**Queer Timing**
The Emergence of Lesbian Sexuality in Early Cinema

SUSAN POTTER

A daring theoretical revision of feminist and queer perspectives

“Susan Potter provides a necessary complication of early cinema studies by taking seriously both the particularities of early cinema and the radical alterity of the sexualities that—though fleeting—indelibly informed it. While film historical writing deeply aligned with both queer theory and the history of sexuality remains all too rare, Queer Timing might be the first study to so thoroughly pursue its project of lesbian emergence in precisely these terms.”

—Mark Lynn Anderson, author of Twilight of the Idols: Hollywood and the Human Sciences in 1920s America

In *Queer Timing*, Susan Potter offers a counter-history that reorients accepted views of lesbian representation and spectatorship in early cinema. Potter sees the emergence of lesbian figures as only the most visible but belated outcome of multiple sexuality effects. Early cinema reconfigured older erotic modalities, articulated new—though incoherent—sexual categories, and generated novel forms of queer feeling and affiliation.

Potter draws on queer theory, silent film historiography, feminist film analysis, and archival research to provide an original and innovative analysis. Taking a conceptually oriented approach, she articulates the processes of filmic representation and spectatorship that reshaped, marginalized, or suppressed women’s same-sex desires and identities. As she pursues a sense of “timing,” Potter stages scenes of the erotic and intellectual encounters shared by historical spectators, on-screen figures, and present-day scholars. The result is a daring revision of feminist and queer perspectives that foregrounds the centrality of women’s same-sex desire to cinematic discourses of both homo- and heterosexuality.

SUSAN POTTER is lecturer in film studies at the University of Sydney.

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