

4c- The Mandalorian is definitely a western. And not just one specific kind.

There was a minor social-media dust-up last week when a movie journalist emphatically tweeted that *The Mandalorian* was “NOT a Western” with that phrase repeated three times, followed by an argument that the new *Star Wars* series instead “comes from Samurai films that INFLUENCED Westerns.”

Most responses to the tweet correctly recognized that those two genres have become so intertwined as to render any debate about which was more important to the show meaningless. Of course *The Mandalorian* is inspired by samurai films and Westerns.

“The Western” is not a singular concept, though, and one of the cool things about *The Mandalorian* is how many different kinds of Westerns it touches upon.

Almost every episode of *The Mandalorian* has leaned heavily on the show’s influences, but “The Gunslinger,” was especially full of callbacks to the Western genre. Those include an arid and inhospitable landscape, a frontier bar in the form of the famous Star Wars Cantina — the same one from *Star Wars* where Greedo famously exclaimed “Maclunkey!” before he tried and failed to kill Han Solo — speeder bikes in place of cowboys’ horses, and even indigenous people (the Tusken Raiders) who our heroes must negotiate with in order to arrange for safe passage through their territory. “The Western” is not a singular concept, though, and one of the cool things about *The Mandalorian* is how many different kinds of Westerns it touches upon. “The Gunslinger”’s story of an experienced vigilante taking a young man under his wing recalls John Wayne’s final film, *The Shootist*. Previous episodes included visual or narrative references to *The Searchers*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *Shane*, and *The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly* just to name a few of the most obvious inspirations. (...)

The Mandalorian’s general concept about a kind-hearted bounty hunter roaming the untamed wilderness recalls Western series like *Wanted Dead or Alive*, which was recently spoofed as *Bounty Law* in Quentin Tarantino’s *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* — whose title is inspired by a Spaghetti Western directed by Sergio Leone, a man whose international breakthrough was a Western called *A Fistful of Dollars*, which was based on a samurai film by Akira Kurosawa called *Yojimbo*.

And around and around we go. *The Mandalorian* is taking all of these influences and synthesizing them into something new.

Matt Singer, *screencrush.com*, December 6, 2019

1. depend 2. references 3. person who enforces the law without the authority to do so
4. *chasseur de primes* 5. wander 6. parody