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0521625521 - Hollywood Renaissance: the Cinema of Democracy in the Era of Ford, Capra, and Kazan

Sam B. Girgus

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HOLLYWOOD RENAISSANCE

Like many of our greatest writers in the last century, American film directors from the late 1930s to the early 1960s instigated a renaissance of original artistic works that helped reinvigorate and renew American culture. During a time of unprecedented danger from antidemocratic forces both abroad and at home, the most imaginative and creative films of these directors – John Ford, Frank Capra, Howard Hawks, Fred Zinnemann, Elia Kazan, George Stevens – articulated issues, themes, and realities at the core of the American experience.

In this provocative and original book, Sam Girgus offers a fresh look at films such as *The Searchers*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, *It's a Wonderful Life*, *High Noon*, and *On the Waterfront*, and shows how they are part of the cultural and historical debate that examines, structures, and questions what modern America means to its people, the world, and history.

Sam B. Girgus is Professor of English at Vanderbilt University. He has written or edited several books on American culture, literature, film, and thought, including *The Films of Woody Allen* (Cambridge, 1993), *Desire and the Political Unconscious in American Literature*, *The New Covenant: Jewish Writers and the American Idea*, and *The American Self: Myth, Ideology, and Popular Culture*.

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*To Arielle Gianni
Katya and Jeff
Meighan and Ali
Jennifer
and Scottie*

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