***Spaghetti Westerns at the crossroads: studies in relocation, transition and appropriation*, edited by Austin Fisher (2016), Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 304 pp., £75 (hardback), ISBN: 9780748695454**

This is a well-constructed volume which collects a number of important key ideas and forms, hitherto unexplored in the study of what is a long enjoyed and long celebrated ‘transatlantic meeting place’ (Fisher:1), the Spaghetti Western. The book, which comes into an evident gap in scholarship, reads very well in addition to contributing a good deal of new work to existing knowledge in its field.

This edited collection of essays is effectively organised into 12 chapters, and then further subdivided into four parts, consisting of the following: ‘Part I: Trans-genre Roots’, which explores contexts for the genre across diverse media platforms, ‘Part II: Ethnic Identities, Transnational Politics’, in which the focus is more socio-political and which observes texts from an ethnographic position, ‘Part III: Asian Crossovers’ which eponymously explores Asian iterations of this genre, and ‘Part IV: Routes of Relocation, Transition and Appropriation’ in which the genre is explored beyond any of its preconceived notions and origins and moves into the ‘afterlife’ of the diverse form.

Austin Fisher’s introduction to the text works commendably to achieve that great task of definition, and manages effectively to ignite the book. Fisher talks of the Spaghetti Western as ‘a classification constantly in transit between cultures, genres and conceptions of taste and its patterns of production, distribution and consumption display diverse acts of “border crossing” and translation’ (1). Thoroughly explored, this is an interesting and diverse volume which looks broadly and with great expertise at this problematized classification and effectively reconsiders the cultural significance of the Spaghetti Western, its global context and its ‘continuing trends of reception and appropriation’ (1).

With a good deal of great work throughout the collection, in particular, Part III and Part IV stand out as offering some bountiful and erudite explorations. Highlights of the text include Ivo Ritzer’s work on ‘Global Cultural Flow’, Thomas Klein’s attention towards the ‘Intercultural Transformations between the Italian Western and the Japanese Swordfight Film in the 1960s’, William Grady’s conflation of the Spaghetti Western genre and comic book forms and Rosemary Stott’s focus on the reception of Once Upon a Time in the West (1968, Dir. Sergio Leone) in the German Democratic Republic. All of these texts speak to fresh, innovative and incredibly interesting theses. Ivo Ritzer’s chapter encapsulates one of the overriding themes of the collection when he considers Lee Seungmoo’s New Zealand and South Korean co-produced film, The Warrior’s Way (2010), a film which Ritzer calls ‘a prime example of cultural hybridity’ (174). Intrinsic to a sufficient appreciation of the Spaghetti Western genre, Ritzer further details that the film, ‘demonstrates that regarding genres like the Western [. . .] as nationally and culturally specific genres perpetuates a dangerous cultural essentialism’ (175).

Elsewhere and of particular interest in Part I are Pasquale Iannone’s considerations of ‘Pietro Germi, Hybridity and the Roots of the Italo-Western’, whose ideas are worthwhile and thought-provoking in their grounding and contextualising of these concepts that are further explored elsewhere within the book. Pete Falconer’s closing chapter is well placed to conclude the study and deals deftly with the ‘ever-disputed “death” of the Western’ (10) in which he considers, with particular contemporary relevance, the ‘sense of foreignness and distance attached to the Western milieu in many of the early Spaghetti Westerns’ (265), and explores the fragmentation of this form and its presence, today, as merely ‘a scattering of recognisable motifs’ (277).

The collection of essays in Spaghetti Westerns at the Crossroads charts this multi-faceted form well through various lenses. This text additionally offers a high level of scholarship which would appeal to higher level undergraduate students, postgraduates and the more seasoned researcher alike. Significant research of this kind, in the field of transnational cinema stands to satiate the appetite of any active researcher in film or media study.

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