



Movie Club

The Artist (2011)

1. 'The Artist' is a film that pays homage to the classic black-and-white silent films, it does this by re-enacting the style itself, it is a pastiche.

'Here is one of the most entertaining films in many a moon, a film that charms because of its story, its performances and because of the sly way it plays with being silent and black and white. "The Artist" knows you're aware it's silent and kids you about it. Not that it's entirely silent, of course; like all silent films were, it's accompanied by music. You know — like in a regular movie when nobody's talking?'
Roger Egbert: <http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/the-artist-2011>

How does the film 'play' with noise and silence? In doing so, the film makes the audience aware that it is not actually a traditional silent film.

2. What do you make of the dream sequence, in which George finds himself in a world of noise, but he himself cannot talk? Is sound used to symbolise an underlying theme here? If so, what theme?
3. Apart from saving George in the house fire, what role does George's dog serve in the film? On the surface the dog seems to offer comic relief—playing dead when George imaginary shoots him. However he appears throughout the course of the film; barking when George cannot speak, standing next to George when most others leave. What underlying significance is here?
4. The film was made to replicate that of the silent-era, going so far as to be filmed in a 4:3 ratio to make the screen take on the shape of an old square television set. However the film was originally shot in colour and then edited to black-and-white after the fact. Does this effect the authenticity of the film, knowing it is actually made in a contemporary time?

'The Artist was made as a love letter to cinema, and grew out of my (and all of my cast and crew's) admiration and respect for movies throughout history. It was inspired by the work of Hitchcock, Land, Ford, Lubitsch, Murnau and Wilder.'
Director, Michel Hazanavicius

What might be the effect on the authenticity of the film if it were released in colour?