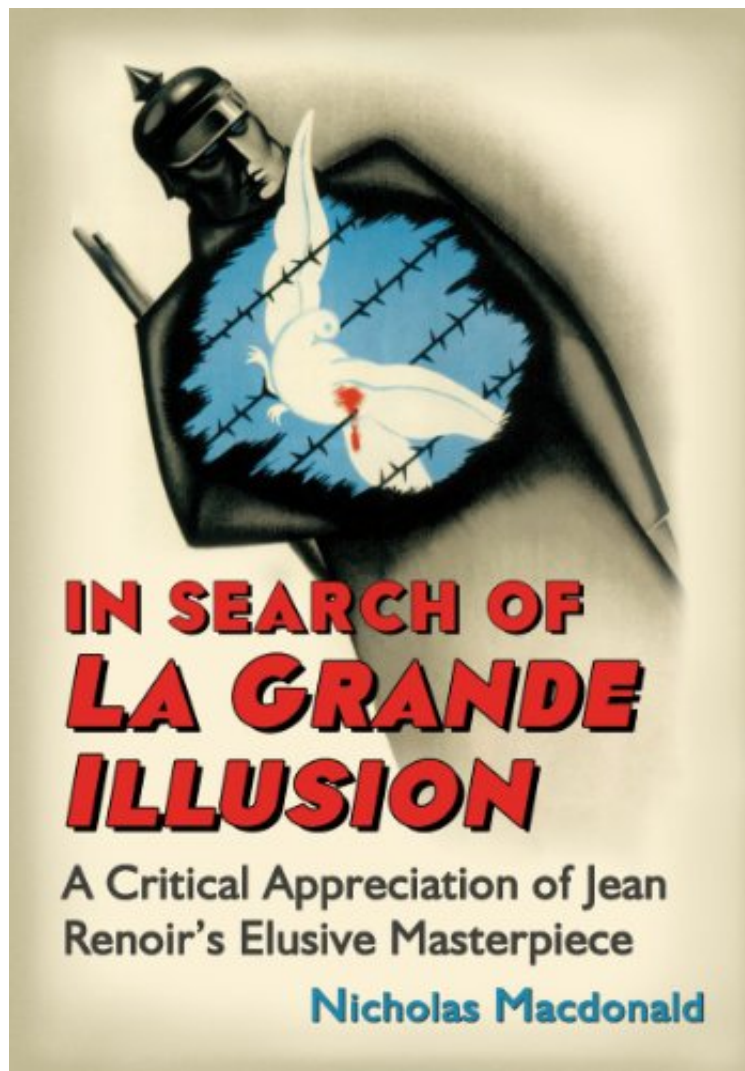


(Free read ebook) In Search of La Grande Illusion: A Critical Appreciation of Jean Renoir's Elusive Masterpiece

## In Search of La Grande Illusion: A Critical Appreciation of Jean Renoir's Elusive Masterpiece

*Nicholas Macdonald*

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**Nicholas Macdonald : In Search of La Grande Illusion: A Critical Appreciation of Jean Renoir's Elusive Masterpiece** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Search of La Grande Illusion: A Critical Appreciation of Jean Renoir's Elusive Masterpiece:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. engaging and informative book By Philip Fried This is a thorough and thoroughly engaging book on the great artistry informing Jean Renoir's popular and apparently straightforward film,

"La Grande Illusion." Not only does it reveal the often subtle motifs in the film and explore its major themes, but it also provides insights into Renoir's career and illuminating comparisons of this film with others he directed. I've seen the film many times, but I still had much to learn from Macdonald's close analysis. His accurate descriptions of scenes and shots gave me the sense that I was seeing the film anew, with the benefit of an expert commentary. An added bonus is that he provides fascinating personal details about Renoir and the cast who came together ephemerally/eternally to create this masterpiece.

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful, engrossing book

By jvonhartz This is a marvelous, thoroughly researched and expertly written book about a classic French film. The story concerns aviators during World War I and has long been recognized as a vivid relating of the last war fought under the old-fashioned rules established by gentlemen. But this work goes far beyond that. It is a gripping exegesis of how and why the film was created, the roles of the actors, both in the movie and in real life. And the reasons for the choices made by the famous director Jean Renoir. As I read I found the film running through the theater of my mind, each scene brought to life through the explication of the text. Mr. Macdonald is a writer. Bright descriptions leap from the pages and subtle insights slip effortlessly into place. This is not a stodgy thesis ground out by a graduate film student. Rather it is an illuminating work that is as fresh as a screening of a fascinating movie.

John von Hartz 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A book for buffs of the golden age of films

By John Pappenheimer In 1959, the author's father, a well known film and social critic, took him to see Jean Renoir's film *La Grande Illusion* at the Baronet Theater in New York. The author was 14-years-old at the time and deeply moved by the black and white film set during World War One. It sparked the author's lifelong obsession with what made the movie so powerful. In the intervening decades, Macdonald has put the film under a microscope scene by scene. He has poured over Renoir's writing. He has exhaustively researched Renoir's life, the gestation of the movie, the choice of actors, and the response of critics. In his preface, Macdonald quotes Renoir's delight in a title that was so open to interpretation and allowed the audience to create, to be an author. Macdonald goes on to quote from Renoir's memoir: Every spectator must be able in his own fashion to interpret both the situations and the general sense of the piece. Macdonald has taken this invitation to heart, coming up with his own take on what the film is about and his belief that the romantic interlude at the end of the film is the richest glimpse of Renoir's longing for shared humanity to triumph over nationalism and class differences.

*In Search of La Grande Illusion* is dense with details including the time Renoir spent in Hollywood with its stultifying effect on his creativity and individualistic approach to film making. This is a book very much written for golden age film buffs and aficionados.

This is an extended analysis of the film, from different perspectives. The first half is largely a discussion of the cinematic technique, with key sequences analyzed shot by shot. The second half approaches the film from many other angles, including its history, the critical reception, Renoir's life and career, and film theory, e.g., film in relation to music. A case is made that Renoir's career was inconsistent, especially after *La Règle du jeu* but also during the 1930s. And rather than emphasizing the humanist, anti-war thrust of *La Grande Illusion*, the film is approached as a work of art that is deeply expressive cinematically.

"Macdonald tracks the issues of the film very closely, adds several surprises, and makes us wish the film was more available." --ProtoView

"This is a rare and valuable work...I urge you to read Macdonald's book." --David Thomson, *The New Republic*

About the Author Nicholas Macdonald, as an independent filmmaker, made a series of low-budget 16mm political films in the early 1970s. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.