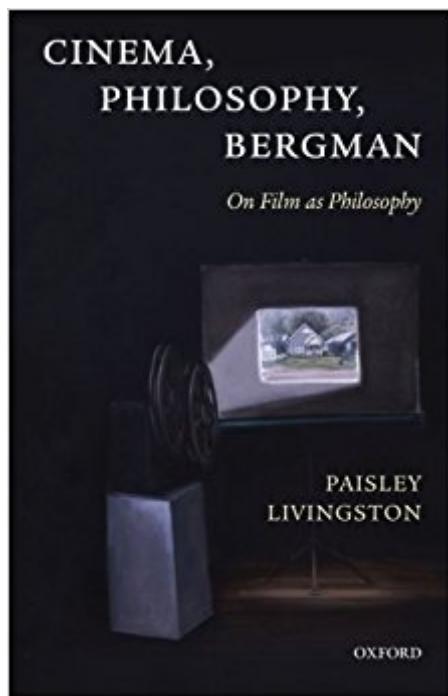


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Cinema, Philosophy, Bergman: On Film As Philosophy



Synopsis

The increasingly popular idea that cinematic fictions can "do" philosophy raises some difficult questions. Who is actually doing the philosophizing? Is it the philosophical commentator who reads general arguments or theories into the stories conveyed by a film? Could it be the filmmaker, or a group of collaborating filmmakers, who raise and try to answer philosophical questions with a film? Is there something about the experience of films that is especially suited to the stimulation of worthwhile philosophical reflections? In the first part of this book, Paisley Livingston surveys positions and arguments surrounding the cinema's philosophical value. He raises criticisms of bold theses in this area and defends a moderate view of film's possible contributions to philosophy. In the second part of the book he defends an intentionalist approach that focuses on the filmmakers' philosophical background assumptions, sources, and aims. Livingston outlines intentionalist interpretative principles as well as an account of authorship in cinema. The third part of the book exemplifies this intentionalist approach with reference to the work of Ingmar Bergman. Livingston explores the connection between Bergman's work and the Swedish director's primary philosophical source--a treatise in philosophical psychology authored by the Finnish philosopher, Eino Kaila. Bergman proclaimed that reading this book was a tremendous philosophical experience for him and that he "built on this ground." With reference to materials in the newly created Ingmar Bergman archive, Livingston shows how Bergman took up Kaila's topics in his cinematic explorations of motivated irrationality, inauthenticity, and the problem of self-knowledge.

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Customer Reviews

Review from previous edition: "Livingston's book covers an impressive amount of territory in an exceptionally clear, and often lively, fashion. He is rigorous and yet generous with argumentative opponents. The book balances abstract, conceptual argument with the close analysis of particular films and sequences very effectively." --Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews

Paisley Livingston has a BA in Philosophy from Stanford University and a PhD from The Johns Hopkins University. He is Chair Professor of Philosophy and Dean of Humanities at Lingnan University in Hong Kong. He has held teaching and research positions at The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, McGill University, l'Ecole Polytechnique (Paris), Siegen University, the University of Aarhus, Roskilde University Center, the University of Copenhagen, and Zinbin (Kyoto). His last book was *Art and Intention* (Oxford: Clarendon). His other books are *Ingmar Bergman and the Rituals of Art* (Cornell), *Literary Knowledge* (Cornell), *Literature and Rationality* (Cambridge), and *Models of Desire* (Johns Hopkins). He co-edited *The Creation of Art* (Cambridge) with Berys Gaut and *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* with Carl Plantinga.

"K" is for Kultur (Swedish for Culture) or maybe because of Eino KAILA, the Finnish positivist that influenced Bergman. There was a philosophical dialogue between the two. Livingston contends that Bergman's films do show philosophy-in-action. Cinema of Bergman is an art form in which his intent is to convey a concept rather than to create an art object. Bergman's philosophical dimension is explained comprehensively by Livingston in an easy to read vernacular. Bergman did say in his films what he meant! Greatly recommended. Dag Stomberg

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