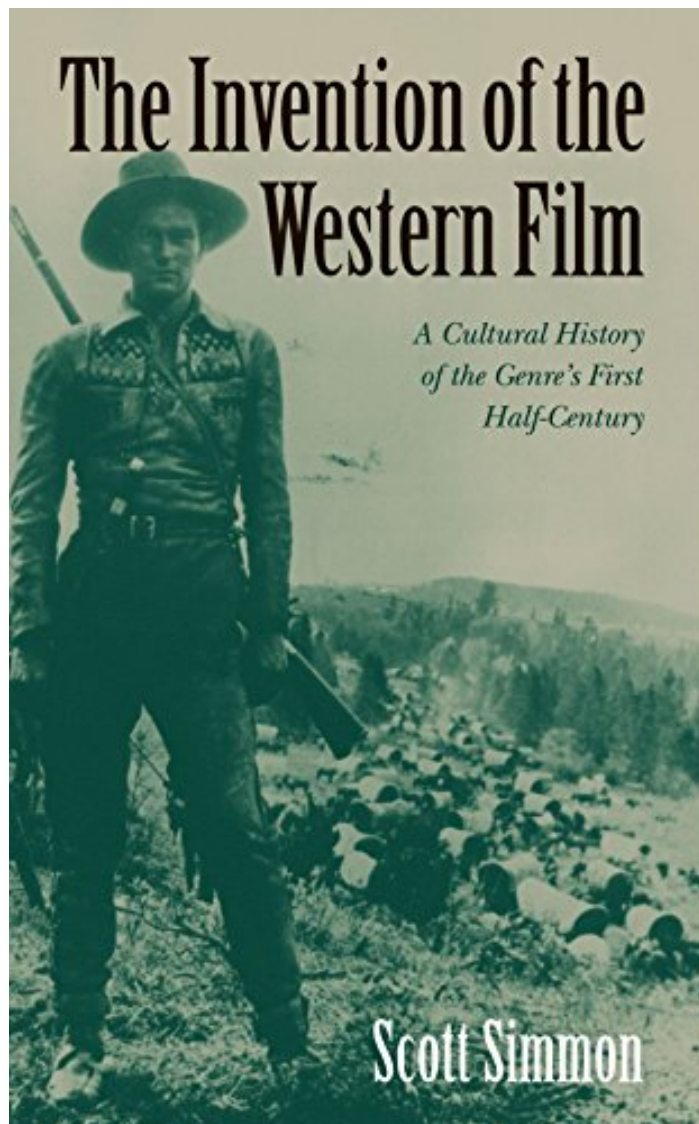


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The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre's First Half-Century (Genres in American Cinema)

Scott Simmon

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Scott Simmon : The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre's First Half-Century (Genres in American Cinema) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Invention of the Western Film: A Cultural History of the Genre's First Half-Century (Genres in American Cinema):

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Not What I Expected, but InterestingBy Michael SamerdykeI had expected a history of the Western genre from "The Great Train Robbery" to "Broken Arrow." However, this is not what Simmons is after. He looks at three issues/eras in the western: silent pro-Indian movies made before WWI, John Wayne B movies of the Thirties, and westerns such as "My Darling Clementine," which were made in the shadow of film noir. There was nothing about William S. Hart or the "epic westerns" of the Twenties. Simmons assumes the reader will be fairly knowledgeable about the development of the genre. However, after I got over my initial disappointment, I have to say that I found the book very interesting, even if I didn't agree with Simmons all the time. He writes in a clear style and has an obvious sympathy for his subject matter. (But he is by no means blind to problems people might find in westerns.) Of the three sections, I most enjoyed the one on the silents and "My Darling Clementine." The latter section, by the way, talks a great deal about post-1950 westerns that refer back to "Clementine." I strongly recommend this book to those interested in westerns, silent film in general, or John Ford.

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.

"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