



The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre's First Half-Century (Genres in American Cinema)

By Scott Simmon

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The Invention of the Western Film ranges across literature, visual arts, social history, ideology, and legend to provide, for the first time, an in-depth exploration of the early Western, from short kinetoscopes of the 1890s through "classic" features of the 1940s. By examining the American Indian's rise and demise during the silent era, B- Westerns of the 1930s, and film noir-influenced Westerns of the 1940s, Scott Simmon's pioneering study silhouettes the genre's evolution against a myriad of cultural forces. This lively, encyclopedic book revitalizes familiar Western icons John Wayne and John Ford, and recovers forgotten masterworks from the Western film's formative years.

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The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre's First Half-Century (Genres in American Cinema) By Scott Simmon Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1302405 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Cambridge University Press
- Published on: 2003-06-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .91" w x 5.98" l, 1.46 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 412 pages



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Review

"Clearly written, The Invention of the Western Film is also well illustrated, sometimes with production stills but more often (and more usefully) with frame enlargements that support the visual analysis. Good historians of film are often less confident as visual analysts, and vice versa. Yet one of Simmon's strengths is his ability to do perceptive close visual readings of movies while also making skillful and sometimes exciting connections between the film under study and other films, other works of literary or visual art, and the history of the West." Film Quarterly

"One of the many strengths of this book is Simmon's narrow focus and his attention to the lesser-known nooks and crannies of the Western. His writing is never less than engaging and accessible, his insights often beautifully stated and eminently quotable" - Journal of Film and Video Stephanie Harrison

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