

Revisiting Heroism and Community in Contemporary Westerns

No Country for Old Men and *3:10 to Yuma*

MARY P. NICHOLS

Abstract: By exploring the tensions between heroism and the community it supports, classic Westerns defend American individualism and offer sober reflection on its costs. In *No Country for Old Men*, Joel and Ethan Coen present a contemporary Western set in west Texas in 1980 with the irrational and brutal violence of the old West, but characters who lack the understanding and will to deal with overwhelming forces. James Mangold's *3:10 to Yuma*, in contrast, although recognizing the attraction of the noble outlaw in a way the classic Western does not, nevertheless shows the superiority of the man who defends family and civilized life. Whereas *No Country* subverts the purpose that traditional Westerns serve for liberal communities, *Yuma* answers this film and challenges the classic Western's tragic presentation of heroism and community.

Keywords: community, family, hero, outlaw, Western

The Western has a long and distinguished history in American film. The American frontier, where civilization has not yet established itself and law and order are weak, allows villains to prey on the innocent and requires men and women to develop the strength and self-reliance to survive. As film critic David Denby observes of the setting of the Western, "[N]othing resembling a social structure exists; individual character, for good or for ill, is all there is."¹

Mary P. Nichols is a professor of political science at Baylor University and chair of the political science department. She is the author of numerous books and articles on the history of political thought and politics, literature, and film. She is a senior fellow at the Alexander Hamilton Institute for the Study of Western Civilization in Clinton, NY. Copyright © 2008 Heldref Publications

The frontier tests resources, not only against the harshness of nature, but also against the ruthlessness of others that emerges when law enforcement is weak or nonexistent. The Western appeals to American individualism. The triumph of good over evil justifies liberal politics, which rely on human self-reliance and independence.

The Western, however, is not simply "a morality play, a story about humanist values penetrating the lawless anarchy of the frontier," as film critic Roger Ebert claims of the genre's "glory days."² Ebert's "humanist values" conceal a tension between the virtues required for the establishment and maintenance of law-abiding communities and those communities themselves. The hero of the Western often rides off into the sunset, unable to find a place in the community he has helped make possible. Examples are legion, but John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* illustrates this well.³ The hero Tom Doniphon (portrayed by John Wayne) shoots Liberty Valance (Lee Marvin), but does not get the girl he loves and leads a lonely life in a world that would not have existed without his heroism.⁴ And there are others, good men but not heroes, such as lawyer Rans Stoddard (James Stewart) who will enjoy the domestic and political life from which Doniphon is excluded. Understood in this way, the Western is a complex enactment of the requirements of liberal communities and their human costs; it is a genre that at its best offers celebration and sober reflection.

The Western has undergone a decline in popularity since its "glory days," and two Westerns released in 2007 seem at first glance to subvert the old-style Western rather than affirm its values. Joel and Ethan Coen's *No Country for Old Men* is set in the contemporary West (that is, west Texas in the 1980s), but its plot recalls that of the Western: Anton Chigurh (Javier Bardem) is as brutal and inimical to civilized life as Liberty Valance.⁵ However, in *No Country for Old Men* there is no Tom Doniphon to shoot Chigurh

or Ranse Stoddard to benefit from law and civilized life if Chigurh were stopped. Sheriff Ed Tom Bell (Tommy Lee Jones), who pursues the killer, retires at the end of the film and lives on with nothing to do because Chigurh does not see him as enough of a threat to kill him.⁶ In James Mangold's *3:10 to Yuma*, a remake of the 1957 Western, it is the villain Ben Wade (Russell Crowe) who "rides" off into the sunset alone, after leaving a trail of devastation (as Chigurh does). And its hero, rancher Dan Evans (Christian Bale) who determines to get the murderer on the train that will bring him to justice, dies as a result.⁷

I examine these two films in this article, showing first that *No Country for Old Men* presents characters who live at the end of history and lack the vision and energy to confront the forces that overwhelm them. There is nothing tragic about the film because in it there is nothing worth preserving. The Coen brothers' film thus undermines the requisites of liberal government and reflection on its preconditions and costs. The recent *3:10 to Yuma* answers the Coen brothers, for its hero leaves behind a memory that nurtures the strength required for the support of community and an understanding of the human goods that community provides. It is not a tragic film because there is something worth saving, and doing so does not necessarily conflict with enjoying it. The benefits that result for the community can also belong to the hero, unlike the case of Tom Doniphon, who lives a long but lonely life. If Dan Evans were to survive the final scene he would go home to his wife and children. This film therefore addresses not only *No Country for Old Men* but also the classic Western, with its tragic understanding of the conflict between heroism and community. The *3:10 for Yuma* passes through a country for the young.

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN

No Country for Old Men opens with scenes of the stark, empty plains of west Texas and the voice-over of a local sheriff. We immediately think of the American West and loneliness and dangers of the wilderness, even though the Coen brothers set their film in 1980. The Old West was a country for young men. Similar to the American colonists who settled the New World, the pioneers who went west sought a new life, free of the past and its restraints. The man whom we hear at the beginning of the film and later meet as Sheriff Ed Tom Bell, however, follows a tradition of lawmen: his grandfather and father were lawmen, he tells us.⁸ Unlike the pioneers of old, his family has been in west Texas for many generations. The sheriff says he likes to hear about the "old timers" whenever he can, and cannot help but compare himself "against them." He is thinking of retirement, we later learn, but regardless of his age he too has become an old-timer who looks to the past and his ancestors. He illustrates what Friedrich Nietzsche identifies as one of the dangers of history: its potentially deadening effect on the present, which occurs when a belief "in the old age of mankind is implanted, the belief of being a later comer and epigone."⁹

At the same time, Bell's frontier is more complex than that of the pioneer hero whose life was at risk, whether

from the harshness of nature, outlaws, or Native Americans. Sheriff Bell knows that his life is in danger, but that is his job, he declares. But he does not want to "go out to meet something [he does not] understand." He tells us of a nineteen-year-old whom he sent to the electric chair for the murder of a teenage girl. The newspaper said it was "a crime of passion," but the "boy" told him there was not any passion to it because he had been planning to kill somebody as long as he could remember. "I don't know what to make of that," Bell tells us, "I sure don't." And the crime he is now going to tell us about seems even less comprehensible, because he cannot "take its measure." Perhaps it is this unintelligible frontier that no one can truly settle that makes him—and those who belong to this world—"old timers." To meet what he cannot understand would be "to put his soul at hazard." It would be "to say, 'OK, I'll be part of this world.'" Human beings do not simply confront death, they confront the incomprehensible, the unintelligible.

The camera moves from the deserted countryside to a road, where a young police officer is taking the film's villain, Anton Chigurh, to the police station in handcuffs. The officer reports on the phone that he sees nothing unusual about Chigurh, other than that he is carrying something that looks like an oxygen tank, for "emphysema or something," with "a hose that runs down his sleeve." In fact, the officer thinks he has everything "under control" until his prisoner brutally strangles him with the handcuffs. We learn the purpose of the "oxygen tank" in the next scene when we see Chigurh use his weapon, the sort known in racing circles as a "humane killer" that is used to put injured horses out of their misery. "Hold still," he tells his unsuspecting victim, as he slowly, politely, and methodically places the hose of his murder machine on his victim's forehead before firing.¹⁰

Elsewhere in the countryside, we hear a young hunter, Llewelyn Moss (Josh Brolin), echo Chigurh's "Hold still" as he aims his rifle at a grazing antelope. But whereas Chigurh's aim is close and deadly, our hunter merely grazes his far-off prey, which limps away with the rest of the herd. The hunter therefore seems to mirror the murderer, even though Llewelyn's prey escapes. Llewelyn's life will soon be ineradicably bound with Chigurh's, as he finds a scene of carnage in the desert: trucks sprayed with bullets and the bloody corpses of several Mexicans—casualties of a drug deal gone bad. Realizing that the cash is missing from the scene, Llewelyn asks the only survivor where to find the "last guy . . . the last man standing," repeating the phrase several times, even in Spanish—"el ultimo hombre." Llewelyn finally spots him sitting by one of the few trees on the horizon, with his eyes open in death and a briefcase filled with two million dollars by his side. Llewelyn absconds with the cash, Chigurh tries to recover it, and Sheriff Bell pursues both of them. The plot thus develops from what the last man leaves behind. Nietzsche uses the phrase "last man" to describe the type of human being who lives at the end of history and whose life is without goals or aspirations. Last men no longer experience love, creation, or aspiration. They are souls without longing.¹¹ Llewelyn, to be sure, wants a better life for his wife, Carla Jean, which he thinks the stolen money can provide, but he can imagine it in only negative terms—she can "retire"

from working at a store—and by the end of the film he is killed. In addition, Sheriff Bell retires, not coming even close to his prey and feeling overmatched by Chigurh's methodical and passionless crimes. Nothing can be done about the overwhelming forces of evil that deprive human beings of control and dignity.

We first see Sheriff Bell with his wife, Loretta (Tess Harper), as he leaves for work. The directors present him as the film's most sympathetic character. He is our storyteller, at least at first when the film begins with his voice-over.¹² We see his loving relationship with his wife and kindness to Llewelyn's wife as he tries to persuade her that she must help him find Llewelyn before those hunting him do. We see his quiet intelligence when he focuses on important details in the case and interprets the evidence for his deputy.¹³ Exchanges with those in his office indicate that he has earned the respect of those who work with him. And his wry sense of humor provides some relief from the film's foreboding and gloom.¹⁴ He is a good man who would like to serve others; all the more is he cause for despair at the human condition when he ends in self-doubt and paralysis.

In the meantime, Llewelyn knows that those involved in the drug deal will be looking for the cash, and he sends his wife to her mother in Odessa for safety. He takes the money toward Mexico. So many are killed who get in the way during the chase that they are difficult to count. A shoot-out sends Llewelyn to a hospital across the border, while we are treated to Chigurh's skilled and deliberate removal of a bullet from his leg in a motel room. A bounty hunter named Carson Wells (Woody Harrelson), whom the drug dealers send after Llewelyn and Chigurh, appears on the scene. Wells serves as a foil for Bell, for he claims to "know [Chigurh] every which way." And whereas Bell waits for Carla Jean to help him locate Llewelyn, Wells succeeds in tracking him to Mexico. He warns Llewelyn that Chigurh is a psychopathic killer from whom he cannot expect rational calculations of interest: "You can't make a deal with him, even if you gave him the money, he might kill you just because you inconvenienced him." Indeed, he is "a peculiar man," with principles that "transcend money or drugs or anything like that." And he comes so close to finding Chigurh that Chigurh finds *him*.

"You don't have to do this," Wells tells his killer before being murdered, but Chigurh is a fatalist. Wells offers him the drug money because he knows "for a certainty" where Llewelyn hid it, but Chigurh knows that he will eventually get it from Llewelyn. Life is like art—scripted beforehand and rolling to its necessary conclusion. Chigurh does not offer Wells even the illusion of freedom, such as a coin toss for his life that Chigurh offered earlier to a storekeeper. The man who hired Wells told him that he has led "a charmed life" to have stayed alive in his line of business, and Wells's reply now rings true, that "charm"—or luck—"has [not] had a whole lot to do with it." Wells has already warned Llewelyn that it is impossible make a deal with Chigurh. Perhaps he knows "for a certainty" the outcome and is merely going through the motions. He would have more "dignity," from Chigurh's perspective, if he "admit[ed his] situation."

Despite Wells's warning, Llewelyn does not know whom or what he is dealing with.¹⁵ Chigurh offers him two choices: either bring the money now and die, or try to get away and Llewelyn and his wife will die. Llewelyn immediately calls Carla Jean and asks her to meet him in El Paso where she will get the money from him and catch a flight to safety. Llewelyn will stay to deal with Chigurh and join her later. Carla Jean now tells Sheriff Bell where to find Llewelyn. At the same time, Chigurh heads for El Paso. A number of paths now converge at the Desert Sands motel. Llewelyn arrives first and meets a prostitute by the swimming pool who invites him to her room for a beer. Llewelyn resists because he knows "what beer leads to," but whether he remains faithful to his wife is unclear. However, Llewelyn and the prostitute meeting at the Desert Sands motel leads to their deaths.¹⁶ Sheriff Bell hears screams as he arrives at what has become the scene of a crime—like a latecomer to history, he arrives too late to do anything. He finds Llewelyn's bloody corpse lying on the floor of a motel room and the prostitute's body floating in the pool.

Before returning home, Sheriff Bell has coffee with the sheriff from El Paso. His counterpart in the big city wears civilian clothes, whereas Bell wears a sheriff's uniform, hat, boots, and badge. He is lean, whereas the El Paso sheriff is overweight. In contrast to the sheriff, Bell looks like a cowboy from the Old West. But the more modern (or urban) character provides no greater insight, for he too confesses his inability to understand the world and the helplessness that follows. "Money and drugs," the El Paso sheriff mutters, "what's it mean? What's it leading to? . . . How do you defend against it?" he asks. To say that "it's the tide, the dismal tide"—as the El Paso sheriff laments and Sheriff Bell agrees—justifies their failure to understand and act.

But where is the money? Would the murderer have had time to find out where Llewelyn hid it? Bell returns to the crime scene, expecting Chigurh to be looking for the cash. The pace is slow-moving and Bell takes a few seconds to stare at the door of Llewelyn's room through his windshield and the barrier of the crime scene tape. After getting out of the car, he stands for a few more seconds staring at the doorknob and hole from Chigurh's weapon. When the camera shows us Chigurh, shotgun in hand, waiting behind a door of the motel room as the sheriff stands outside, we await the first meeting of these two characters and another shootout as Bell draws his gun for the first time in the film. Bell slowly walks around the room but finds nothing except an open grate, a coin, and screws. He figured Chigurh would come for the money, but again arrived too late. Nothing happens and the film cuts to another scene. Like the parallel lines of the barbed wire fence we saw at the beginning of the film, Chigurh and Bell never meet. The Coen brothers let their film end in several scenes, not with a bang but a whimper.

The sheriff, back in Sanderson—or rather in the desert outside of town—visits the shack of an old man, Ellis (Barry Corbin), who is confined to his wheelchair. Ellis is Bell's grandfather's former deputy who was shot and crippled many years ago in the line of duty. Although the two seem to know each other well, Bell has not visited recently.

Loretta regularly writes to Ellis with family news, he tells the sheriff, although the latter “didn’t know there was any.” The recent news Ellis heard from Bell’s wife is that he is retiring, or “quitting,” as Ellis refers to it several times. Bell reveals to the crippled old man that he feels “overmatched” and had thought that when he got old God would come into his life in some way, but has not.¹⁷ He does not blame God, he tells Ellis, for if he were God he would have the same opinion of himself as God does. Ellis offers support not by pointing to any unnoticed achievements, but by offering the opinion that we do not know what God thinks. God is as unintelligible as Chigurh. This film is not about the world’s injustice, but its unintelligibility. Bell’s words from the opening voice-over haunt the film: “I don’t know what to make of that.”

Ellis offers further consolation by telling Bell that what he is feeling “ain’t nothing new,” for “this country is hard on people.” Sounding like Chigurh, Ellis claims that “[y]ou can’t stop what’s coming. . . . It ain’t all waiting on you. That’s vanity.” But if you cannot stop what is coming, the sheriff should have never tried to find Llewelyn to save him from the people hunting him. Neither, for that matter, should a young Bell have signed on as sheriff in the first place, nor should his father or grandfather before him. Ellis acknowledges “your granddaddy never asked me to sign on as deputy.” Because he believes that you cannot stop what is coming, he is not so much taking responsibility for his choice of signing on—as his remark might at first suggest—as he is asserting that no one is responsible.

When Sheriff Bell asks what Ellis would have done if the man who shot him had been released from prison, he is surprised to hear that Ellis would not do anything: “[N]o point in it. All the while you spend trying to get back what’s been took from you, more is going out the door.” But the film shows us nothing that Ellis has to prevent from going out the door. This may be good advice, but he appears to find no more joy in living than Bell. When the sheriff asks Ellis how he is doing, he simply says “you’re looking at him.” The camera looks at his ramshackle house, which is overrun by cats—some of them “half wild,” some of them “just outlaws.” Once-domesticated nature is apparently reverting to its original condition. Ellis makes fresh coffee “every week,” even if there is some left in the pot. The sheriff gives the old man a cup but does not join him. Ellis’s “wisdom” provides little sustenance. Like Will Kane in the classic film *High Noon*, Bell comes to a former law officer and old friend for help, and finds only despair. Unlike Kane, however, Bell shares that despair. And unlike Bell, Kane does not give up his badge until he has dealt with Frank Miller’s threat to civilized life. In the earlier film, high noon approaches; in *No Country for Old Men* it is merely late in the day. The sun is setting in one of the film’s opening shots of the Texas countryside.

Although there may be nothing new under the sun, Chigurh has another murder in mind; the choice he posed to Llewelyn lurks in the background. Chigurh tells Carla Jean he has given his word to her husband. We now see his “principle” at work: when one recognizes neither good nor evil, one has only one’s word to which to be true. “You

don’t have to do this,” she says, just as Wells said to him earlier. Although Chigurh objects to the notion that he has a choice, he nevertheless offers Carla Jean what he had not offered to Wells—the toss of a coin. He therefore does not even keep his word, because if one’s word is arbitrary it can be replaced. He is as indifferent to the outcome as is the coin, although he tells her that the coin toss is “the best I can do.” The “coin don’t have no say. It’s just you,” she says when she refuses to play. But Chigurh believes that he “got here the same way the coin did.” The next thing we see is Chigurh leaving the house. We might hope that Carla Jean decided to play and won the toss as the storekeeper had earlier, or that Chigurh was sufficiently moved by her refusal to play that he decided a second time not to keep his word. On the first front steps, however, he checks his boots, apparently for blood (on several previous occasions he sidestepped the blood of his victims). There will surely be another crime scene here, but this time without the retired Sheriff Bell.

In the novel, in contrast, we are told that Carla Jean finally calls heads and loses.¹⁸ The novel therefore makes it clear that she too succumbs to the desire for self-preservation and the power that Chigurh wields over her. The film is more powerful in leaving open what happens. When we realize that Chigurh killed her, the choice of interpretation is ours. If we suppose that Carla Jean played the game and lost, as happens in the novel, it is we who impose on the story the thought that even the woman who at first stands up to the murderer grasps at the chance of a coin toss when her life is at stake. Or, if we suppose that she dies for refusing to play, we must acknowledge that her “heroism” is for naught—unrewarded, unknown, and in fact uncertain. In other words, the film leaves us with a choice, which given the alternatives is not much of a choice. It is like Carla Jean having to choose between heads and tails.

Chigurh drives away from the crime scene, as methodically and passionlessly as ever, well within the speed limit. Another driver runs a red light and crashes into his car. It looks like something analogous to a random coin toss might lead to Chigurh’s death, or at least to his apprehension by the law, but it is the driver of the other car who lies motionless. Either result would fit with the Coen brothers’ film, for everything is accidental if Chigurh has arrived at where he has in the same way the coin has. Chigurh gets out of his ruined car, covered with his own blood, and slowly limps away with his leg hurt again and a bone sticking out of his left arm. Chigurh will live to murder again. We may all be last men, but there is no last crime, only a repetition of pointless horror. That it is the culpable driver who gets killed rather than Chigurh may be the Coen brothers’ ironic reflection on the extent to which we get our just desserts. The action of the film therefore confirms Ellis’s suggestion that the world is better understood as incomprehensible than as just.

The final scene returns us to the now-former sheriff who is having breakfast with his wife and finding too much time on his hands now that he is retired. He reckons he might go for a horseback ride. Earlier we saw Bell riding a horse to a crime scene, but now he has nowhere to ride. However, it

is not clear that the lawman actually accomplished much as sheriff. We heard in the opening voice-over that he sent a "boy" to the electric chair, but that was "a long while ago." The Coen brothers do not show him apprehending anyone, bringing anyone to justice, even firing a shot in a film where many shots are fired. Earlier, when he and his deputy enter Llewelyn's trailer, his deputy draws his gun and asks the sheriff whether he is going to draw his, but Bell replies that he will hide behind his deputy. What is a joke at the outset—does he know that they have arrived too late to find Chigurh there and that no guns need be drawn?—echoes as the film proceeds. Llewelyn at least wounds Chigurh in the leg, as he had done to the antelope earlier.¹⁹ The sheriff never even sees Chigurh. To him, Chigurh is "a ghost." Perhaps the sheriff has quit a long time ago.

In the last scene, all Bell has to tell are his dreams, dreams of his father that look forward to his own death. He has trouble remembering one of them, in which his father gave him some money, but Bell thinks he lost it. Perhaps he fears that he has failed to pass on the inheritance of his forefathers. Bell and his wife have no children.²⁰ In a second dream he is riding in a mountain pass with his father, who goes ahead of him—"fixing to make a fire"—and who will be waiting for him when he arrives "in all that dark, in all that cold." Whether his father will be waiting for him is left ambiguous, because Bell wakes up, he reports, before he reaches his father. Even if his dream is an intimation of a benevolent God who ultimately provides light and warmth for human beings, his existence remains uncertain. Chigurh, however, is a reality that crushes human life. Bell's account of his dream is the last utterance of the film, which cuts to a black background for the credits.

By going into the motel room with his gun drawn to look for the murderer, Sheriff Bell chooses to hazard his life, but as he says in his opening voice-over, that is just part of the job. If we understand courage, as he also suggests, as hazarding one's soul by confronting what we cannot understand, we must assume that he has taken that risk and lost because he ends up a broken man. His civilian clothes, which he wears for the first time in the last scene, suggest that he lost whatever identity he had. But if the film affirms Chigurh's final words to Carla Jean—and we have no responsibility for our actions because we got here the way the coin did—no one really has a soul to hazard. The title of the film, from the novel of the same name, comes from the first line of William Butler Yeats's poem "Sailing for Byzantium" ("This is no country for old men"), because it is a country for the young. In his review of the film in the *New Yorker*, Anthony Lane confirms Ellis's statement that this is a tough country, for there is "no vivacity—what Yeats calls the 'sensual music' of the lusting world" in the film. Lane concludes that the "Texas that looms up through the movie is no country for young men, either."²¹

One might explain the film's meaning, however, in yet another way: we are all old men. In addition to the teenager who killed without passion, whom Bell describes in his opening voice-over, there are two encounters with the young in the film. Wounded and trying to make his way across the Mexican border without calling attention to

himself, Llewelyn meets three teenage American boys who suppose he has been in a car accident. Instead of offering to help get him to a hospital, one of them agrees to give Llewelyn his jacket for five hundred dollars. And when Llewelyn asks another for the beer the boy is drinking, the teenager tries to sell it as well. Later, after his car accident, Chigurh meets two younger boys and offers to buy a shirt from one of them to use as a sling for his broken arm. Although the boy's first instinct is to give him his shirt, he takes the money when Chigurh offers one hundred dollars. The money buys their silence as well: "You didn't see me," Chigurh tells them, "I was already gone."²² The boy very politely agrees to lie for Chigurh ("yes, sir"), ironically recalling one of Sheriff Bell's observations about the decline of contemporary times: "Once you quit hearing 'sir' and 'ma'am', the rest is soon to follow." The sheriff is wrong: the old forms are neither a protection for nor a sign of moral health. As Chigurh walks away, the two boys fight over whether the money should be shared. The young hold no promise. They have—as it were—been born old.

Nietzsche attributed tedium to "the old age of mankind," and claimed that it would be relieved by the murderous acts of "a pale criminal." Nietzsche's pale criminal, as is said of Chigurh himself, "transcends money or drugs or things like that." In fact, Nietzsche's pale criminal kills not for money but "for the thrill of the knife," and robs only out of shame and cover for his madness.²³ Although money and drugs do not move Chigurh, he does not appear to get "a thrill" out of anything, but then he is not even a pale version of the pale criminal. No one, not even the directors, could possibly admire him. The best that anyone can say of Chigurh in the film is that he is "hard barked," as Sheriff Bell observes. His repeated and meaningless acts of violence are as tedious as the end of history itself.

3:10 TO YUMA

Instead of the bleak view of the Western plains that opens *No Country for Old Men*, *3:10 to Yuma* begins in the bedroom of two boys, William (Logan Lerman) and Mark (Ben Petry), sons of rancher Dan Evans (Christian Bale). They have gone to bed, but the older of the two lights a match to look at his dime novel *The Deadly Outlaw*. Will's reading is interrupted when the family barn bursts into flames. His father must restrain him from firing on the perpetrators, men sent by a character named Hollander who holds the mortgage on Evans's ranch and would like to possess the land. Will does not think his father can "take care of this" any more than he can take care of his family, for they cannot make their payments. The younger son, Mark, suggests they tell the marshal about the barn, but Will knows that the marshal "ain't doin' shit," and by implication neither is his father. The law seems as helpless as Evans himself, who is handicapped by having lost his leg during the Civil War, the dry climate, and Hollander having dammed the creek that might have provided water for Evans's cattle. Because a railroad track will be laid through, Evans's land is worth more to Hollander without Evans and his family on it.

The next character we meet, the outlaw Ben Wade, appears as a possible hero for Will. From the beginning we see that Wade is an unusual outlaw. While his gang prepares to rob a stagecoach on its way to Bisbee, Wade sits at a distance absorbed in drawing on his sketch pad, although he is quite able to help his men when needed. In fact, the hired guards on the stagecoach appear to be fending off the outlaws until Wade drives Evans's wandering cattle into the coach's path. Wade's right-hand man Charlie Prince (Ben Foster) walks around putting final bullets in the wounded and injured men lying on the ground around the wreck of the stagecoach, and the scene becomes as brutal as the one produced by the drug deal in *No Country for Old Men*. When one of the guards puts a gun to the head of a young member of Wade's gang, Wade shoots both his own man and the guard as easily as Chigurh shoots his victims. "This is what happens when you put us all at risk," Wade says to the dead member of his gang, and later quotes for his men a verse from Proverbs about those who court their own destruction. "Tommy was weak. Tommy was stupid," he observes. "Tommy is dead." Whereas Charlie Prince loves Wade, the rest of the gang know what is in store for them should they fail him. If Wade differs from Chigurh in not working alone, his quick action against one of his own men indicates that he is hardly less of a loner, and foreshadows the film's ending.

There is one way, however, in which Wade distinguishes himself from Chigurh: the outlaw in *3:10 to Yuma* seems to be looking for a worthy opponent. Whereas Chigurh has no hesitation in killing the bounty hunter who knows him better than anyone else, Wade prevents Charlie Prince from killing Byron McElroy (Peter Fonda), a bounty hunter from Wade's past. "I'll come for you," McElroy tells Wade when Wade spares his life, and Wade lets him know that he will be disappointed if McElroy does not. McElroy may be reckless, as when he taunts "Charlie Princess," but he is not stupid or weak. When veterinarian Potter (Alan Tudyk) removes a bullet from McElroy's stomach with no anesthesia, he does not need to be held down by the townsfolk.

Dan Evans and his sons are trying to round up their wandering cattle when they witness the robbery. Will is so impressed when Wade shoots Tommy and the guard ("He's fast," Will observes) that he seems unimpressed when his father rides up to Ben Wade and tells him they have come to collect their cattle. Wade, however, appears to be impressed and allows Evans to proceed in the business.

This will not be their only encounter. They both travel to Bisbee—Wade to give his men earned refreshment at the saloon, and Evans to take the wounded McElroy on a stretcher to the doctor. In the saloon, Wade courts a woman who works there (Vinessa Shaw) whom he remembers as a singer from a saloon further north. She remembers a woman whom Wade asks her about: "No one forgets Velvet," she tells him. She and Wade have larger worlds in common than do Wade and his men. When the men disperse for a destination just south of the border—they know they will not be safe in Bisbee for long—Wade heads upstairs with the woman. When we next see them, Wade sits in a chair by her bed sketching her naked body. He asks her to come

away with him to Mexico. Wade is more erotic than Chigurh, even if his murders of Tommy and the guard seem as equally without passion as Chigurh's murders.

After spotting Wade's horse outside the saloon, Evans finds Wade downstairs with the singer. Evans asks him to pay for his two cattle that died when Wade "borrowed" his herd for the robbery, and then for a day's wages for himself and his boys for their trouble rounding them up. The two men appear to be conducting business as they size each other up, and Wade pays Evans for his use of the cattle in the robbery. As the two men negotiate, the marshal and his deputies surround the saloon and take Wade without a struggle. His capture does not involve any heroics on the part of the officers. Rather, Wade seems careless of his own life when something attracts him, whether the singer whom he sketches, or the rancher who stands up to him.

The town then faces the problem of what to do with Wade, because Bisbee has neither the force to hold him when his gang returns nor the legal authority to conduct a trial. The officers must escort him to Contention, where he can be taken on the 3:10 p.m. train to Yuma to stand trial. The Southern Pacific railroad has suffered heavy losses from Wade and will pay to see this happen, as its representative Mr. Butterfield (Dallas Roberts) makes clear. When law fails, private enterprise must serve. It is a motley group that will escort Wade to Contention: Mr. Butterfield; Tucker (Kevin Durand), who is one of the men who burned Evans's barn; McElroy, who seems undaunted by his surgery; the good citizen Doc Potter; and Dan Evans, who believes that the promised two hundred dollars will save his ranch. In addition, Evans wants to regain the respect of his family—he tells his wife Alice (Gretchen Mol) that he is tired of the way his sons look at him—and tired of the way she does not. Like Sheriff Bell, Evans is religious enough to experience God's silence: "I've been standing on one leg for three damn years, waiting for God to do me a favor. And he ain't listening." What Evans says of Wade, Sheriff Bell would say of Chigurh—he's a killer and "someone ought to have the decency to bring him to justice." But Evans is a man who believes it can be done and tries to do it. Unlike Bell, he does not feel "overmatched," and asks his wife to "have a little faith in [him]."

We get a further view of Wade when they stop at the Evans's ranch on their way to Contention and Alice serves them dinner. Wade talks to Alice of a woman he once knew, the daughter of a sea captain whose beautiful green eyes changed into all the colors of the sea, in the same easy way as he quotes the Bible. As film critic Ty Burr describes him, he is "a snake and a snake charmer in one irresistible package."²⁴ On the way to Contention, Wade needles Evans about the hard life he offers Alice and arouses his anger. "I like this side of you, Dan," he says when Evans holds a gun to his throat and threatens to kill him. The side he does not like—or perhaps just does not understand—is Evans's "sensitive conscience," which would not allow him to kill a man just because he might wish him dead (for example, the "asshole" Tucker who burned down his barn). No such scruple prevents Wade, and the members of the group escorting Wade begin to fall one-by-one. Doc Potter dies

during their efforts to retake Wade after he escapes, and Wade throws McElroy off a cliff when the bounty hunter traces Wade's origin to "the rancid womb of a whore." "Even bad men love their mamas," Wade explains. If Wade had once looked to McElroy as a worthy opponent, he now seems to be forging such a bond with Evans.²⁵ Will Evans captures Wade's attention as well; the boy snuck away from home to join the group taking Wade to Contention. After all, as this fourteen-year-old told his father earlier, he can ride and shoot as well as any of the men accompanying his father. Wade sees "a wildness in [Will's] eyes" that seems familiar to him. "I thought he was going to shoot me back in the ravine," Wade says in admiration of the young man.

It is a rough journey to Contention, but an even rougher time once they arrive. Butterfield asks the town's marshal (Sean Hennigan) and his deputies (Christopher Berry and Girard Swan) for help. If the marshal's name, Will Doane, is a good omen—he is the marshal in the short story on which *High Noon* is based²⁶—the fact that his deputies are named Harvey Pell and Sam Fuller indicates that not much help should be expected from them, because they share their names with two of the men who fail to stand up to the killers in *High Noon*.²⁷ When Charlie Prince and Wade's gang arrive and promise the eager townsfolk two hundred dollars for each of Wade's captors they kill, Evans's chances of success become even more bleak. Whereas the fearful townsfolk of *High Noon* huddle in the safety of their homes and church as high noon approaches, the men of Contention jump at the chance to fight alongside the outlaws in the minutes before the train arrives. And the marshal and his deputies throw down their guns in surrender, only to be mercilessly shot. No willing person remains to escort Wade to the train except Evans and his son. Butterfield even offers Evans two hundred dollars to go home.

In the meantime, Wade and Evans get to know each other better as they await the 3:10 train in the bridal suite of a Contention hotel. Roger Ebert speculates about this "mutual testing of insight" that "each senses he has found the first man he has met in years who is his equal in conversation."²⁸ Evans wavers for a moment when Wade offers him a thousand dollars to let him walk out the door and asks him to imagine what he could do with it: he could buy more cattle for his ranch, send his boys to school, and make his wife proud of him. Just as the eyes of a woman arouse Wade's longing, Wade arouses the longing of others. Whereas the "choice" Chigurh gives Carla Jean is heads or tails, Wade offers Evans a choice that helps reveal Evans's character. And unlike the scene with Carla Jean, *3:10 to Yuma* shows us how Evans chooses and that his son Will witnesses the choice. Evans's resolve that "someone ought to have the decency to bring [Wade] to justice" is strengthened by Will's presence. Evans is concerned not only about his son's opinion of him, but also that he replace Wade as his son's role model. When even Will urges his father to leave, just as Amy does her husband in *High Noon*, Evans teaches him why he cannot walk away: he must make sure that Doc Potter has given his life for something. When Evans says to Will, before leaving with Wade for the station, "You have become a fine man," he reveals what is most on his mind.

Evans therefore becomes stronger as a result of Wade tempting him. Wade, however, is even more affected by Evans. He not only engages in a "mutual testing of insight" with Evans, but he also observes Evans's relationship to his son. He remembers the death of his own father "over a shot of whiskey" and his mother abandoning him when he was eight years old. When Will asks Wade to call off his gang, Wade refuses and denies Will's statement that he is "not all bad." We are, however, entitled like Will not to believe him, for he has just called his men "animals all of them." By the time he and Evans head to the train, dodging the gunfire of Wade's gang and the townspeople, Wade has resolved that he "ain't doing this no more" and protects Evans as they make their way to the station. But it is Will's action that ensures his father gets Wade on the train. Once again following his father after being commanded to stay away, Will releases a herd of cattle that provides a screen for his father and Wade as they run toward the train.²⁹ Wade climbs on the 3:10 train to Yuma. When the two men smile at each other, they come as close as possible to a positive answer to the question Wade asked Evans earlier, "Still not friends?" *3:10 to Yuma* thus shows a development in Wade that makes his actions at the end plausible.³⁰

It is at this moment—when Evans smiles at Wade—that Charlie Prince shoots Evans in the back, to Wade's clear dismay. The outlaw jumps off the train and shoots every remaining member of his gang. He has learned, we suppose, the difference between killing animals and killing a man, a difference he had denied earlier. Although Will has the opportunity to shoot Wade, he cannot bring himself to do it because he understands that difference as well. Perhaps he also remembers his mother's words when his brother, Mark, questions whether it is right to ask the blessing with a killer at the dinner table: "Grace is for everyone." Wade boards the train again as it pulls out of the station, therefore making it clear that Evans has kept his side of his final bargain with Butterfield: that the railroad give one thousand dollars to Evans's family for Evans's service and a guarantee that Hollander's men will not step foot on his land again.

We may doubt that Wade goes all the way to Yuma, because he whistles for his horse to follow the train. It is hard to imagine what is in store for him; he has killed the remaining members of his gang. The outlaw at the end ironically resembles the classic Western hero who saves the community by killing the outlaws and riding off alone. There is of course Wade's proposal to the singer in Bisbee to accompany him to Mexico, but she knows that is "crazy." The lonely life, the film seems to say, belongs to the outlaw.³¹

Will Evans, in contrast, will return to his mother and younger brother with the news of his father's death and heroism. In the 1957 version of *3:10 to Yuma*, it is not Will who follows Dan Evans to Contention but Alice.³² Will and his younger brother will learn of their father's heroism only through their mother's report. The more pronounced role of Will Evans makes the recent film more complex. Will not only sees his father's heroism firsthand in the remake, but he watches him die as he had watched Doc Potter die earlier. He had urged his father to save his life by walking away and came to understand why he did not. At the outset

of the film, when Will saw his father standing while the barn burned, he told him that he never wanted to walk in his shoes. At the end, he follows his father to the station and plays a part in helping him get Wade on the train.

Evans lost his leg defending the nation's capital from Confederate soldiers, even if his own men shot him as they were retreating. Now he has lost his life, true to principles of justice and his love for his family and manifesting the virtues necessary for their defense. Unlike Sheriff Bell, Evans passes something on, and does so to his sons. Butterfield wanted "an example made" of Wade by having him tried and hanged in public. It would be an example that injustice does not pay because the law corrects it. Evans's deeds have made an example for his son and the moviegoer, an example of virtue that law cannot command and that even the outlaw has come to respect, but a virtue that makes law and civilized life possible. Will's dime novel, *The Deadly Outlaw*, will no longer have the same attraction for him as it did at the film's beginning.³³ Whereas the Coen brothers give us a country inimical to human life, the 3:10 to Yuma passes through a country in which Will Evans will protect his mother and younger brother and—with money earned by his father—will surely make a success of their ranch.

LAST MEN AND HEROES

Chigurh's murders and impunity confirm Nietzsche's view that we live at the end of history, when human beings concede their sovereignty over themselves to what they can neither understand nor control. You cannot stop what is coming, Ellis advises Bell, and Chigurh is indifferent to the toss of the coin that decides whether his victims will live. Unlike Wade, Chigurh would not imagine a woman's eyes as the colors of the ocean; if he is invincible, it is because he loves nothing. He resembles the teenager whom Bell sent to the electric chair for killing a fourteen-year-old girl, whose crime was "without passion." So too are Chigurh's murders incomprehensible to Bell, for—in desiring nothing—Chigurh has no purpose. The film is chilling because the viewer never knows whether Chigurh is going to point his gun at the next person he meets. That he lets the teenagers who see him after the car accident live makes no more sense than his killing of other characters whom he might also have bought off. The advice Evans receives from the man who was trying to foreclose on his mortgage—"Sometimes a man has to be big enough to see how small he is"—is a sentiment that Chigurh could share with any of his victims before he kills them. It is he who believes what Wade tells Will Evans without fully believing it: victims are "little red ants on a hill."

Wade would be a hero more to Nietzsche's liking than Chigurh would be, for Wade distinguishes the weak from the strong and refuses to excuse weakness. He is a natural ruler whose men are "lost without him, like dogs without a master," and he comes to believe that such men do not deserve to live. He is a harsh master who surely does not confer grace on everyone.³⁴ He opens a Bible in the hotel room, the book he once read cover to cover after his mother abandoned him at a train station, and uses it to sketch Evans sitting guard with his shotgun. He therefore leaves a portrait

of a hero superimposed on the first page of the Bible. As it is for Nietzsche, religion is replaced by art.

Like Nietzsche, Wade appeals to the imagination of others to arouse their longing. He tries to bribe Evans with a vision of a better life for him and his family in exchange for letting Wade escape. But Wade seems to have no such ulterior purpose when he tells Will about Dodge City, "the meanest, most beautiful, dirty city there was," where "women will do things for you you'll never forget" and where you'll have money in your pocket that will give you "everything a man ever wished for" or "comes to need." Will looks up to Wade, at least at the beginning, but the vision with which Wade tries to inspire him is only that of Dodge City. It is when Will sees Wade's sketch of his father in the Bible left in the hotel room that he determines to follow his father to the train. In Wade's art, Will sees a true reflection of his father's character, a man who resorts to force not for its own sake or for personal gain but for the protection of justice and decency and the sake of his family. The art that Wade superimposes on a page within the Bible takes its place within its covers. This is the only one of Wade's sketches that is seen in the film by another character, and the fact that it is shared is presumably unintentional on Wade's part—as is its effect on Will. It is not simply Wade's art that moves Will, it is its presentation of his father. Piety, at least filial piety, returns. Whereas the film's Nietzschean hero rides off alone, the effect of his art unintended, Dan Evans deliberately leaves his son a memory that "his old man walked Ben Wade to that station when no one else would." Dan Evans is more alive at the end of *3:10 to Yuma* than Sheriff Bell is at the end of *No Country for Old Men*. *No Country for Old Men* to the contrary, "[s]ometimes a man must be small enough to recognize how big he is." It is in this sense that "grace is for everyone." That is what *3:10 to Yuma* shows us, and if it moves us it does so deliberately.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am grateful for the comments of the anonymous reviewers and for those of Patrick Brereton—former managing editor of *Perspectives on Political Science*—which helped me to clarify my argument.

NOTES

1. David Denby, "Eastern, Western: *The Nanny Diaries* and *3:10 to Yuma*," *New Yorker*, September 3, 2007, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/cinema/2007/09/03/070903crici_cinema_denby (accessed August 13, 2008).

2. Roger Ebert, review of *No Country for Old Men*, directed by Joel and Ethan Coen, *Chicago Sun-Times*, November 8, 2007.

3. *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, directed by John Ford (Paramount Pictures, 1962).

4. See Mark Roche and Vittorio Hosle, "Vico's Age of Heroes and the Age of Man in John Ford's Film, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*," *Clio* 23, no. 2 (1993): 131–47; Peter A. French, *Cowboy Metaphysics: Ethics and Death in Westerns* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997); and Sidney A. Pearson Jr., "It is Tough to be the Second Toughest Guy in a Tough Town: Ask the Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," *Perspectives in Political Science* 36, no. 1 (2007): 23–28. Wyatt Earp in John Ford's *My Darling Clementine* nevertheless bridges the divide between the hero and community that Ford portrays in *Liberty Valance*. See Mary P. Nichols, "Heroes and Political Communities in John Ford's Westerns: The Role of Wyatt Earp in *My Darling Clementine*," *Perspectives on Political Science* 31, no. 2 (2002), 78–84.

5. *No Country for Old Men*, directed by Joel and Ethan Coen (Miramax Films, 2007). Unless otherwise noted, the quoted dialogue in this article is from the film, not the novel.

6. In the novel by Cormac McCarthy, from which the Coen brothers adapted their screenplay, Bell tells us of his dealings with drug dealers that “the worst of it is knowin’ that probably the only reason I’m even still alive is that they have no respect for me,” *No Country for Old Men* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 217. Although Bell does not speak these words in the film, Chigurh has an opportunity to kill Bell but lets him live. The audience has no reason to think that Chigurh is moved by any respect for his opponent or even that he has taken much notice of the officer who is pursuing him.

7. *3:10 to Yuma*, directed by James Mangold (Lions Gate Entertainment, 2007); and *3:10 to Yuma*, directed by Delmer Daves (Columbia Pictures, 1957). Evans’s death is unique to the remake. In the 1957 film version, as in the 1953 short story on which it is based, Dan Evans rides on the train to Yuma with Ben Wade. See Elmore Leonard, *Three-Ten to Yuma and Other Stories* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 70. Not only does the hero survive in the earlier versions, but there are no suggestions that Wade is about to walk away, because Evans goes with him to Yuma. In the recent film, in contrast, Wade whistles for his horse, which follows the train. Wade will not be on the train when it arrives in Yuma.

8. In McCarthy’s novel, only Bell’s grandfather was sheriff. Bell tells us that his “father was not a lawman” (*No Country*, 90). The screenplay, in contrast, emphasizes Bell following the past. Therefore, in the movie he is more clearly the end of a line. So too does the film remove any hint that Bell has been anything but a lawman all his life, whereas in the novel Bell says, “I done different things. Was a detective on a railroad for a while” (90).

9. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, trans. Peter Preuss (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1980), 28. The title of the film’s first chapter (on DVD) is “Old Timers.”

10. Roger Ebert describes Chigurh as a tall, “slouching” man with black hair and a terrifying smile (review of *No Country*). One wonders if his word choice has anything to do with the last lines of Yeats’ poem, “The Second Coming” (the title of the book and film is taken from another Yeats’s poem, “Sailing to Byzantium”):

[S]omewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born? (Yeats, “The Second Coming,” 13–22)

11. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, 1976). Zarathustra proclaims, “The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small” (129). The title of the film’s second DVD chapter is “Last Man Standing.” Llewelyn finds the man dead, “sitting” by a tree. There is a last man, but no “last man standing.” Presumably this applies to the film as well. Before the film is over, both Llewelyn and Chigurh, wounded, try to escape by limping or hopping, as does the antelope that Llewelyn shoots and the dog that was shot by the drug dealers.

12. Those who have read the novel will be struck by the fact that whereas Bell’s reflections appear at the beginning of the novel’s chapters, in the film Bell’s first voice-over is his last. He stops communicating directly to the viewer.

13. He explains how the murderer switched vehicles several times as he fled, for example, and the meaning of the tire tracks the police officers find in the sand near the carnage. He also figures out the murderer’s characteristic weapon before anyone else.

14. “It’s a mess, ain’t it sheriff?” his deputy asks as he surveys the corpses in the desert. “If it ain’t, it will do until the mess gets here,” Bell replies. His humor gives him distance from the horror. So too, after relating gruesome murders he reads about in the paper, he tells his deputy, “I laugh myself sometimes, ain’t a whole else you can do.” Of course, Bell’s remark about the mess yet to come says more than he knows; these deaths lead to many more before the film ends. And he does not join his deputy in laughing at the news from California, where a couple rented rooms to elderly couples, tortured and murdered them, and then collected their social security checks. California is no country for the old either.

15. Llewelyn’s incomprehension is foreshadowed when he hears the name of his antagonist as “Sugar.”

16. See William Park’s interesting analysis of how the Coen brothers

“have deliberately darkened the somber novel” on which the screenplay is based. In the novel, for example, Llewelyn picks up a runaway teenage girl on the way to El Paso. When they stop for the night, he rents two rooms and resists her amorous invitations. In the novel he dies defending the girl from his assassins. The Coen brothers therefore darken Llewelyn’s character and deprive him of any heroic elements. William Park, review of *No Country for Old Men*, MercatorNet (New Media Foundation), http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/no_country_for_old_men (accessed December 2, 2007). See McCarthy, *No Country*, 228, 235, and 237.

17. In the novel, Ellis speaks these despairing lines, whereas the film gives them to Bell. As Park compares the two: “[I]n the novel, despite his mistakes and defeats, [Bell] never doubts God and the free will that turns life into a meaningful moral struggle” (Park, review). See McCarthy, *No Country*, 267. In fact, we find Bell admitting in the novel “I don’t recall that I ever give the good Lord all that much cause to smile on me. But he did” (McCarthy, *No Country*, 91).

18. McCarthy, *No Country*, 258.

19. Wells is surprised to hear that Llewelyn has seen Chigurh and is still living.

20. This is explicit in the novel. Bell says, “No children. We lost a girl but I wont talk about that.” McCarthy, *No Country*, 90.

21. Anthony Lane, “Hunting Grounds: *No Country for Old Men* and *Lions for Lambs*,” *New Yorker*, November 12, 2007, http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/cinema/2007/11/12/071112cerci_cinema_lane (accessed August 12, 2008).

22. Chigurh’s statement here is true in the case of Sheriff Bell, who never sees him, and time after time finds him “already gone,” when he arrives—at the car fire early in the film, the carnage in the desert, Llewelyn and Carla Jean’s trailer, and the crime scene at the Desert Sands. Therefore, Bell thinks of him as a “ghost.”

23. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 149–51.

24. Ty Burr, “Western remake of ‘3:10 to Yuma’ is right on target,” *Boston Globe*, September 7, 2007.

25. As Wade says shortly before their struggle, he does not care to talk with McElroy because he does not find him “that interesting.” One suspects his comment leads McElroy to insult him.

26. It is reported that Will Doane’s name was changed to Will Kane in the script of *High Noon* because Katy Jurado, who played Helen Ramirez in *High Noon*, could not pronounce it. There are other reasons for the change in Doane’s name; see Mary P. Nichols, “Law and the American Western: The Case of *High Noon*,” *Legal Studies Forum* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1998).

27. When the marshal tells them that “[w]e got law and order in this town, just like any other,” Wade finds it “very reassuring.” The lines the deputies use as they decide to back out of the fight echo lines of the deputy in *High Noon* who does the same. “I didn’t figure on it being a whole gang,” one of the deputies in *3:10 to Yuma* says, just as a deputy in *High Noon* backs out when he learns that he and Kane are alone against the killers. “I didn’t figure on anything like this, Will.” In both films, the deputies plead that they are family men and therefore cannot run the risk they are being asked to run.

28. Ebert, review, *Chicago Sun-Times*.

29. Will has seen this trick before, when he first saw Wade rob the stagecoach.

30. Despite his perceptive review of *3:10 to Yuma*, Ty Burr believes that in the end Ben Wade “behaves in a profoundly uncharacteristic way, so much so that we’re left scratching our heads” (Burr, review). This is truer of the earlier version of *3:10 to Yuma*, which does not trace such a development in Wade’s character.

31. Even the ending of John Ford’s *Stagecoach*, in which the Ringo Kid (John Wayne) rides off to Mexico with a woman of questionable background, is unavailable to Wade.

32. In this aspect the 1957 version resembles *High Noon*, in which Amy Fowler returns to town to help her husband against the outlaws. Alice does not play such an active role as does Amy, but visibly represents the marriage and family that moves her husband to act. In spite of this difference between the two versions of *Yuma*, however, the remake seems closer to *High Noon* because Will’s direct participation in the action resembles Amy’s. Of course, Will is no pacifist. His education takes other directions.

33. The fact that Elmore Leonard’s short story was first published in *Western Dime Magazine* no doubt prompted this feature of the film. Like Will, the screenwriters read a simple story in a dime novel and moved forward to a more complex understanding.

34. Wade’s gun has a golden crucifix welded onto its handle. He stares at it just before executing his men. One wonders how he interprets the Crucifixion.