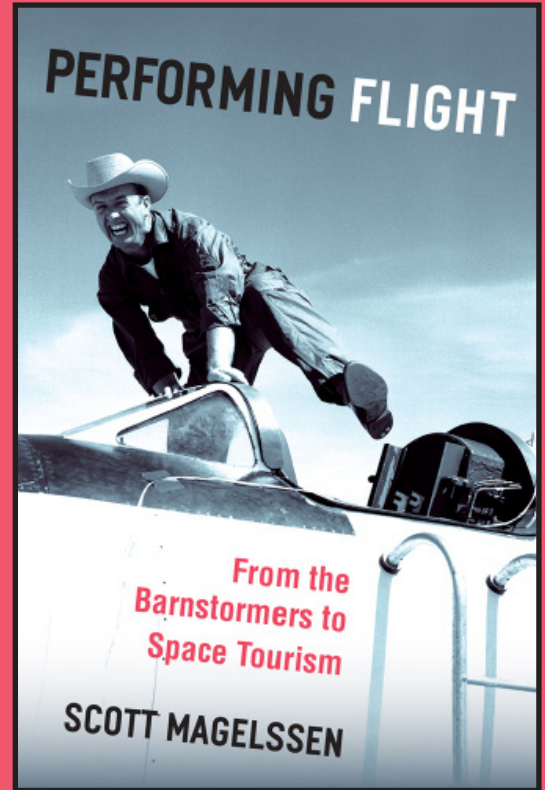


Performing Flight

From the Barnstormers to Space Tourism

Performing Flight sheds new light on moments in the history of US aviation and spaceflight through the lens of performance studies. From pioneering aviator Bessie Coleman to the emerging industry of space tourism, performance has consistently shaped public perception of the enterprise of flight and has guaranteed its success as a mode of entertainment, travel, research, and warfare. The book reveals fundamental connections between performance and human aviation and space travel over the past 100 years, beginning with the early aerial entertainers known as barnstormers (named after itinerant 19th century theater troupes) to the performative history of the Enola Gay and its pilot Paul Tibbets, who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima, thus ushering in the atomic age. The book also explores the phenomenon of “the pilot voice”; the creation of the American Astronaut, on whose performative success the Cold War, the Space Race, and funding of the US Space Program all depended; and the performative strategies employed to cement notions of space tourism as both manifest destiny and an escape route from a failed planet. A final chapter addresses the four hijacked flights of 9/11 and their representations in discourse and in memorials. *Performing Flight* effectively and imaginatively demonstrates the ways in which performance and flight in the United States have been inextricably linked for more than a century.

Scott Magelssen is Professor of Drama and Performance Studies at the University of Washington.



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