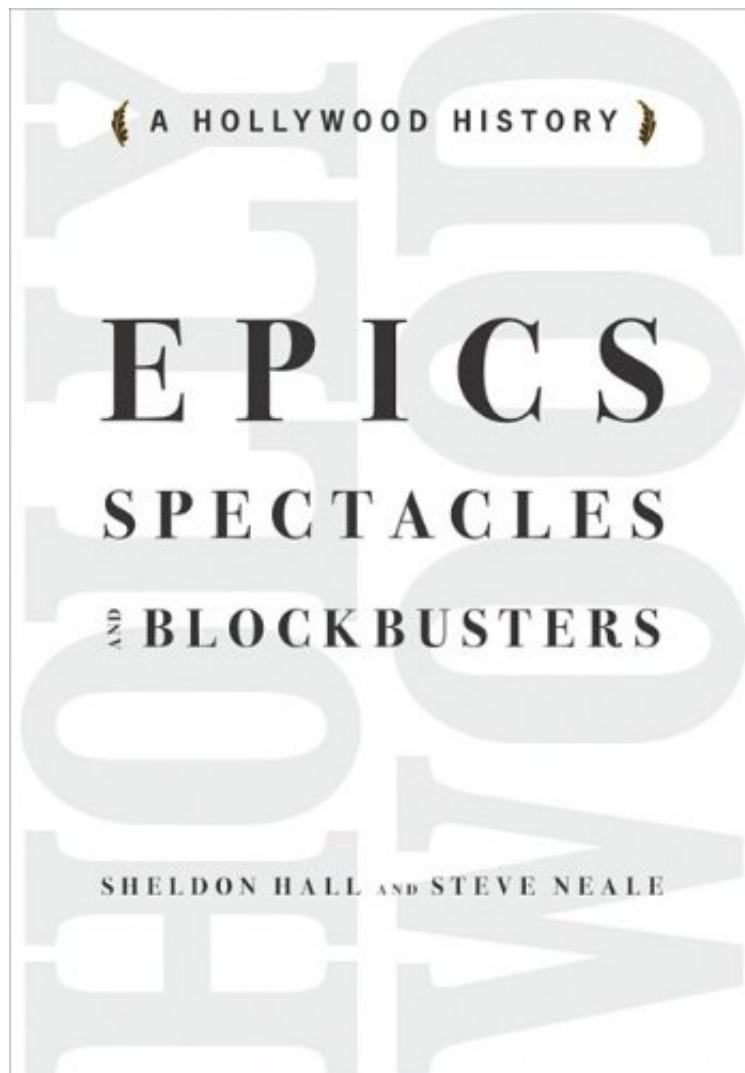


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Epics, Spectacles, and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series)

Sheldon Hall, Steve Neale

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Sheldon Hall, Steve Neale : Epics, Spectacles, and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Epics, Spectacles, and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History (Contemporary Approaches to Film and Media Series):

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book.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy John S Campbell excellent service and product2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The Hollywood Spectacle Industry AnatomizedBy Dr. Laurence RawThis book charts the history of the Hollywood spectacle, epic and blockbuster from the silent era to the present. Although written with an obvious enthusiasm for the subject, this is not just a celebration of the genres, but an extended analysis of how industry imperatives shaped the construction, casting, marketing and reception of these kind of films. The authors give a unique insight into the ways these films are planned and - more significantly - marketed, especially in the digital age, when the film makes as much money through its DVD and/or online release as it does in movie theatres. The result is a long, comprehensive, and highly detailed work, suggesting that the genres are still very much alive, even though the costs to produce them remain astronomical.

The pantheon of big-budget, commercially successful films encompasses a range of genres, including biblical films, war films, romances, comic-book adaptations, animated features, and historical epics. In *Epics, Spectacles, and Blockbusters: A Hollywood History* authors Sheldon Hall and Steve Neale discuss the characteristics, history, and modes of distribution and exhibition that unite big-budget pictures, from their beginnings in the late nineteenth century to the present. Moving chronologically, the authors examine the roots of today's blockbuster in the "feature," "special," "superspecial," "roadshow," "epic," and "spectacle" of earlier eras, with special attention to the characteristics of each type of picture. In the first section, Hall and Neale consider the beginnings of features, specials, and superspecials in American cinema, as the terms came to define not the length of a film but its marketable stars or larger budget. The second section investigates roadshowing as a means of distributing specials and the changes to the roadshow that resulted from the introduction of synchronized sound in the 1920s. In the third section, the authors examine the phenomenon of epics and spectacles that arose from films like *Gone with the Wind*, *Samson and Delilah*, and *Spartacus* and continues to evolve today in films like *Spider-Man* and *Pearl Harbor*. In this section, Hall and Neale consider advances in visual and sound technology and the effects and costs they introduced to the industry. Scholars of film and television studies as well as readers interested in the history of American moviemaking will enjoy *Epics, Spectacles, and Blockbusters*.

About the AuthorSheldon Hall is a senior lecturer in stage and screen studies at Sheffield Hallam University and author of *Zulu: With Some Guts Behind It - The Making of the Epic Film* and co-editor (with John Belton and Steve Neale) of *Widescreen Worldwide*. Steve Neale is professor of English at the University of Exeter and author and editor of several books, most recently, *Genre and Contemporary Hollywood*.