

# Shine Bright LLCE Cycle Terminal

## File 19 Modern western

### Welcome to Bodie p. 219

Welcome to The Somethin' or Other Tour! We're in Bodie, California. This is a ghost town in Mono County, close to the Nevada border, southeast of Tahoe, northwest of Yosemite. This was a boomtown in the 1870s and it slowly started to die off as the gold-mining profits around here started to plummet. It's now a National Historic Site and a State Park. I've been waiting to come here for years. Super thrilled!

At its height they say there was eight to ten thousand people here, and while there's a hundred plus buildings still here, it's only about five percent of the buildings that were here in its heyday.

I'm sort of in awe being here, like, finally, man, I've been waiting, like, my whole life to come here. Finally here. As you guys know I love Wild West stuff, it's one of my favorite things. I love Gold Rush history, also one of my favorite things. Ah this is cool!

## Women in the West p. 223

But in the middle of this acclaimed run of work came perhaps Reichardt's biggest, boldest move of all: an ensemble period western that took her familiar Oregon landscapes back to their wildest state and her filmmaking to its most ambitious. Based on a true story, *Meek's Cutoff* tracks a small wagon party on the Oregon Trail in 1845. Their guide, one Steven Meek, has taken them off trail, ostensibly on a shortcut, but the group now find themselves adrift, short on rations and water and unsure whether the blustering Meek is merely incompetent, or worse, sabotaging their journey. When the group eventually captures a lone Indian that Meek determines to kill, it's one of the women, Emily Tetherow, who resists, adamant that their captive might lead them to water and potential safety. But who is leading who and to where? With moments of unexpected violence, gunplay, and even sudden catastrophe, there's far more conventional plot in action here than usual for Reichardt and her frequent writer-collaborator John Raymond. Yet *Meek's Cutoff* is no break with Reichardt's cinema but rather an expansion. It's a western that explores genre conventions but very much on her terms. Reichardt relishes tuning into nature's rhythms and honing in on chores, routine, process. Her cast underwent pioneer camp to familiarise themselves with the rigors of frontier life.

## Rescripting the western p. 224

From the beginning of the film, the western stereotype is immediately clear. The location where all the events take place couldn't be more typical: West Texas, near the Mexican border. All the main characters are perfectly integrated in this environment. They are the essential element of every western movie.

Consistent with the western genre, the whole story is centered around the possession of a large sum of money. The suitcase, containing two million dollars, is a form of narrative centre of gravity. With the exception of sheriff Bell, all the characters share a common goal: to take possession of the suitcase. Their actions and interactions are motivated solely by the presence of the money. In a normal western, there would be only one possible conclusion. The duel is the highest moral point of a western movie. It represents the only honorable solution of a radical out-and-out confrontation between two characters who embody the ideals of good and evil. However, regardless of the outcome of the battle, the meaning of western duels is always the same: the hero reaffirms himself as the hero. But this does not happen in *No Country for Old Men*. In spite of almost one and a half hours of impending climax, there is no duel at the end. The death of Moss, the character we've been driven to perceive as the hero of the movie, is invisible. We find him dead. At this point, the whole western stereotype suddenly collapses on the spot.