



# Tracking King Kong: A Hollywood Icon in World Culture, 2nd Edition (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series)

By Cynthia Erb

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## Tracking King Kong: A Hollywood Icon in World Culture, 2nd Edition (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series) By Cynthia Erb

In *Tracking King Kong* Cynthia Erb charts the cultural significance of the character of King Kong, from the early 1930s, when Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack's classic film *King Kong* was first released, to Peter Jackson's 2005 remake. Although *King Kong* has received much academic attention over the past twenty-five years, the bulk of these analyses deal with the film's human characters rather than Kong himself. In this revised edition of an influential study, Erb argues that King Kong is a particular kind of cultural outsider who represents a cross-penetration of American notions of exoticism and monstrosity. *Tracking King Kong* considers problems such as race and gender in the *King Kong* tradition, as well as historical, international, and contemporary audience and fan responses to this classic film and its popular protagonist.

Erb begins her examination of King Kong in the 1930s, when the original film was produced and released, extending through the 1970s, when the film and its hero reached the height of their cultural visibility in a remake by Dino De Laurentiis, and concluding with a look at Peter Jackson's version in 2005. The book includes a detailed production history of the original 1933 film based on primary historical and archival sources; a genre study examining Kong's relations to horror, jungle adventure, and travel documentary genres; an analysis of Kong's influence on the Japanese film *Godzilla*; and a look at sequels, remakes, and spinoffs related to King Kong, such as *Mighty Joe Young*. Erb also analyzes Jackson's remake of *King Kong*, to determine how and why Jackson revised the main character, casting him as a melancholy hero.

The revised edition of *Tracking King Kong* updates a groundbreaking study of King Kong as the iconic character enters the twenty-first century. Scholars of film and television studies as well as general readers interested in film and popular culture will appreciate this significant volume.

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Cynthia Erb is associate professor of film and English at Wayne State University.

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