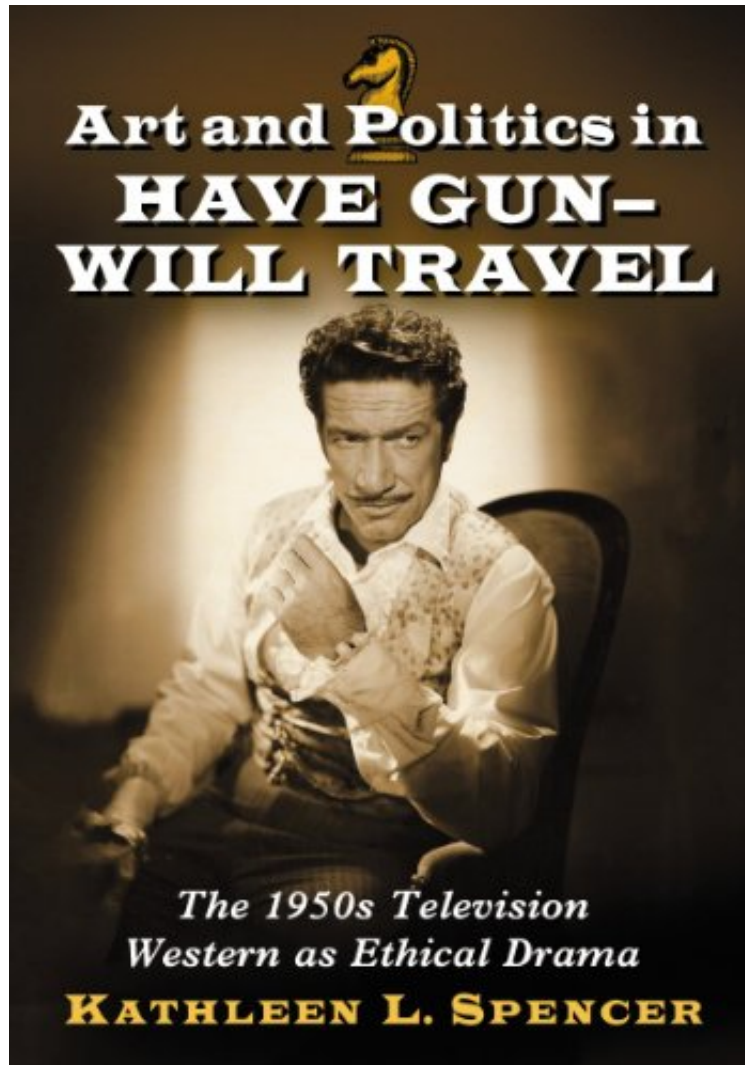


## Art and Politics in Have Gun - Will Travel: The 1950s Television Western As Ethical Drama

*Kathleen L. Spencer*

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**Kathleen L. Spencer : Art and Politics in Have Gun - Will Travel: The 1950s Television Western As Ethical Drama** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Art and Politics in Have Gun - Will Travel: The 1950s Television Western As Ethical Drama:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. and VERY good.By THEGaryGreenThis apparently is a thesis or dissertation, nonetheless it is well written, thoughtful, informative... and VERY good.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great TV show companionBy CustomerA very good, detailed book about one of the best

shows from that era. Lots of facts about the stars in the episodes. A good synopsis of the episodes. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Wonderful Tribute to A Classic TV Show! By Mike O'Connor To my mind, HAVE GUN, WILL TRAVEL was the BEST western show on television ever! It was a marvelously entertaining, thoughtful and compassionate show anchored by the incomparable Richard Boone. Each week, the show presented little morality tales that simultaneously entertained and challenged the viewer. Kathleen Spencer's incisive ART AND POLITICS IN HAVE GUN - WILL TRAVEL, a 2014 McFarland Company release, offers up an equally entertaining and thought-provoking tribute to that classic show. As borne out by Spencer's research, Richard Boone WAS Paladin and his values, beliefs and experiences shaped the show. HAVE GUN - WILL TRAVEL differed markedly from the other TV westerns in that it wasn't an ensemble show and it didn't dish out quick, cookie-cutter, shallow endings that wrapped up that week's story in a nice, reassuring package. The show rose and fell on one character - Paladin - and he proved endearing enough to last six seasons. Boone always struck me as being the ONLY television western star who could actually put the hurt on someone if he wanted to. Despite that aura of menace, his Paladin character was a multi-dimensional, wonderfully entertaining and eminently watchable character. Likewise, the characters and issues depicted in the show weren't superficial stock plots or characters. They were real people struggling to survive in desperate times and often, despite Paladin's help, they didn't survive or evolve. For years, HAVE GUN - WILL TRAVEL has deserved a book like Spencer's. She doesn't just provide basic plotlines. She probes and examines each show in the context of the times and in comparison to other popular shows like WAGON TRAIN, GUNSMOKE and BONANZA. Until further notice, I nominate ART AND POLITICS IN HAVE GUN - WILL TRAVEL as the best book on the subject out there. It gets my highest recommendation.

From 1955 to 1964, American television was awash in adult Westerns, as much as one quarter of all prime-time programming. During its six seasons (1957-1963), Have Gun-Will Travel was recognized as one of the best shows on television--politically the most liberal, and intellectually and aesthetically the most sophisticated, largely because of Richard Boone. This work places the series in its larger historical context, exploring why the Western was so popular at the time, and examines how the early history of television affected the shows. A brief biography of Boone is included, revealing how his values and experiences shaped the series. Behind-the-scenes life on the show is compared with that of its most popular competitors, Gunsmoke, Wagon Train and Bonanza. Major themes and patterns of the shows are compared, in particular the figures of the lawman, the gunfighter and the outlaw, racial and ethnic minorities, and women.

"expertly researched and thought provoking reading"--Western Clippings. About the Author Kathleen L. Spencer is a retired professor of literature and composition. She has published major essays on Dracula and on science fiction authors Samuel Delany, Ursula Le Guin, and Joanna Russ, and a book on English fantasist Charles Williams. She lives in Cincinnati.