



# Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western

*Armando Jose Prats*

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## **Invisible Natives: Myth and Identity in the American Western** Armando Jose Prats

This incisive, provocative, and wide-ranging book casts a critical eye on the representation of Native Americans in the Western film since the genre's beginnings. Armando José Prats shows the ways in which film reflects cultural transformations in the course of America's historical encounter with "the Indian." He also explores the relation between the myth of conquest and American history. Among the films he discusses at length are Northwest Passage, Stagecoach, The Searchers, Hombre, Hondo, Ulzana's Raid, The Last of the Mohicans, and Dances With Wolves. Throughout, Prats emphasizes the irony that the Western seems to be able to represent Native Americans only by rendering them absent. In addition, he points out that Native Americans who appear in Westerns are almost always male; Native women rarely figure into the plot, and are often portrayed by white women rendered "Indian" by narrative necessity. Invisible Natives offers an intriguing view of the possibilities and consequences—as well as the historical sources and cultural origins—of the Western's strategies for evading the actual portrayal of Native Americans.

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