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Undergraduate Dissertation

Trabajo Fin de Grado

Men of False Grit: Masculinity and Parody in Joel and Ethan Coen´s *True Grit* (2010)

Author

Germán Buesa Artal

Supervisor

María del Mar Azcona Montoliú

FACULTY OF ARTS

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1. Introduction

True Grit is a 2010 film directed by Joel and Ethan Coen. It tells the story of Mattie Ross (Hailee Steinfeld), a fourteen-year-old farm girl who is determined to track down and bring to justice his father's killer, Tom Chaney (Josh Brolin). She recruits US Marshal Rooster Cogburn (Jeff Bridges) and Texas Ranger LaBoeuf (Matt Damon) to help her in this endeavour. The plot is adapted from two previous works: the 1968 novel *True Grit*, by Charles Portis, and its 1969 film adaptation of the same name, directed by Henry Hathaway and starring John Wayne in the role of Rooster Cogburn. For the purpose of this essay, however, we will be mainly dealing with the recent film adaptation, using the previous one as reference.

After its release on December 22, 2010, both critics and spectators were generally pleased with *True Grit*. According to *The Guardian´*s Peter Bradshaw "this *True Grit* is a very impressive piece of work, beautifully photographed by Roger Deakins, and if you had never seen the original, it might be getting even higher praise." For Manohla Dargis, from *The New York Times*, the directors successfully construct a "true picture of how the West was won, or — depending on your view — lost". Furthermore, initial revenue expectations were exceeded, as the worldwide profit of $252,276,927 made it the Coen brothers' highest-grossing film at the time. *True Grit* was nominated for a total of ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor for Jeff Bridges and Best Supporting Actress for Hailee Steinfeld, even if it won none.

This essay will be looking at masculinity in the film, especially focusing on how the film makes use of a series of parodic techniques in order to highlight the old male conventions of the Western genre and exaggerate them in their adaptation. The two

main male characters, Cogburn and Laboeuf, will be explored in detail. This section will be preceded by a theoretical framework elaborating on the concepts of both parody and film parody, especially in the filmography of directors Joel and Ethan Coen.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Parody

The term parody can be traced back to Ancient Greece, its meaning deriving from the words *para* "beside, counter, against" and *oide* "song". This form of textual imitation with the aim of attacking or going against the original text was already common in Greek literature: parodic versions of epic narratives were written, where gods and great heroes were constantly mocked and every possible divine rule or authority was in that way subverted (Dentith, 40). Nevertheless, the English term parody did not appear until many centuries later, when British playwright and poet Ben Jonson cited it in *Every Man in His Humour* (1598). As he wrote, the concept could be simply understood with his explanation: “A parody! a parody! with a kind of miraculous gift, to make it absurder than it was.” As time went on, parody became more and more common in some creative works.

In the 20th century parody established itself as one of the main rhetorical instruments used by all sorts of authors in a variety of creative fields. Amidst the popularity of parody and its newly acquired central position within the artistic devices, the Canadian-born academic Linda Hutcheon became one the most relevant voices on the issue after the publication of *A Theory of Parody* (1985), where she analyses the device and is implications in detail. Hutcheon defines parody in the following way: “Parody […] is a form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion, not always at the expense of the parodied text […] Parody is, in another formulation, repetition with a critical distance, which marks difference rather than similarity” (6). Hutcheon explores different examples of parody from different historical moments and

highlights the close relationship between the original text and its parody. There is, of course, critical distance and difference, but parody could never exist without the close reading and understanding of the original work.

2.2. Film Parody

According to Dan Harries, film parody can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century: "By the 1900s, a number of films became more self-reflexive by parodying cinematic spectatorship itself […] As cinema developed in terms of ´feature length´ and multiple reels, greater screen time began to be utilized for generating complex narrative scenarios – setting up a wider range of intertextual, filmic references" (12). Film parody does not need both elements of the parody to be audio-visual texts, as long as the outcome of the parodic activity is a film. *Sherlock Jr.* (Buster Keaton, 1924), often cited as one of the first representative parodic films, mimics the classic detective stereotype stemming from literary character Sherlock Holmes, by Arthur Conan Doyle. Charles Barton also drew inspiration from well-known literary characters in *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein* (1948), in which there are parodic versions of classic horror creatures such as Frankenstein and Dracula. Other titles parodying earlier films include Keaton´s *Three Ages* (1923), based on D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916), or *The Paleface* (McLeod, 1948), starring Bob Hope and laughing at the western genre as a whole.

It would not be completely accurate, though, to ignore the fact that film parody has gained importance with the passing of time, as it became particularly popular during the last decades of the 20th century. In these cases, with several decades of film history already left behind, parody does tend to be drawn upon earlier filmic works. Different successful examples can be cited as a means to highlight the relevance parody has in film

nowadays. Director Jay Roach ridiculed the spy genre in general and the James Bond saga in particular with *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* (1999), which even parodied the title of iconic James Bond film *The Spy Who Loved Me* (1977). This second part of the Austin Powers franchise experienced an extremely successful release, even establishing new records for the biggest opening ever for a comedy. Other remarkable example of parody through the alteration of genre conventions might be *Blazing Saddles* (Mel Brooks, 1974), a well-acclaimed Western satirical comedy which plays with the classic Hollywood genre of cowboys and the Far West. On a side note, it is worth keeping in mind Hutcheon´s ideas about the close relationship between the source text and its parody. This is especially relevant when dealing with examples such as *Young Frankenstein* (Mel Brooks, 1974) or *Zorro, The Gay Blade* (Peter Medak, 1981). The former was partly conceived as a tribute to both the original Frankenstein story by Mary Shelley and to its previous film adaptations. It made use of a series of technical devices to bring it back several decades, such as black and white, opening credits and old-fashioned transitions. Similarly, the latter was a parody of *The Mark of Zorro* (Rouben Mamoulian, 1940), establishing itself as its extraofficial sequel and including a special dedication in the prologue paying respects to the original film´s director.

2.3. Film Parody and The Coen Brothers

Parody is one of the recurrent elements of the Coen brothers' filmography. Out of a filmography of 20 works directed by both Ethan and Joel as a tandem, more than half of them include comic elements or are directly comedy films as such. Works like black comedy crime film *Fargo* (1996) or comedy thriller *Barton Fink* (1991) earned them great

success among critics and scholars, while the eccentric *The Big Lebowski* (1998) became a cult favourite. Not all of their films are with instances of subversive, parodic components elements. Their personal style, as McBride explains, is a mixture of parody and other comedy-related disciplines:

> So it is something of a paradox that the rap against the Coen Bros. often centers around their penchant for caricature, their love of grotesquerie, and their fascination with venality. The brothers have little interest in "realism" of any kind, preferring a stylized, exaggerated take on the world, and their viewpoint on the human race is as jaundiced as (Jonathan) Swift's. The flamboyant, sharply drawn nature of their characters, the delight the Coens take in the idiosyncrasies of their actors, and their sheer zaniness are among their principal artistic virtues.

McBride's point helps us to understand the way the Coen brothers use comedy in his films. In *Burn After Reading* (2008), for example, the parody revolves around the generical conventions of spy films, with the directors adding those aforementioned grotesque, satirical and comedy elements to the espionage plot. From the genre point of view, the Coens take their parody one step further in *Hail, Caesar!* (2016), in which a comedy about a 1950s Hollywood studio opens the door for the ridiculing of several different classic films: a western, a musical, a comedy of manners, an epic set in Ancient Rome, etc. In this sense, they are once again combining that sense of respect and admiration for past cinema with the use of humour as a tool for bringing certain flaws to the fore.

The Coen brothers do not simply use parody in their classic Hollywood-inspired works. The tool they so masterfully make use of and combine with parody is adaptation. Blending adaptation and parody is also a constant throughout their whole career. *O*

Brother, Where Art Thou? (2000) is a loose adaptation of Homer´s Odyssey, *The Big Lebowski* is built upon different elements from writer Raymond Chandler´s personal style, and *The Ladykillers* (2004) adapts the screenplay from Alexander Mackendrick´s 1955 comedy of the same title. In the case of *True Grit*, there are two original texts, Henry Hathaway's film (1969) and Charlie Portis's novel (1968).

3. *True Grit*

Mostly from the perspective of genre, the Coen brothers legitimize the canon of Hollywood film culture through a series of parodic films which are either inspired by a classic genre or directly by a classic film. Nevertheless, just as the general theory of parody claims, the Coen's revisions of these films also bring to the fore specific aspects of the ideology of the previous films. In the case of *True Grit* and for the purposes of this essay, these revisions have to do with the type of masculinity embodied by the two main male characters.

This essay will explore, first, the toxic, cowboy-style masculinity of Rooster Cogburn. This section will be followed by an exploration of the character of Laboeuf. The third and final part will look at how both characters evolve and experience a learning process, in which they realise how their individuality is not enough to solve the problems posed by the plot and they must reach out to one another in search of help. Some references to Henry Hathaway's 1969 adaptation will be made, even if this essay does not attempt to function as a comparison between the two works. However, it is relevant to see the modern film in the light of the older one as a way to explore the Coen brothers´ parodic additions to the original text.

3.1. Rooster Cogburn

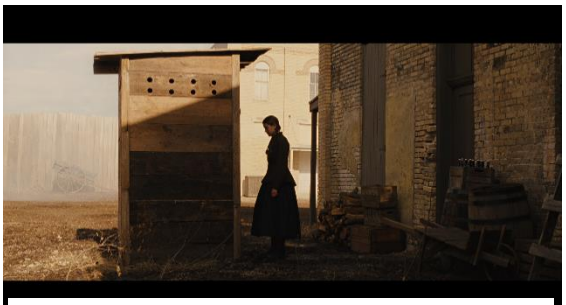


Figure 1

The first time we hear the name of Rooster Cogburn is when Mattie asks a character attending a public execution about local gunmen available for the job she has in mind: the pursuit and capture of Tom Chaney, the man who killed her father. Following the indications she is given, she finds him in the toilet outside the local saloon. Through a long shot, we see her at the centre, staring aimlessly at the door (fig. 1). Cogburn´s rough, strong voice is heard from the inside. He tells her to leave. The use of framing and mise-en-scéne in this scene (the fact that Mattie is talking to somebody she cannot see) highlights the miscommunication among them and the fact that they are unable to reach an agreement which satisfies both parties. Cogburn being in the toilet (taking care of "business", as he puts it) adds some grotesque bodily humour to the scene and the characterization of the marshal. He has been described as a man with true grit, and seems to have quite a respectable position in the community. Yet, this scatological presentation undermines his reputation as a figure of authority. Boje explains how the grotesque bodily humour has traditionally used, "to ridicule the king and clergy, to use dung and urine to degrade". Yet, as he adds, "this was not to just mock, it was to unleash what Bakhtin saw as the people's power, to renew and regenerate the entire social system" (4). In this spirit, the Coens are already mocking the marshal from his first scene, subverting the power position he holds and parodying the traditional Western main character. Furthermore, as will be mentioned below, the presence of a young, female character demanding his attention hints at the idea of the system regeneration introduced by the quotation.

In Henry Hathaway's 1969 film, John Wayne's Cogburn, however, makes his first but brief appearance right after the initial hanging. He is present at the execution and is seen taking a prisoner into custody, quickly his authority and ruthlessness towards criminals. Like the Coen's Cogburn, he does not want to listen to Mattie when she approaches him since he is completely focused on the task at hand (the main difference being that the task at hand is of very different nature in each case). In both cases Mattie is seen as annoying by others, since she asks to be heard and listened to. Being a young woman who stands up for herself and has clear objectives is problematic for these representatives of old, dominant masculinity, who are used to confine women to domesticity. Mattie will not cease in her efforts to organise the pursuit of Chaney even if Cogburn is not listening, with the spectators knowing that a regeneration of the social system is needed as to bring the murderer to justice and it is the marshal (eschatologically mocked in the Coen's version) who has to help Mattie.

After the toilet´s unsuccessful conversation, Mattie decides to attend a trial where Cogburn is being questioned so she can later talk to him. The courtroom is crowded and everybody is carefully listening to the marshal, which reinforces his position of power in the community. The first time we see him onscreen, however, the formal choices seem a little unconventional. Mattie´s point of view is partially blocked by some members of the public, so only less than half of the marshal´s body is visible in the long shot. Besides, he is on the left side of the frame, and the dim lighting of the room combined with the backlighting from the windows make him barely recognisable

(fig. 2). As he keeps talking and Mattie moves around the room to get a better view, a tracking shot slowly takes the spectator towards the middle, placing Cogburn in a more central position. Eventually, when Mattie manages to get a good look, a push-in movement leads us to a close-up of the marshal. This characterization scene reaches its climax when he reveals he did shoot the man he is being asked about, giving way to a new instance of interrogation by the attorney. Nevertheless, the key point of the fragment is when he is fully shown to the audience at the climax, due to the several implications this entails. The clarity and fearlessness of Cogburn´s testimony confirm what Mattie has heard about him: he is ruthless, capable of standing his ground and shooting a man when necesssary. He is certainly a man with true grit, and from this moment onwards it is obvious that he is the right one for the job. Furthermore, the aforementioned unusual formal choices in the fragment add a sense of moral ambiguity around the character. John Wayne´s Cogburn makes much more of a grand entrance at the trial, taking the stand after the judge announces his name to everyone. While the importance the marshal holds within the community is reflected in both films, the Coens add a layer of unlawfulness to their Rooster Cogburn, turning him into a lone wolf with little regards for any external authority.

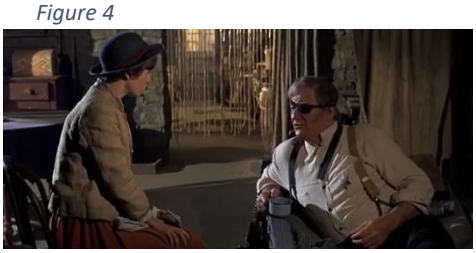
Figure 2

The next time we see Cogburn in the Coen's film adds some elements to his characterization as a grotesque figure. Mattie visits him where he lives, in the back of a small store. They are finally meeting to discuss the payment and conditions for the

pursuit of Tom Chaney, and Cogburn´s onscreen presence differs greatly from that of the trial. This is felt from the beginning in the formal aspects of the fragment: the medium shot frames the man in the middle of the screen, allowing spectators to see him in detail. Besides, lighting does not evade him this time, reinforcing the effect of getting to know him from a closer distance. The ragged, old-school underwear he is wearing (fig. 3) contrasts with his usual marshal suit, making it clear that we are being granted a more private side to him, one that lets us know he is not the respectable man everyone thinks he is: his dirty underwear and the fact that he cannot afford a proper lodging are the most evident signs here. The clothing issue is definitely relevant, since in the 1969 film the character seems to rest fully dressed in bed during a similar scene (fig. 4). In this sense the newer film´s portrayal is much more realistic, not trying to idealize the cowboy who is always ready for action. Very much in their parodic style, the Coens´ Cogburn is a man-child at times, depending on others to give him shelter or even rolling his own cigarettes, as Mattie does in the scene. In a western world of gunmen and criminals in which appearances are everything, the directors grant us a special perspective of Cogburn´s character. Here, he is not the authoritative, respected figure that society knows so well. The film portrays the truth behind the strong Western masculinity, full of loneliness, dirt and alcohol.

Figure 3

Figure 4



Following on this necessity to constantly establish his male, leader status, let us now move on to another subject of analysis. Adding new

elements to the original story once again, the Coens clearly expose the character in a short scene halfway through the film. Mattie and Cogburn are already wandering through the wild, in their pursuit of Tom Chaney, when they see a small cabin with a horse tied outside. The animal seems to be uneasy, and two native American children are outside the cabin, trying to calm it down. Cogburn decisively approaches and sets the horse free from the rope with his knife, then pushing the native boy to the ground. After showing all this through medium shots, the camera pans slightly to the left and the marshal is now framed from the waist down as he walks up the stairs and into the porch. Next to him, the little Native American girl becomes even smaller. From this position of clear superiority, he kicks her to the ground, not even turning to look at her. Not happy with that, and after Mattie and the children stare at each other for a short minute, he repeats the process, hitting the little boy this time and also kicking him to the ground. Interestingly enough, Cogburn´s facial expression is never shown during these unnecessary aggressions. The cold, unsentimental way of presenting them is in line with the general tone of the film, in which the spectator will decide whether this is physical, comic relief to alleviate the tension of the action story, or it is actually an instance of racist violence. The western genre has traditionally placed native Americans in the position of antagonist, as a barely human social group that roams the Wild West and threatens the civilized inhabitants of what will later become the United States. This view has often worked as a way to legitimize the conquest of native lands, and it is pretty common in classical Hollywood western films. Therefore, this scene exposes the racism which could be understood to be inherent to the western genre. The Coens, in their usual style, make use of a straightforward, unnecessary kind of violence in order to highlight these ideas. In addition, there is something to be said about masculinity when dealing

with Cogburn and the native children. It seems like the marshal has the constant necessity to reassert his masculinity with this type of attitudes. He is clearly the superior figure being the older white male, but he still showcases his ruthlessness as a means to let everyone know he is in charge.

3.2. Laboeuf

After first negotiating with Cogburn, Mattie goes back to the boarding house she is staying at. A dolly shot seen from her perspective slowly advances towards Laboeuf, who is sitting at the porch. As she gets closer, he places his feet up on the railing, in a gesture that highlights the spurs on his boots. He then lights and starts to smoke a pipe while staring at Mattie (fig. 5), whose scared reaction we see through several medium close-up shots. Labeouf's first appearance in the film clearly conveys a certain arrogance, along with a defiant attitude. This behaviour will also be displayed shortly after, when he sneaks into Mattie´s room and waits for her to wake up so he can offer his services, for instance. Back to the spurs and pipe moment, the characterisation here suggests that we are dealing with a man in constant need to reaffirm his masculinity. His fragile ego and many insecurities make it hard for him to adjust, and will also see him clash with Cogburn in some sort of a masculinity crisis duel all throughout the film. The young Laboeuf is certainly different from the marshal, and that makes him stand out. In his constant need for reaffirmation, he always keeps himself properly dressed up and his hair looks tidy, especially for the western standards of dirt

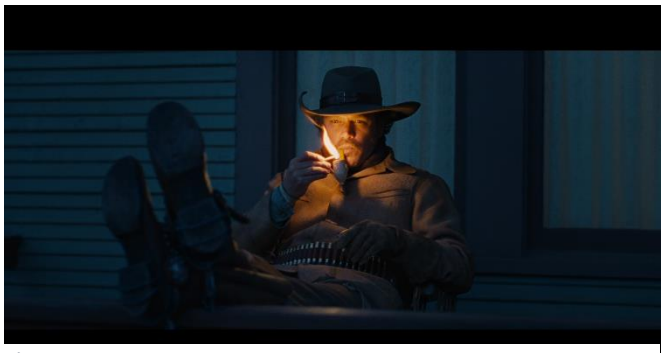


Figure 5

and constant physical action. He is driven by appearances, and even the choice of Matt Damon by the Coen Bros. is relevant here, a well-known Hollywood actor often associated with good looks and top physical shape.

Another scene to better understand Laboeuf comes when the expedition is just about to get started. Mattie is denied the chance to join the two gunmen in their pursuit of Chaney, but she still follows their path and crosses the river to reach them. At that point, similarly to what occurs in the original film, Laboeuf gives Mattie a spanking as punishment for disobeying the grown-ups. Nevertheless, the scene in the 2010 film is quite different, therefore "repeating with a difference" once again as a means to highlight Laboeuf´s problematic masculinity. In the 1969 film, this fragment was simply framed in a long shot, with the Texas ranger spanking the girl and Cogburn laughing and later telling him to stop. The Coens, on the other hand, place the emphasis on the spanking itself and Mattie´s struggle to defend herself. The scene starts with a high angle shot which already establishes Laboeuf´s domination after he pushes her to the ground. Next, it will be the fast-paced editing which controls the tempo of the fragment, adding a sense of violence and even injustice to both the hitting and her reaction. The medium close-ups will help convey all this (fig. 6), while the spectator wonders, again, whether an aggression on an innocent girl is really justified. In all, the action in this scene is just another instance of Laboeuf´s crumbling masculinity and great insecurity. He feels he should always lead by example and protect the law, punishing those who divert

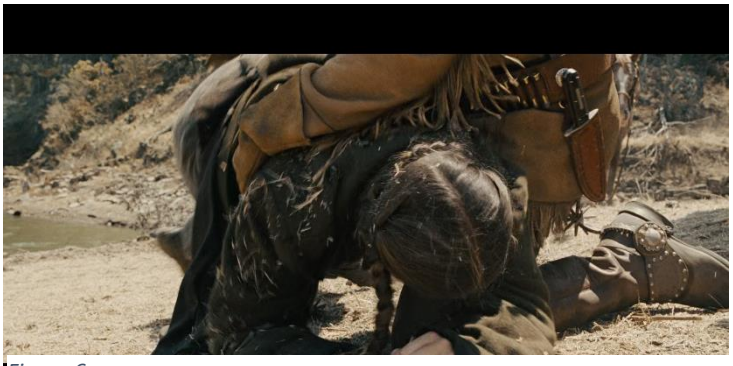


Figure 6

from the convention. His practical implementation of these principles in this case is so unreasonable that even Cogburn, the tough guy, decides to intervene in favour of Mattie. Laboeuf has to accept this imposition, since the marshal is pointing his gun at him reflects which shows that there is another big male authoritative figure above him.

However, the younger man does not always respect Cogburn, often due to both their egotistical masculinities clashing and thus hindering the expedition. There is a scene that illustrates this idea: the three characters are riding together, with the two men arguing about who the best shooter is. Suddenly, Cogburn stops and launches a target onto the sky in order to hit it with his gun. With mixed results as a consequence of his drunkenness, the shooting represents what the marshal stands for in the film: he is definitely able and possesses the qualities of the western hero, but the expectations placed upon him about being a ruthless gunman are way too heavy for him. He will and will not hit the target, with the weight of true grit bearing down upon him and even crushing him at times. This leads to the masculinity crisis he endures, leading to his many attempts to exaggerate his strength and showcase his most violent side as to be feared and respected.

Laboeuf´s case is also related to this sort of crisis, more in tune with a desired sense of authority in his case. Deep down, he would love to be regarded just as Cogburn is, so he is frequently showing he can do as well as him, being a better shooter in this scene as an example. But the Texas ranger is often mocked by the marshal, leading to his obsession with authority and the necessity to project a masculine, aggressive image that does not really reflect his true character. He enjoys telling Mattie stories about his Texas adventures and how hard life further west is, but he rarely sounds as heroic as he would

like. Cogburn, being an older gunman with a vast experience in the business, usually disdains his tales, such as when the ranger addresses Mattie and tells her: “You're lucky to be where water's so handy. I've seen the time I've drank out of a filthy hoofprint and I was glad to get it”. The ridicule here is pretty obvious, with Cogburn immediately laughing at him and adding another reason for Laboeuf to need even more masculine reaffirmation.

3.3. Reaching out for help

The previous sections have explored how Cogburn’s and Labeouf’s masculinities clash during the course of the film. Therefore, it is now time to briefly look at how Cogburn and Laboeuf symbolically solve their differences at the end of the film, so the action can come to a close. During one of the last scenes, Cogburn is finally ready to confront Ned Pepper and his gang once Laboeuf has knocked Chaney out and Mattie is apparently safe. The marshal, in typical western fashion, rides against four men fearlessly, taking out three of them with one pistol in each hand. However, Ned Pepper manages to shoot him off his horse, and he sits defenceless in front of his gun-wielding rival, which is portrayed in a low angle. But somehow, even in that unprivileged position, he seems to keep calm in this situation, perhaps not fearing death while also hoping the Texas ranger is close-by to aid him. Laboeuf does indeed come to the rescue, thanks to a 400-yard shot that kills Ned Pepper right at the last minute. Formally, this last bit of suspenseful action is filmed through an extreme long shot in which Pepper and Cogburn are barely

Figure 7

recognisable and the ranger´s rifle appears on the right side (fig. 7). The importance here lies on the shooter rather than on the target itself: it is of course relevant that the marshal is saved, but the key element is the fact that it is Laboeuf who successfully performs the shooting. In this way, the two individualistic, egotistical gunmen put an end to the film´s main conflict by working together. They challenge the masculine western tradition of the lone wolf, the self-reliant cowboy who needs no other than himself to achieve his objectives. This is the individualism of the classical western, which, according to Lurh, gained popularity due to several different social anxieties among men in the 20th century:

> "The generation that fought World War II evidenced widespread anxiety about the erosion of individuality and masculine vitality in the postwar era. Many felt that, in the aftermath of a globally empowering victory, they were losing control of their lives […] A highly publicized masculine fear involved losing individuating potency and becoming simply a ´number´, an ´organization man´, a corporate ´man in a gray-flannel suit´ " (75).

This, then, would explain the tendency of western genre to idealise the lives of self-reliant cowboys, men who enjoyed all sorts of freedom and on whom all those male audiences would project their anxieties and fears regarding lack of individuality and control. The Coen Bros. give this classic principle a twist, offering the imperfect male characters a chance of improvement through collaboration and companionship. It could be said that a new, more modern masculinity is shown onscreen, with the directors

highlighting the classic masculinity problems and exaggerating the issues they bring about, therefore leading to reflection about the topic.

The 2010 film also concludes this male companionship on a brighter note, seeing them saying goodbye after Cogburn thanks Laboeuf for his lifesaver shot. The 1969 story, though, does not end as positively as the remake: Laboeuf dies due to his fight with Chaney and Cogburn leaves his body behind when he leaves with Mattie. The spectator wonders, then, whether the two men actually had any hint of affection for each other, and would probably conclude that it was not the case after this subtle but crushing part of the ending.

4. Conclusion

This essay has explored masculinity in Joel and Ethan Coen´s *True Grit* (2010). Since the film is both an adaptation of Charles Portis´ 1968 novel *True Grit* and Henry Hathaway´s 1969 film of the same title, the Coen Bros. make use of parody to highlight behaviours and attitudes belonging to problematic masculinities and bring the issue to the fore.

The essay starts with an introduction of the concept of parody, film parody and parody in the movies of the Coen brothers. Having established the necessary framework, the body of the essay has been dedicated to the analysis of masculinity in *True Grit.* The analysis of the film, then, is divided in three parts. Section one explores the character of Jeff Bridges as marshal Rooster Cogburn, looking at his masculinity and the way the directors choose to show said trait through their formal choices. The second section is an analysis of Matt Damon as Texas Ranger Laboeuf, following a similar process to the one used for the previous character, also seeing some of his scenes in detail. The third part is slightly different, focusing on the evolution of both men and how they undergo a learning process which leads them from individualistic masculinity to male companionship. All this analysis has been carried out from the perspective of parody, often referencing the 1969 film and looking at the Coen Bros. parodic work in the light of the previous adaptation.

Finally, it has been concluded that the film overtly exposes an old, problematic kind of masculinity associated to the Western genre, mainly thanks to the parodic characters of Cogburn and Laboeuf. Both pick up where their 1969 counterparts left off and add several layers of ridicule and misery to their portrayal, making it clear they are far from being heroic nor exemplary. Surprisingly, perhaps, the Coen Bros. also offer a

hint of improvement towards the end of the film, in which both men undergo a learning process as to leave egotistical masculinity behind and embrace reaching out for help as a way out of their problems. That, in this case, is indeed a trait that should be an example for all.

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Intolerance (DW Griffith, 1916)

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Mark of Zorro, The (Robert Mamoulian, 1940)

O Brother, Where Art Thou? (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2000)

The Paleface (Norman Z. McLeod, 1948)

Sherlock Jr. (Buster Keaton, 1924)

Spy Who Loved Me, The (Lewis Gilbert, 1977)

Three Ages (Buster Keaton, 1923)

True Grit (Henry Hathaway, 1969)

True Grit (Joel and Ethan Coen, 2010)

Young Frankenstein (Mel Brooks, 1974)

Zorro, the Gay Blade (Peter Medak, 1981)