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John Ford's *Stagecoach*

Stagecoach is one of the classics of Hollywood cinema. Made in 1939, it revitalized the Western genre, served as a milestone of John Ford's career, and made John Wayne a star. This volume offers a rich overview of the film in essays by six leading film critics. Approaching *Stagecoach* from a variety of critical perspectives, they place the film within the contexts of authorship, genre, American history, and culture. Also examined are the film's commentary on race, class, gender, and democracy, as well as the film's artistry.

Barry Keith Grant is a professor of film and director of the Graduate Program in Popular Culture at Brock University. His books include *The Film Studies Dictionary*, *Voyages of Discovery: The Cinema of Frederick Wiseman*, and *Film Genre Reader*.

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BARRY KEITH GRANT

Brock University



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Contents

	<i>Acknowledgments and Credits</i>	page ix
	<i>List of Contributors</i>	xi
	Introduction: Spokes in the Wheels	1
	Barry Keith Grant	
1	<i>Stagecoach</i> and Hollywood's A-Western Renaissance	21
	Thomas Schatz	
2	"Powered by a Ford"?: Dudley Nichols, Authorship, and Cultural Ethos in <i>Stagecoach</i>	48
	Charles J. Maland	
3	That Past, This Present: Historicizing John Ford, 1939	82
	Leland Poague	
4	"A Little Bit Savage": <i>Stagecoach</i> and Racial Representation	113
	J. P. Telotte	
5	"Be a Proud, Glorified Dreg": Class, Gender, and Frontier Democracy in <i>Stagecoach</i>	132
	Gaylyn Studlar	
6	<i>Stagecoach</i> and the Quest for Selfhood	158
	William Rothman	

Cambridge University Press
0521793319 - John Ford's Stagecoach
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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii CONTENTS

Reviews of <i>Stagecoach</i>	179
Welford Beaton, <i>The Hollywood Spectator</i> (February 18, 1939)	179
Frank S. Nugent, <i>The New York Times</i> (March 3, 1939)	181
John Mosher, <i>The New Yorker</i> (March 4, 1939)	182
<i>Filmography</i>	185
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	233
<i>Index</i>	239

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0521793319 - John Ford's Stagecoach
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[More information](#)

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Quotations from the draft screenplay of *Stagecoach* appearing in Charles J. Maland's essay are part of the John Ford Papers in the Indiana University Library and are used courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

J. P. Telotte's "'A Little Bit Savage': *Stagecoach* and Racial Representation" is based on material previously published as "A Fate Worse Than Death: Racism, Transgression and Westerns" in *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 26: 3 (Fall 1998): 120–7. Used with permission of *Journal of Popular Film* and Heldref Publications.

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[More information](#)

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Obviously Ford's version of *Drums Along the Mohawk* could not have served as a pre-text for the earlier *Stagecoach* until its release in November 1939. A St. Louis Post-Dispatch ad avers that *Stagecoach* is "Directed by John Ford with all the power and electrifying drama of *Hurricane* and *The Informer*." But six other ads expand this intertext by one title "Submarine Patrol, and almost always as first on the list. developed among the stagecoach passengers, driver, and sheriff? Ford's approach to filmmaking Ford cuts dialog to a minimum and focuses on action and visual detail. Ford believes, "The main thing about motion pictures is to photograph the people's eye. Look at their faces." Notice how often information is communicated silently with a gaze, e.g., Hatfield's looking at Mrs. Mallory through a window, her looking back from the stagecoach window, or Ringo and Dallas looking lovingly at each other as she holds the baby. Directed by John Ford. With John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Andy Devine, John Carradine. A group of people traveling on a stagecoach find their journey complicated by the threat of Geronimo and learn something about each other in the process. A group of people traveling on a stagecoach find their journey complicated by the threat of Geronimo and learn something about each other in the process. Director: John Ford. Writers: Ernest Haycox (original story), Dudley Nichols (screen play). (This film is the inspiration to "Space bus to Benton's Colony"). *Stagecoach* is a 1939 American Western film directed by John Ford, starring Claire Trevor and John Wayne in his breakthrough role. The screenplay, written by Dudley Nichols, is an adaptation of "The Stage to Lordsburg", a 1937 short story by Ernest Haycox. The film follows a group of strangers riding on a stagecoach through dangerous Apache territory.