

America First



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At a time when the expanded projection of US political, military, economic and cultural power draws intensified global concern, understanding how that country understands itself seems more important than ever. This collection of new critical essays tackles this old problem in a new way, by examining some of the hundreds of US films that announce themselves as titularly 'American'. From early travelogues to contemporary comedies, national nomination has been an abiding characteristic of American motion pictures, heading the work of Porter, Guy-Blache, DeMille, Capra, Sternberg, Vidor, Minnelli and Mankiewicz. More recently, George Lucas, Paul Schrader, John Landis and Edward James Olmos have made their own contributions to Hollywood's Americana. What does this national branding signify? Which versions of Americanism are valorized, and which marginalized or excluded? Out of which social and historical contexts do they emerge, and for and by whom are they constructed? Edited by Mandy Merck, the collection contains detailed analyses of such films as "The Vanishing American", "American Madness", "An American in Paris", "American Graffiti," "American Gigolo", "American Pie", and many more.

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