

## JOHN FORD ESSAY

John Ford's main characters are usually outsiders, either as victims because they are different or heroes because they are selected. They are either prostitutes or alcoholics or outlaws or rebels. Some characters are just weak people. Nonetheless, these characters turn into heroes at certain times in these movies.

In *Stagecoach*, the main characters are mostly victims. Dallas is cast out by many people because she is a prostitute. For instance, she does not deserve a silver cup when she wants to drink water whereas Mrs. Mallory does, and she is never asked when an important decision has to be made. Because of his alcoholism, Doc Boone, a disgraced doctor, is cast out by many people too, as well as Ringo Kid because he is an escaped outlaw. Mrs. Lucy Mallory feels rejected because she is a pregnant young bride whose husband is away because he is a soldier. Hatfield is a gambler. Like all the people who bet money, he is considered as a dishonest man. Gatewood is an embezzling banker who runs away from Tonto because he stole money there. Peacock is a weak whiskey salesman who tries to rejoin his family.

In *My Darling Clementine*, John Ford presents some outsider characters who are victims of their differences. Chihuahua becomes a victim of her social rank when Clementine arrives in town. Clementine Carter is rejected by her ex-lover Doc Holliday who is a sick alcoholic disgraced doctor.

The main characters in *The Searchers* are victims of the differences between the Indians and the whites. Ethan Edwards is victim of his jealousy because he loves his brother's wife named Martha. He is also victim of his hatred for the Indians because his mother had been taken away and killed by the Indians during a raid. As a result, he does not like Martin Pawley because Indian blood runs in his veins. For instance, he calls him blankethead. He is a victim of his past. The early scenes seem to suggest that he has done something illegal or dishonest. For example, he gives brand new money to his brother Aaron. Martin Pawley is a victim because he is half-Indian half-white. Deborah Edwards, called Debbie, is victim of the situation because she is taken away and brought up by the Indians. Chief Cicatrice (Scar) is victim of his hatred towards the whites because his two sons were killed by the whites. John Ford also presents an outsider through Mose Harper who is simple-minded. Laurie Jorgensen feels abandoned by Martin Pawley, the man she loves, because he only focuses on Debbie's search. Her brother, Brad Jorgensen, is victim of his sadness because Lucy with whom he was engaged has been killed by the Indians.

In *Stagecoach*, John Ford presents some outsiders as heroes. Dallas helps Mrs. Mallory while she's giving birth, takes care of her baby while Lucy is sick and protects her baby during the Indian attack. Doc Boone helps Mrs. Mallory to give birth. Ringo Kid defends the stagecoach during the Indian attack. Hatfield is well-mannered and looks like a man of good social position even if he is a gambler. He defends and protects Mrs. Mallory during the Indian attack and takes care of her during their journey. He wants to shoot her in the head during the Indian attack to save her from the Indians but he is killed just before he could accomplish this heroic deed. It is very courageous of Lucy Mallory to try to rejoin her husband while she is pregnant considering the dangerous territory she has to cross.

The main characters in *My Darling Clementine* can also be heroes. Through different scenes, we discover that Doc Holliday comes from a family of good social position probably from Boston. For example, his choice of champagne when he offers a drink to Earp is the choice of a well-mannered, sophisticated man used to drinking the most delicate wines and alcohols. There is a second scene where a stage actor named Granville Thorndyke forgets a part of the soliloquy from Hamlet. He asks Doc Holliday for some help and, without any hesitation, Doc Holliday recites the exact words of the monologue. Again, this scene shows

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that he certainly belongs to a highly educated family. Clementine is brave enough to leave Boston and her comfortable life, and choose a rougher life in Tombstone to find her ex-lover Doc Holliday. Earp becomes the heroic marshal of Tombstone in order to get rid of the bad Clantons who are responsible for the death of his two younger brothers.

The main characters in *The Searchers* behave like heroes at the end of the movie. Ethan manages to control his hatred for Debbie and finally does not kill her but takes her back home. In spite of the interbreeding that makes him an outsider, Martin Pawley performs an heroic deed and infiltrates the Indian camp to save Debbie and kill Chief Cicatrice.

In these three movies, John Ford chooses to present the life of outsiders and shows us that these people are capable of heroic deeds which make them captivating.