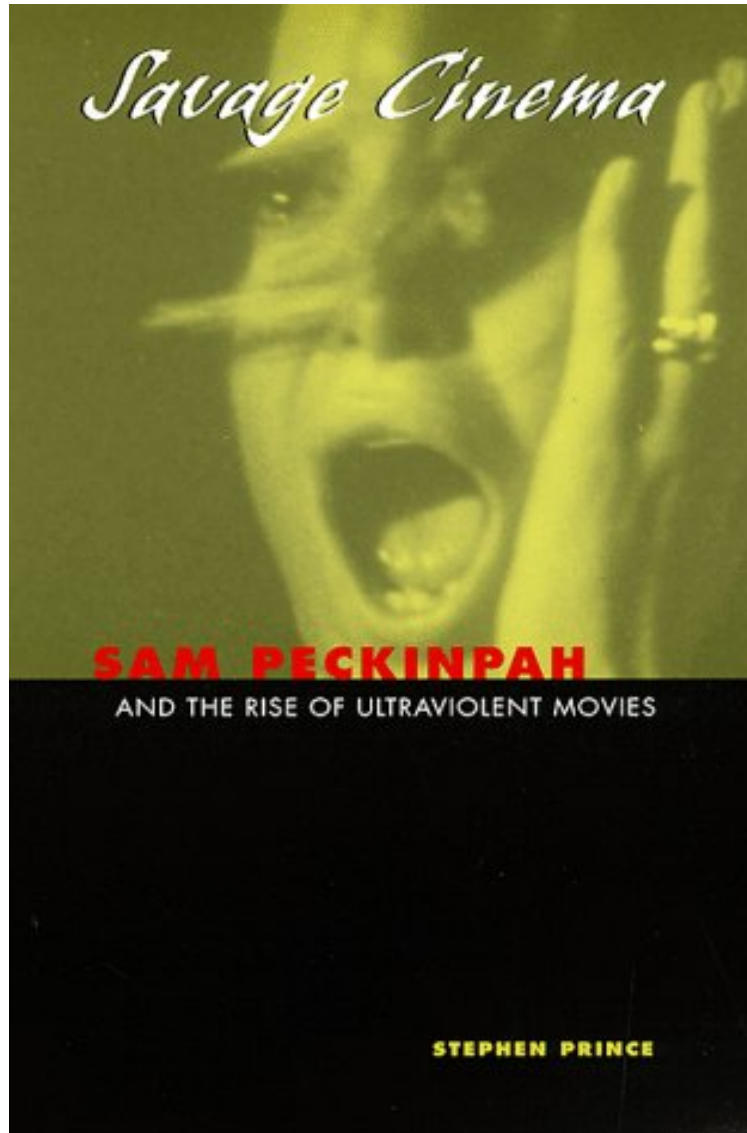


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Savage Cinema: Sam Peckinpah and the Rise of Ultraviolent Movies

Stephen Prince

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Stephen Prince : Savage Cinema: Sam Peckinpah and the Rise of Ultraviolent Movies before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Savage Cinema: Sam Peckinpah and the Rise of Ultraviolent Movies:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Peckinpah's Mastery By Patrick Mc Coy I recently saw the Blu-ray edition of Sam Peckinpah's Straw Dogs and it included some very interesting commentary from film critic Stephen Prince, who had previously written a very interesting book on Akira Kurosawa, so when I saw that he had written a

book on Sam Peckinpah, *Savage Cinema* (1998). It is a well researched and somewhat academic look at one of the more controversial directors of the late 60s and 70s. While Prince discusses all of Peckinpah's films most of the conversation is about his two finest films, *The Wild Bunch* and *Straw Dogs*, however, some other violent films include: *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*, *Pat Garrett Billy the Kid*, *Cross of Iron*, and *The Osterman Weekend*. Prince points out that his main stylistic feature, that influenced later film makers like Scorsese, Tarantino, and Woo was his distinctive slow motion montage style used in fight scenes. He was in turn influenced by the likes of Akira Kurosawa and Sergei Eisenstein. There are several insightful comments about the misunderstood director such as: His cinema is, therefore, caught in a contradiction between the aesthetic excitement it offers viewers through its montage editing and the moral revulsion toward violence which the narratives, characters, and dramatic situations often convey. That *Straw Dogs* has been Peckinpah's most misunderstood film is curious, but the reasons for this misunderstanding are clear. The film has been generally perceived as Peckinpah's most notorious celebration of brutality, a work that promotes a caveman ethic of dominance by the strong. Pauline Kael's notorious description of *Straw Dogs* as a fascist work of art disturbed Peckinpah precisely of his historical understanding of the term. He drafted a reply to her in which he pointed out his distress over this analogy. "...I don't appreciate the description of the film as a fascist one, because it has connotations which to me are odious." Witness to the bloodshed of the 1960s, attuned when sober to the price of his own rages, Peckinpah could not work as a romantic celebrant of violence, a sentimental exponent of gore. Instead, as he said, his best films show the its ugliness, the way it diminishes human potential. The book is divided into five sections: 1. Peckinpah and the 1960s, 2. Anesthetizing Violence, 3. Melancholy and Morality, 4. Interrogating Violence, and 5. A Disputed Legacy. It is a well-researched, if not too academic at times, look at a misunderstood master of cinema. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An Unusual Take on Peckinpah By Michael Samerdyke *Savage Cinema* surprised me. Usually, books on Peckinpah focus on his relationship with the Western genre and put *The Wild Bunch* as his chief accomplishment. *Savage Cinema*, however, looks at Peckinpah's relationship with violence and focuses instead on *Straw Dogs*, *Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid*, and *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*. *Ride the High Country* and *Major Dundee* are barely mentioned, and Stephen Prince viewed *The Wild Bunch* as something that Peckinpah had grown past in these three later films. The result was a book that viewed Peckinpah through a fresh set of eyes, instead of one that plowed over the same ground. I found the book very fascinating and convincing. The reason I gave it four stars instead of five is that Prince's chapter on the use of montage became hard for me to follow. But apart from that, this is a very interesting book that shows how Peckinpah was a major filmmaker and different from the "ultraviolence" of today's cinema. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A significant, insightful work By 4thDegree Prince doesn't get the fifth star only because the book is a little underwritten in parts (like the conclusion), and because I feel his analysis of "Straw Dogs", while well-intentioned and mostly solid, seems a little unbalanced with regard to David Sumner (Hoffman). Nevertheless, this is a MUST-HAVE for students of Peckinpah and/or cinematic violence. Particularly fascinating is Prince's unique view of "Peckinpah's great trilogy on the toxic nature of violence" (re: "Straw Dogs", "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid", and "Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia"), which represents a significant breakthrough in the literature. The freshness and clarity of 90 percent of this book make it worthwhile, and the other 10 percent is still readable. Don't expect Vonnegut, after all this is a critical volume. Highly recommended to students and cinephiles.

More than any other filmmaker, Sam Peckinpah opened the door for graphic violence in movies. In this book, Stephen Prince explains the rise of explicit violence in the American cinema, its social effects, and the relation of contemporary ultraviolence to the radical, humanistic filmmaking that Peckinpah practiced. Prince demonstrates Peckinpah's complex approach to screen violence and shows him as a serious artist whose work was tied to the social and political upheavals of the 1960s. He explains how the director's commitment to showing the horror and pain of violence compelled him to use a complex style that aimed to control the viewer's response. Prince offers an unprecedented portrait of Peckinpah the filmmaker. Drawing on primary research materials Peckinpah's unpublished correspondence, scripts, production memos, and editing notes she provides a wealth of new information about the making of the films and Peckinpah's critical shaping of their content and violent imagery. This material shows Peckinpah as a filmmaker of intelligence, a keen observer of American society, and a tragic artist disturbed by the images he created. Prince's account establishes, for the first time, Peckinpah's place as a major filmmaker. This book is essential reading for those interested in Peckinpah, the problem of movie violence, and contemporary American cinema.

From *Library Journal* Prince (communications, Virginia Tech) looks at the theme of violence in Peckinpah's films and his influence on the ultraviolent filmmakers of today. Peckinpah made films in the 1960s, not coincidentally a time when the Vietnam War, urban riots, political assassinations, antiwar violence, and rising street crime were appearing on home television screens. In *The Wild Bunch*, Peckinpah thought extreme movie violence would have a cathartic effect, leaching away the audience's aggressive drives. But in most of Peckinpah's mature films, violence has negative consequences, and the pain of the survivors is obvious. This is completely different from today's ultraviolent movies, with their cartoonish depictions of death and mayhem. Much of the book discusses the cinematic techniques

Peckinpah used to make the audience aware of the moral implications of the character's actions. Highly recommended for academic collections. AMarianne Cawley, Charleston Cty. P.L., SCCopyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. "...an extraordinary work ...beautifully written ...Prince has recuperated Peckinpah's reputation as one of the most important artists of the postwar American cinema-perhaps the crucial link between late classical and postmodern Hollywood." (David A. Cook, Director, Film Studies Program, Emory University, and author of History of Narrative Film) "...an extraordinary work ...beautifully written ...Prince has recuperated Peckinpah's reputation as one of the most important artists of the postwar American cinema-perhaps the crucial link between late classical and postmodern Hollywood." (David A. Cook, Director, Film Studies Program, Emory University, and author of History of Narrative Film)