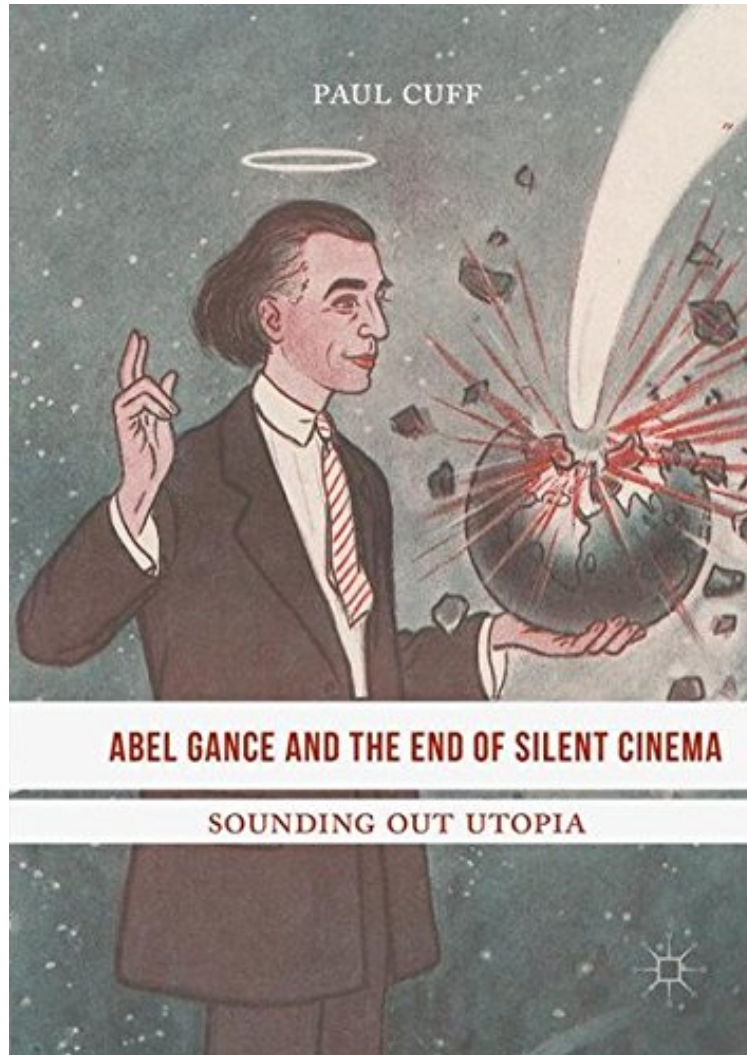


Abel Gance and the End of Silent Cinema: Sounding out Utopia

Paul Cuff

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Paul Cuff : Abel Gance and the End of Silent Cinema: Sounding out Utopia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Abel Gance and the End of Silent Cinema: Sounding out Utopia:

This book explores the creation and destruction of Abel Gances most ambitious film project, and seeks to explain why his meteoric career was so nearly extinguished at the end of silent cinema. By 1929, Gance was Frances most famous director. Acclaimed for his technical innovation and visual imagination, he was also admonished for the excessive

length and expense of his productions. Gances first sound film, *La Fin du Monde* (1930), was a critical and financial disaster so great that it nearly destroyed his career. But what went wrong? Gance claimed it was commercial sabotage whilst critics blamed the directors inexperience with new technology. Neither excuse is satisfactory. Based on extensive archival research, this book re-investigates the cultural background and aesthetic consequences of Gances transition from silent filmmaking to sound cinema. *La Fin du Monde* is revealed to be only one element of an extraordinary cultural project to transform cinema into a universal religion and propagate its power through the League of Nations. From unfinished films to unrealized social revolutions, the reader is given a fascinating tour of Gances lost cinematic utopia.

From the Back Cover This book explores the creation and destruction of Abel Gances most ambitious film project, and seeks to explain why his meteoric career was so nearly extinguished at the end of silent cinema. By 1929, Gance was Frances most famous director. Acclaimed for his technical innovation and visual imagination, he was also admonished for the excessive length and expense of his productions. Gances first sound film, *La Fin du Monde* (1930), was a critical and financial disaster so great that it nearly destroyed his career. But what went wrong? Gance claimed it was commercial sabotage whilst critics blamed the directors inexperience with new technology. Neither excuse is satisfactory. Based on extensive archival research, this book re-investigates the cultural background and aesthetic consequences of Gances transition from silent filmmaking to sound cinema. *La Fin du Monde* is revealed to be only one element of an extraordinary cultural project to transform cinema into a universal religion and propagate its power through the League of Nations. From unfinished films to unrealized social revolutions, the reader is given a fascinating tour of Gances lost cinematic utopia.**About the Author** Paul Cuff is an Associate Fellow in the Department of Film and Television Studies, University of Warwick, UK. He has produced work on Abel Gance, Sherlock Holmes, Buster Keaton, and Spike Milligan. His first monograph, *A revolution for the screen: Abel Gances Napolon*, was published in 2015.