



French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology, 1907-1939. Volume 1: 1907-1929 (French Film Theory & Criticism)

By Richard Abel

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These two volumes examine a significant but previously neglected moment in French cultural history: the emergence of French film theory and criticism before the essays of André Bazin. Richard Abel has devised an organizational scheme of six nearly symmetrical periods that serve to "bite into" the discursive flow of early French writing on the cinema. Each of the periods is discussed in a separate and extensive historical introduction, with convincing explications of the various concepts current at the time. In each instance, Abel goes on to provide a complementary anthology of selected texts in translation. Amounting to a portable archive, these anthologies make available a rich selection of nearly one hundred and fifty important texts, most of them never before published in English.

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Editorial Review

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This first volume of what the author calls a "history/anthology" of French film theory and criticism covers the years 1907-1929. In these two decades, France produced some of the most extraordinary films of all time: Georges Mèliès, René Clair, and Abel Gance, director of *Napoleon*, were all in their heyday. In a series of essays interspersed with generous excerpts from his primary sources, Richard Abel demonstrates that these filmmakers, along with writers like Jean Cocteau, Antonin Artaud, and even Colette, engaged in fascinating critical debates about the meaning, the sociology, and the politics of their burgeoning national art. This is the only book in English to collect these writers' ideas on the movies. It is invaluable reading for anyone interested in the early history or modern theory of cinema.

Review

"Constitutes an excellent research tool for scholars of French cinema but also, importantly, for those concerned with the development of film theory and criticism generally."--**Ginette Vincendeau**, *Screen*

"[Richard Abel] has put all interested in French cinema deeply in his debt."--**D. J. Wenden**, *English Historical Review*

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