



Film Criticism as Cultural Fantasy: The Perpetual French Discovery of Australian Cinema (Film Cultures)

Andrew McGregor

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This book presents an unprecedented analysis of the dynamics of cultural representation and interpretation in film criticism. It examines how French critical reception of Australian cinema since the revival period of the 1970s has evolved as a narrative of perpetual discovery, and how a clear parallel can be drawn between French critics' reading of Australian film and their interpretation of an exotic Australian national identity. In French critical writing on Australian cinema, Australian identity is frequently defined in terms of extremes of cultural specificity and cultural anonymity. On the one hand, French critics construct a Euro-centric orientalist fantasy of Australia as not only a European Antipodes, but the antithesis of Europe. At the same time, French critics have tended to subordinate Australian cultural identity within the framework of a resented Anglo-American filmic and cultural hegemony. The book further explores this marginalisation by examining the influence of the French auteur paradigm, particularly in reference to the work of Jane Campion, as well as by discussing the increasingly problematic notion of national identity, and indeed national cinemas, within the universal framework of international film culture.

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