration. I also acknowledged the generous assistance in locating photographs provided by Mary Corliss, Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive; Val Almendarez, Academy of

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**Part 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**

## 1

### “The Key to Your Clock”

David “Noodles” Aaronson, age about sixty, with thirty-five years of anonymity behind him, and nine years of notoriety behind those, stumps into the bar-deli run by the brother of his childhood sweetheart. His greeting is simple: “I brought back the key to your clock.” Fat Moe takes the key and restarts the long-silent pendulum. His doing that is not just an inroad to Noodles’s memories and to the film—it’s an announcement: Sergio Leone is making movies again.

Twenty years earlier, Leone’s first film had been an overnight success, making household words of its title and the name of its star. But Leone himself remained an unknown quantity: He had masked himself behind the name “Bob Robertson”—not, as many might assume, to conceal the Italian origin of *A Fistful of Dollars* from its American audience, but to conceal it from Italian viewers, who liked their Westerns imported, not homegrown.

All that’s changed now. For one thing, we couldn’t have known at the opening of *Once Upon a Time in America* that the film that celebrated Leone’s return to the screen after too long an absence would also be his last. For another, even then Leone was not yet a recognized master. His fame, success, and critical and popular acceptance have been largely a posthumous phenomenon. Long after the first edition of this book appeared, mention of Leone’s name was often answered by “Who?” and sometimes by a vague reference to Clint Eastwood or “Spaghetti Westerns,” but rarely with much of a fix on what was unique and important about the man’s films.

Leone did not invent the Italian Western, of course. He was not the first, the only, nor the most prolific creator of the genre. But the success of his films was the key factor in establishing credibility for European directors in this most American of genres. After the name “Sergio Leone” was unveiled in the opening credits to *For a Few Dollars More*, it became a drawing card in Europe. And once the late-coming American critical establishment discovered Leone, through the more overtly artful *Once Upon a Time in America* and *Duck, You Sucker!*, even an “idea” or “presented by” credit for Leone was enough to make a film worthy of attention.

The name “Bob Robertson” was a tribute to Leone’s deepest roots in cinema: “Roberto Roberti” was the pseudonym under which his father, Vincenzo Leone, became an early and important force in Italian film, directing more than a hundred films from 1905 on. Sergio Leone was born January 3, 1929, in Rome. With an actress mother and a director father, his career in film was virtually predetermined. He entered the Italian film industry in 1947 and played a bit part in De Sica’s *Bicycle Thief*.

But his destiny lay on the other side of the camera. Leone served his apprenticeship assisting Italian directors, as well as advising Americans who came to

Italy in the '50s to work at Cinecittà on then-popular, ancient-world epics. These included William Wyler, Raoul Walsh, Robert Wise, Fred Zinneman, and Robert Aldrich, on whose *Sodom and Gomorrah* (1963) Leone was an assistant director.

From under the shadow of the big-budget, American, biblical spectaculars crawled the modest domestic peplum—the “sword and sandal” epics with which a new generation of Italian filmmakers began to make their names. Based on the world of classical mythology and ancient Italian history, these films came to the fore following Joseph E. Levine’s successful international promotion of Pietro Francisci’s *Hercules* (1957), starring Steve Reeves. The trend led in two directions: to the so-called “peplum” films, in which muscular superheroes competed with one another in increasingly bizarre combinations (*Ulysses Against Hercules*, *Maciste Against the Vampires*, *Samson and the Treasure of the Incas*, *Maciste Against the Men in the Moon*), and to the more conventional revisions of classical antiquity imitative of the internationally successful American spectacles. In this latter subgenre, Leone began to emerge as an individual talent, contributing to the screenplay of *Sign of the Gladiator* (1958), stepping in to finish *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1959) when illness struck credited director Mario Bonnard, and directing, himself, *The Colossus of Rhodes* (1961).

He came into his own, of course, with the three Clint Eastwood Westerns he directed from 1964 to 1967. By then he had begun to feel he’d exhausted the possibilities of the Western, and he was already laying plans for an expansive American gangster film, to be called *Once Upon a Time in America*. But when Paramount brought him to the United States it was for another Western. *Once Upon a Time in the West* failed at the box office, yet refused to die, capturing critical attention over the years as a definitive statement on—and in—the Western genre.

Leone turned his attention again to preparing *Once Upon a Time in America*. He began producing for his own company, Rafran Cinematografica, to raise money and support for the project. But he ended up directing another Western—well, semi-Western—*Duck, You Sucker!* (1972) when a planned collaboration with Peter Bogdanovich fell through. Leone then served in a supervisory capacity on *My Name Is Nobody* (1973), reportedly directing a number of scenes of the Leone-based script himself, while looking over the shoulder of signatory director Tonino Valerii. He was a producing creative supervisor on *A Genius* (1975), a sequel to *My Name Is Nobody*, directed by Damiano Damiani.

By the late '70s the “Spaghetti Western” vogue had faded. Leone’s name appeared less frequently in the trade journals. And though several laudatory critical articles appeared, as appreciation of his Westerns grew, it began to look as if—as a working creative talent—Sergio Leone had become a memory.

But beginning in 1978, reports began to surface now and again that Leone was about to start shooting *Once Upon a Time in America*. The reports were true, but filming was postponed again and again. For a time, Leone tried to lure James Cagney out of retirement to appear in the film, but without success. At last, in 1982, principal photography began. The appearance, in 1984, of three different cuts of *Once Upon a Time in America* heralded a renewal of interest in Leone’s work, even as it presaged a dark and disappointing debut for the film. A full European cut, a shorter cut for U.S.

festival play, and the Ladd Company's drastically shortened and rearranged version left audiences and critics puzzled and concerned about whether the real *Once Upon a Time in America* existed at all. But a limited theatrical tour of the 225-minute U.S. festival version enthralled audiences, and went on to become a popular and successful video cassette. Indeed, the enthusiasm prompted Paramount at last to release, after seventeen years, a fully restored American version of *Once Upon a Time in the West*.

Leone was back, at last getting the recognition he deserved. In 1987, he went to work on a long-planned film about the Russians' desperate defense of Leningrad against Hitler's *Winterschlacht im Osten*. He had two or three other projects in development as well. And then, suddenly, it was over. On April 30, 1989, the news hit that Sergio Leone was dead of a heart attack at age sixty. What we had was all we were going to get; there would be no more Sergio Leone films.

The foregoing is the briefest synopsis of Leone's too-short career, and I'll attempt no more, since Leone has already been more thoroughly biographed by Sir Christopher Frayling than anyone else could hope to equal. Readers interested in the details of Sergio Leone's life and career will wish to seek out Sir Christopher's book.

This book, by contrast, includes little biography, no behind-the-camera "making of" research, no cinematic archaeology, no theory of film in general or Leone in particular. I assay nothing more than an appreciative critical response to the sights and sounds of the handful of films upon which Leone's reputation rests. The discussions, catalogues, and occasional essays that make up this book are intended as a tribute to an important film stylist and master mythmaker. If longtime Leone enthusiasts find here something to illuminate their viewings of his films, and if newcomers find there is more to the world of Sergio Leone than they had perhaps expected, I'll have succeeded in my task.



**Sergio Leone**  
**(directing Claudia Cardinale on the set of *Once Upon a Time in the West*)**

**Part 2**  
**THE FILMS**

## “A Sergio Leone Film”

### From Sandals to Six-Shooters

On May 21, 1975, *Variety* reported that

Fida distrib *Edmondo Amati* is entering the disaster film cycle with ingenious economy. He has taken “The Last Days of Pompeii,” directed by *Mario Bonnard* and *Sergio Leone* (his first) for re-issue with added scenes of earthquakes and other natural catastrophes.

Soon afterward, this letter appeared in *Variety*, under the headline “Leone on His Past”:

Rome.

Editor, *Variety*:

With reference to the news item published in *Variety* on May 21st, 1975, I should like to specify that before becoming a full-fledged director, I have worked as an assistant director in 58 films. In many of these (including “The Last Days of Pompeii”), I have also directed the second unit.

Clever distributors digging up these old pictures and exhibiting my name in block letters are obviously trying to make a few pretty pennies by misleading the spectator into believing that they are Sergio Leone films.

Sergio Leone

By the time he wrote this letter, Sergio Leone had clearly developed a notion of what constituted “a Sergio Leone film,” and wanted the film world to understand that notion in no uncertain terms. In the first edition of this book, I expressly deferred to Leone’s self-definition, and limited myself to the “true” Leone films by beginning my examination of the director’s work with *A Fistful of Dollars*. But today, with the perspective of two additional decades, there is value in taking at least a brief look at the “sword and sandal” films that formed the context of Leone’s apprenticeship—especially since those films offer early manifestations of the kind of narrative form that Leone ultimately refined and made his own.

The “peplum” films—so named for the Roman-style sandal worn by the characters in them—were a result of the fusion of a traditional interest of Italian cinema and the incursion of American filmmakers into Italy in the mid- to late ’50s to get the advantage of inexpensive labor and Mediterranean landscapes for the biblical spectacles that were in particular demand at the time. A generation of young Italian filmmakers, raised on American films, inspired by postwar neorealism, and eager for new modes of expression for their hungry talent, found their tools in the detritus of American production companies’ Roman holiday—not only sets, props, and costumes, but cameras, cranes, raw film, and stock footage. Serving as assistant directors and in other capacities on American productions afforded these young men the opportunity to grab what they could and make films of their own on the fly. This was the beginning

of the careers of many writers and directors who would make names for themselves in the years ahead: not only Leone but Sergio Corbucci, Sergio Sollima, Mario Bava, Antonio Margheriti, Gianfranco Parolini, Pietro Francisci, Mario Caiano.

The peplum formula presents a narrative model that these young writers and directors would later adapt to the nineteenth-century American Southwest, both affronting and revitalizing the ailing Western genre. There are many peplum films, the genre is rich and varied, and one may do it a disservice by generalizing. But it is important to recognize that the genre that came to be known by the flippant title “Spaghetti Westerns” did not emerge through spontaneous combustion. Most of the narrative and character elements of the Italian Western were already present in the peplum films, which got them in turn from mixing and matching Greek, Roman, and early Christian history and myth.

The typical peplum story centers on an outsider, a man from another land or country, whose wanderings bring him to a new land, rich, decadent, and oppressed. This land is customarily ruled by either a powerful tyrant or a good but weak king who is about to be overthrown by a would-be tyrant. The outsider is either welcome or unwelcome at court, and sometimes both; but his fate becomes intertwined with that of an attractive woman of noble birth, who is caught up in the political turmoil (on one side or the other). The outsider makes it his business to strike a blow for freedom and right, and to rid the country of the oppressor. In doing so, the outsider often also gets his revenge on the very forces that destroyed his family or village, and caused him to become a rootless wanderer in the first place. To put it another way, the typical peplum hero has a private mission and a public mission—to gain revenge for a personal wrong done to him, and to free others from a similar wrong—and in the purest iterations of the formula, the two missions merge when the oppressor turns out to be the same villain.

Leone worked on American-produced biblical epics as well as writing and co-directing Italian-produced peplums of the mythic world. The two films in which he played the most important role were *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei* (*The Last Days of Pompeii*, a 1959 widescreen and color remake of an ever-popular Bulwer-Lytton potboiler that had already been filmed many times before), which Leone co-directed with an ill and aging Mario Bonnard; and *Il colosso di Rodi* (*The Colossus of Rhodes*, 1961), which gave Leone his first solo director credit. Leone’s peplum films do not exhibit much of what would later come to be recognized as the Leone style. But they do exemplify the mythic and narrative patterns that interested him as a writer, an inventor of stories, characters, and plot structures. Both involve a visitor or outsider who comes to a city especially noted for beauty and spectacle on the one hand, corruption and treachery on the other. Both films’ protagonists are at odds with—and briefly suffer at the hands of—oppressive regimes. And in both films the protagonist escapes an apocalyptic disaster that destroys the city and the evil within it.

If films such as *Gli ultimi giorni di Pompei* and *Il Colosso di Rodi* are similar to Leone’s later work more in their dialogue, structure, and character relationships than in their visual style and technique, it is partly because Leone was still learning his craft, developing the tools and fine-tuning the techniques that he would later make uniquely his own, and partly because of the severely limited budgets and shooting schedules

faced by the young Italian filmmakers working in the peplum genre. There is little in *Il Colosso di Rodi* to suggest the stylist that Leone would become just a few years later—though the film does contain one clever and prophetic trompe l’oeil shot involving eyeballs filling the widescreen frame.

It was the shift in filmmakers’ and audiences’ interest from the peplum to the Western that made Leone’s growth to artistic maturity take the path it did. The peplum experience laid the basis for Leone’s mythic vision and his episodic approach to narrative and character. When, in 1961, some of the peplum makers had got the idea of plowing fresher ground by using the landscapes of Spain to make Westerns set in the American Southwest, the process was already set in motion by which Leone would emerge as a cinematic giant of unique vision.

As already noted, Leone was not the first of the peplum directors to attempt a Western; even today too many moviegoers who know Leone’s name and what it came to stand for fail to appreciate the impact the Italian Western had, or the masterpieces it produced, during the slightly less than two decades the genre held sway in Europe. A mere fraction of the more than five hundred “Euro-Westerns” produced between 1961 and 1978 ever reached the United States, notwithstanding the enthusiasm Leone’s films met with American audiences (who seemed to understand and appreciate what the genre was doing far faster than most critics did).

Sergio Corbucci, whose *Romolo e Remo (Duel of the Titans)*, (1961) is one of the best peplum films, and who remarked more than once that the Italian Western grew directly from the peplum genre, is also responsible for two of the greatest “Spaghetti Westerns”: *Django* (1966) and *The Great Silence* (1969). Sergio Sollima’s *La Resa dei Conti (The Big Gundown)*, (1966) and *Faccia a faccia (Face to Face)*, (1967) are little-seen masterpieces. Giulio Petroni’s brilliant *Da uomo a uomo (Death Rides a Horse)*, (1968) was allowed to fall into the public domain and is thus the subject of many inferior DVD transfers, not one of which preserves the proper widescreen ratio of the original film. Giulio Questi’s bizarre *Se sei vivo, spara (Django Kill)*, (1967) brought European existential expressionism to the Western well before *El Topo* (1970). But the films of Sergio Leone remain the principal exemplars of the Italian Western.

The degree to which Leone’s films became the benchmark for all later assays of the Western genre was apparent in 2006, when John Hillcoat’s film of Nick Cave’s *The Proposition* hit U.S. screens, to be widely and enthusiastically compared with the films of Sergio Leone. And, true enough, the Australian film employed many of the techniques associated with Leone’s Westerns: realistic emphasis on dirty hair, mud- and blood-caked skin, unshaven faces; uncompromising depictions of violence and cruelty; stunning landscapes of natural beauty contrasted with an ugliness of both character and event; shock cuts from wide to extreme closeup; self-referential use of the frame as a boundary of reality; the yearning struggle to find redemption for the most unredeemable of people and acts.

But there is, it seems to me, a key difference in vision between the Australian film and the films of Leone and his American models, and identifying it will serve as an introduction to the patterns of the Western genre in which Leone’s genius ultimately matured. The myth of the American Western (not necessarily of the historical American West) is, at its simplest, that strong men tamed a frontier, making it safe for

a civilized society that then had no room for them. The myth of Australia, by contrast—at least as represented in *The Proposition*, various screen versions of the Ned Kelly story, and a handful of other Australian “Westerns”—is that strong men, both good and bad, were not builders of civilization but obstacles to its advancement. In both myths, civilization is the relentless, inevitable force that drives out the strong; but in the Australian myth, civilization opposes the strong men, and comes about in spite of them, not because of them.

Analyses, both deep and shallow, of the American Western abound with references to “the wild West” and “the lawless land.” But the myth of the American Western is not that of civilization bringing law into a lawless place; it is the giving way of natural law to civil law—or, since the myth is modeled on the New Testament, the emergence of a New Law as a fulfillment of the Old. The strong men—again, both good and bad—are not men who have no need of law, or who flout the law, but rather men who are law unto themselves. The Old Law characterizes men who live by unwritten, internalized codes. Often these are individualized, personal codes—a sense of what a man has to do or ought to do. But they can also be communally shared codes. Bands of outlaws live according to a shared code of values; so do the aboriginal native tribes who play an important role in the Western myth; and so do the “good guys,” who ultimately stand for human dignity and the protection of the weak against strong men who would work them harm. Indeed, the “good guys” (sometimes, though rarely appropriately, called “cowboys”) consistently find themselves set off against one or both of the other two groups: The traditional model is “cowboys and Indians”; but the conflict in the American Western is more often “good guys and bad guys”—the bad guys being sometimes outlaws, sometimes land-grabbers (railroads, banks, mining companies, or big cattle ranchers), sometimes hired guns in the service of the land-grabbers. Popular perception to the contrary, the Indians—though usually a presence and often a threat—are rarely the bad guys in American Westerns. By at least as early as 1948, the bad guys were those who sold guns or whiskey to the Indians, or lied to them, or otherwise exploited them; and when the bad guys were Indians, they were usually renegades who went against the interests of their own people, the will of their tribal government, or the wisdom of their elders. John Ford’s *Fort Apache* and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* were hardly ground-breaking in this respect. And while sometimes the good guy finds himself in alliance with the tribes against the bad guys, more often there is an uneasy, shifting balance of power among all three. (We’ll see later how Leone adapted this three-way model—which we might call “the Good, the Bad, and the Other”—to the structure of character relationships in his Western films.)

The American Western is about the tensions among these codes: The good man paves the way for civilized society because his sense of natural law—his moral sense, if your will—wins out over the codes of both outlaws and aboriginals, both of which, in very different ways, emphasize insularity and the protection and betterment of one’s own group over the good guys’ outgoing sense of acceptance and protection of others. It is on the good guys’ essentially Christian code that civil law is built, written law that ultimately replaces the natural law written in the hearts of stronger, pre-civilized men.

The Western may depict this tension at any of several phases in its development, giving writers and directors of Western films a varied palette from which to choose.

John Wayne, in his most memorable performances, exemplifies the Old Law, a man struggling within himself over issues of right and wrong, constantly weighing passion against reason, often making wrong choices and having to redeem himself by righting them in the end. This is certainly true of Tom Dunson in *Red River* and Ethan Edwards in *The Searchers*. It's also true of most of the characters portrayed by Randolph Scott in the films he made with director Budd Boetticher—the films that, of all American Westerns, had the most direct influence on the Italian Western, given their crisp, spare dialogue; their sparsely populated landscapes; and their tight, quasi-mythic storylines, often iterating the same private/public mission that characterizes the peplum hero.

James Stewart, by contrast, is often the New Law, a man living by codes written by others, by civilization, and charged with enforcing those codes, often against exemplars of the Old Law. John Ford's iconic landmark *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* is a key film in placing the man of the New Law in the context of strong men of the Old Law, one bad, one good, but both committed to a very different, pre-civilized kind of morality.

Henry Fonda, in Ford's earlier *My Darling Clementine* (like Gary Cooper in *High Noon*), may seem to be a representative of the New Law, but is really a man of the Old Law, uneasy with the badge he wears, out of step with the society he serves, more bound by what a man's heart tells him he must do than what the political order demands. Indeed, this iconography of Fonda is what enabled Leone to get away with casting this American movie archetype of nice-guy idealism as the mercenary and amoral titan Frank in *Once Upon a Time in the West*.

Two things are apparent from this brief and admittedly simplistic analysis of the narrative and moral structure of the American Western myth. First: the American Western was uniquely suited to the visions and temperaments of fledgling Italian directors, coming of age while working in the peplum genre, rich as it was with mythic visions and narrative structures set nominally in the antiquity of their own culture but more fundamentally in a past of elemental, pre-civilized conflict among titans. Second: underlying both the peplum and the Western is the notion that civilized society and the people who live within its strictures are essentially weak (Leone called it "a world without balls"), and have need of civil law to control, protect, and comfort them. The strong, whose protection of the weak in the pre-civilized frontier ultimately facilitates the displacement of the strong by the weak, have no need of civil law and its limitations, have no use for it, and when it prevails, they must move on.

This Nietzschean idea, uneasily merged with the Christian values of the good-guy protector of the innocent, is the stuff of which Sergio Leone's Westerns are made.

## “Me Right in the Middle”

### *A Fistful of Dollars*

Because a mere fraction of the more than five hundred “Spaghetti Westerns” released between 1961 and 1978 were distributed outside of Italy, fewer still in the United States, and none enjoyed as much attention and exhibition as the five directed by Sergio Leone, there is a double disadvantage. It means that—for good or ill—Leone’s films carry virtually the whole burden of representing the genre to its international audiences, and that critics and viewers tend to make little distinction between Leone’s films and the genre as a whole. Leone is judged in a vacuum rather than in the generic context in which he worked. For this reason, people often praise as innovative in his work what is merely genre convention.

The Italian Western is an extension of the Hollywood Western layered over a reaction against it. The films are lush with references to the Hollywood classics and the directors to whom the Italians acknowledge a debt: John Ford, Howard Hawks, John Sturges, Budd Boetticher, Anthony Mann, Nicholas Ray, Henry King, Henry Hathaway, Robert Aldrich, and Samuel Fuller, as well as such popular institutions as *Shane* and *High Noon* more honored for their narrative form than for their directorial style. Even the most outrageous turns of plot, character, and ethic in Italian Westerns are basically variations on—or inversions of—Hollywood Western conventions. The Italians, like their Hollywood paragons, were working in an established mythos, their differences in approach attributable to dissimilar individual visions and sociohistorical contexts. Leone is to Ford as Euripides is to Aeschylus; and they are all of them beholden to Homer.

The Italian overhaul of American myth is characterized by a more cynical view of people, of their motivations, and of their capabilities. Violence and cruelty are emphasized—particularly the abuse of innocents. Often, an impossibly fast mercenary gunman is the antihero.

The proliferation of constructions like “My Name Is” or “They Call Me” in the titles of Italian Westerns signals an existential approach to the B-Western cliché of the anonymous loner. Identity is not inherent in the name but in the style and in the act. “Nobody,” “Trinity,” “The Man with No Name,” and others are what they do, not what they’re called. The mythic subtext of the Hollywood Western has become the main text of the Italian Western—more abstract, at times almost allegorical.

The unstated allegorical pretensions of the Italian Western are nowhere more evident than in the films’ emphasis on currency, whether in titles (*One Silver Dollar*, *A Fistful of Dollars*, *For a Few Dollars More*, *For a Dollar between the Teeth*, *One Hundred Thousand Dollars for Ringo*), as image, or as “Macguffin”-like motive—