



Cinema, democracy and perfectionism: Joshua Foa Dienstag in dialogue (Critical Powers MUP Series)

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In the lead essay for this volume, Joshua Foa Dienstag engages in a critical encounter with the work of Stanley Cavell on cinema, focusing skeptical attention on the claims made for the contribution of cinema to the ethical character of democratic life.

In this debate, Dienstag mirrors the celebrated dialogue between Rousseau and Jean D'Alembert on theatre, casting Cavell as D'Alembert in his view that we can learn to become better citizens and better people by observing a staged representation of human life, with Dienstag arguing, with Rousseau, that this misunderstands the relationship between original and copy, even more so in the medium of film than in the medium of theatre.

Dienstag's provocative and stylish essay is debated by an exceptional group of interlocutors including Davide Panagia, Tracy Strong, Tom Dumm and Elizabeth Wingrove. The volume closes with a robust response from Dienstag to his critics.

Cinema, Democracy and Perfectionism builds on Dienstag's well known work on narrative and political theory, but takes it in a new direction by turning to a topic that is increasingly prominent in political theory on the place of cinema in democratic life. It will appeal both to readers in political theory and film studies.

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