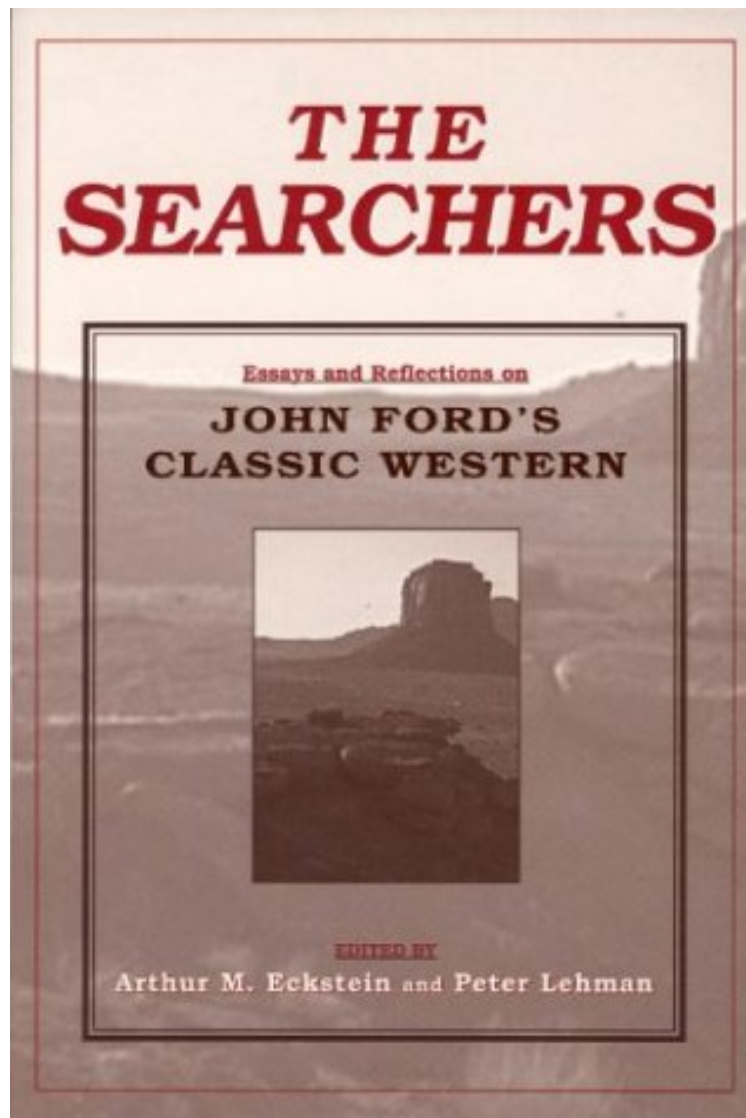


[Free download] The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Fords Classic Western (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series)

The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Fords Classic Western (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series)

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From Brand: Wayne State University Press : The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Fords Classic Western (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Fords Classic Western (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An amazing collection of thoughts on an important film

By Danny Bull
The Searchers is one of my favorite films of all time, and this book thoroughly explores why. The Searchers was initially panned by critics and audiences, seeming to be destined to being lost to the ages. Then in the 1960s and 70s the film school generation found this film, and it has slowly become more and more important to the film community. The film dares to examine racism in the West, in a time when so many films liked to paint the west as great time in our history. This book brings together tons of different perspectives on one of the most important films of all time. Some of the film's greatest champions are George Lucas, Steven Spielberg and Martin Scorsese. Films like Star Wars and Taxi Driver owe a lot to this film. Towards the beginning of Star Wars Luke returns home to find his dead and on fire, and runs into the doorway of the farmhouse, and sees something even more unspeakable, a direct homage to one of the scenes in the Searchers. Robert Dinero's character mirrors John Wayne's character in his twisted idea of heroism in Taxi Driver. While American audiences and critics panned the Searchers, French critics embraced the film as one of the greatest in of the Auteur films. John Ford uses John Wayne's character's psychosis in the film to highlight America's racist and schizophrenic Manifest Destiny. John Wayne is a man driven by hatred and racism, in a quest to rescue and kill his niece for having been defiled by native Americans. He is driven on a years long quest over thousands of miles to track down and kill the niece he supposedly loves. Along the way he defiles the corpses of his enemies in a rage filled quest. John Wayne's character's rage and hate is dwarfed in an alien landscape, mostly shot in Monument Valley. It was shot in a film format that was only used a handful of times, who's color is beyond impressive. Recently film buffs like Quentin Tarantino have brought it back with films like the Hateful Eight, but for a long time it was considered a failed format. The color and clarity, along with interesting shooting choices, gives the film a dreamlike quality when looking back on it after 60 years. It is amazingly beautiful, and some of the shots in the film are the best that have ever been done. I live near Monument Valley, and have watched it in dozens of films, and nothing comes close to The Searchers. The Searchers was long under-appreciated, especially by the AFI's top 100 list. But in the past decade film scholars have gone back and re-evaluated this film and realized that it is one of the most important films of all time. It has since jumped into the top 10, and I believe on the next round it could jump into the top 5. When this book was written, it was not even on the list. It has made an amazing comeback to become one of the most respected films of all time, with the help of people championing the film, like the editor of this book. John Ford's guilt and shame about how he viewed and used the Native Americans in his films before is evident in this film. John Wayne, in one of his few bad guy roles, also seems to be self critical for the only time in his career. It is the first western film to explore the growing sense of shame at what had been done in the west. It is interesting to have that type of shame in a genre that glorified killing Native Americans, and confused audiences, the vast majority of whom still believed in Manifest Destiny. It was a film way before its time, and struggles with issues that would not be explored on film for decades to come. It is an important film for understanding the first tremors of guilt, breaking the image of America in the 1950s. This film is a mainstay of modern film school, and this book is the perfect way to examine the film. From the famous shot of John Wayne in the doorway, hat brim casting most of his face in shadow, to the line of horses coming down the sand dunes with monument valley in the background, this film is one of the best examples of incredible cinematography ever made. There was even an event out a Joshua tree where they showed the film at one frame every minute, just to highlight how ever frame in this film tells a story. There is so much meaning packed into this film, with each shot it is incredible. The book really examines how this film came to be, and what it means to people after all these years through a collection of essays. Some of them are more accounts of the filming, others by filmmakers and how they were inspired by this film, and others just try to place the film in the context of what it has meant to audiences since its making. This book is for people who truly love this film, and want to get a deeper understanding of it. Anyone in film school should get this book, because this is the type of film that you can study in depth and get a real sense of what is most important in film.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.
I knew it was a great movie when I saw it at age 16

By Gary A. Westgard
I saw this movie in 1956. I have been in love with it ever since. I did not know why. Now I discover that so have alot of other people. Each time I see the film, I see something new. Each essay in this fine book also helped me to see this film once again, sometimes in a new way. Great film. Very fine book.

6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Multiple Perspectives

By She Who Must Read
This collection offers multiple perspectives on the classic Ford western, including one from a Native American writer that requires the reader to re-think the genre and an intriguing analysis of Ford's musical choices for the movie. Students of film will appreciate close analyses of Ford's cinematic techniques and reminders of the difference between film narration and history. Several essays address the historical context of the film's story as well as the possible connection between The Searchers and Brown vs. Board of Education. Be prepared for redundancies. After the fifth time I read that Ford's movie is about miscegenation and incest, my reaction was "yeah, yeah." Some of the arguments are convoluted as only academics could make them and not terribly convincing. Nevertheless, the book is "must read" for anyone who loves movies, loves Ford westerns, or who just loves this particular movie.

In many ways a traditional western, The Searchers (1956) is considered by critics as one of the greatest Hollywood films, made by the most influential of western directors. But John Ford's classic work, in its complexity and ambiguity,

was a product of post-World War II American culture and sparked the deconstruction of the western film myth by looking unblinkingly at white racism and violence and suggesting its social and psychological origins. *The Searchers* tells the story of the kidnapping of the niece of Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) by Comanche Indians, and his long search to find her—ultimately not to rescue her but to kill her, since he finds her racially and sexually violated. *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford's Classic Western* brings historians and film scholars together to cover the major critical issues of this film as seen through a contemporary prism. The book also contains the first published, sustained reaction to the film by Native Americans. The essays explore a wide range of topics: from John Wayne's grim character of Ethan Edwards, to the actual history of Indian captivity on the southern Plains, as well as the role of the film's music, setting, and mythic structure—all of which help the reader to understand what makes *The Searchers* such an enduring work.

From the Publisher In many ways a traditional western, *The Searchers* (1956) is considered by critics as one of the greatest Hollywood films, made by the most influential of western directors. But John Ford's classic work, in its complexity and ambiguity, was a product of post-World War II American culture and sparked the deconstruction of the western film myth by looking unblinkingly at white racism and violence and suggesting its social and psychological origins. *The Searchers* tells the story of the kidnapping of the niece of Ethan Edwards (John Wayne) by Comanche Indians, and his long search to find her—ultimately not to rescue her but to kill her, since he finds her racially and sexually violated. *The Searchers: Essays and Reflections on John Ford's Classic Western* brings historians and film scholars together to cover the major critical issues of this film as seen through a contemporary prism. The book also contains the first published, sustained reaction to the film by Native Americans. The essays explore a wide range of topics: from John Wayne's grim character of Ethan Edwards, to the actual history of Indian captivity on the southern Plains, as well as the role of the film's music, setting, and mythic structure—all of which help the reader to understand what makes *The Searchers* such an enduring work. About the Author Arthur M. Eckstein is professor of History at University of Maryland. Peter Lehman is Director of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Program at Arizona State University. He is author of *Roy Orbison: The Invention of an Alternative Rock Masculinity* and editor of *Masculinity: Bodies, Movies, Culture*.