



Released on Disney+ streaming 8 September 2022. Rating: low +2 (-4 to +4) or 7/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4593060/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/pinocchio\\_2022](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/pinocchio_2022)

GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S PINOCCHIO: This is called "GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S PINOCCHIO" to distinguish it from the \*other\* 2022 Pinocchio film, PINOCCHIO, which is a live-action Disney film starring Tom Hanks, while GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S PINOCCHIO is a stop-motion animated Netflix film. (This makes the third stop-motion animated film from Netflix this year, the first two being THE HOUSE [reviewed in the 05/13/22 issue of the MT VOID] and WENDELL & WILD [reviewed above].) There was also a Roberto Begnini version in 2002. GUILLERMO DEL TORO'S PINOCCHIO obviously has a very different look from current CGI animation--not as realistic, for example--but apparently del Toro is hoping for a stop-motion revival. del Toro is also not afraid to change the classic story in many ways. For example, it takes place in pre-World-War-II Italy, and fascism and war play an important role in the film. The animation is stunning, but the story was never really one of our core memories from childhood, so we had more difficulty connecting to it than many others will.

Released on Netflix streaming 9 December 2022. Rating: high +1 (-4 to +4), or 6/10.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1488589/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/guillermo\\_del\\_toros\\_pinocchio](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/guillermo_del_toros_pinocchio)

BRIAN AND CHARLES: BRIAN AND CHARLES is expanded from a 2017 12-minute film, and serves as evidence that some shorts do not expand well. The plot has almost nothing to do with the premise (an eccentric character builds a robot), which has become more of a MacGuffin. The plot could just as easily have centered around an eccentric character and a younger brother. And there are some inconsistencies that were introduced in the expansion. For example, why is all the introductory material being filmed as a documentary. Are we to believe it is all a documentary, or is that aspect dropped early on? It seemed a promising idea, but was very disappointing.

Released theatrically 17 June 2022. Rating: 0 (-4 to +4) or 4/10

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13270424/reference>

What others are saying: [https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/brian\\_and\\_charles](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/brian_and_charles)

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### **This Week's Reading** (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

PAST IMPERFECT by Peter Charles Hoffer (PublicAffairs, ISBN 978-1-588648-445-3) looks at four recent scandals involving respected historians (Stephen Ambrose, Michael Bellesiles, Joseph Ellis, and Doris Kearns Goodwin). Hoffer goes back to historians at the very start of the United States and presents evidence to support his claim that the failings of these four are not a new phenomenon, but defects found in historians for the last two hundred and fifty years.

I would have more confidence in Hoffer if the following sentence did not appear on page 26: "Such borrowing as Parkman (and Bancroft) assayed from other authors was something that men of letters did all the time, without qualms--if not without controversy, as Edgar Allen Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Samuel L. Clements (Mark Twain), and other authors discovered."

Yes, he manages to misspell the names two of the three famous authors that he lists (and arguably uses a dash where a comma would have been a better choice). And later he refers to the book by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh as THE HOLY BLOOD AND THE HOLY GRAIL, when the accurate title is HOLY BLOOD, HOLY GRAIL. Strangely, he uses the correct title on the next page, and then just HOLY BLOOD ten pages later, before reverting to THE HOLY BLOOD AND THE HOLY GRAIL in the index. For someone complaining about sloppiness (as indicating possible deception), Hoffer is hardly in an unassailable position.

It may seem like a minor thing, but it is many ways indicative of the flaws he finds in historians, who are disrespectful of primary sources and have misused them to support their thesis, which is called consensus history. Falsification, plagiarism, and fabrication--the crimes of the four historians--have been with us since the beginning of American history, Hoffer claims, and run as a thread through not just consensus history, but its successors.

The actual cases Hoffer discusses are of different kinds of deception. Hoffer points out that Michael Bellesiles, the author of ARMING AMERICA, has incomplete data in the first edition (e.g., there are only vague indications of sample sizes), and data in subsequent editions inconsistent with those in the first (e.g., the sample sizes are smaller, and there are fewer samples). Basically, Hoffer claims that gun ownership was somewhere around 15% in colonial America, but all subsequent researches of the documents Hoffer claims to have used indicate a much higher percentage.

Stephen Ambrose and Doris Kearns Goodwin are both accused of plagiarism, and have admitted to re-using or paraphrasing secondary sources, and particularly in such a way that when those secondary sources were citing primary sources, it appeared that Ambrose or Goodwin had found the primary source themselves.

Joseph Ellis was a different sort of deception. He didn't plagiarize other historians, or fake data in his books. No, he did a George Santos: he made up an entire back story. He was more careful than Santos, though--he did not lie on his resume to Mount Holyoke College. What he did was lie to his students in his lectures, claiming all sorts of Vietnam War and civil rights experiences that he never

had.

Hoffer also discusses another sort of feception common among historians (and others, one suspects): using the research of graduate students and other assistants. This in itself is not bad, assuming that either the assistants are doing purely clerical or basic editing work, but if these assistants are doing substantive research and writing that appears in the finished work, Hoffer says they should be given co-author credit, not just a mention in the acknowledgments section.

And connected to this is what responsibility the novelist or filmmaker has to the historians who have either provided the works they have relied on, or the historical advisors who have worked with them throughout the production of the film. As Hoffer notes, if the caterer gets a credit at the end of the film, why not the historical advisors?

With so much discussion these days of how to teach history, and especially what to teach and what to ignore, this 2004 book is amazingly (and depressingly) topical.

[Disclaimer: Count me among the "woke" in this debate. I know that to some "woke" is a pejorative, but I see it as the opposite of "asleep" or "comatose". "Social justice warrior" has also taken on a pejorative aspect, and it's time to reclaim that as well. Since when is fighting for social justice a bad thing?)

[PAST IMPERFECT by Peter Charles Hoffer should not be confused with PAST IMPERFECT by Mark C. Carnes, a book about historical films, or with PAST IMPERFECT edited by Martin H. Greenberg and Larry Segriff, an anthology of time travel stories.]

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Quote of the Week:

When you re-read a classic, you do not see more  
in the book that you did before; you see more in you  
than was there before.

--Cliff Fadiman

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