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| Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans (1927) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| *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 The United States 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 pits the hectic modern excess of the city against the calm of country life: it finds a farmer fall prey to the charms of a city woman who nearly drives him to kill his beloved wife. The film boasted a stylised 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 awards at the first Academy Awards in 1929: Unique and Artistic Production, Best Cinematography, and Best Actress in a Leading Role. |
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| Further reading:  (Fischer)  (Eisner)  (Everson)  (Koszarski)  (Fischer, The Shock of the New: Electrification, Illumination, Urbanization, and the Cinema) |