

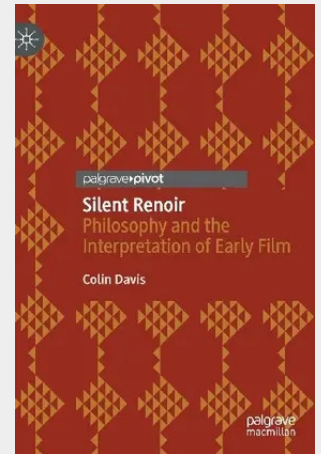
Davis

Silent Renoir

Philosophy and the Interpretation of Early Film

Jean Renoir (1894-1979) is widely regarded as one of the most distinguished directors in the history of world cinema. In the 1930s he directed a string of films which stretched the formal, intellectual, political and aesthetic boundaries of the art form, including works such as *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, *La Grande Illusion*, *La Bête humaine* and *La Règle du jeu*. However, the great director's early work from the 1920s remains almost completely unknown, even to film specialists. If it is discussed at all, it is often seen to be of interest only insofar as it anticipates themes and techniques perfected in the later masterpieces. Renoir's films of the 1920s were sometimes unfinished, commercially unsuccessful, or unreleased at the time of their production. This book argues that to regard them merely as prefigurations of later achievements entails a failure to view them on their own terms, as searching, unsettled experiments in the meaning and potential of film art.

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