*Sherlock, Jr.* (1924)

Directed by and starring Buster Keaton, *Sherlock, Jr.* follows the adventures of a young movie theater employee who is obsessed with becoming a detective. When he loses his girl because he is wrongly accused of stealing her father’s pocket watch, he has the opportunity to try out his skills as a gumshoe. The film’s second half features a dream sequence during which the projectionist, having dozed off in his booth, enters the movie screen. Here, he transforms into the great detective, Sherlock, Jr., and successfully solves a similar case. The dream sequence characterizes the film as particularly modernist, both exploring the protagonist’s subjective dream state and providing self-reflexive commentary on the medium. When Keaton first enters the movie screen, the backdrops shift rapidly on him, from a rough sea to a snowy landscape. Each time the scenery changes, Keaton adapts acrobatically, diving or tumbling through the scene. The sequence thus showcases Keaton’s spectacular physicality and refers back to cinema’s early days in the vaudeville theater. The film has had a lasting influence, ranging from Woody Allen’s homage in *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985) to Robert Zemeckis’s *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988).

Paratextual Material (from BFI website: <http://explore.bfi.org.uk/sightandsoundpolls/2012/film/4ce2b6b5b13f5>

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References and Further Reading:

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