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# The Periscope Above the Surface

A Study of Auteur Themes in John Ford Films Featuring  
Submarines

## Abstract

This thesis conducts an auteur analysis of John Ford films containing submarines with the method of textual analysis. The films that are being analyzed are *The Blue Eagle* (1926), *Men Without Women* (1930), *Seas Beneath* (1931), *Submarine Patrol* (1938) and *The Growler Story* (1958). The purpose is to find out which distinctive auteur themes that can be identified in each of these films. The results indicate that the common distinctive auteur themes that can be identified are the Irish characters, the Christian religious theme, the ceremonial funeral farewells, the comedic touch, the importance of family, the American Civil War references, settling of conflicts through fights, the display of manliness through not wearing shirts, patriotism, sacrifice, redemption, the importance of cooperation, the stylistic theme of filming documents such as letters to drive the narrative and the recurring use of the song “The Monkeys Have No tails in Zamboanga.”

**Keywords:** John Ford, auteur theory, textual analysis, submarine films, patriotism, sacrifice, redemption

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# 1. Introduction

In September 1971, when Ford was staying at the Excelsior Hotel at The Lido to attend the Venice Film Festival, he encountered some stomach troubles. A critic was at the hotel door wanting to talk with him, but his daughter Barbara Ford politely told the critic that the interview probably would not be possible. Ford shouted from the lavatories: “Come in, come in. I can deal with two shits at once.”<sup>1</sup>

The anecdote as described by Scott Eyman is symptomatic and representative of Ford’s strong personality. It captures his free-spirited formulations as well as his conflicts and complicated relationship with media and academia. There are many stories relating to Ford’s clashes with producers. For example, there is a famous and legendary story about a producer telling Ford he was five pages behind schedule and Ford responding by tearing out five pages from the script, giving them to the producer and saying, “Now we’re back on schedule.”<sup>2</sup>

Ford left his personal marks on the films he directed. There is a large body of academic works related to the study of John Ford and his films. However, there are fields that have not yet been thoroughly researched. In the scholarship on Ford, the submarine films have not gained the same attention as his more famous films. This thesis conducts a closer examination of Ford’s submarine films. Well known submarine films from other directors include *Submarine* (1928), *Das boot* (1981) and *The Hunt for Red October* (1990).

Submarine film is a genre that focus on submarines in many different scenarios, for example in war contexts such as World War I or the Cold War. The scenarios can also have different plots, such as fantasy, science fiction and horror stories. Submarine films can be argued to be a separate genre, in contrast to just being a subgenre to the war film. The basic

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<sup>1</sup> Scott Eyman, *Print the Legend: The Life and Times of John Ford*, New York: Simon & Schuster 1999, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

syntactical and genre-specific pattern can be said to be the contrast between the outside and the inside.<sup>3</sup>

Considering Ford's importance as a filmmaker, contributing to a greater understanding of overlooked parts of his oeuvre must be of significant value to the film studies field. The common denominator for the academically overlooked films in his oeuvre, is the focus on submarines.

Ford had an extensive career in the American navy. He joined the U.S. Navy in 1934.<sup>4</sup> In April 1940, the Naval Field Photographic Unit was created by Ford. When America entered World War II the unit became the Field Photographic Branch of the Office of Strategic Services.<sup>5</sup> In Ford's unit, twelve men died during World War II.<sup>6</sup> Ford received the Legion of Merit, the Navy Air Medal, the Purple Heart and the gold braid of a rear admiral during his military career.<sup>7</sup>

With the knowledge about Ford's naval career, and the recurrence of submarines throughout his filmography, gaining understanding of how the auteur John Ford works with submarines and which auteur themes that are present in these films will be of importance for further understanding of the director's works.

## 1.1 Aim and Research Question

The aim of this thesis is to explore films by John Ford containing submarines. The choice was made due to several reasons. The films have not been thoroughly explored before, the

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<sup>3</sup> Linda Maria Koldau, "Sound effects as a genre-defining factor in submarine films", *MedieKultur: Journal of Media and Communication Research*, vol 26 issue 48, 2010, p. 19-20.

<sup>4</sup> Sue Matheson, *The Westerns and War Films of John Ford*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield 2016, p. 94.

<sup>5</sup> Sue Matheson, *The John Ford Encyclopedia*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield 2020, p. 94.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph McBride, *Searching for John Ford: A Life*, London: Faber and Faber 2003, p. 390.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 28.

submarine genre has proven to be a durable and popular genre and the films have relation to some of Ford's favorite topics, namely the navy and war. Through the method of textual analysis and the auteur theory, it will be determined which auteur features distinguish Ford films containing submarines.

The earlier films containing submarines will also be compared to the post-World War II film, namely *The Growler Story* (1958), which was made after Ford had gained war experience himself. Due to this, the study has the potential of tracing the development over time.

It is remarkable that the submarine theme has not been explored regarding its possible impact on Ford's career. Ford participated in active service in World War II<sup>8</sup> (although not in submarines). The research question is:

Which distinctive auteur themes can be identified in the chosen films *The Blue Eagle* (1926), *Men Without Women* (1930), *Seas Beneath* (1931), *Submarine Patrol* (1938) and *The Growler Story* (1957)?

## 1.2 Disposition

This thesis begins with chapter 1 which is an introduction to the subject of John Ford. In the introduction it is explained why his submarine films were chosen as the focus of the thesis. Chapter 1 is followed by a subchapter called "1.1 Aim and Research Question." In this subchapter, the aim is presented, which is to explore the auteur themes of Ford films containing submarines. The research question is also specified.

The introductory chapter is followed by the second chapter called "Previous Research." In this chapter, the focus is on research in the John Ford field and examples of readings and

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<sup>8</sup> Tag Gallagher, *John Ford: The Man and His Films*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1986, p. 200.

analysis that have been made on some of his films are given. The lack of auteur analysis on the films containing submarines is also discussed.

The third chapter is called “Material.” The primary material consists of the films *The Blue Eagle* (1926), *Men Without Women* (1930), *Seas Beneath* (1931), *Submarine Patrol* (1938) and *The Growler Story* (1957). The secondary material consists of biographies, academic books, and academic papers.

Chapter 4 is called “Method” and deals with the methodological part of the thesis. The chosen method of textual analysis is described and discussed. Chapter 5 is titled “Theoretical Framework” and here the auteur theory is described. A brief history is provided, along with more recent contributions. The importance of the auteur theory for this thesis is specified.

Chapter 6 is called “Findings and Analysis.” In this chapter, the films are analyzed in chronological order, and the findings are presented. The story of each film is summarized first. Then the chronological appearance of the auteur themes is presented, with examples from the films and the analyses that support the identification of the theme.

Chapter 7 has the title “Conclusions” in which the answer to the thesis research question is addressed. The name of chapter 8 is “Further Research” in which the potential for future studies related to this thesis’ topics are discussed.

## **2. Previous Research**

The academic research on John Ford is vast and deep reaching. Since it is impossible to give a complete overview of the research in the context of this thesis, I will give a short overview of some of the available material, with relevance to the subject at hand. The aim of this is to orientate the reader and contextualize this thesis.

To the best of this authors knowledge, no auteur analysis has been conducted on the films *The Blue Eagle* (1926), *Men Without Women* (1930), *Seas Beneath* (1931), *Submarine*

*Patrol* (1938) and *The Growler Story* (1957). No earlier auteur analysis of the mentioned films were found in FIAF (International Index to Film Periodicals Database) during my searches.<sup>9</sup>

Close readings have been made of many John Ford films. Examples of these are *The Quiet Man* (1952)<sup>10</sup>, the famous reading of *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) by The Editors of Cahiers du Cinéma<sup>11</sup> and a book-length analysis of *The Searchers* (1956) by Sven Åke Heed and Jan Olsson.<sup>12</sup>

Another category of research concentrates on doing a “re-reading” of a film, as Jeremy Carr does in his article about *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962) published in 2017<sup>13</sup> or as Nick Browne does in an article published in 1979 on *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939).<sup>14</sup>

Some articles focus on comparisons between Ford films. An example is an examination of *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962) by Mike Yawn and Bob Beatty, published in 1996.<sup>15</sup>

Many kinds of analyses of John Ford films have been made, for example an analysis of *The Searchers* (1956) that chronicles its journey from a novel, to a script and finally to the screen, written by Arthur M. Eckstein.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> As of 2020-04-23, the search terms “The Blue Eagle” and “Auteur” give 0 results.

The search terms “Men Without Women” and “Auteur” results in 7 matches.

The keywords “Seas Beneath” and “Auteur” give 2 results.

Searching for the keywords “Submarine Patrol” and “Auteur” in FIAF give 2 results.

The search words “The Growler Story” and “Auteur” in FIAF give 0 results. None of the results are auteur analysis of the films.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph Bierman, “What the Quiet Man Said: Shifting Contexts and the Polysemy of the Text”, *Journal of Film and Video*, vol. 63 issue 3, 2011: 30-44.

<sup>11</sup> The Editors of Cahiers du Cinema, “John ford's Young Mr. Lincoln. A collective text by The Editors of Cahiers du Cinéma”, *Screen*, vol. Xiii issue 3, 1972: 5-44, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Sven Åke Heed & Jan Olsson, *The Searchers: En filmanalys*, Malmö: LiberFörlag 1983.

<sup>13</sup> Jeremy Carr, “Contradictions of the west(ern): The man who shot liberty valance”, *Film International*, vol. Xv issue 79, 2017: 125-130.

<sup>14</sup> Nick Browne, “The spectator of American symbolic forms: Re-reading John Ford's 'Young Mr. Lincoln'”, *Film Reader*, issue 4, 1979: 180-188.

<sup>15</sup> Mike Yawn & Bob Beatty, “The American Frontier in Film: John Ford's Vision of the Closing West: From Optimism to Cynicism”, *Film & History*, vol. 26 issue 1-4, 1996: 6-19, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> Arthur M. Eckstein, “Darkening Ethan: John Ford's the Searchers (1956) from Novel to Screenplay to Screen”, *Cinema Journal*, vol. 38 issue 1, 1998: 3-24.



Another interesting example of an analysis concerns the function of brawls in John Ford films with examples from *The Wings of Eagles* (1957) and *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949).<sup>17</sup>

There is an article in a Spanish film magazine published in 2008 that discusses the depiction of World War 1 in the films *Men Without Women* (1930), *Seas Beneath* (1931), *Submarine Patrol* (1938) and *What Price Glory* (1952).<sup>18</sup>

In *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, Peter Wollen discusses how the auteur theory can help reveal hidden complex meanings in films like *Donovan's Reef* (1963). Wollen also points out how the theory can bring completely new insight to films like *The Wings of Eagles* (1957) concerning its motifs.<sup>19</sup>

This thesis will utilize the previous research by being aware of what came before and be inspired by it. It would be difficult to conduct research on Ford's films without any contextualization. Especially previous auteur studies of Ford films, such as the one by Peter Wollen, are something that this paper has the possibility of continuing to build upon.

### **3. Material**

The primary material consists of the films *The Blue Eagle* (1926), *Men Without Women* (1930), *Seas Beneath* (1931), *Submarine Patrol* (1938) and *The Growler Story* (1957). The reason they have been chosen for the study is because they all contain submarines.

There is another Ford film containing a submarine, namely the documentary *December 7th* (1943). This World War II film has been excluded from the analysis because of the brief and peripheral nature of the film's submarine (under 20 seconds screen time), as well as being a documentary. An analysis of the film was not considered relevant for this thesis.

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<sup>17</sup> Lane Roth, "Ritual Brawls in John Ford's Films", *Film Criticism (ARCHIVE)*, vol. 7 issue 3, 1983: 38-46.

<sup>18</sup> Quim Casas, "El cine bélico de Ford (2): Entre el mar y la tierra", *Dirigido Por...*, 2008: 54-57.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 2nd edition., London: Thames & Hudson 1970, p. 102.

Not all the films survive in complete form. *The Blue Eagle* (1926) is missing 11 minutes of footage in the currently available version. The existing version has a runtime of 58 minutes. Of this running time, some missing scenes are narrated by intertitles.<sup>20</sup>

*Men Without Women* (1930) does not miss any footage, although the only available version is a work print from the International Sound Version.<sup>21</sup> Only minor statements and utterances can be heard from the characters while the rest of the dialogue appears in intertitles.

This could present some challenges for the analysis. However, the analysis will be based on the available material, while still staying vigilant about the possible differences between the original version and the available. All the other films survive without any known missing material.

The secondary material consists of academic papers published in scientific journals, as well as biographies and other academic books written about John Ford. Examples of books on John Ford utilized for this thesis is *Print the Legend: The Life and Times of John Ford* (1999) by Scott Eyman, *Searching for John Ford: A Life* by Joseph McBride, *The John Ford Encyclopedia* by Sue Matheson, *The Westerns and War Films of John Ford* by Sue Matheson, *The Cinema of John Ford* by John Baxter, *My Darling Clementine: John Ford, Director* edited by Robert Lyons, *John Ford* by Peter Bogdanovich, and *John Ford: The Man and His Films* by Tag Gallagher.

Something to consider while reading the biographies is that many myths might be present. It is necessary to have a somewhat skeptical viewpoint while reading these. If a certain point is contradictory in the different biographies, caution needs to be taken.

Regarding the academical books that are being used on auteur theory, it must be emphasized that the viewpoints taken in those specific works are designed for that specific

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<sup>20</sup> Sue Matheson, *The John Ford Encyclopedia*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield 2020, p. 24.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 215.

theoretical approach, namely, the auteur perspective. Therefore, consideration shall be given to the obvious notion that some theoretical perspectives might be incompatible with each other.

## 4. Method

The method that has been chosen for this thesis is the textual analysis. The textual analysis is related to the French method of close reading (*explication de texte*). Some predecessors and inspirations to the textual analysis are Umberto Eco's book *Open Work* and Roland Barthes and his separation of "text" and "work" as concepts. Textual analysis as a term was transferred from the discipline of literature to film.<sup>22</sup>

Professor Robert Stam writes that textual analysis follows naturally to the auteur perspective. He makes the point that authors write texts. The texts of films are systematically organized, as opposed to just random events.<sup>23</sup>

A difference between the literary text and the film as a text, is that the text of a film is not "quotable." The differences lie within the medium itself. Literature and literary criticism share the same medium, namely words. For films, the distinction is different. Films therefore escape the language which tries to analyze it. The best the film analyst can do is to try to overcome the obstacles present.<sup>24</sup>

The organization of the methodological approach in this thesis is inspired by the reading of *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) by The Editors of *Cahiers du Cinéma* where they write about their method:

[...] to present each scene in its fictional chronological order and discuss the different determining moments emphasising in each case what we believe to be

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<sup>22</sup> Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing 2000, p. 185.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 186.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 187.

the main determinant (the key signification), and indicating the secondary determinants, which may in turn become the main determinant in other scenes.<sup>25</sup>

This thesis will approach the chosen films in a similar way. The films will be presented in chronological order as well as the analyzed scenes within the films as well. In the analyzed scenes, only the things determined to be relevant to the analysis will be mentioned. A specific auteur theme will be discussed followed by relevant examples and an analysis.

## 5. Theoretical Framework

### 5.1 The Auteur Theory

Examples of books relating to the auteur theory that are referenced in this thesis are *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* by Peter Wollen as well as the anthologies *Authorship and Film* and *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*.<sup>26</sup>

Auteur theory was developed by a group of critics writing for the French film magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma*. One of the claims they made was that American cinema was worthy of more in-depth studies and that masterpieces had been made by more than just a very small amount of Hollywood directors. These directors had previously been dismissed by academics.<sup>27</sup>

Peter Wollen states that the auteur theory does not say that the director is solely responsible for a film. The theory has the potential to identify authors, which were not known before. For example, it was common to dismiss European directors work once they came to America, while praising the European films they made. For example, a distinction was made

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<sup>25</sup> The Editors of Cahiers du Cinema, "John ford's Young Mr. Lincoln. A collective text by The Editors of Cahiers du Cinéma", *Screen*, vol. Xiii issue 3, 1972: 5-44, p. 14.

<sup>26</sup> David A. Gerstner & Janet Staiger (eds.), *Authorship and Film*, New York: Routledge 2003; Barry Keith Grant (ed.), *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 2nd edition., London: Thames & Hudson 1970, p. 74.

between the American Hitchcock and the English Hitchcock. The auteur theory helped identify that the Hollywood career of many European filmmakers did produce masterpieces.<sup>28</sup>

According to Wollen, there are two main schools of auteur critics. One is where the *mise-en-scène* and style is in focus and the other is where the themes, motifs and meanings are in focus.<sup>29</sup> The American film critic Andrew Sarris developed his own criteria in how to determine the worth of an American auteur. Sarris evaluated if the director possessed a distinct visual style, technical competence and “interior meaning.”<sup>30</sup>

Janet Staiger describes several different approaches to authorship. One of them is called “Authorship as signature.” In this approach the historical person “signs” the texts. A message is produced, even if unintentionally, across several films, because a specific person is connected to them. In this approach, the director functions like a conductor. This is the approach that Wollen has in the book *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*. Wollens’ theory is structural in the way he organizes his analysis.<sup>31</sup> Janet Staiger argues that the auteur theory needs to be reconceptualized to fit in with the poststructuralism view of agency and subject, because she does not think it is always desirable to separate the author completely from the text.<sup>32</sup>

Claire Johnston writes about the representation of women in Ford films with the help of the auteur analysis. She states that the woman represents home for Ford. Johnston also writes that Ford uses the woman as a symbol of civilization.<sup>33</sup> In an essay published in 2004, Barry Keith Grant writes about Kathryn Bigelow as an auteur. In the essay, he describes how

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 77.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 78.

<sup>30</sup> David A. Gerstner, “The Practices of Authorship”, in *Authorship and Film*, David A. Gerstner & Janet Staiger (eds.), 3-25. New York: Routledge 2003, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Janet Staiger, “Authorship approaches” in *Authorship and Film*, David A. Gerstner & Janet Staiger (eds.), 27-57. New York: Routledge 2003, p. 43 f.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>33</sup> Claire Johnston, “Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema”, in *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*, Barry Keith Grant (ed.), 119-126. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing 2008, p. 123.

Bigelow's films questions the central importance of violence in action films, at the same time as violence is still portrayed.<sup>34</sup>

Thomas Elsaesser describes the auteur theory's position today, by tracing its development. The shift in the focus is from concentrating on "signature style" to "signature product" therefore widening the definition. This reflects a different media landscape that has emerged since the 1980s. An important shift today is the focus on special effects that occurs in the post-production process. Elsaesser argues that the amount of control directors such as George Lucas and Steven Spielberg assert on their productions confirms the validity of one of the key aspects of the auteur theory.<sup>35</sup>

Thomas Elsaesser uses James Cameron's blockbuster film *Avatar* (2009) to illustrate how to conduct a modern auteur analysis.<sup>36</sup> Elsaesser points out common themes present in Cameron's films, which traditionally would qualify him as an auteur. Elsaesser then makes an analysis of *Avatar* (2009), considering a multitude of aspects, among them some biographical aspects of James Cameron's life, such as his obsession with water and deep-sea exploration.<sup>37</sup>

In this thesis, the auteur theory will be used to conduct the analysis. The theory will be used to identify auteur themes in the Ford films containing submarines. If a pattern would be uncovered in the films, it could also work to strengthen the validity of the auteur theory. Auteur themes in these films could prove that Ford paid attention to details and therefore indeed had influence over important decisions even in relatively minor films like the ones analyzed in this thesis.

This thesis will focus on the auteur themes in the analyzed films and not the style and *mise-en-scène*. According to Wollen this is one of the two main approaches to auteur analysis.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Barry Keith Grant, "Man's Favorite Sport?: The Action Films of Kathryn Bigelow", in *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*, Barry Keith Grant (ed.), 280-291. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing 2008, p. 280.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *The Persistence of Hollywood*, New York: Routledge 2012, p. 284 f.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 300.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 290.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 2nd edition., London: Thames & Hudson 1970, p. 74.

If a specific stylistic choice is very prevalent in all the films this can of course be of value to acknowledge.

The auteur analysis in this thesis is based on the theoretical framework presented in this part, namely that of identifying auteur themes. This thesis is most similar to the way the auteur theory was applied by Peter Wollen, but also incorporates a more modern approach, such as the one proposed by Thomas Elsaesser, in that the themes in several films are identified and that the context that the films were released in is taken into account. The way of doing this is to make readings of films while being aware of what an auteur is, and the way the film text is constructed.

To be able to further understand and contextualize the thesis for the reader, I argue it is necessary to know some rudimentary details about the person John Ford, to try to grasp what can possibly have shaped him, both professionally and personally. This is done in relation to what Thomas Elsaesser did in his modern auteur analysis that is discussed earlier in this theory chapter, as well in relation to the discussion that Janet Staiger has about the value of not completely forgetting the author of a text, even today. It is therefore important to have some knowledge to be able to understand the analysis completely and why certain emphasis is made on certain points.

### 5.1.1 A Periscopic Reflection on Some Aspects of John Ford's Life

According to Scott Eyman, Ford was in some ways like other directors of the 1920s, personality wise, in that he was a tough and laconic man. The way he differed was in the way he approached shooting films. The accepted Hollywood approach of the time would be to first film an entire scene in a long master shot. After that they would shoot close ups and medium shots. Finally, they would hand over all the material to the editor.

Because of the many different takes to choose from, the editor could edit the material however they wanted. However, Ford did it in a different way. Ford would only shoot those parts of a scene as he had it formulated it in his mind and the ones he needed. By purpose, he severely limited the editing choices by not giving alternative shots to choose from to the editors.<sup>39</sup>

Ford would talk about his uncle Mike, which he claimed, begun serving in the Union during the American Civil War, but later deserted and joined the confederate side. The point being that it had metaphorical resonance for Ford to not show clear allegiance to any political interests.<sup>40</sup>

Ford was the son of two Irish immigrants.<sup>41</sup> The family was catholic.<sup>42</sup> During his life, he made great effort never to let anyone know the real John Ford. He would perpetuate a tough persona, with an anarchic individualist core.<sup>43</sup>

### 5.1.2 Themes in John Ford Films

In this subchapter, some themes in Ford films are presented, as described by other researchers. This is to give a contextualization to this thesis. It can give a hint about which themes that might be prevalent in films containing submarines.

According to Peter Bogdanovich, the most frequently recurring theme of Ford's work is the defeat, both the tragedy of it but also the special kind of glory in it. The first film that Ford

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<sup>39</sup> Scott Eyman, *Print The Legend: The Life And Times Of John Ford*, New York: Simon & Schuster 1999, p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 29.

<sup>42</sup> Sue Matheson, *The John Ford Encyclopedia*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield 2020, p. 92.

<sup>43</sup> Scott Eyman, *Print the Legend: The Life and Times of John Ford*, New York: Simon & Schuster 1999, p. 20.



made after his World War II experience was, *They Were Expendable* (1945) which concerned one of America's worst military defeats.<sup>44</sup> Sacrifice is also a common theme in Ford's films.<sup>45</sup>

The British director Lindsay Anderson wrote that there is a human theme in Ford's films. Humans have value and dignity.<sup>46</sup>

John Baxter writes that at the center of Ford's vision of the world is a complex mix of Irish humor, respect for authority, military customs, religious conviction, amateur sociology, and philosophy. Just like the poems by Walt Whitman, Ford praises his society and embraces discipline and order.<sup>47</sup>

Different themes have different symbolism in the films. For example, the dance in *Fort Apache* (1948) conveys a completely different meaning than it does in *My Darling Clementine* (1946).<sup>48</sup>

John Baxter claims that catholic philosophy, images, and themes play an important role on all levels of Ford's work.<sup>49</sup> Baxter interprets that Ford suggests that in the films *Fort Apache* (1948) and *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962), society can only benefit from a sacrifice if the legend gets the dominance over the truth.<sup>50</sup>

Baxter claims that the characters in Ford's films are deprived of their individuality, and instead personify the virtues of the society. In Ford's films such as *The Long Gray Line* (1955) and *The Prisoner of Shark Island* (1936), it is implied that the greatest heroes are those that influence others by acting selflessly, despite facing injustice.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford*, New Revised and Enlarged Edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1978, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>46</sup> Lindsay Anderson, "Commentaries: John Ford" in *My Darling Clementine: John Ford, director*, editor Robert Lyons, 158-162. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press 1984, p. 158.

<sup>47</sup> John Baxter, *The Cinema of John Ford*, New York: A. S. Barnes 1971, p. 16.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 32.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

Sometimes Ford films show the main hero settling down, but most of the time the last shot of the films ends with the hero going away and accepts the burden as savior and scapegoat. The characters often have biblical overtones for example *3 Godfathers* (1948).<sup>52</sup>

### 5.1.3 John Ford and The Studio System

For the theoretical discussion, it is of value to discuss John Ford's relationship to the studio system, and what could make him gain more autonomy in the filmmaking process than most other contemporary directors.

Thomas Schatz claims in his book *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* that the auteur theory would not be worth "bothering with" if it would not have been as influential as it was. Schatz claims that that the assembly-line production and the division of labor, among other aspects, during the studio era, makes the auteur theory problematic. Schatz says that with the background information about the system, it does not make sense to attribute a certain style or filmmaking to any individual or director.

Schatz acknowledges that some Hollywood directors possessed a certain style and had an unusual authority over the productions, such as John Ford, Alfred Hitchcock, Frank Capra and Howard Hawks, but claims that these directors status were to a higher degree a result of their roles as producers, instead of their roles as directors.

Further, Schatz also claims that the Ford pictures *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) and *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) "[...] were no more distinctive than other star-genre formulations turned out by routine contract directors [...]." He also states, "And ultimately any individual's style

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<sup>52</sup> John Baxter, *The Cinema of John Ford*, New York: A. S. Barnes 1971, p. 21.

was no more than an inflection on an established studio cycle.” Schatz point is that the films were a result of “institutional forces” rather than an individual’s expression.<sup>53</sup>

While it is true that Ford worked within the system, he was indeed to be considered an auteur. As for the directors’ roles as producers, for example John Ford, a look at his filmography reveals that the number of films that he was credited as a producer on is significantly fewer compared to the number of films in which he was not credited as producer. Despite this, it would be fair to say that most cinephiles would recognize *My Darling Clementine* (1946) as bearing the unique auteur marks of John Ford.

Also, lets ponder the core of the argument that not one individual would have any ability to influence a film to the degree as to create a unique mark and deserve to be called an auteur. The argument that Schatz is making is that, if they had more influence it would be because they were also producers. At the same time, he claims that not one individual had that power to influence a film, but that it all boils down to the “institutional forces.” The argument is contradictory by nature.

One example will be provided regarding how Ford gave himself more autonomy than other directors in the studio system during the era. This is to strengthen the argumentation that Ford indeed had more control over the institutional forces and are to be considered an auteur.

Director Robert Parrish began his career as a child actor for Ford, and later he worked as an editor on a couple of Ford’s films. He said about Ford: “He very seldom shot more than one take; he used very little film and was always under schedule or under budget. So, by and large, the film that an editor would get almost had to go into the picture.”<sup>54</sup> Parrish also said:

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Schatz, *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era*, London: Faber and Faber 1998, p. 5 f.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford*, New Revised and Enlarged Edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1978, p. 9.

He had a big streak of contempt for any kind of authority, any kind of paternal influence on him-all the producers, all the money-they were the enemy. On the Informer, on the first day of shooting, he got the entire cast and crew together in the middle of the set, and he brought out the producer. 'Now get a good look at this guy,' Ford said and he took hold of the man's chin. 'This is Cliff Reid. He is the producer. Look at him now because you will not see him again on this set until the picture is finished.' And that was true-we never saw him again-he just disappeared.<sup>55</sup>

Considering the multitudes of accounts of the conflicts that Ford had with producers, it is fair to conclude that he did things in his own way. Ford seemingly did everything in his power to gain as much autonomy over his projects as was possible at the time.

## 6. Findings and Analysis

### 6.1 Analysis of *The Blue Eagle* (1926)

The first auteur theme to be identified in the film is the patriotic one. The film's opening credits are imposed on top of strong waves in the ocean. An eagle attached to an anchor is symmetrically centered on the screen, bridging the gap between the ocean and the sky. Considering the general theme of the film and the tool of textual analysis, it is possible to analyze the symbolism.

In the context of this film and American popular culture, my interpretation is that the anchor is representing the American fleet that does its duty on the water. At the same time, the

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<sup>55</sup> Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford*, New Revised and Enlarged Edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1978, p. 14.

eagles positioning in the sky symbolizes the thriving of the American spirit, which cannot be drowned even by the strong waves.

Since June 20, 1782, the bald eagle as featured on The Great Seal of the United States has been one of only two symbols officially created by law in the United States. The other one is the flag. The bald eagle itself has been attributed with many different metaphorical meanings by Americans.<sup>56</sup> Considering the strong patriotic themes in the film, it is therefore a fitting beginning.

The patriotic auteur theme is also present in the first intertitle which reads: “Dedicated to the unsung heroes of the navy-the Blue Eagles of steadfast service and unconquerable courage - -. This is about two roughneck who love the same girl. They’re shipmates now-but when the war is over, all this patriotic stuff is OUT!” The screen fades to black. We get to know through an intertitle that it is November 1917.

It has already been established, that in this film, the love story is at the center. The duty to the country comes first though. At the same time, the phrasing of the sentence indicates a sort of ambivalence towards patriotism. It is not seen as a specifically serious matter in this context, but the center of a joke. As we know, Ford had not yet served in a war, as he would do later. On the other hand, that does not have to mean that he would always have to treat all military subjects seriously at all time. The comedy-drama *Mister Roberts* (1955) would be evidence of this.

From the opening intertitle, it is therefore possible to start to analyze the patriotic theme. As the analysis of this film progresses, it will be expanded upon. So far, the film undoubtedly supports a strong patriotism and has a special reverence for the U.S. Navy. At the same time, the innocent joke cannot be seen to do serious harm to the image of the U.S. Navy. Quite the

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<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, "Symbol of a Nation: The Bald Eagle in American Culture", *The Journal of American Culture*, vol. 13 issue 1, 1990: 63–69, p. 63.

opposite, it adds a side of humanity into it, and makes the viewer sympathize with the characters and their private lives. This helps to nuance the patriotic theme.

In the first scene of the film, the auteur theme of Catholicism appears. The Irish auteur theme is also present. The first scene of the film introduces Chaplain O'Regan, who is described as a "pastor of a little parish on the water-front of a great city." He stands on the American warship looking out over the ocean. O'Regan is a name of Irish origin.

In this character, Ford combines two important and recurring themes, the Irish and the Catholic. Also, since he is serving in the U.S. Navy, he is considered as a patriotic Irish Catholic pastor within the film's context. O'Regan represents the stability and familiarity through the film. He is the glue that holds the society together, which will be proven later.

In the next scene, the auteur theme of not wearing shirts to represent manliness appears. There is also the auteur theme of Catholicism. The film cuts to the ship's boiler room. The men in the room do not wear shirts and tirelessly chip coal into the roaring fire. The fire almost burns some of the sailors. In the coal room George Darcy is the boss. Big Tim Ryan works under him. They intertitles make clear that they are "bitter" enemies. The fire keeps shooting out in a threatening manner.

The imagery gives the impression that the sailors are in hell. Fire is aggressively trying to burn their bare bodies and the workload appears endless. The connection to hell is reasonable to make in the context of the film. The pastor is standing on the warship above the sailors. They are working below the normal ground.

Regarding the sailor's bare bodies, it could also be because it indeed is hot in the boiler room. That would be a reasonable argument, if it were not for its frequent occurrence and recurrence, even in situations without the high temperatures. Even if this might be a common display of manliness for many other directors it could still be argued that it is an auteur theme

for Ford, since it is recurring and also resonates with the concept of manliness put forward in the films.

Next, the auteur theme of the special Ford comedic touch turns up. One of the sailor's points at a man and says, "That's one of your drug-store cowboys." This can be interpreted as a reference to all the western pictures that Ford had directed up to that point. This kind of self-reference and lighthearted satirical humor is so frequent and important in Ford films that it constitutes an auteur theme. At this point in Ford's career, there were no doubts that the word "cowboy" was heavily associated with him as a director of mostly western pictures.

Next is the stylistic auteur theme of showing documents to drive the narrative. We get a view of a love letter in full picture. This is recurring in Ford films, that of a letter being put in front of the camera to be read. In many other films the viewer only gets to read an intertitle or similar. Ford uses this creative way to play with the viewers expectations. We get a view into the characters private lives. The viewer is truly all-seeing, not even the love letters are left untouched.

The auteur theme of settling conflicts through fighting is introduced. Again, the auteur comedic touch is also present. Because of the love letter, a fight breaks out over the girl between the two main characters, George Darcy, and Big Tim Ryan. The fight is interrupted by O'Regan who makes a joke about them fighting on government time. He sets up a more formal fight and takes it up deck. The sailors come up from the coal room and puts up an improvised boxing ring with the help of ropes that they hold. Both men are fitted with real boxing gloves. Enemy ships eventually interrupt the fight. The settling of conflicts through fighting is a topic which will be expanded more upon later.

Now, the auteur theme of the ceremonial funeral and farewell is shown. The patriotic theme is also present through the presence of the American flag to honor the dead, who died in

battle. As a result of the attack from the enemy, one American fireman dies. There is a funeral ceremony at sea, where O'Regan is leading the service. The fireman is buried in the ocean.

An American flag is shown in the hands of the sailors. This kind of farewell ceremony is typical of Ford films, even if this one was shorter than usually. The funeral has the function of providing the viewer with a break and a reflection of what is to come. The viewer is also confronted by death in a realistic way.

In many films, both modern and older, a person's death bears no consequences. It is merely used as a tool to give the viewer a thrill. In this scene, as in many others of Ford films, the death of a person warrants reflection. Ford does not let the death pass by and be easily forgotten. He pays attention and respect to it.

The auteur theme of patriotism is relevant to mention again. When the sailors arrive "home" the camera follows them from the front marching in a parade. The woman, Rose Kelly, is the subject of the two men's affection. Her father Kelly is a police officer. Kelly is seen walking between the two men, arm in arm. Here she is happily torn between the two men. At this moment, we do not get to know what she is thinking. The parade is meant as a form of celebration.

The auteur theme of the importance of family is presented in the scene after the parade. In the scene, George Darcy meet his brother Limpy. He has become addicted to drugs, and has a supplier living with him. George literally kicks the supplier out and is reunited with his brother. They both look at a picture on the wall of their mother, who had passed away.

Here, the common Ford theme of the importance of family is emphasized. The way the brothers look at the picture of their mom is unmistakable. Even though the importance of family appears in other directors' films, the uniqueness that Ford brings to the topic makes it stand out. Ford does not simply celebrate a traditional complete family.



Instead, he makes the viewer aware of what would be a happy family, and then contrasts it with the reality. In this specific scene, the picture is representing the longing for a complete family, while the rundown room in which the brothers find themselves represents the reality.

The reoccurring auteur theme of references to the American Civil War is present in the film. The film takes place during World War I, which makes it a historical film. Despite the World War I historical setting Ford also managed to include an American Civil War reference. In a scene with a dance party, there is a Civil War veteran enthusiastically talking about his memories from the Battle of Gettysburg.

As is common in many of Ford films, a historic element is introduced, namely the American Civil War. The history is always present, and helps shape the future, even if the young sailors does not seem very interested to listen but have their attention on the girls instead. At the dance party there is also room for some auteur comedic elements, as sailors pour cold water in a man's pants.

After the party, when both men confront Kelly at the same time, she declares that she is not interested in any of them. This is a strong reaction from her. She is obviously tired of their fighting over her. At the same time, she does like both men, and she is troubled by not being able to decide which one she really likes. Instead, she pushes both away. Since the men were stopped from completing the fight before, it is still not settled.

The auteur theme of the importance of family is shown again but in a different way. A woman dies leaving a note in her hand, which says that she entrusts her baby into the hands of chaplain O'Regan. The cause of death was a drug overdose. O'Regan suggests to George Darcy and Big Tim Ryan unite to help him get rid of the "dope peddlers." O'Regan tells them to find out where the drugs are coming from and says, "declare war on the smugglers." To make the both men agree, he promises them a chance to have a fight in the Parish Gym a week from then. Here, he gives them a chance to finish their fight. The importance of family is emphasized by

the baby's loss of the mother. The pastor represents the wider family, not just the immediate blood bonds.

The family theme continues. When the police confront Limpy, he gets help from his brother George who stops the cops momentarily. Even though George knows that what Limpy does is wrong, he still helps him since they are brothers. At the harbor, Limpy says to his companion "Quick! The cops are after me! Get me out to the submarine!" The submarine represents a physical space of safety at this moment. Even if they cannot see it, it is visualized in their minds as a place where they will be safe from the cops.

The cops and O'Regan are hunting the submarine with one of their boats. Limpy, George Darcys brother, does not have enough time to get inside the submarine. He is running around at the pointy front of the surface, locked outside. With the policeboats approaching the submarine submerges under the surface. As it submerges Lumpy dives of the submarine, which results in his death. The submarine turned out to be a false security.

The story is of one brother that failed to save his own. George let down his family. It is only him left; the parents being gone already. Before, it was the two brothers that had to watch the photograph of the mother together. From now on, George must watch the picture alone, and be reminded of the death of his own brother.

The submarine is owned by the drug runners. For the drug runners, it represents safety. For the society, it is viewed as a threat. It can go undetected and that results in deaths in the city. In this case it is not the submarine that causes the deaths, but rather it is used as a tool to transport the harmful goods. At the same time, a man dies as a result of not being able to get into the submarine while submerging.

The auteur theme of societal cooperation is shown. By roughing up one of the street sellers they get the information that the submarine is kept in a cave on Rock island. Darcy and Ryan do not approach the cave alone. They arrive at Rock Island with what seems like the

whole neighborhood. Here is the Ford theme of cooperation, a society coming together to solve a problem. As the men climb down the cave together, they are descending into the unknown.

The Catholic auteur theme is present again, with similarities to the beginning of the film. The smugglers are using a smoke signaling system. The symbolic of the open fire yet again reminds of hell. Just as in the coal room in the beginning, the men have climbed down to hell together again.

The auteur theme of displaying manliness through not wearing shirts to represent manliness appears. George takes off his shirts and prepares to swim. It is explaining that he is the best swimmer. George, with the help of two other men rigs the docked submarine with dynamite and blows it up. It could be argued that the shirts would have made it more difficult to swim but viewing the scene it is obvious it is also a statement about tough men.

The submarine represents a dangerous tool that needs to be destroyed. Although the physical object is not an issue, it is used in a way that is negative, namely being used for smuggling.

One of the men says, "Look out devil - - here they come!" This is another auteur religious reference of sending the drug smugglers to hell. This also strengthens the interpretation from earlier, that the fire is supposed to be an allusion to hell. The men shake hands after the submarine is blown up.

Finally, the ending of the film depicts the formal fight between Darcy and Ryan. The auteur theme of settling disputes through fights is present. O'Regan says that it is a private fight and asks everyone else to leave. The chaplain is also the referee. The fight is played out in the boxing ring as promised. The fight is formalized, this time in the real boxing ring. The first time we see the men fighting, is with their bare hands in the modern industrial environment. None of the men have shirts on, but of course this could be explained through being customary in boxing matches.

The men have the proper equipment such as gloves. The fight is long and many punches land in the head of both men. Finally, George gives up, still standing when they shake hands. Even though Tim won the fight, Rose Kelly still picked Darcy.

In this way, they both become winners. And it is evident that the physical strength is not the only basis for intimate relationships. The two men's friendship is restored. In this world, men solve conflicts through fighting with their fists and then can become friends again. It is seen as an appropriate approach.

Lastly the auteur theme of the importance of family appears again. A deceased sailor's wife is given a child to take care of by chaplain O'Regan. It is also made clear, that the widow is interested in Big Tim Ryan.

Here is also the for Ford typical auteur theme of redemption. Big Tim Ryan tried to save the widows now deceased husband. It is indicated that he starts to take care of the widow and the child, therefore making up for failing to save her husband. The finish of the film is a military parade, although the service members are in civilian clothes, to attend a church service. The patriotic undertones are obvious.

Ryan and Darcy walk in side-by-side, seemingly good friends. A police officer stops by O'Regan and say "Well, I see the war's over." The police officer is referencing both World War I and the private war between the two men. O'Regan nods, smiles, and walks into the church. The church represents the community and safety. Pastor O'Regan represents the personification and the church represents the physical object.

Several auteur comedic elements are noticeable throughout the film. An example is when a police officer is given a cigar, which explodes. Another is when a man falls from the roof during the boxing match and interrupts them.

## 6.2 Analysis of *Men Without Women* (1930)

The film was notable because of its experimental aspects, such as the underwater photography that documented naval rescue crews working with welding a submarine on the bottom of the ocean. The sound was apparently also groundbreaking in its new use of techniques regarding the microphones that were hung from fishing poles, which captured sounds from bars and streets in a novel way. Ford said: “That was the first submarine picture ever made actually using a real sub. It was a very effective picture-for those days...” Ford also lifts forward the film’s humor.<sup>57</sup>

The film begins with stating that it is “A story of the submarine service.” This makes clear that the main subject of the film indeed is the submarine and its crew. The film opens in Shanghai in what is describes as “The longest bar in the world.”

The auteur theme of the importance of family is introduced as well as the recognizable humor. One of the sailors, named Winkler, buys a vase for his mother. In a comic scene he falls over but manages to still hold the vase over his head. Here is the typical auteur Ford humor.

The men are drinking plenty of alcohol in the bar. One of the sailors gets a glass with a fish in. This is another auteur comedic touch, but at the same time it has symbolic value. The symbolism with the fish will be repeated later in the film. The symbolism is that the fish is trapped inside the cup in a similar way the sailors will be trapped in their own submarine.

In the bar, the sailors start singing the song “The Monkeys Have No tails in Zamboanga.” It was also to be used in *They Were Expendable* (1945) and *Donovan’s Reef* (1963). As my further analysis shows, it was also used in the film *Submarine Patrol* (1938). This came to be a recurring song in Ford’s films and could be argued being an auteur touch just as the recurring Christian hymn “Shall We Gather at the River.” A sailor sings another song and plays the piano.

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<sup>57</sup> Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford*, New Revised and Enlarged Edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1978, p. 52.

The crew of the submarine s-13 stays together and drinks together. They give the impression of being a very tight knitted group.

The following part is connected to the Ford auteur theme redemption. A navy officer, named Weymouth, who is commanding another military ship, is claiming that he saw a person in the bar that he knew was dead, named Quartermain. The events that happened were dramatic.

The officer explains: "Quartermain was in command of the destroyer that was carrying England's greatest field marshal on a secret mission...." Then another officer says that he remembers and explains that the ship was torpedoed and sunk at night. Weymouth says that there was evidence that proved that the enemy was fully informed of the ships sailings plans.

There was also a scandal involving a woman named Lady Patricia. She was the only person that Quartermain met between the time he got the sailing plans and the time he sailed. Weymouth was in the jury in the trail. He had to choose between putting the guilt on either Quartermain or Lady Patricia, "the woman he loved...." He says, "I voted to clear the woman... and damned the memory of my best friend." Weymouth is correct, as we will learn later in the film. He did indeed see Quartermain in the bar. Quartermain is a part of the submarine s-13 under the fake name of Burke. Later in this thesis, it will be explained how Quartermain gets the chance to redeem himself.

The symbolism with the goldfish resurfaces, since one of the sailors has brought one, inside a glass bowl. The sailor with the goldfish says "I'm goin' to take the pretty little things down to the river and set 'em free." Here it is made clear that the fish is indeed trapped in a restricted area, namely the bowl, just as the sailors will be later in the film. Ironically, he does not set the fish free, but gives it away before they reach the water, constituting another of Ford satirical comedic touches.

The sailor with the goldfish in his hands, along with the other sailors, walks past a woman sitting in a cage. The sailors start to sing and make fun of the woman in the cage until

they get water on their heads. This is symbolic and has a meaning that is connected to the later events in the film. The cage works as a physical barrier between the men and the woman.

The title of the film is a reference both to a lack of physical intimacy, and to a lacking on a spiritual level. The men are not connected to women but are doomed to live the life of a submarine crew, where duty comes first and the private life second. Also, it is a form of irony to see the sailors make fun of what constitutes the woman's prison, to later be trapped in a similar deadly "cage" themselves. The dark auteur humor is present.

When the crew is boarding the submarine s-13, another comedic incident happens. One of the sailors, called Dutch, tries, and fails to smuggle alcohol onboard, strapped to his leg. Another sailor notices they search the pants legs and instead puts the bottle under his shirt. The alcohol is destroyed when one of the men searching them smacks a baton in his belly, breaking the bottle. This is another example of the comedic touch, in which later becomes a very serious film.

When the submarine is out on open water, the weather turns rough, with high waves. The submarine gets struck by a boat, due to the bad weather, which causes the submarine to take in water. We get to know that the engine room and all the sailors in there drowned. Here, what was supposed to be a place of safety for them, a metal fort, for which the men had no fear, became their own death trap.

The lights go out in the submarine. The communication equipment in the submarine is not working correctly. Here is the technology failing the humans. The sailors become focused on trying to survive. One of the sailors says, "I'd sure like to be one of Jenkins' little goldfish just about now!" At this moment, the sailors are trapped, just as the woman in the cage and the goldfish in the bowl.

In the claustrophobic submarine, the sailors sit with water up to their knees. Eventually the air is running out in the confined space. The only way out is blocked and can only be cleared

by divers from the outside. One man keeps trying to send messages. There is only one oxygen tank left. The men start fighting about it. Some want to have more; others want to save it. The auteur theme of settling conflicts through fighting appears again.

The young and idealistic captain says “Fellows, if we’ve got to die...let’s go like men! Nobody will ever know how we met the end.... But let’s prove to ourselves that we can meet it like heroes!” The older sailors dismiss him. “Well, he ain’t gonna make no hero out of me!” said one of them. Here there is a fundamental disagreement on what it means to be heroic and the value of sacrifice. It is problematized, as different characters have different opinions on the matter.

The sailor Pollock begins screaming “Save our souls!” Here the religious and Christian auteur theme appears again. The man who prayed is trying to blow the ship up and causes an explosion. Pollock later reappears after they first beat him down. He says “Down on your knees, you sinners! Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord!”

Pollock refuses to stop screaming with the detonator in his hands, and the captain is forced to shoot him to death. The captain gets saddened by his own action. Here is the weighting of one life against many. One life was taken, but many were saved. The auteur theme of sacrifice is present. One was sacrificed to save many. The religious theme here is present and portrayed as a last resort of a desperate man.

On the other hand, the reason for Pollock’s actions is not explained through religion. The other sailors call him “crazy.” Later, another man says a prayer in the dark, which could almost be considered an apology for showing the religion in a negative light before. Once again, the thematic representation is more complex than in many films and are not one-sided.

It could also be argued that the crew must learn to cooperate in order to save themselves. The importance of cooperation is a recurring auteur theme in John Ford’s films. Here it is not on the societal level, but on a much smaller level. If it does not work between individuals it is



doubtful if it would work on a broader level. Considering the nature of the film, with its claustrophobic setting and being an extensive character study, the change in focus is motivated.

The sailor known as Dutch is revealed to have written a letter to his mother. Here again, the auteur theme of the importance of family appears. At the same time, rescue ships are looking for them since they do not have contact with the submarine. Also notable is that many of the men are not wearing shirts inside the submarine, echoing the Ford auteur way of displaying manliness.

Finally, the rescue ships find the submarine. One after one, the men are dying due to leaking chlorine gas that originates from the control room being flooded with water that reaches the switchboards. The man named Winkler dies holding his vase, which was a gift for his mother. He also wrote a letter to his mother, again invoking the auteur theme of the importance of family.

The divers manage to clear the torpedo tubes which the sailors aim to use to escape from the submarine. The underwater photography is notable and gives the film realistic and documentarist qualities. It contributes to the overall feeling of the film and gets the viewer to identify more with the crew, to truly feel that they are in the water.

When one of the sailors is leaving, he says, “would you mind giving me that letter to Winkler’s mother?” Once again, this is made to show the importance of family relationships, and especially between mother and son. This interpretation is made in the context of this film, but also in connection with other Ford films.

Here, the auteur theme of sacrifice and redemption appears. It is revealed that one of the sailors will have to stay behind to operate the tubes. The men are shot out one by one, until only the young captain and Quartermain remains. Then a conflict ensues. The captain says, “A Captain always stays with his ship!”

Quartermain explains the situation for the captain and how he abandoned his own ship in the past. He reveals that the only one he told about the ship's plans was Lady Patricia. He was found guilty of treason. Quartermain says he does not want to go up and face Weymouth. Finally, Quartermain gives the captain the fake name of Burke and hits him until he passes out and shoots him out from the tube. The Irish auteur theme occurs again with the use of the Irish surname Burke.

The conflict here is about restoring honor and redemption. Even if Quartermain failed before, he now found himself in a situation where he had the opportunity to restore his own honor and redeem himself. Redemption is an important recurring auteur theme in Ford's films.

When the captain is rescued, he does not reveal Quartermain identity to Weymouth. When pressured by Weymouth, he assures the commander that "Burke" was from his own hometown and they have known each other the whole life. The whole crew takes off their hats in honor of Quartermain's sacrifice and a trumpet is blown. The ships' American flag is lowered. Here is a classical auteur John Ford farewell on display, after the passing away of someone. Quartermain manages to redeem himself by sacrificing his life. The patriotic theme is also present, since he did this not only for personal reasons, but for letting his country down before. By his actions, his honor is restored, and he is redeemed.

### 6.3 Analysis of *Seas Beneath* (1931)

The film features the first appearance of a boastful Irish character in a sound film. Ford said the character was a composite of many people, including his own father.<sup>58</sup>

During the opening credits, the background on display is a still picture of roaring waves. The names of the cast and crew, as well as the title of the film, all appear "beneath" the water.

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<sup>58</sup> Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford*, New Revised and Enlarged Edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1978, p. 54.

The sky only takes up a small portion of the screen, most space is devoted to the sea. The symbolism and wordplay mark a foreshadowing of what is to come. The film begins at August 18, 1918, during a late stage of World War 1.

Firstly, the auteur technique of filming a document in full screen is evident. The opening scene is an establishing shot of a Q-ship on the sea. The camera shakes along with the rhythm of the waves. The Bridge Logbook of the U.S.S. Mystery Ship No. 2 takes up the whole frame. The commander is Lieutenant U.S.N Robert Kingsley. The camera shows the viewer the content of the logbook, which reveals that they sailed from Yorktown harbor on a secret mission.

The auteur theme of having Christian references appear in this scene. The commander addresses the crew and explains that their objective is to act as a decoy for enemy submarine and be torpedoed by them. An older officer, Chief Mike Costello, acts as comic relief and he makes some funny comments, especially when the ship's big gun is introduced. The officer talks about a girl that he loved and kisses the big gun. He wants to "christen" the gun he claims after the only girl that he ever loved that he knew loved him too. This is a Christian reference.

Except for this, the film has plenty of auteur comedic elements, some involving Costello, but also others. Also, the auteur theme of having an Irish character in a prominent role is upheld in the Irish character Costello.

The commander declares that they are looking for "the biggest of them all" in reference to the enemy submarine. The commander of the enemy submarine is "Baron von Steuben. The ace of the U-boat captains."

The first submarine is introduced in a sequence with the camera attached to the front of it as it emerges from underwater to above. It turns out to be an American submarine and therefore non-hostile. Very quickly, after they have introduced each other physically and shaken hands, the American submarine descends into the sea again and the crew of the ship calls out

their goodbyes. This submarine only invokes positive feelings. The auteur theme of the importance of cooperation is present.

The commander explains for his crew that they are going to pretend to be a merchant ship in order for the enemy submarine to come up and shoot at them, instead of torpedoing them. The enemy submarine is obviously a threat to their lives, and a dangerous object. This contrasts with their friendly submarine. In this film, it is obvious that it is not the physical object of the submarine that is a threat, but it is merely a tool, like a weapon.

The next three paragraphs are necessary to understand because of their connection to the auteur theme of sacrifice and redemption. First a sailor lets his crew down but gains redemption through his actions. The crew enjoys some leisure activities between the action, for example diving from the ships mast down into the sea. The ship sails to refuel and get food at a port in the Canary Islands. At the Canary Islands, a lot of drinking is featured. The commander photographs the German submarines at the same time as he flirts with a woman, comedically tricking the Italian police. It turns out that the girl the commander was flirting with is Anna Marie von Steuben, sister of the enemy commander's submarine.

One of the sailors, named Richard Cabot, is given alcohol to the point that he passes out by a woman that is a German spy. The crew looks for him but cannot find him and they sail away without him. The German gets important information about their mission in this way. When Cabot realizes that he made a mistake to trust the woman, he sneaks on board a German ship that is leaving the harbor.

There is a scene in which the viewer gets to see the inside of the German submarine. We also get a shoot through the periscope with parts of the screen covered, leaving only a circle for the viewer to see. From the periscope's view we understand that the Germans look on a ship. This voyeuristic sequence culminates when the Germans very slowly takes the submarine up to the surface. The ship is German and is carrying the submarine commander, von Steubens' sister.

They kiss on the cheeks, and the commander asks her if their mother is well. Here the auteur theme of the importance of family appears.

The American sailor by the name of Richard Cabot, who managed to sneak onto the Germans ship, is killed. Before he died, he damaged the ship from the inside, so water begins leaking in. He climbs up and puts an oil barrel on fire. Here, the sailor redeems himself. He sacrifices himself, which is in contrast with what he did before, when he let down the crew when he was tricked by the spy. The auteur themes of sacrifice, and redemption are present in this scene.

It is ordered that the dead American sailor is to be buried in the water as the Germans said in the film “Das ist ein seemanns ende.” He gets saluted when he is taken away. This is a typical auteur Ford farewell. It gives the viewer a chance to reflect upon the death and a chance to say farewell. It did not matter that the Germans and Americans were enemies, the dead were to be respected.

The submarine descends in a slow sequence. After this, the German ship sinks as it is leaking. The crew escapes in a lifeboat. The American ship notices a fire. As we get to know through the logbook, they found the body of junior officer Richard Cabot and gave him a “sea burial.”

Finally, the American crew finds the German submarine. A scene with the sailors underneath the deck shows many of them not wearing their shirts. Here is the typical Ford auteur way of displaying manliness.

One of the sailors, Stanley Northcross II, when they are up on deck later, shows a tattoo on his bare breast, an anchor with two American flags by each side, and a text that reads “Death before dishonor.” The captain responds, “It’s fine Stanley. Great.” And follows up by saying “But what will your mother say?” The perplexed sailor sits down and says “Well, that, sir, is problematical.” Here is the typical Ford comedic touch as well as the importance of family.

Inside the German submarine we get a closeup of the man by the periscope, and he is very concentrated. The submarine goes up to the surface and fire their cannons at the American ship with the main characters on. The Americans send up a flag which apparently is an international code that means “stay away.”

The Germans still shoot at the American ship, which begins to take in water and sink, but very slowly, and it will stay floating for a long time. A part of the ship catches fire due to the bombing and the captain orders some of the sailors to jump into the water, in order to make the Germans go closer. The Americans have set a trap for them. When the submarine gets close enough, the big gun from the beginning of the film is revealed. At the same time, the American flag is flown up above the ship. The patriotic auteur touch is clear here.

Most of the sailors that operate the cannon and the machine gun do not have shirts on. Here is the typical Ford auteur way of displaying manliness through not wearing shirts. An American submarine targets the visible German submarine and the viewer gets to see the submarine through the periscope. They shoot a torpedo that hits the submarine, which result in the submarine taking in water.

When the submarine is sinking, some of the German crew, including the commander, stands on top of it, with the German flag in the background. Some of the German sailors do not have their shirts on either. They are saluting their flag. They say goodbye to each other and shake hands as the submarine is sinking. A scene depicts the Germans submarines torpedo room being filled with water and the crew fighting to climb the only ladder out.

By filming the American logbook, the viewer is informed that the German submarine U-172 was sunken and survivors were picked up. The auteur way of filming documents to forward the narrative is evident. The prisoners were turned over to Detention Camp. Anna Maria, who was sent out on a lifeboat with some of the crew before the bombing and shooting begun, stands by the harbor.

In the end, Bob professes his love for Anna Maria and even suggests marriage in a church nearby, but Anna Marie rather goes home with her brother, even if she does not rule out meeting him again in the future. The Germans march away on a line with Anna Maria holding her fiancée as commander Kingsley watches with a conflicted mind. Here, the importance of family is emphasized, in this case, Anna Marie's brother.

#### 6.4 Analysis of *Submarine Patrol* (1938)

Of the film *Submarine Patrol* (1938), Ford said in the interview by Bogdanovich that he had a lot of sympathy for the Blue Jackets, because he had been one himself. He said that the comedy in the film was improvised.<sup>59</sup> In the film, the camera film signs and documents to convey information to the viewer, which is a common auteur technique for Ford.

Behind the opening credits is a shadow of an anchor, slightly tilted with the hooks on the right side. The film begins at Sands Street gate, Brooklyn Navy Yard. The films take place during World War 1. A boastful young playboy millionaire man named Perry Townsend III, giving the impression of being quite wealthy, enlist in the navy and is assigned to one of the navy's new submarine chasers, called subchaser 599, as chief engineer. The auteur comedic touch is present in this film through many characters, and especially in the main character Townsend III.

The playboy meets a girl named Susan Leeds who is on a freighter. She picks him up in her truck to drive him to the harbor. The playboy is displeased with the submarine chaser when he sees it. He explains that he is used to a yacht. Conflict immediately ensues when he interacts with the sailors. The contrast is obvious. He stands in his expensive clothes in opposition to the

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<sup>59</sup> Peter Bogdanovich, *John Ford*, New Revised and Enlarged Edition, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1978, p. 69.

sailors' uniforms. It is played out partly for comedic and satirical purposes, therefore continuing the comedic auteur theme.

The first food at the submarine chaser is lamb stew, which seems to be a common staple there. After the food, the sailors go out drinking. When the sailors go into a bar the camera follows them from behind, similar to the film *Men Without Women* (1930). The sailors sing the song "The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga," the same as in the bar in *Men Without Women* (1930). The use of the song is to be considered an auteur touch, just as the recurring "Shall We Gather at the River" which was featured in *The Searchers* (1956) among others. One of the sailors has the Irish surname of Haggerty, continuing the auteur theme of having Irish characters.

McAlisson sits by a table with Susan. He declares that he does not like dancing: "I don't approve of dancing." Susan reminds him of a time when he did dance which makes him give up immediately. When Susan gets up to dance with the playboy, McAlisson lift his pointing finger and says "Susan, I forbid you. Dancing is a sinful pastime." This causes the playboy to go away momentarily. The use of the word "sinful" bears religious connotations. Therefore, here is the auteur theme of religion present.

When McAlisson leaves the table, the playboy grabs Susan from the table very fast. They leave to go to an expensive restaurant. They dance together. When the playboy takes Susan back to her boat, Susan's father takes him to his cabin for a talk. Susan's father is the captain of the boat. The class difference is obvious, with Townsend explaining that they have had champagne. Susan's father explains that he does not want them to meet anymore.

A naval officer called John C. Drake, is punished by his supervisors for gross negligence. He is demoted. Consequently, he is put in charge of the submarine chaser that Townsend works on. Drake tries to instill more discipline in the sailors when he arrived. This is valuable information for this study since this character will get the chance to redeem himself later.



During scenes in the film, American flags are displayed over the heads of the sailors, echoing the auteur patriotic theme. The submarine chaser also sails past the Statue of Liberty, increasing the patriotic message. In the engine room, a man has passed out. He does not wear a shirt. The common auteur theme of displaying manliness through the bare chest reoccurs. During the film, the sailors have many brawls with each other and solve the conflicts between them by fighting, constituting the same auteur theme as in the other films.

During the submarine chasers' mission in the nighttime, one of the men spots a periscope in the water. He loses sight of it quickly. With the help of the gun on the boat they aim for the supposed enemy submarine. It turns out to be a garbage can and not a periscope. This is both done as a form of comic relief but also to increase the tension.

After the mistaken periscope, the viewer gets to see the Germans looking through the real telescope on the American boat. The voyeuristic aspect comes in when we see the boats from the view of the periscope. The Germans load a torpedo. The watcher in the American submarine notices the periscope and the alarm is activated.

The Germans fire the torpedo, but the torpedo does not hit the American submarine chaser. Instead, the German submarine gets hit by a bomb the American threw in causing the crew to drown. The camera shows us the torpedo room, which gets flooded, and the man operating the periscope, twisting it around in panic. The American crew gives salute to the German submarine, some men without their shirts. This is a typical auteur Ford funeral farewell, to respect you enemy as well as the typical way of displaying manliness.

The American submarine chaser docks in Italy. The name of another boat is Maria Ann. That is the boat Susan's father is the captain of. During a dinner between Townsend and Susan, her father interrupts them and beats him and takes his daughter away. Finally, Susan's father finds out that Townsend wants to marry his daughter. The auteur theme of the importance of family is present here.

The crew of the submarine chaser gets a mission to find a German submarine called U 26, which has sunken 31 ships before. The Navy have now found the submarines base, which is surrounded by enemy boats. The commander only wants volunteers, but the whole crew naturally volunteers. Here, the auteur theme of cooperation and sacrifice is shown.

Some of the crew of the American submarine chaser roars out in a small roaring boat, avoiding the mines in the water, and at the same time identifying the mines. When the American submarine chaser sees the German submarine, they start shooting the crew with a mounted machine gun and a cannon. The chaser gets hit and starts taking in water. The boats take several more hits before the German submarine is sunken. Then they blow up the storage house for the submarine.

Susan's father is happy that his daughter is going to marry Townsend. The submarine chaser's commander and Townsend smoke together. Later the commander is told that he made the navy proud. He got the chance to redeem himself, and he did. Before, he was demoted for gross negligence and now, he and his crew are heroes. The auteur theme of redemption is evident.

The film ends with the wedding between Townsend and Susan. Unfortunately, the wedding is cancelled, with the message delivered through a letter, which one of the sailors drops off. The crew is sailing to Malta for repairs and then to the Baltic. He still proclaims his love for her. The film concludes with Susan promising Townsend that she is going to wait for him to marry later. They scream loudly as the ship is leaving. The last shot is of the submarine chasers sailing away over the water. The closing credits with "The End" contains the same anchor in the background that was seen in the opening credits.

## 6.5 Analysis of *The Growler Story* (1958)

This is a dramatized documentary short and training film made for the United States Navy. It is based on the real story of Submarine commander Howard W. Gilmore's sacrifice. The film opens with a statement that it is dedicated to "That dedicated woman' the navy wife." Here the auteur theme of the importance of family appears.

The first shot after the opening credits are of a submarine coming up from the water very slowly. The sailors come up from the submarine. One of the crew suggests a "swimming party." Here the typical Ford comedic touch is shown, seeing the crew jump into the water to swim. A man dives into the water with the cigarette still in his mouth. We are introduced to Howard W. Gilmore and his family of wife and two kids. "A man that knew how to live, and how to die," the narrator says. Gilmore is shown saying goodbye to his family.

Other sailors are also introduced when they say goodbye to their families. The farewell scene is long relative to the total playtime. An orchestra is playing music during the farewell. The families wave goodbye to the leaving submarine. It has the feeling of a formal ceremony. The ceremonial way of taking farewell is evident, even though the main character is not dead yet. The families do not know if the crew will return. In the film, it is reminiscent of the life that a submarine crew must live. They become "Men Without Women" as in the title of the earlier Ford film.

An American flag is displayed waving in the wind of the submarine displaying the patriotic auteur theme. The submarine crew fires a missile on an enemy submarine. In this scene, the submarine is a tool of weaponry, dangerous for the people on the other side. Some of the crew is seen without shirts, which seems to be a common way for Ford to display manliness in the submarine.

The submarine gets bombed by airplanes while underwater. Later, at another time, when the submarine is at the surface and Howard W. Gilmore make his crew get cover first when

being shoot at by an enemy ship. He is shot and severely injured. He shouts to his crew “Take her down!” Doing this, he kills himself, but saves his crew. He is aware of that this will kill him. Here, his hero status is cemented. He sacrifices himself, thus the auteur theme is obvious.

The film cuts to a scene in which the wife is dressed in black and the choir singing. She is handed the Congressional Medal of Honor and a salute by all present is done. There is also a shot of an American flag. This is a characteristic Ford ceremonial funeral and goodbye, especially, when sailors place a ring of flowers on top of the submarine. This is a recurring auteur theme.

This is the only one of the analyzed films that is in color. The film uses fade out to overlap some of the scenes, as seen in earlier Ford work. The camera is mostly static, even if it makes small movements occasionally. As in earlier films, Ford films a document in order to convey information to the viewer.

## **7. Conclusion**

Through the auteur analysis of the films, much new knowledge about the auteur themes has surfaced. Some of the themes might be easier to identify than others, without knowledge about Ford. However, the more complex religious references present in the film might only be possible to identify with a contextualization of both Ford and the time period. There is a great value in contributing to knowledge in these overlooked Ford films. I will list each of the distinctive auteur themes by each film in chronological order, followed by comments.

The research question of the thesis was:

Which distinctive auteur themes can be identified in the chosen films *The Blue Eagle* (1926), *Men Without Women* (1930), *Seas Beneath* (1931), *Submarine Patrol* (1938) and *The Growler Story* (1957)?

In *The Blue Eagle* (1926), the distinctive auteur themes are, the patriotic theme, the Christian Catholic theme, the Irish character, display of manliness through not wearing shirts, the comedic touch, settling of conflicts through fights, the ceremonial funeral farewells, the importance of family, the American Civil War reference, importance of cooperation, redemption, sacrifice and the stylistic theme of filming documents such as letters to drive the narrative.

*The Blue Eagle* (1926) differ from the other films in that it is a silent film. As found in the analysis, this one had an elaborate plot with large doses of both humor and seriousness. What is remarkable is that so many of the auteur themes that will continue much later in Ford's career already is present.

The ceremonial farewells are of particular interest. They play a big role in many Ford films, and in this silent film, they are still present, although it does not have the more central importance that it will have in later films. As said before, this is different from most films, even of the era. Usually, deaths are not recognized in this realistic and emotionally impactful way. Ford does not show violence for the sake of it. He asks us to reflect about it, and the consequences that follow.

In *Men Without Women* (1930) the distinctive auteur themes are the importance of family, the comedic touch, the Christian religious theme, importance of cooperation, display of manliness through not wearing shirts, settling of conflicts through fights, sacrifice, redemption, the Irish theme, the ceremonial funeral farewell, the stylistic theme of filming documents such as letters to drive the narrative and the use of the song "The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga."

In *Men Without Women* (1930) it is easy to see submarine film genre specific conventions being formed. Even though it is identifiable as a submarine film, it is still distinctively a Ford film. The Irish theme is not found in other submarine films as a typical

genre staple. Even though *Men Without Women* (1930) differs in some ways from many other Ford films in that it does not contain references to the American Civil War, it makes up for this by its historical focus. It probably would not fit very well in the narrative either. This shows that Ford was flexible in his approach, even though he had many cherished themes.

In *Seas Beneath* (1931), the distinctive auteur themes are the Christian theme, the comedic touch, the Irish character, the importance of family, sacrifice, redemption, the ceremonial funeral farewell, importance of cooperation, display of manliness through not wearing shirts, patriotism and the stylistic theme of filming documents to drive the narrative.

*Seas Beneath* (1931) stands out among other films from the period. It is true that it is mostly a routine picture if viewed on its premises, and that it does not aspire to be a masterpiece. Nevertheless, it is distinctly a Ford picture which is understood in viewing the film. Yet again, the Irish character are present with the unmistakably improvised comedic touch which is typical for Ford.

Admittedly, many other films from the era feature tough men, but the way they are portrayed and the construction of the reality in Ford's films differ. The solution to conflict between friends in Ford's films is a well-intentioned fist fight, something that is different from many other films in that it is often deadly serious and not used as a tool to solve a conflict in a beneficial way for both parts, but just for one. In Ford's world, men could fight and then be friends immediately afterwards.

In *Submarine Patrol* (1938), the distinctive auteur themes are the comedic touch, the religious theme, display of manliness through not wearing shirts, patriotism, the ceremonial funeral farewell, redemption, sacrifice, display of manliness through not wearing shirts, the importance of family, the importance of cooperation, settling of conflicts through fights, the Irish character, the stylistic theme of filming documents to drive the narrative and the use of the song "The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga."

*Submarine Patrol* (1938) is a typical Ford film in many ways. At the same time as it is indeed recognizable as Ford, it has not been hailed as a masterpiece, nor does it aspire to be. Even in a rather fast-paced film like this, where the focus is to sink the enemy, the ceremonial farewells are an integral part. It is similar in many ways to Ford's other films featuring submarines, and the use of the song "The Monkeys Have No Tails in Zamboanga" (also used in *Men Without Women*) implies that Ford is aware of this fact. Ford is not afraid to repeat themes from earlier films.

In *The Growler Story* (1957), the distinctive auteur themes are the importance of family, the comedic touch, the ceremonial funeral farewell, the display of manliness through not wearing shirts, patriotism, sacrifice, importance of cooperation and the stylistic theme of filming documents to drive the narrative.

*The Growler Story* (1957) is a different viewing experience than the other films. It is like watching one of the other full-length Ford features in only around 20 minutes. It is a special kind of film, distinctively identifiable as directed by Ford. The themes are presented, but in a condensed and focused way. It is understandable to see why Ford made this film. After all, he had the chance to make something different in making a short docudrama, but at the same time return to familiar grounds with submarines, the navy, and the recurring themes.

In conclusion, the auteur themes that appear in the films gives support to the auteur theory and shows its relevance and power as a theoretical tool. Through this thesis, the knowledge on these Ford films has been expanded and it will be easier to evaluate them in comparison with the director's more famous and analyzed works. Finally, the strength of the auteur theory to trace themes over time has been demonstrated as well as Ford's impressive craftsmanship and influence over his works, even the earlier ones. Despite the controversies in relation to the auteur theory since its inception, it still is a stimulating and versatile tool and will most likely continue to receive attention in the future.

## 8. Further research

Another possible research aspect to consider would be to do readings of his films based on what the military vehicles represents and if this differ before and after his real-life war experience. Other possible entrances could be to study the documentaries of John Ford more closely with the help of the auteur theory. Do the documentaries appear distinct from his fictional work and in that case how?

To build on the research laid forward here, it would be fruitful to study how representation and development of Ford's patriotic aspects changed over time. Another interesting endeavor would be to investigate how the camera movement developed over time, and if this differs between genres. It would also be valuable to identify auteur themes in other Ford films which have not yet been explored.

Another more difficult film historical research area is to search for the lost films of John Ford. While writing this thesis and studying the filmography of John Ford, it becomes apparent that many of the early silent films are missing. Unfortunately, this might be permanent for most of them, but the endeavor to search for and preserve the found material must continue.



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## **Filmography**

### Primary films

Original title: *The Blue Eagle*

Production company: Fox Film Corporation

Country: USA

Year of release: 1926

Producer: John Ford & William Fox

Director: John Ford

Screenwriters: Gerald Beaumont (story "The Lord's Referee"), Gordon Rigby (scenario) and Malcolm Stuart Boylan (titles)

Cinematographer: George Schneiderman and Arthur Edeson (uncredited)

Editor: Unknown

Music: Not applicable

Actors: George O'Brien (George Darcy), Janet Gaynor (Rose Kelly), William Russell (Big Tim Ryan), Margaret Livingston (Mrs. Mary Rohan), Robert Edeson (Chaplain 'Father Joe' Regan), Philip Ford (Limpy Darcy), David Butler (Nick 'Dizzy' Galvani)

Black and white

58 minutes

Original title: *Men Without Women*

Production company: Fox Film Corporation

Country: USA

Year of release: 1930

Producer: John Ford

Director: John Ford

Screenwriters: John Ford (story), James Kevin McGuinness (story) and Otis C. Freeman

Cinematographer: Joseph H. August

Editor: Walter Thompson

Music: Carli Elinor

Actors: Kenneth MacKenna (Chief Torpedoman Burke), Frank Albertson (Ensign Albert Edward Price), J. Farrell MacDonald (Costello), Warren Hymer (Kaufman), Paul Page (Handsome), Walter McGrail, (Joe Cobb), Stuart Erwin (Radioman Jenkins), George Le Guere (Curly Pollock), Charles K. Gerrard (Commander Weymouth), Harry Tenbrook (Dutch Winkler), Warner Richmond (Lieutenant Commander Briddwell), John Wayne (Radioman on surface) (uncredited)

Black and white

77 minutes

Original title: *Seas Beneath*

Production company: Fox Film Corporation

Country: USA

Year of release: 1931

Producer: John Ford

Director: John Ford

Screenwriters: Dudley Nichols (screenplay), James Parke Jr. (story), William Collier Sr. (dialogue) (uncredited) and Curt Furberg (dialogue) (uncredited)

Cinematographer: Joseph H. August

Editor: Frank E. Hull

Music: Peter Brunelli

Actors: George O'Brien (Cmdr. Robert "Bob" Kingsley), Marion Lessing (Anna Marie Von Steuben), Mona Maris (Fraulein Lolita), Walter C. Kelly (Chief Mike "Guns" Costello), Warren Hymer ("Lug" Kaufman), Steve Pendleton as (Ens. Richard "Dick" Cabot), Walter McGrail (Chief Joe Cobb), Larry Kent (Lt. "Mac" McGregor), Henry Victor (Baron Ernst von Steuben), John Loder (Franz Shiller)

Black and white

90 minutes

Original title: *Submarine Patrol*

Production company: Twentieth Century Fox

Country: USA

Year of release: 1938

Producer: Daryl F. Zanuck

Director: John Ford

Screenwriters: Rian James (screenplay), Darrell Ware (screenplay), Jack Yellen (screenplay), Ray Millholland (novel), William Faulkner, (script, 1936) (uncredited), Don Ettlinger (contributor) (uncredited), Sheridan Gibney (contributor) (uncredited), Gene Markey (contributor) (uncredited), Kathryn Scola (1936 script) (uncredited), Karl Tunberg (contributor) (uncredited), George O. Noville (contributor) (uncredited)

Cinematographer: Arthur C. Miller

Editor: Robert L. Simpson

Music: Arthur Lange (uncredited) and Charles Maxwell (uncredited)

Actors: Richard Greene (Perry Townsend III), Nancy Kelly (Susan Leeds), Preston Foster (Lieutenant John C. Drake), George Bancroft (Captain Leeds), Slim Summerville (Ellsworth "Spuds" Fickett-Cook), John Carradine (Matt McAllison), Joan Valerie (Anne), Henry Armetta (Luigi)

Black and white

95 minutes

Original title: *The Growler Story*

Production company: U.S. Navy

Country: USA

Year of release: 1957

Producer: Mark Armistead

Director: John Ford

Screenwriter: Unknown

Cinematographer: Pacific Fleet Combat Camera Group

Editors: Jack Murray & Barbara Ford

Music: Not applicable

Actors: Ward Bond (Quincannon), Ken Curtis (Captain Howard W. Gilmore) and members of the U.S. Navy (uncredited)

Eastmancolor

22 minutes

## Other films

Original title: *Submarine*

Production company: Columbia Pictures

Country: USA

Year of release: 1928

Director: Frank Capra

Original title: *The Prisoner of Shark Island*

Production company: Twentieth Century Fox

Country: USA

Year of release: 1936

Director: John Ford

Original title: *Young Mr. Lincoln*



Production company: Cosmopolitan Productions

Country: USA

Year of release: 1939

Director: John Ford

Original title: *The Grapes of Wrath*

Production company: Twentieth Century Fox

Country: USA

Year of release: 1940

Director: John Ford

Original title: *December 7th*

Production company: U.S. Navy Department and U.S. War Department

Country: USA

Year of release: 1943

Director: John Ford and Gregg Toland

Original title: *They Were Expendable*

Production company: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Country: USA

Year of release: 1945

Director: John Ford

Original title: *My Darling Clementine*

Production company: Twentieth Century Fox

Country: USA

Year of release: 1946

Director: John Ford

Original title: *Fort Apache*

Production company: Argosy Pictures

Country: USA

Year of release: 1948

Director: John Ford

Original title: *3 Godfathers*

Production company: Argosy Pictures

Country: USA

Year of release: 1948

Director: John Ford

Original title: *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*

Production company: Argosy Pictures

Country: USA

Year of release: 1949

Director: John Ford

Original title: *The Quiet Man* (1952)

Production company: Argosy Pictures

Country: USA

Year of release: 1952

Director: John Ford

Original title: *What Price Glory*

Production company: Twentieth Century Fox

Country: USA

Year of release: 1952

Director: John Ford

Original title: *The Long Gray Line*

Production company: Columbia Pictures and Rota Productions

Country: USA

Year of release: 1955

Director: John Ford

Original title: *Mister Roberts*

Production company: Orange Productions

Country: USA

Year of release: 1955

Director: John Ford, Mervyn LeRoy & Joshua Logan (uncredited)

Original title: *The Searchers*

Production company: C.V. Whitney Pictures

Country: USA

Year of release: 1956

Director: John Ford

Original title: *The Wings of Eagles*

Production company: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer

Country: USA

Year of release: 1957

Director: John Ford

Original title: *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*

Production company: Paramount Pictures and John Ford Productions

Country: USA

Year of release: 1962

Director: John Ford

Original title: *Donovan's Reef*

Production company: John Ford Productions and Paramount Pictures

Country: USA

Year of release: 1963

Director: John Ford

Original title: *Das boot*

Production company: Bavaria Film, Radiant Film, Westdeutscher Rundfunk and SWR Fernsehen

Country: West Germany

Year of release: 1981

Director: Wolfgang Petersen

Original title: *The Hunt for Red October*

Production company: Paramount Pictures, Mace Neufeld Productions and Nina Saxon Film Design

Country: USA

Year of release: 1990

Director: John McTiernan

Original title: *Avatar*

Production company: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, Lightstorm Entertainment, Dune Entertainment and Ingenious Film Partners

Country: USA

Year of release: 2009

Director: James Cameron