



Mr. Deeds Goes to Yankee Stadium: Baseball Films in the Capra Tradition

Wes D Gehring

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Celebrated film director Frank Capra was a central architect of the feel good movie genre now known as populism, which celebrates people, families, second chances, and other traditional American icons such as small town or pastoral life and baseball. Capra developed his own brand of populism by interweaving traditional values of the genre with a younger, more vulnerable hero starting with *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* in 1936. The result, Capraesque populism, has had a significant influence of American pop culture in general and forms a small but important variety of baseball movie. This book examines eight of these Capraesque baseball films, starting with the all-important *Pride of the Yankees* (1942), which one admiring critic has called *Mr. Deeds Goes to Yankee Stadium*. An introduction provides an overview of baseball and populism. Individual chapters are devoted to the populist legacy from Will Rogers (Capra's mentor) to Capra, *The Pride of the Yankees*, *The Stratton Story*, *Angels in the Outfield*, *The Natural*, *Bull Durham*, *Field of Dreams*, *Frequency*, and *The Rookie*.

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