



Foreign Films in America: A History

Kerry Segrave

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Foreign films once enjoyed a position of prominence on American theater screens. By the start of World War I, however, the United States' film industry was strong enough to challenge that foreign presence and foreign films in America have been insignificant ever since. For about a century, the Hollywood cartel has dominated the production, distribution, and exhibition of movies domestically and around the world. This work traces the history of the foreign film in America from its domination in the early days to its low standing in the present, looking at the attempts made by foreign producers to increase their presence on American cinema screens, the responses by Hollywood to those attempts, and the oligopoly of Hollywood's few producers. The work discusses the cultural differences between foreign artistic expression and the commercialism of the American film and analyzes Hollywood's explanations for the lack of a foreign presence: Americans have "unique" tastes, they don't like subtitles, foreign films are immoral or badly made, trade union pressure, and so on. An appendix detailing the all-time gross earnings of foreign-language films and a full bibliography conclude the work, which is illustrated with stills and posters.

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