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.
THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS FILM HANDBOOKS SERIES

General Editor: Andrew Horton, University of Oklahoma

Each CAMBRIDGE FILM HANDBOOK is intended to focus on a single
film from a variety of theoretical, critical, and contextual perspectives.
This “prism” approach is designed to give students and general readers
valuable background and insight into the cinematic, artistic, cultural,
and sociopolitical importance of individual films by including essays
by leading film scholars and critics. Furthermore, these handbooks by
their very nature are meant to help the reader better grasp the nature
of the critical and theoretical discourse on cinema as an art form, as
a visual medium, and as a cultural product. Filmographies and select
bibliographies are added to help the reader go further in his or her own
exploration of the film under consideration.

VOLUMES IN THE SERIES

Buster Keaton’s “Sherlock Jr.” ed. by Andrew Horton, University of
Oklahoma
Spike Lee’s “Do the Right Thing.” ed. by Mark Reid, University of Florida
Ozu’s “Tokyo Story,” ed. by David Desser, University of Illinois,
Urbana–Champaign
“The Godfather Trilogy,” ed. by Nick Browne, University of California,
Los Angeles
Hitchcock’s “Rear Window,” ed. by John Belton
Godard’s “Pierrot le Fou,” ed. by David Wills, State University of
New York, Albany
Bunuel’s “The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,” ed. by Marsha Kinder,
University of Southern California
Bergman’s “Persona,” ed. by Lloyd Michaels, Allegheny College
“Bonnie and Clyde,” ed. by Lester Friedman
John Ford’s
Stagecoach

Edited by
BARRY KEITH GRANT
Brock University
Reviews of Stagecoach

Welford Beaton, *The Hollywood Spectator* (February 18, 1939) 179


John Mosher, *The New Yorker* (March 4, 1939) 182

Filmography 185

Select Bibliography 233

Index 239
Many thanks to Andy Horton and Beatrice Rehl of Cambridge University Press for their support, encouragement, advice, and patience. Both are a pleasure to work with. I also am grateful to my colleagues in the Department of Communication, Popular Culture, and Film at Brock University, Ontario, for listening to me talk about John Ford. And of course I owe a special debt of gratitude to my family, who helped me balance work with more fuddle.

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.

Frank S. Nugent’s review of *Stagecoach* is reprinted by permission of the *New York Times*.

StillscourtesyofFilmStillsArchive,MuseumofModernArt;JerryOhlinger’sMovieMaterialStore;andtheauthors’owncollections.
Contributors

BARRY KEITH GRANT is a professor of communication, popular culture, and film at Brock University in Ontario, Canada. He is the author of Voyages of Discovery: The Cinema of Frederick Wiseman and The Film Studies Dictionary (with Steve Blandford and Jim Hillier) and editor of numerous volumes, including Film Genre Reader, The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film, and Documenting the Documentary: Close Readings of Documentary Film and Video (with Jeannette Sloniowski). He is currently editor of the “Genres in American Cinema” series for Cambridge University Press and the “Contemporary Film and Television” and “TV Milestones” series for Wayne State University Press.


LELAND POAGUE is a professor of English at Iowa State University. He has written books on Frank Capra, Ernst Lubitsch, Billy Wilder, Leo McCarey, and Howard Hawks; is co-author of Film Criticism: A Counter Theory (with William Cadbury), and with Kathy A. Parsons of Susan Sontag: An Annotated Bibliography 1948–1992; and has edited or co-edited volumes on Susan Sontag and Alfred Hitchcock. His articles have appeared in such publications as Cinema Journal, CineAction, Post Script, Film Criticism, and Hitchcock Annual.
CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM ROTHMAN is a professor of motion pictures and director of the graduate program in Film Studies at the University of Miami. He is the author of Hitchcock – The Murderous Gaze, The “I” of the Camera, Documentary Film Classics, and Cavell's The World Viewed: A Philosophical Perspective on Film (with Marian Keane). His essays and reviews have appeared in numerous journals, and he is editor of Cambridge University Press’s “Studies in Film” series.

THOMAS SCHATZ is a professor and chair of the Radio-Television-Film Department at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of four books on Hollywood cinema, including Hollywood Genres, The Genius of the System, and, most recently, Boom and Bust: American Cinema in the 1940s. His writing on film has appeared in various publications, including Film Comment, The Nation, Premiere, and the New York Times. He teaches and consults frequently throughout the United States and overseas on American film and television, and he also has worked on many television documentaries focusing on the movie industry.

GAYLYN STUDLAR is director of the Film and Video Studies Program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She is the author of In the Realm of Pleasure: Von Sternberg, Dietrich, and the Masochistic Aesthetic and The Mad Masquerade: Masculinity and Stardom in the Jazz Age and co-editor of books on John Huston, James Cameron’s Titanic (1997), and John Ford’s Westerns. Her writing has appeared in numerous film journals and in such anthologies as Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema.

J. P. TELOTTE is a professor of literature, communication, and culture at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. He is the author of Voices in the Dark: The Narrative Patterns of Film Noir, Replications: A Robotic History of the Science Fiction Film, Dreams of Darkness: Fantasy and the Films of Val Lewton, and Science Fiction Film for Cambridge University Press’s “Genres in American Cinema” series. The author of dozens of articles on popular film, he also edited Beyond All Reason: The Cult Film Experience.