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| ***Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans (1927)*** |
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| *Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans* is an American silent film directed by German director Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau, who was renowned for his Expressionistic films including *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1922), *Der Letzte Mann* (*The Last Laugh*; 1924), and *Faust* (1926). Murnau was part of a wave of successful European directors who were lured to America by studio moguls to increase the artistic prestige of American cinema in the 1920s. *Sunrise* was produced by the Fox Film Corporation, and starred George O’Brien as The Man, and Janet Gaynor as The Wife. The Fox Movietone system made it the first fiction film to be released with an optical soundtrack. Carl Mayer wrote the screenplay for *Sunrise,* which is based on Hermann Sudermann’s short story *Die Reise nach Tilsit* (*The Trip to Tilsit*) published in 1917. The story finds a farmer fall prey to the charms of a city woman, who nearly drives him to kill his beloved wife, and pits the hectic modern excess of the city against the reliable calm of country life. The film boasted a stylized aesthetic that had an enormous artistic and critical impact — its carefully construed montage sequences, haunting double exposures, pictorial lighting and impressive tracking shots injected European modernism into classical American cinema. The film won three statuettes at the first Academy Awards in 1929: Unique and Artistic Production, Best Cinematography, and Best Actress in a Leading Role. |
| Further reading:  (Fischer)  (Eisner)  (Everson)  (Koszarski)  (Fischer, The Shock of the New: Electrification, Illumination, Urbanization, and the Cinema) |