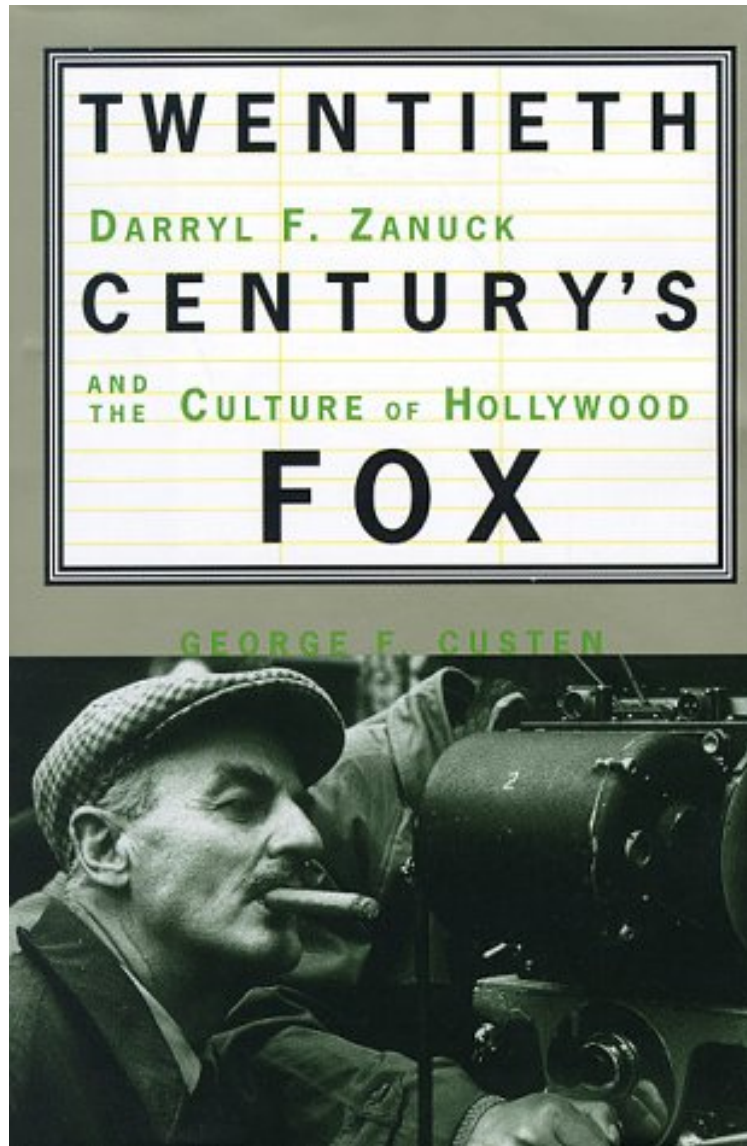


Twentieth Century's Fox: Darryl F. Zanuck And The Culture Of Hollywood

George F. Custen

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#1428347 in Books 1997-11-28Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.75 x 6.75 x 1.75l, #File Name: 046507619X384 pages | File size: 58.Mb

George F. Custen : Twentieth Century's Fox: Darryl F. Zanuck And The Culture Of Hollywood before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Twentieth Century's Fox: Darryl F. Zanuck And The Culture Of Hollywood:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Darryl F. ZanuckBy A fanA wonderful overview of director Darryl F. Zanuck !2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy HighSierra49erExcellent reading on one of

the original Hollywood studio moguls. 5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. NitpickerBy babyboomerlarry/The narrative starts out slow and boring. It is as if the author is trying to turn it into a scholarly presentation. Well, it's a biography. Zanuck himself would tear it to shreds and do a rewrite. After 90 pages, when the author gets into the facts of the movies Zanuck helped bring to screen along with the behind-the-scenes machinations, does the book come alive. The last thirty or so pages also hold little interest. The author needs to learn a lesson- when you have nothing to say, don't say it. So, the book is very informative for about the 65% middle. From that, you will learn a lot about how the Zanuck ego made Hollywood history.

Spanning four decades and more than a thousand films, the creative output of Darryl D. Zanuck was astonishing and unparalleled. With *The Jazz Singer* he supervised the innovation of film sound. With *The Public Enemy* and *Little Caesar* he reinvented the gangster film. With *42nd Street* he reinvigorated the musical. He set the standard for film biography with pictures such as *Young Mr. Lincoln* and *The Story of Alexander Graham Bell*. He innovated CinemaScope. And he molded the star images of James Cagney, Shirley Temple, Tyrone Power, Betty Grable, Marilyn Monroe, and Rin Tin Tin. In this major new biography, George F. Custen illuminates Zanuck's evolution into one of the most influential producers in American film. He explains what set him apart from rivals Irving Thalberg and David O. Selznick, how he developed the gritty realism that came to redefine motion pictures, and how he brilliantly predicted and capitalized on changing public tastes. Zanuck was a man of enormous energy and eccentricity, commanding his studio with a sawed-off polo mallet. Dozens of his memorable films including *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Gentleman's Agreement*, *All About Eve*, *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, and *The Robe* have come to represent the era in which they were made. Hard-boiled or nostalgic, historical or pure Hollywood, Zanuck's films and Zanuck himself have become legends of the cinema. But what exactly was this producer's contribution to the films he made? How did he rise from being a writer of silent serials to become head of production at Warner Brothers by his mid-twenties, and then to form his own studio, Twentieth Century-Fox at age thirty-three? Twentieth Century's Fox tells the whole story from Zanuck's boyhood to his tumultuous years with the feuding Warners, his battles with the censors and with his own actors, and the legendary acting-out of scenes during story conferences in his famous green office. Along the way, Custen treats us to inside stories about actors such as Edward G. Robinson, Gregory Peck, and Marilyn Monroe. In never-before-published story conference notes, telegrams, and surprisingly candid anecdotes, he reveals how more than any producer before or since this diminutive, enigmatic fellow from Wahoo, Nebraska, changed the way we look at film. Custen highlights the studio as the context of production. Zanuck's ability to shape the producer's role and the organizational style during the golden years of the studio system with its own peculiar methods, clearly delineated rules, and pecking order was the crucible out of which he forged a unique vision of American film and American culture.

.com Unfairly remembered as a vulgar, cigar-chomping mogul, producer Darryl F. Zanuck (1902-79) gets his due in this perceptive biography. Film historian George F. Custen analyzes Zanuck's role in shaping gritty, urban-oriented movies such as *The Public Enemy* that made Warner Brothers' reputation in the 1920s and '30s. Discussing Zanuck's career at 20th Century Fox, Custen emphasizes Zanuck's nurturing of socially conscious films such as *Gentleman's Agreement*, wisely relegating to a brief epilogue the later years of his physical and mental decline. This intelligent appraisal doubles as a cogent history of the Hollywood studio system. From Library Journal Zanuck is one of Hollywood's most fascinating characters: an uneducated Midwesterner who became a brilliantly intuitive writer and editor for Warner Brothers, the man who ran 20th Century-Fox for 20 years, a gentile in a business dominated by Jewish moguls, and a great shaper of popular culture. Custen (Bio-Pics, Rutgers Univ., 1992) considers him, along with MGM's Irving Thalberg, "the most important and most influential producer in the history of the American cinema." He claims that Zanuck has never received his full due from historians because of his crude and abrasive personality and marshals plenty of evidence to support his claim. This is not a full-length biography. Custen chooses to concentrate on the intricacies of movie-making, and the story in effect stops with Zanuck's 1956 departure from Hollywood for a short-lived career of independent filmmaking in France. Use of archival material marks it as an important study, but by no means is it the last word on Zanuck. ?Thomas J. Wiener, editor, "Satellite DIRECT" Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sAn effective, in-depth evaluation of the life and work of the master movie mogul. One increasingly circulated variation on the auteur theory holds that certain remarkable producers, like Zanuck, have had a profound shaping influence on the movies they oversaw. But even in these terms, Zanuck enjoyed a remarkable, perhaps unique career. With close to 1,000 movies to his credit, he painstakingly crafted (working at an extraordinary level of detail) an unprecedented string of noteworthy--and usually successful--films, from *All About Eve* to *The Grapes of Wrath* and *How Green Was My Valley*. As Custen (Performing Arts/CUNY, Staten Island) notes, Zanuck ``would not give up the belief that although filmmaking was a collaborative enterprise, ultimately he and he alone possessed the judgment to successfully run the machinery of storytelling and to regulate the enterprise surrounding it." Zanuck was also responsible for any number of cinematic milestones. From the first major talkie, *The Jazz Singer*, to the first gangster movies, to CinemaScope, he had a sixth

sense for surprising the public with its own unsuspected wants. As Custer demonstrates, Zanuck, an artist among businessmen, was quite unlike any of the other men who ran studios. He came to Hollywood during the Silent Era, vaguely determined to be a writer. His real break came with his creation of the Rin Tin Tin series. From there he giddily ascended to the control of his own studio at the age of 31, a position he maintained until he was in his 50s, when in the fit of a middle-age crisis he moved to Europe and pursued a peripatetic and priapic existence, producing occasional movies as the mood took him. While Custer's story has great legs, his writing suffers from feet of clay--he can't resist constantly repeating himself. Nonetheless, a significant reappraisal of a major, often neglected, moviemaker. (16 pages bw photos, not seen) -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.