Disappearing Tricks Silent Film Houdini And The New Magic Of The Twentieth Century Author Matthew Solomon Published On January 2010

Born on January 5, 1941 in Tokyo, Hayao Miyazaki is known as the 'Japanese Disney', a filmmaker as revered - and as popular - as Walt Disney or Steven Spielberg. Miyazaki, in short, is a true phenomenon in contemporary animation and in world cinema.

Describes how nineteenth-century magicians used magic lanterns to produce optical illusions, and assesses the magician's influence on the development of modern special effects

The Oxford Handbook of Cinematic Listening explores the intersection between the history of listening and the history of the moving image. Featuring established and emergent scholars from musicology, film studies, and literary studies, ethnomusicology and sound studies, popular music,sociology, media and communications, and psychology, this Handbook offers a wide range of case studies and methodological perspectives on the archaeologies, aesthetics, and extensions of cinematic listening.Chapters are structured around six themes: Part I ("Genealogies and Beginnings") considers film sound in light of pre-existing genres such as opera and shadow theatre, and explores changes in listening taking place at critical junctures in the early history of cinema. Part II ("Locations andRelocations") focuses on specific venues and presentational practices (from roadshow movies to contemporary live-score screenings). Part III ("Representations and Re-presentations") zooms into the formal properties of specific films, analysing representations of listening on screen as well as onthe role of sound as a representational surplus. Part IV ("The Listening Body") focuses on cinematic sound as a powerful and sensual stimulus that has the power to engage the full body sensorium. Part V ("Listening again") discusses a range of ways in which film sound is encountered andreinterpreted outside the cinema, through ancillary materials like songs and soundtrack albums, in experimental conditions, and in pedagogical contexts. Part VI ("Between Media") compares the listening protocols of cinema with those of TV series and music video, promenade theatre and personalstereos, video games and Virtual Reality.

The promise of magic has always commanded the human imagination, but the story of industrial modernity is usually seen as a process of disenchantment. Drawing on the writings and performances of the so-called 'Golden Age Magicians' from the turn of the twentieth century, Chris Goto-Jones unveils the ways in which European and North American encounters with (and representations of) Asia - the fabled Mystic East - worked to re-enchant experiences of the modern world. Beginning with a reconceptualization of the meaning of 'modern magic' itself - moving beyond conventional categories of 'real' and 'fake' magic - Goto-Jones' acclaimed book guides us on a magical mystery tour around India, China, and Japan, showing us levitations and decapitations, magic duels and bullet catches, goldfish bowls and paper butterflies. In the end, this mesmerizing book reveals Orientalism as a kind of magic in itself, casting a spell over Western culture that leaves it transformed, even today.

A Dictionary of Film Studies covers all aspects of its discipline as it is currently taught at undergraduate level. Offering exhaustive and authoritative coverage, this A-Z is written by experts in the field, and covers terms, concepts, debates, and movements in film theory and criticism; national, international, and transnational cinemas; film history, movements, and genres; film industry organizations and practices; and key technical terms and concepts. Since its first publication in 2012, the dictionary has been updated to incorporate over 40 new entries, including computer games and film, disability, ecocinema, identity, portmanteau film, Practice as Research, and film in Vietnam. Moreover, numerous revisions have been made to existing entries to account for developments in the discipline, and changes to film institutions more generally. Indices of films and filmmakers mentioned in the text are included for easy access to relevant entries. The dictionary also has 13 feature articles on popular topics and terms, revised and informative bibliographies for most entries, and more than 100 web links to supplement the text.

A fascinating exploration of the role new media technologies play in our experience of film.

Conjuring Science explores the history of magic shows and scientific entertainment. It follows the frictions and connections of magic and science as they occurred in the world of popular entertainment in France from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth century. It situates conjurers within the broader culture of science and argues that stage magic formed an important popular conduit for science and scientific enthusiasm during this period. From the scientific recreations of the fairs to the grand illusions of the theatre stage and the development of early cinema, conjurers used and were inspired by scientific and technological innovations to create illusions, provoke a sense of wonder, and often even instruct their audience. In their hands, science took on many meanings and served different purposes: it was a set of pleasant facts and recreational demonstrations upon which to draw; it was the knowledge presented in various scientific lectures accompanied by optical projections at magic shows; it was the techniques necessary to create illusions and effects on stage and later on at the cinema; and it was a way to separate conjuring from the deceit of mediums, mystical showmen and quacks in order to gain a better standing within an increasingly scientifically-minded society.

Examines the work of pioneer filmmaker Georges Méliès in relationship to Second Industrial Revolution's advances in technology, transportation, and chemistry

Magic

Through his radio and film works, such as The War of the Worlds and Citizen Kane, Orson Welles became a household name in the United States. Yet Welles's multifaceted career went beyond these classic titles and included lesser-known but nonetheless important contributions to television, theater, newspaper columns, and political activism. Orson Welles in Focus: Texts and Contexts examines neglected areas of Welles's work, shedding light on aspects of his art that have been eclipsed by a narrow focus on his films. By positioning Welles's work during a critical period of his activity (the mid-1930s through the 1950s) in its larger cultural, political, aesthetic, and industrial contexts, the contributors to this volume examine how he participated in and helped to shape modern media. This exploration of Welles in his totality illuminates and expands our perception of his contributions that continue to resonate today.

The most famous stage actress of the nineteenth century, Sarah Bernhardt enjoyed a surprising renaissance when the 1912 multi-reel film Queen Elizabeth vaulted her to international acclaim. The triumph capped her already lengthy involvement with cinema while enabling the indefatigable actress to reinvent herself in an era of technological and generational change. Placing Bernhardt at the center of the industry's first two decades, Victoria Duckett challenges the perception of her as an anachronism unable to appreciate film's qualities. Instead, cinema's substitution of translated title cards for her melodic French deciphered Bernhardt for Anglo-American audiences. It also allowed the aging actress to appear in the kinds of longer dramas she could no longer physically sustain onstage. As Duckett shows, Bernhardt contributed far more than star quality. Her theatrical practice on film influenced how the young medium changed the visual and performing arts. Her promoting of experimentation, meanwhile, shaped the ways audiences looked at and understood early cinema. A leading-edge reappraisal of a watershed era, Seeing Sarah Bernhardt tells the story of an icon who bridged two centuries--and changed the very act of watching film.

Italian film star Bartolomeo Pagano's "Maciste" played a key role in his nation's narratives of identity during World War I and after. Jacqueline Reich traces the racial, class, and national transformations undergone by this Italian strongman from African slave in Cabiria (1914), his first film, to bourgeois gentleman, to Alpine soldier of the Great War, to colonial officer in Italy's African adventures. Reich reveals Maciste as a figure who both reflected classical ideals of masculine beauty and virility (later taken up by Mussolini and used for political purposes) and embodied the model Italian citizen. The 12 films at the center of the book, recently restored and newly accessible to a wider public, together with relevant extra-cinematic materials, provide a rich resource for understanding the spread of discourses on masculinity, and national and racial identities during a turbulent period in Italian history. The volume includes an illustrated appendix documenting the restoration and preservation of these cinematic treasures.

The mobile app as technique and imaginary tool, offering a shortcut to instantaneous connection and entertainment. Mobile apps promise to deliver (h)appiness to our devices at the touch of a finger or two. Apps offer gratifyingly immediate access to connection and entertainment. The array of apps downloadable from the app store may come from the cloud, but they attach themselves firmly to our individual movement from location to location on earth. In The Imaginary App, writers, theorists, and artists—including Stephen Wolfram (in conversation with Paul Miller) and Lev Manovich—explore the cultural and technological shifts that have accompanied the emergence of the mobile app. These contributors and interviewees see apps variously as "a machine of transcendence," "a hulking wound in our nervous system," or "a promise of new possibilities." They ask whether the app is an object or a relation, and if it could be a "metamedium" that supersedes all other artistic media. They consider the control and power exercised by software architecture; the app's prosthetic ability to enhance certain human capacities, in reality or in imagination; the app economy, and the divergent possibilities it offers of making a living or making a fortune; and the app as medium and remediator of reality. Also included (and documented in color) are selected projects by artists asked to design truly imaginary apps, "icons of the impossible." These include a female sexual arousal graph using Doppler images; "The Ultimate App," which accepts a payment and then closes, without providing information or functionality; and "iLuck," which uses GPS technology and four-leaf-clover icons to mark places where luck might be found. Contributors Christian Ulrik Andersen, Thierry Bardini, Nandita Biswas Mellamphy, Benjamin H. Bratton, Drew S. Burk, Patricia Ticineto Clough, Robbie Cormier, Dock Currie, Dal Yong Jin, Nick Dyer-Witheford, Ryan and Hays Holladay, Atle Mikkola Kjøsen, Eric Kluitenberg, Lev Manovich, Vincent Manzerolle, Svitlana Matviyenko, Dan Mellamphy, Paul D. Miller aka DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid, Steven Millward, Anna Munster, Søren Bro Pold, Chris Richards, Scott Snibbe, Nick Srnicek, Stephen Wolfram

In Magic's Reason, Graham M. Jones tells the entwined stories of anthropology and entertainment magic. The two pursuits are not as separate as they may seem at first. As Jones shows, they not only matured around the same time, but they also shared mutually reinforcing stances toward modernity and rationality. It is no historical accident, for example, that colonial ethnographers drew analogies between Western magicians and native ritual performers, who, in their view, hoodwinked gullible people into believing their sleight of hand was divine. Using French magicians' engagements with North African ritual performers as a case study, Jones shows how magic became enshrined in anthropological reasoning. Acknowledging the residue of magic's colonial origins doesn't require us to dispense with it. Rather, through this radical reassessment of classic anthropological ideas, Magic's Reason develops a new perspective on the promise and peril of cross-cultural comparison.

Joe Posnanski enters the colorful world of Harry Houdini and his legions of devoted fans to explore the illusionist's impact on global culture—and why his legacy endures to this day. Nearly a century after Harry Houdini died on Halloween in 1926, he feels as modern and alive as ever. The name Houdini still leaps to mind whenever we witness a daring escape. The baby who frees herself from her crib? Houdini. The dog who vanishes and reappears in the neighbor's garden? Houdini. Every generation produces new disciples of the magician, from household names in magic like David Copperfield and David Blaine to countless other followers whose lives have been transformed by the power of Houdini. In rural Pennsylvania, a thirteen-year-old girl finds the courage to leave a violent home after learning that Houdini ran away to join the circus; she eventually becomes the first female magician to saw a man in half on television. In Australia, an eight-year-old boy with a learning impediment feels worthless until he sees an old poster of Houdini advertising "Nothing on earth can hold Houdini prisoner," and begins his path to becoming that nation's most popular magician. In California, an actor and Vietnam War veteran finds purpose in his life by uncovering the secrets of his hero. But the unique phenomenon of Houdini was always more than his death-defying stunts or his ability to escape handcuffs and straitjackets. It is also about the power of imagination and self-invention. His incredible transformation from Ehrich Weiss, humble Hungarian immigrant and rabbi's son, into the self-named Harry Houdini has won him a slice of immortality. No one has withstood the test of time quite like Houdini. Fueled by Posnanski's personal obsession with the magician—and magic itself—The Life and Afterlife of Harry Houdini is a poignant odyssey of discovery, blending biography, memoir, and first-person reporting to trace Houdini's metamorphosis into an iconic figure who has inspired millions.

Examines the impact and importance of the health education film in Europe and North America in the first half of the twentieth century.

An authoritative and much-needed overview of the main issues in thefield of early cinema from over 30 leading international scholarsin the field First collection of its kind to offer in one reference:original theory, new research, and reviews of existing studies inthe field Features over 30 original essays from some of the leadingscholars in early cinema and Film Studies, including Tom Gunning,Jane Gaines, Richard Abel, Thomas Elsaesser, and AndréGaudreault Caters to renewed interest in film studies' historicalmethods, with strict analysis of multiple and competing sources,providing a critical re-contextualization of films, printedmaterial and technologies Covers a range of topics in early cinema, such as exhibition,promotion, industry, pre-cinema, and film criticism Broaches the latest research on the subject of archivalpractices, important particularly in the current digitalcontext

&&LDIV&&R&&LDIV&&R&&LP style="MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt"&&RIllusionist, escape artist, movie star, aviator, and spy—Harry Houdini was all these and an international celebrity and the world's most famous magician. This fascinating biography looks at all the facets of Houdini's amazing life and includes 21 magic tricks and illusions for a hands-on learning experience. Children will be inspired by this Jewish immigrant who grew up in poverty and, through perseverance and hard work, went on to become one of the most popular and successful entertainers of all time. Houdini was an artist who created his acts carefully, practicing them for years in some cases. He performed such seemingly impossible stunts as escaping several sets of handcuffs and ropes after jumping off a bridge into a flowing river. &&L/P&&R&&LP style="MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt"&&R &&L/P&&R&&LP style="MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt"&&RKids will learn how he devised his most legendary stunts and will also learn the science and logic behind many of Houdini's acts including his famous milk can escape. Kids can amaze their family and friends with these simple, entertaining, and fun tricks and illusions: &&L/P&&R Stepping through an index card Performing an odd number trick Making a coin appear Mind reading with a secret code Making a magic box Lifting a person with one hand Making a talking board And much more &&LP style="MARGIN: 0in 0in 0pt"&&R &&L/P&&R&&L/DIV&&R&&L/DIV&&R By 1915, Hollywood had become the epicenter of American filmmaking, with studio "dream factories" structuring its vast production. Filmmakers designed Hollywood studios with a distinct artistic and industrial mission in mind, which in turn influenced the form, content, and business of the films that were made and the impressions of the people who viewed them. The first book to retell the history of film studio architecture, Studios Before the System expands the social and cultural footprint of cinema's virtual worlds and their contribution to wider developments in global technology and urban modernism. Focusing on six significant early film corporations in the United States and France—the Edison Manufacturing Company, American Mutoscope and Biograph, American Vitagraph, Georges Méliès's Star Films, Gaumont, and Pathé Frères—as well as smaller producers and film companies, Studios Before the System describes how filmmakers first envisioned the space they needed and then sourced modern materials to create novel film studios. Artificially reproducing the natural environment, film studios helped usher in the world's Second Industrial Revolution and what Lewis Mumford would later call the "specific art of the machine." From housing workshops for set, prop, and costume design to dressing rooms and writing departments, studio architecture was always present though rarely visible to the average spectator in the twentieth century, providing the scaffolding under which culture, film aesthetics, and our relation to lived space took shape.

From the author of The Cellist of Sarajevo, an exciting new novel that uses the life and sudden death of Harry Houdini to weave a tale of magic, intrigue, and illusion. What is real and what is an illusion? Can you trust your memory to provide an accurate record of what has happened in your life? The Confabulist is a clever, entertaining, and suspenseful narrative that weaves together the rise and fall of world-famous Harry Houdini with the surprising story of Martin Strauss, an unknown man whose fate seems forever tied to the magician's in a way that will ultimately startle and amaze. It is at once a vivid portrait of an alluring, late-nineteenth/early-twentieth-century world; a front-row seat to a world-class magic show; and an unexpected love story. In the end, the book is a kind of magic trick in itself: there is much more to Martin than meets the eye. Historically rich and ingeniously told, this is a novel about magic and memory, truth and illusion, and the ways that love, hope, grief, and imagination can—for better or for worse—alter what we perceive and believe.

From risqué cabaret performances to engrossing after-hours shop talk, Trade of the Tricks offers an unprecedented look inside the secretive subculture of modern magicians. Entering the flourishing Paris magic scene as an apprentice, Graham M. Jones gives a firsthand account of how magicians learn to perform their astonishing deceptions. He follows the day-to-day lives of some of France's most renowned performers, revealing not only how secrets are created and shared, but also how they are stolen and destroyed. In a book brimming with humor and surprise, Jones shows how today's magicians marshal creativity and passion in striving to elevate their amazing skill into high art. The book's lively cast of characters includes female and queer performers whose work is changing the face of a historically masculine genre.

Fantastic Voyages of the Cinematic Imagination
Orson Welles in Focus
Footwear and Film Manufacturing in Second Industrial Revolution Paris
Magic's Reason
The Imaginary App

At the turn of the twentieth century, American popular culture was booming with opportunities to see Jesus Christ. From the modernized eyewitness gospel of Ben-Hur to the widely circulated passion play films of Edison, Lumière, and Pathé; from D. W. Griffith's conjuration of a spectral white savior in Birth of a Nation to W. E. B. Du Bois's "Black Christ" story cycle, Jesus was constantly and inventively visualized across media, and especially in the new medium of film. Why, in an era traditionally defined by the triumph of secular ideologies and institutions, were so many artists rushing to film Christ's miracles and use his story and image to contextualize their experiences of modernity? In The Disappearing Christ, Phillip Maciak examines filmic depictions of Jesus to argue that cinema developed as a model technology of secularism, training viewers for belief in a secular age. Negotiating between the magic trick and the documentary image, the conflicting impulses of faith and skepticism, the emerging aesthetic of film in this period visualized the fraught process of secularization. Cinematic depictions of an appearing and disappearing Christ became a powerful vehicle for Americans to navigate a rapidly modernizing society. Studying these films alongside a multimedia, interdisciplinary archive of novels, photographs, illustrations, and works of theology, travel writing, and historiography, The Disappearing Christ offers a new narrative of American cultural history at the intersection of cinema studies and religious studies.

Arguing for the need to understand Gothic cinema as an aesthetic mode, this book explores its long history, from its transitional origins in phantasmagoria shows and the first 'trick' films to its postmodern fragmentation in the Gothic pastiches of Tim Burton. But what is Gothic cinema? Is the iconography of the Gothic what solidified its aesthetics? And exactly what cultural roles does the Gothic continue to perform for us today? Gothic Cinema covers topics such as the chiaroscuro experiments of early German cinema, the monster cinema of the 1930s, the explained supernatural of the old dark house mystery films of the 1920s and the Female Gothics of the 1940s, the use of vibrant colours in the period Gothics of the late 1950s, the European exploitation booms of the 1960s and 1970s, and the animated films and Gothic superheroes that dominate present times. Throughout, Aldana Reyes makes a strong case for a medium-specific and more intuitive approach to the Gothic on screen that acknowledges its position within wider film industries with their own sets of financial pressures and priorities. This groundbreaking book is the first thorough chronological, transhistorical and transnational study of Gothic cinema, ideal for both new and seasoned scholars, as well as those with a wider interest in the Gothic.

Devices of Curiosity excavates a largely unknown genre of early cinema, the popular-science film. Primarily a work of cinema history, it also draws on the insights of the history of science. Beginning around 1903, a variety of producers made films about scientific topics for general audiences, inspired by a vision of cinema as an educational medium. This book traces the development of popular-science films over the first half of the silent era, from its beginnings in France around 1910. Devices of Curiosity also considers how popular-science films exemplify the circulation of knowledge. These films initially had recourse to previous traditions such as the magic-lantern lecture for their representational strategies, and they continually had recourse to established visual iconography, but they also created novel visual paradigms and led to the creation of ambitious new film collections. Finally, the book discerns a transit between nonfictional and fictional modes, seeing affinities between popular-science films and certain aspects of fiction films, particularly Louis Feuillade's crime melodramas. This kind of circulation is important for an understanding of the wider relevance of early popular-science films, which impacted the formation of the documentary, educational, and avant-garde cinemas. An authoritative and comprehensive guide to cinema's first true blockbuster.

Hidden in Plain Sight
A Dictionary of Film Studies
The Cinema of Hayao Miyazaki
Cinematic Ghosts
Trade of the Tricks
The Confabulist
Focus On: 100 Most Popular Vaudeville Performers

Selected by the Modern Library as one of the 100 best novels of all time Published in 1975, Ragtime changed our very concept of what a novel could be. An extraordinary tapestry, Ragtime captures the spirit of America in the era between the turn of the century and the First World War. The story opens in 1906 in New Rochelle, New York, at the home of an affluent American family. One lazy Sunday afternoon, the famous escape artist Harry Houdini swerves his car into a telephone pole outside their house. And almost magically, the line between fantasy and historical fact, between real and imaginary characters, disappears. Henry Ford, Emma Goldman, J. P. Morgan, Evelyn Nesbit, Sigmund Freud, and Emiliano Zapata slip in and out of the tale, crossing paths with Doctorow's imagined family and other fictional characters, including an immigrant peddler and a ragtime musician from Harlem whose insistence on a point of justice drives him to revolutionary violence.

In 1896, Maxim Gorky declared cinema "the Kingdom of Shadows." In its silent, ashen-grey world, he saw a land of spectral, and ever since then cinema has had a special relationship with the haunted and the ghostly. Cinematic Ghosts is the first collection devoted to this subject, including fourteen new essays, dedicated to exploring the many permutations of the movies' phantoms. Cinematic Ghosts contains essays revisiting some classic ghost films within the genres of horror (The Haunting, 1963), romance (Portrait of Jennie, 1948), comedy (Beetlejuice, 1988) and the art film (Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives, 2010), as well as essays dealing with a number of films from around the world, from Sweden to China. Cinematic Ghosts traces the archetype of the cinematic ghost from the silent era until today, offering analyses from a range of historical, aesthetic and theoretical dimensions.

"Presidential campaigns of the twenty-first century are not the first to use new media to promote their platform and marshal votes. In Politicking and Emergent Media, distinguished film historian Charles Musser looks at four US presidential campaigns during the long 1890s (1888-1900) as Republicans and Democrats mobilized a variety of media forms to achieve electoral victory. New York--the home of Wall Street, Tammany Hall, and prominent media industries--became the site of intense debate as candidates battled over voters' rights, labor issues, and currency standards for a fragile economy. If the city's leading daily newspapers were mostly Democratic as the decade began, Republicans eagerly exploited alternative media opportunities. Using the stereopticon (a modernized magic lantern), they developed the first campaign documentaries. Soon they were using motion pictures, the phonograph, and telephone in surprising and often successful ways. Brimming with rich historical details, Charles Musser tells the remarkable story of the political forces driving the emergence of new media at the turn of the century"--Provided by the publisher.

Percy Jackson is about to be kicked out of boarding school...again. And that's the least of his troubles. Lately, mythological monsters and the gods of Mount Olympus seem to be walking straight out of the pages of Percy's Greek mythology textbook and into his life. Book #1 in the NYT best-selling series, with cover art from the feature film, The Lightning Thief.

Stage Illusions and Scientific Diversions, Including Trick Photography
Cinema and Prison in Early Twentieth-Century America
The Biopic and American National Identity
Studios Before the System
Seeing Sarah Bernhardt
Devices of Curiosity
US Presidential Elections of the 1890s

A groundbreaking contribution to the study of nontheatrical film exhibition, Carceral Fantasies tells the little-known story of how cinema found a home in the U.S. penitentiary system and how the prison emerged as a setting and narrative trope in modern cinema. Focusing on films shown in prisons before 1935, Alison Griffiths explores the unique experience of viewing cinema while incarcerated and the complex cultural roots of cinematic renderings of prison life. Griffiths considers a diverse mix of cinematic genres, from early actualities and reenactments of notorious executions to reformist exposés of the 1920s. She connects an early fascination with cinematic images of punishment and execution, especially electrocutions, to the attractions of the nineteenth-century carnival electrical wonder show and Phantasmagoria (a ghost show using magic lantern projections and special effects). Griffiths draws upon convict writing, prison annual reports, and the popular press obsession with prison-house cinema to document the integration of film into existing reformist and educational activities and film's psychic extension of flights of fancy undertaken by inmates in their cells. Combining penal history with visual and film studies and theories surrounding media's sensual effects, Carceral Fantasies illuminates how filmic representations of the penal system enacted ideas about modernity, gender, the body, and the public, shaping both the social experience of cinema and the public's understanding of the modern prison.

Disappearing TricksSilent Film, Houdini, and the New Magic of the Twentieth CenturyUniversity of Illinois Press

Disappearing Tricks revisits the golden age of theatrical magic and silent film to reveal how professional magicians shaped the early history of cinema. Where others have called upon magic as merely an evocative metaphor for the wonders of cinema, Matthew Solomon focuses on the work of the professional illusionists who actually made magic with moving pictures between 1895 and 1929. The first to reveal fully how powerfully magic impacted the development of cinema, the book combines film and theater history to uncover new evidence of the exchanges between magic and filmmaking in the United States and France during the silent period. Chapters detailing the stage and screen work of Harry Houdini and Georges Méliès show how each transformed theatrical magic to create innovative cinematic effects and thrilling new exploits for twentieth-century mass audiences. The book also considers the previously overlooked roles of anti-spiritualism and presentational performance in silent film. Highlighting early cinema's relationship to the performing body, visual deception, storytelling, and the occult, Solomon treats cinema and stage magic as overlapping practices that together revise our understanding of the origins of motion pictures and cinematic spectacle.

How Hollywood biopics both showcase and modify various notions of what it means to be an American. Biopics—films that chronicle the lives of famous and notorious figures from our national history—have long been one of Hollywood's most popular and important genres, offering viewers various understandings of American national identity. Invented Lives, Imagined Communities provides the first full-length examination of US biopics, focusing on key releases in American cinema while treating recent developments in three fields: cinema studies, particularly the history of Hollywood; national identity studies dealing with the American experience; and scholarship devoted to modernity and postmodernity. Films discussed include Houdini, Patton, The Great White Hope, Bound for Glory, Ed Wood, Basquiat, Pollock, Sylvia, Kinsey, Fur, Milk, J. Edgar, and Lincoln, and the book pays special attention to the crucial generic plot along which biopics traverse and showcase American lives, even as they modify the various notions of the national character. "A provocative, critically astute study, this collection examines the biopic as a reflexive, refractive modernist film genre. Admirably researched essays provide close, compelling readings of chosen films, while exploring the multilayered matrices of historical fact, biographical and autobiographical literature, popular media representations, and cultural histories—shaping not only the lives and narratives of the performers, artists, and political/historical figures represented but also the practices of the filmmakers as they worked within or on the margins of the Hollywood industry." — Cynthia Lucia, Rider University "The volume's greatest strengths include its range, its variety of ideas on the significance of the biopic, and its research—definitive in several cases—into the relation between historical figures and their cinematic counterparts." — James Morrison, author of Passport to Hollywood: Hollywood Films, European Directors

Méliès Boots
His Life and Adventures with 21 Magic Tricks and Illusions
Architecture, Technology, and the Emergence of Cinematic Space
Disappearing Tricks
An Anthropology of Analogy
Harry Houdini for Kids
The Maciste Films of Italian Silent Cinema

What does it mean to describe cinematic effects as "movie magic," to compare filmmakers to magicians, or to say that the cinema is all a "trick"? The heyday of stage illusionism was over a century ago, so why do such performances still serve as a key reference point for understanding filmmaking, especially now that so much of the cinema rests on the use of computers? To answer these questions, Colin Williamson situates film within a long tradition of magical practices that combine art and science, involve deception and discovery, and evoke two forms of wonder—both awe at the illusion displayed and curiosity about how it was performed. He thus considers how, even as they mystify audiences, cinematic illusions also inspire them to learn more about the technologies and techniques behind moving images. Tracing the overlaps between the worlds of magic and filmmaking, Hidden in Plain Sight examines how professional illusionists and their tricks have been represented onscreen, while also considering stage magicians who have stepped behind the camera, from Georges Méliès to Ricky Jay. Williamson offers an insightful, wide-ranging investigation of how the cinema has functioned as a "device of wonder" for more than a century, while also exploring how several key filmmakers, from Orson Welles to Christopher Nolan and Martin Scorsese, employ the rhetoric of magic. Examining pre-cinematic visual culture, animation, nonfiction film, and the digital trickery of today's CGI spectacles, Hidden in Plain Sight provides an eye-opening look at the powerful ways that magic has shaped our modes of perception and our experiences of the cinema.

In this book, editors Mario Slugan and Daniël Biltereyst present a theoretical reconceptualization of early cinema. To do so, they highlight the latest methods and tools for analysis, and cast new light on the experience of early cinema through the application of these concepts and methods. The international host of contributors evaluate examples of early cinema across the globe, including The May Irwin Kiss (1896), Un homme de têtes (1900), The Terrible Turkish Executioner (1904) and Tom Tom the Piper's Son (1905). In doing so, they address the periodization of the era, emphasizing the recent boom in the availability of primary materials, the rise of digital technologies, the developments in new cinema history, and the persistence of some conceptualizations as key incentives for rethinking early cinema in theoretical and methodological terms. They go on to highlight cutting-edge approaches to the study of early cinema, including the use of the Mediathread Platform, the formation of new datasets with the help of digital technologies, and exploring the early era in non-western cultures. Finally, the contributors revisit early cinema audiences and exhibition contexts by investigating some of the earliest screenings in Denmark and the US, exploring the details of black cinema going in Harlem, and examining exhibition practices in Germany.

Women explode out of chimneys and melt when sprayed with soda water. Feminist activists play practical jokes to lobby for voting rights, while overworked kitchen maids dismember their limbs to finish their chores on time. In early slapstick films with titles such as Saucy Sue, Mary Jane's Mishap, Jane on Strike, and The Consequences of Feminism, comediennes exhibit the tensions between joyful laughter and gendered violence. Slapstick comedy often celebrates the exaggeration of make-believe injury. Unlike male clowns, however, these comic actresses use slapstick antics as forms of feminist protest. They spontaneously combust while doing housework, disappear and reappear when sexually assaulted, or transform into men by eating magic seeds—and their absurd metamorphoses evoke the real-life predicaments of female identity in a changing modern world. Specters of Slapstick and Silent Film Comediennes reveals the gender politics of comedy and the comedic potentials of feminism through close consideration of hundreds of silent films. As Maggie Hennefeld argues, comedienne catastrophes provide disturbing but suggestive images for comprehending gendered social upheavals in the early twentieth century. At the same time, slapstick comediennes were crucial to the emergence of film language. Women's flexible physicality offered filmmakers blank slates for experimenting with the visual and social potentials of cinema. Specters of Slapstick and Silent Film Comediennes poses major challenges to the foundations of our ideas about slapstick comedy and film history, showing how this combustible genre blows open age-old debates about laughter, society, and gender politics.

In Supernatural Entertainments, Simone Natale vividly depicts spiritualism's rise as a religious and cultural phenomenon and explores its strong connection to the growth of the media entertainment industry in the nineteenth century. He frames the spiritualist movement as part of a new commodity culture that changed how public entertainments were produced and consumed. Starting with the story of the Fox sisters, considered the first spiritualist mediums in history, Natale follows the trajectory of spiritualism in Great Britain and the United States from its foundation in 1848 to the beginning of the twentieth century. He demonstrates that spiritualist mediums and leaders adopted many of the promotional strategies and spectacular techniques that were being developed for the broader entertainment industry. Spiritualist mediums were indistinguishable from other professional performers, as they had managers and agents, advertised in the press, and used spectacularism to draw audiences. Addressing the overlap between spiritualism's explosion and nineteenth-century show business, Natale provides an archaeology of how the supernatural became a powerful force in the media and popular culture of today.

The Adventurous Life of a Versatile Artist: Houdini
A Novel
Specters of Slapstick and Silent Film Comediennes
Invented Lives, Imagined Communities
An Archaeology of Magic and the Cinema
Conjuring Asia
The Lightning Thief

From The Death of Nancy Sykes (1897) to The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies (2014) and beyond, cinematic adaptations of British literature participate in a complex and fascinating history. The History of British Literature on Film, 1895-2015 is the only comprehensive narration of cinema's 100-year-old love affair with British literature. Unlike previous studies of

literature and film, which tend to privilege particular authors such as Shakespeare and Jane Austen, or particular texts such as Frankenstein, or particular literary periods such as Medieval, this volume considers the multiple functions of filmed British literature as a cinematic subject in its own right-one reflecting the specific political and aesthetic priorities of different national and historical cinemas. In what ways has the British literary canon authorized and influenced the history and aesthetics of film, and in what ways has filmed British literature both affirmed and challenged the very idea of literary canonicity? Seeking to answer these and other key questions, this indispensable study shows how these adaptations emerged from and continue to shape the social, artistic, and commercial aspects of film history.

HARRY HOUDINI, "the World's Handcuff King and amazing Prison Breaker," a title universally and unanimously bestowed upon him, has had a career as adventurous and romantic as the most imaginative writer could possibly conjure. Indeed, this wonderful genius, with a science concerning bolts, bars, locks, and chains that will yet revolutionize the world's methods of safeguarding itself against "the men that prowl in the night," confirms the truth of the ancient adage that "truth is stranger than fiction." Just remember for a moment that he is the man to whom the shrewdest police, the sharpest detectives, and the most watchful jail wardens look with awe and anxiety. And they are eminently right in this attitude of disquiet, because they know that buried in the brain of Houdini lies the secret of an unknown power he alone possesses that makes their prisons as powerless as Japanese screens, and renders their multiple-locking handcuffs, leg irons, and all the other prison paraphernalia, no more binding than store twine. Suppose the innate and inherent integrity of character that Houdini possesses, in common with most men brought up within the circle of a mother's sweet influence, were to be swept aside by the desire for riches not his own. There are many men of many millions to-day whose money is not their own. Suppose he should be captured by a band of desperate men determined to wrest from Houdini this secret worth millions. Suppose a great hypnotist were to obtain dominance over this mystery-enveloped genius and use his baneful powers for evil designs. What then? A slight knowledge of the marvels Houdini has accomplished mixed with a little imagination would create as many more suppositions of this kind as this book could contain. But, to be brief, admitting the possibility of the happening of any of these suppositious instances, and you will gain a clear idea of the extraordinary character and quality of Houdini's powers. It is often the best way to see the full scope of a cause by carefully ascertaining its effect. This analytical method is equally applicable to Houdini, and recognizing the harm he would receive were his secrets confided to unworthy hands, you gain an adequately impressive idea of the enormity of responsibility that rests upon him.

Matthew Solomon's study of Chaplin's The Gold Rush (1925) provides an in-depth discussion of the film's production and reception history, placing it in the context of the turn-of-the-century Alaska Klondike gold rush, and analyses the film's narrative and formal features, particularly its references to music-hall performance styles and tropes.

New Perspectives on Early Cinema History