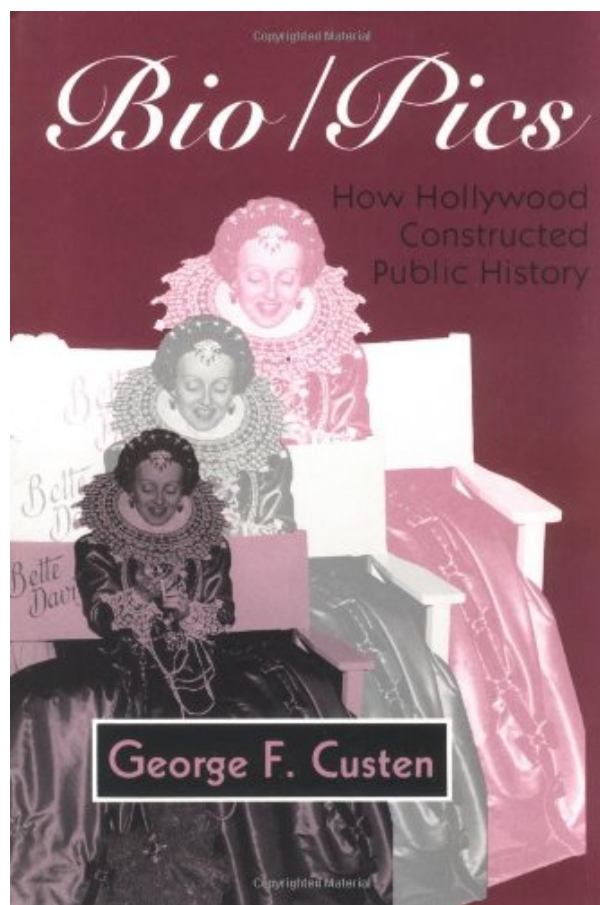
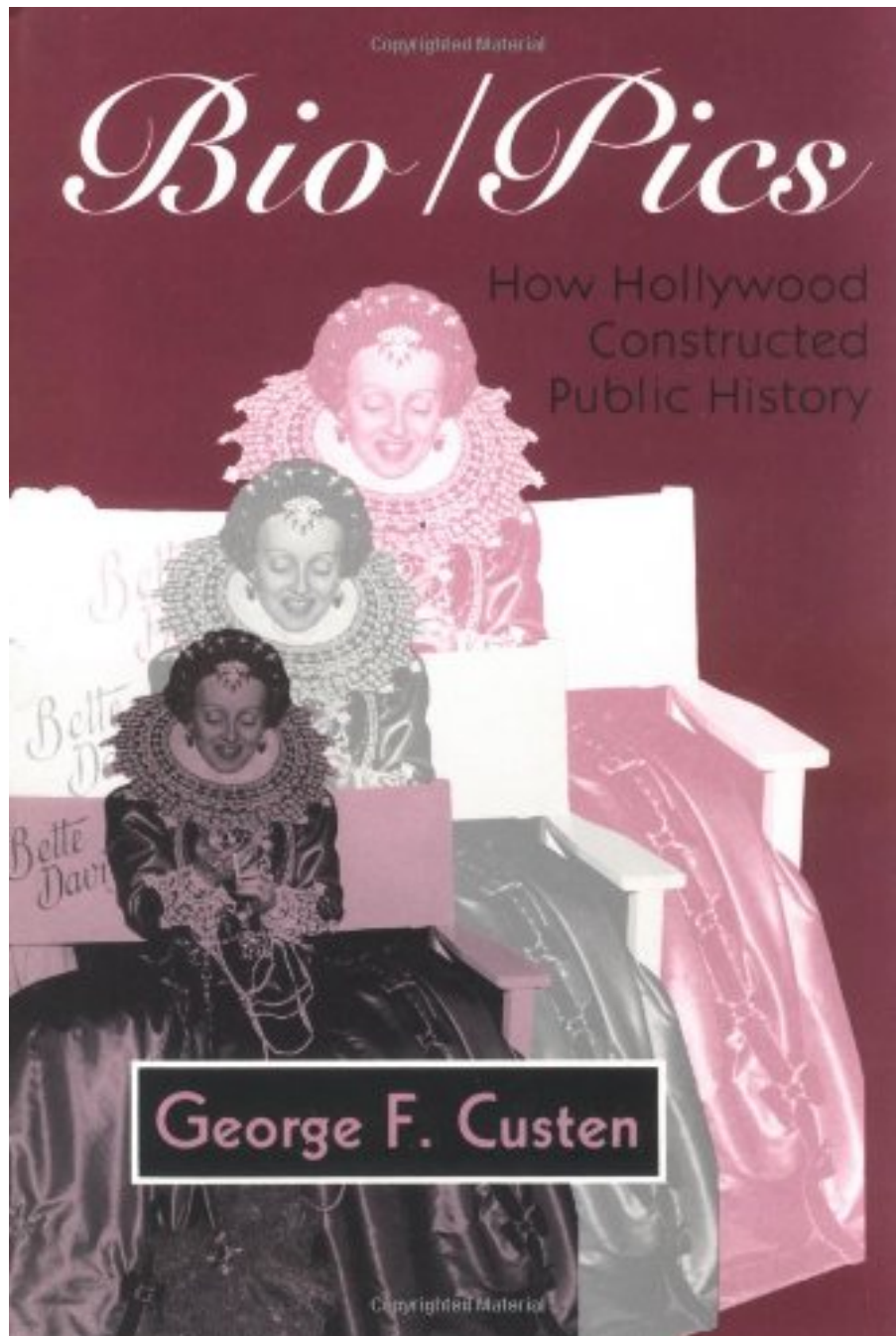


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CONSTRUCTED PUBLIC HISTORY
(STUDIES) BY PROFESSOR GEORGE
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From Library Journal

Enhanced by charts, appendixes, notes, and references to approximately 300 movies from 1927 to 1960 (with additional material on the biopics' absorption by contemporary television), this volume analyzes biographical film production, distribution, and exhibition under the constraints of censorship, libel law, producer proclivities, and casting. Custen (communications, CUNY) explains why biographies of entertainers proliferated after World War II, how studio moguls fostered biographical narratives similar to their own rags-to-riches stories, and to what extent research departments affected veracity. A good addition to a scant literature that includes Michael Pitts's *Hollywood and American History* (McFarland & Co., 1984) and George MacDonald Fraser's *The Hollywood History of the World* (LJ 9/15/88). Essential for comprehensive film collections. Movie Entertainment Book Club selection.

- Kim Holston, American Inst. for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters, Malvern, Pa.
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Review

"A fresh and important contribution to film history and cultural studies." -- Daniel Czitrom, Mount Holyoke College

"Ambitious and groundbreaking... a book no historian, student of media, or movie enthusiast should miss." -- George Gerbner, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania

"An illuminating account of an enduring but little analyzed staple of popular film, the story of a life..." -- Richard Dyer, University of Warwick

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sample of over one hundred films produced during the studio era (1927-1960), Custen maintains that the biopic constructed a Hollywood code of history out of a tightly controlled reference system, glamorizing the producers' own personal visions of what constituted a great life. Custen's examination of production practices reveals that the machinery of public history operating through these films was fueled by different textual and intertextual sources; Hollywood's model of history was derived from recycled plots played out on its back lots and sound stages, and not from the world outside the studio walls. His analysis of the roles played by star personae, legal considerations, censorship practices, and the producers' own ideologies brings the world of the biopic alive, even into the age of the made-for-TV movie.

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