



# Frank Capra's Eastern Horizons: American Identity and the Cinema of International Relations (Cinema and Society)

*Elizabeth Rawitsch*

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Frank Capra has long had a reputation as being the quintessential American director - the man who perfectly captured the core values of the United States with classic films including *It Happened One Night*, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. However, as Elizabeth Rawitsch argues, Capra's construction of national identity did not occur within an exclusively national context. She points out that many of his films are actually set in China, Latin America, the Philippines and the South Seas.

Featuring in-depth textual analysis supported by original archival research, *Frank Capra's Eastern Horizons* explains that Capra's view of what constituted 'America' changed over time, extending its boundaries to embrace countries often far from the United States. East and West often intermingle in films such as *The Bitter Tea of General Yen* and in Capra's orientation documentaries for World War II American servicemen; Capra imagined a kind of global community, albeit one with heavy undertones of British and American imperialism. This innovative book offers a startlingly fresh perspective on one of the most iconic figures in American film history.

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