Lillian Diana Gish[1] (October 14, 1893 – February 27, 1993) was an American actress of the screen and stage,[2] as well as a director and writer whose film acting career spanned 75 years, from 1912 in silent film shorts to 1987. Gish was called the First Lady of American Cinema, and she is credited with pioneering fundamental film performing techniques.

Gish was a prominent film star of the 1910s and 1920s, particularly associated with the films of director D. W. Griffith, including her leading role in the highest-grossing film of the silent era, Griffith's seminal The Birth of a Nation (1915). At the dawn of the sound era, she returned to the stage and appeared in film infrequently, including well-known roles in the controversial western Duel in the Sun (1946) and the offbeat thriller The Night of the Hunter (1955). She also did considerable television work from the early 1950s into the 1980s and closed her career playing, for the first time, opposite Bette Davis in the 1987 film The Whales of August (which would prove to be one of Davis's last on-screen appearances). In her later years
In her later years Gish became a dedicated advocate for the appreciation and preservation of silent film. Gish is widely considered to be the greatest actress of the silent era, and one of the greatest actresses in cinema history. Despite being better known for her film work, Gish was also an accomplished stage actress, and she was inducted into the American Theatre Hall of Fame in 1972.

Gish was born in Springfield, Ohio, to Mary Robinson McConnell (1875–1948) (an Episcopalian) and James Leigh Gish (1872–1912) (who was of German Lutheran descent).[5] She had a younger sister, Dorothy, who also became a popular movie star.
The first several generations of Gishes were Dunkard ministers. Her great-great-great-grandfather came to America on the ship Pennsylvania Merchant in 1733 and received a land grant from William Penn. Her great-great-grandfather fought in the American Revolutionary War and is buried in a cemetery in Pennsylvania for such soldiers. Letters between Gish and a Pennsylvania college professor indicate that her knowledge of her family background was limited.

Gish's father was an unreliable alcoholic. When he left the family, her mother took up acting to support them. The family moved to East St. Louis, Illinois, where they lived for several years with Lillian's aunt and uncle, Henry and Rose McConnell. Their mother opened the Majestic Candy Kitchen, and the girls helped sell popcorn and candy to patrons of the old Majestic Theater, located next door. The girls attended St. Henry's School, where they acted in school plays.
The girls were living with their aunt Emily in Massillon, Ohio, when they were notified by their uncle that their father, James, was gravely ill in Oklahoma. Lillian traveled to Shawnee, Oklahoma, to see her father, who by then was institutionalized in an Oklahoma City hospital. She saw him briefly and stayed with her aunt and uncle, Alfred Grant and Maude Gish, in Shawnee and attended school there. She wrote to her sister Dorothy that she was thinking of staying and finishing high school and then going to college, but she missed her family. Her father died in Norman, Oklahoma, January 9, 1912, and, soon after, Lillian returned to Ohio.

When the theater next to the candy store burned down, the family moved to New York, where the girls became good friends with a next-door neighbor, Gladys Smith.
Gladys was a child actress who did some work for director D. W. Griffith and later took the stage name Mary Pickford.[6] When Lillian and Dorothy were old enough, they joined the theatre, often traveling separately in different productions. They also took modeling jobs, with Lillian posing for artist Victor Maurel in exchange for voice lessons.[7]
In 1912, their friend Mary Pickford introduced the sisters to Griffith and helped get them contracts with Biograph Studios. Lillian Gish would soon become one of America's best-loved actresses. Although she was already 19, she gave her age as 16 to the studio.[8] Gish had German, Scottish and English ancestry.
Gish never married or had children. The association between Gish and D. W. Griffith was so close that some suspected a romantic connection, an issue never acknowledged by Gish, although several of their associates were certain they were at least briefly involved. For the remainder of her life, she always referred to him as "Mr. Griffith". She was also involved with producer Charles Duell and drama critic and editor George Jean Nathan. In the 1920s, Gish's association with Duell was something of a tabloid scandal because he had sued her and made the details of their relationship public.
Gish learned French, German, and Italian from spending 15 years in Europe, which she first visited in 1917 during World War I. George Jean Nathan praised Gish's acting glowingly—comparing her to Eleonora Duse.

During the period of political turmoil in the US that lasted from the outbreak of WWII in Europe until the attack on Pearl Harbor, she maintained an outspoken noninterventionist stance. She was an active member of the America First Committee, an anti-intervention organization founded by retired General Robert E. Wood with aviation pioneer Charles Lindbergh as its leading spokesman. She said she was blacklisted by the film and theater industries until she signed a contract in which she promised to cease her anti-interventionist activities and never disclose the fact that she had agreed to do so.

She maintained a very close relationship with her sister Dorothy, as well as with Mary Pickford, for her entire life. Another of her closest friends was actress Helen Hayes, the "First Lady of the American Theatre". Gish was the godmother of Hayes's son James MacArthur. Lillian Gish had also designated Hayes as a beneficiary of her estate, with Hayes surviving her by less than a month.
The American Film Institute named Gish 17th among the greatest female stars of Classic American cinema.[15] In 1955, she was awarded the George Eastman Award, for distinguished contribution to the art of film, at the George Eastman Museum's (then George Eastman House's) inaugural Festival of Film Artists.[16] She was awarded an Honorary Academy Award in 1971, and in 1984 she received an AFI Life Achievement Award.[17] Gish, an American icon, was also awarded in the Kennedy Center Honors.

An Unseen Enemy (1912)
Two Daughters of Eve (1912)
In the Aisles of the Wild (1912)
The One She Loved (1912)
The Muskeeters of Pig Alley (1912)
My Baby (1912)
Gold and Glitter (1912)
The New York Hat (1912)
The Burglar's Dilemma (1912)
A Cry for Help (1912)
Oil and Water (1913)
The Unwelcome Guest (1913)
The Stolen Bride (1913)
A Misunderstood Boy (1913)
The Left-Handed Man (1913)
The Lady and the Mouse (1913)
The House of Darkness (1913)
Just Gold (1913)
Just Kids (1913)
The Mothering Heart (1913)
During the Round Up (1913)
Adrian Paul Botta (adrianpaulbotta@gmail.com)

An Indian's Loyalty (1913)
A Woman in the Ultimate (1913)
A Modest Hero (1913)
So Runs the Way (1913)
The Madonna of the Storm (1913)
The Blue or the Gray (1913)
The Conscience of Hassan Bey (1913)
The Battle at Elderbush Gulch (1913)
The Green-Eyed Devil (1914)
The Battle of the Sexes (1914)
The Hunchback (1914)
The Quicksands (1914)
Home, Sweet Home (1914)
Judith of Bethulia (1914)
Silent Sandy (1914)
The Escape (1914)
The Rebellion of Kitty Belle (1914)
Lord Chumley (1914)
Man's Enemy (1914)
The Angel of Contention (1914)
The Wife (1914)
The Tear that Burned (1914)
The Folly of Anne (1914)
The Sisters (1914)
His Lesson (1914)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)
The Lost House (1915)
Enoch Arden (1915)
Captain Macklin (1915)
Souls Triumphant (1915)
The Lily and the Rose (1915)
Daphne and the Pirate (1916)
Sold for Marriage (1916)
An Innocent Magdalene (1916)
Intolerance (1916)
Diane of the Follies (1916)
Pathways of Life (1916)
Flirting with Fate (1916)
The Children Pay (1916)
The House Built Upon Sand (1917)
Hearts of the World (1918)
The Great Love (1918)
Liberty Bond Short (1918)
The Greatest Thing in Life (1918)
The Romance of Happy Valley (1918)
Broken Blossoms (1919)
True Heart Susie (1919)
The Greatest Question (1919)
Way Down East (1920)
Remodeling Her Husband (1920) - Director
Orphans of the Storm (1921)
The White Sister (1923)
Romola (1924)
La Boheme (1926)
The Scarlet Letter (1926)
Annie Laurie (1927)
The Enemy (1927)
The Wind (1928)
One Romantic Night (1930)
His Double Life (1933)
Commandos Strike at Dawn (1942)
Tap Man (1943)
Miss Susie Slagle's (1946)
Duel in the Sun (1946) - Academy Award Nomination
Portrait of Jennie (1948)
The Cobweb (1955)
The Night of the Hunter (1955)
Salute to Theaters (1955)
Orders to Kill (1958)
The Unforgiven (1960)
Follow Me, Boys! (1966)
Warning Shot (1966)
The Comedians (1967)
The Comedians in Africa (1967)
Arsenic and Old Lace (1969)
Henri Langlois (1970)
Twin Detectives (1976)
A Wedding (1978)
Thin Ice (1981)
Hobson's Choice (1983)
Hambone and Hillie (1984)
Sweet Liberty (1985)
The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1986)
The Whales of August (1987)
The Birth of a Nation (1915)

Director: D.W. Griffith
Writer: Thomas Dixon Jr.
Release Date: 3 March 1915 (USA)

First film to be shown in the White House (to President Woodrow Wilson). President Woodrow Wilson is famously rumored to have responded to the film with the remark: "It is like writing history with lightning".

When it opened in New York City, ticket prices were $2.00 each, which was considered astronomical at the time. In today's currency, accounting for inflation, that would be about $17 - $20. One million people saw the film within a year after its release.

Because of the racist overtones of the movie, it was banned in several major cities, such as Los Angeles and Chicago.
Among the many film techniques that this movie pioneered were panoramic long shots, iris effects, still shots, night photography, panning shots and the careful staging of battle scenes where hundreds of extras were made to look like thousands. It also employed color tinting for dramatic purposes and creating drama through its own musical score. D.W. Griffith was known for his economical methods of filming. For example: if a mistake was made during a take, rather than calling "Cut!" and beginning the scene over, he would call other actors on-camera to perform a different scene on that particular set, so as to save the setup.

Generally considered to mark the birth of modern American cinema. The film was unprecedented in the scope of its battle scenes, and was accordingly innovative in its use of assistant directors to stage and coordinate the movement of distant extras in the background. Originally presented in two parts, with an intermission.

After this film was released and criticized as being racist, D.W. Griffith was very hurt. He decided to make Intolerance: Love's Struggle Throughout the Ages (1916) as a follow-up, to show how damaging and dangerous people's intolerance can be.
Intolerance: Love's Struggle Throughout the Ages (1916)

Director: D.W. Griffith
Writers:
D.W. Griffith (scenario)
Anita Loos (titles)

During filming of the battle sequences, many of the extras got so into their characters that they caused real injury to each other. At the end of one shooting day, a total of 60 injuries were treated at the production's hospital tent.
The Babylonian orgy sequence alone cost $200,000 when it was shot. That's nearly twice the overall budget of The Birth of a Nation (1915), another D.W. Griffith film and, at the time, the record holder for most expensive picture ever made.

D.W. Griffith invested more than $2 million in this film, an unprecedented amount of money at the time. Unfortunately, it never even came close to earning back its budget--audiences in 1916 were completely unused to seeing films that ran in excess of three hours. Even when it was re-cut and released as two separate features, "The Fall of Babylon" and "The Mother and the Law", it still failed to make money. The massive life-size set of the Great Wall of Babylon, seen in the fourth story, was placed at the corner of Sunset Boulevard and Hollywood Boulevard (in Hollywood, California) when the movie was completed. It became a notable landmark for many years during Hollywood's golden era. It actually stood on the lot of the studio on Prospect Avenue near the Sunset & Hollywood Boulevard junctions in the eastern end of the city. It was the first such exterior set ever built in Hollywood. Falling into disrepair, it was eventually torn down. Years later, this same Babylon set was replicated as the central courtyard design for the new Hollywood & Highland complex in Hollywood, which opened in 2001.

Included among the "1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die", edited by Steven Schneider.
True Heart Susie (1919)

Director: D.W. Griffith
Writer: Marian Fremont (story)

Released under Paramount Pictures’ prestigious Artcraft label. In 1919 Adolph Zukor devised a three-tiered brand system - the Artcraft division for its high-end, A-list product (ones that could command higher roadshow admissions in major cities) and Realart on the opposite end. The middle tier, which comprised the bulk of the studio’s mainstream releases, was the Paramount banner. This quality classification existed for five years.

D.W. Griffith became cinema's first Modernist by trying to continue the traditions of Victorian theater and literature; in attempting to perpetuate the 19th century, he invented the 20th. Nowhere is this paradoxical effect more evident than in TRUE HEART SUSIE, one of his greatest films.

“Do men look for the true heart in women? Or are most of them caught by the net of paint, powder, and suggestive clothes?”

Among the many Peary-listed films Lilian Gish made with D.W. Griffith — including The Birth of a Nation (1915), Hearts of the World (1916), Broken Blossoms (1919), Way Down East (1920), and Orphans of the Storm (1921) — True Heart Susie is the sweetest and least complicated.
It tells the touching tale of a naive country girl (Gish) who genuinely believes that her ambitious yet sincere young neighbor (Harron) is meant to be her future husband, and gives up her beloved cow towards this good cause; Harron's continued oblivion of Gish's feelings — and Gish's shifting reactions (from blind optimism to heartbroken acceptance) — form the emotional backbone of the film, which is ultimately little more than a love triangle involving a deceptive vamp. It's Gish's performance which really elevates the movie above its somewhat predictable material: watching her face as she learns about Harron's engagement, one is reminded once again about her status as silent cinema's most accomplished actress.

Note: The life-story of handsome Harron — who had earlier co-starred in the modern episode of Griffith's Intolerance (1916) — is quite tragic and mysterious; he died from a gunshot wound the year after this film was released, under shadowy circumstances.

Lillian Gish ... True Heart Susie
Robert Harron ... William Jenkins
Wilbur Higby ... William's father
Loyola O'Connor ... Susie's aunt
George Fawcett ... The Stranger
Clarine Seymour ... Bettina Hopkins
Kate Bruce ... Bettina's aunt
Carol Dempster ... Bettina's friend
Raymond Cannon ... Sporty Malone
Hearts of the World (1918)

D. W. GRIFFITH'S
SUPREME TRIUMPH
HEARTS OF THE WORLD

Adolph Lestina... The Grandfather
Josephine Crowell... The Mother

Lillian Gish... The Girl - Marie Stephenson

Robert Harron... The Boy - Douglas Gordon Hamilton
Jack Cosgrave... The Father of the Boy
Kate Bruce... The Mother of the Boy

Ben Alexander... The Boy’s Littlest Brother
Marion Emmons... The Boy’s Other Brother (as M. Emmons)
Francis Marion... The Boy’s Other Brother (as F. Marion)

Dorothy Gish ... The Little Disturber

Robert Anderson... Monsieur Cuckoo

George Fawcett... The Village Carpenter

George Siegmann... Von Strohm
Fay Holderness... The Innkeeper
L. Lowry... A Deaf and Blind Musician
Eugene Pouyet... A Poilu
Anna Mae Walthall ... A French Peasant Girl
Yvette Duvoisin ... A Refugee (as Yvette Duvoison of the Comédie Française)
Herbert Sutch... A French Major
George Nichols... A German Sergeant
Mary Gish... A Refugee Mother (as Mrs. Mary Gish)
Mary Hay... A Dancer

Erich von Stroheim ... A Hun

Noël Coward ... The Man with the Wheelbarrow / A Villager in the Streets (as Noel Coward)
D.W. Griffith filmed some battle scenes during actual battles at the front in France. While he was out near the front trenches scouting locations, his party came under a surprise German artillery barrage. Griffith and his assistant jumped in a nearby ditch, and when the barrage was over they emerged from the ditch to discover that although they were uninjured, a shell had exploded near the ditch, killing the two soldiers acting as their escorts, along with a dozen other soldiers standing nearby.

The movie was commissioned by Great Britain, which hoped that a depiction of WWI would help spur the United States to join the allies. Although D.W. Griffith had the cooperation of the British, French and Belgian governments to film in their territories, his cameraman, G.W. Bitzer, was of German descent and was not allowed in France. Griffith used an army cameraman instead.

Griffith bought footage of the German army off of an Austrian-American officer, Kleinschmit, who had been arrested in the United States for espionage, and incorporated the footage into this film.
Broken Blossoms or The Yellow Man and the Girl (1919)

Director: D.W. Griffith (Oct 20 1919)
Writers:
Thomas Burke (adapted from a story by)
D.W. Griffith (writer)

The film's premiere engagement included a live prologue featuring a dance routine performed by actress Carol Dempster. During Dempster's dance the stage was illuminated by blue and gold footlights. Later, during the screening of the film, a stagehand accidentally switched on those footlights and the movie screen tinted the film in an unusual way. D.W. Griffith, standing in the rear of the auditorium, was so surprised and delighted at the blue and gold-tinted effect that he ordered all copies of the film to be tinted in those colors during certain key sequences.

This movie was originally made for Adolph Zukor at Paramount Pictures. D.W. Griffith bought it from him in order to release it through his new company, United Artists.
Way Down East (September 3 1920 USA)

Lillian Gish ... Anna Moore
Richard Barthelmess ... David Bartlett
Mrs. David Landau ... Anna Moore's Mother
Lowell Sherman ... Lennox Sanderson
Burr McIntosh ... Squire Bartlett
Josephine Bernard ... Mrs. Emma Tremont
Mrs. Morgan Belmont ... Diana Tremont
Patricia Fruen ... Diana's Sister
Florence Short ... The Eccentric Aunt
Kate Bruce ... Mrs. Bartlett
Vivia Ogden ... Martha Perkins
Porter Strong ... Seth Holcomb
George Neville ... Constable Rube Whipple
Edgar Nelson ... Hi Holler
Mary Hay ... Kate Brewster - the Squire's Niece
Creighton Hale ... Professor Sterling
Emily Fitzroy ... Maria Poole - Landlady
Filming Locations: Farmington, Connecticut, USA  
(Ice floe scenes) Mamaroneck, New York, USA White River Junction, Vermont, USA Orient Point, Long Island, New York, USA Fort Lauderdale, Florida, USA

The scenes on the ice floes were not only very dangerous to film, but for Lillian Gish, they had lasting ill effects. Until the day she died, her right hand was somewhat impaired due to the extended filming where her hand was in the icy water. During the filming of the ice floe scenes, a fire had to be built underneath G.W. Bitzer's camera in order to keep it warm enough to run.
According to G.W. Bitzer, D.W. Griffith was frostbitten on one side of his face during the shooting, and it bothered him the rest of his life. While there is a lot of inter-cutting in the editing, the basic ice floe scenes were filmed in White River Junction (Hartford Village), Vermont during the late winter.
Orphans of the Storm (1921)

Director: D.W. Griffith
Writers:
Adolphe d'Ennery (novel)
Eugène Cormon (novel)

D.W. Griffith used this movie as a means of commenting, obliquely, on contemporary politics of his time. He drew parallels between the anarchist mobs that overthrew the French aristocrats, and what he says in opening titles to the film are the present American dangers of succumbing to the kind of "anarchy and Bolshevism" he perceived in the recent Russian Revolution. It is a great historical irony that those Bolsheviks Griffith railed against were quite smitten with the director's incomparable ways of generating film tension in crosscutting as well as his cinematic means of conveying good and evil via sophisticated editing and framing techniques. As the father of film syntax Griffith was an enormous influence on the Soviet filmmakers Sergei M. Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin, who were inspired by many of his films including the anti-Bolshevik Orphans of the Storm (1921).

Lillian Gish was thrilled to be invited to the White House by President Warren G. Harding following the premiere of Orphans of the Storm (1921).

Lillian Gish first suggested D.W. Griffith film the enormously popular play "The Two Orphans," which had been translated into 40 languages, thinking of her sister Dorothy Gish in the role of Henriette. Interestingly, Griffith cast Dorothy as Louise, the passive blind victim, when it was Lillian who was best known for playing helpless heroines. Most who knew her would attest that Dorothy was the more vivacious and strong willed of the two sisters. Lillian had written of her sister in 1927 "She is laughter, even on the cloudy days of life; nothing bothers her or saddens her or concerns her lastingly."

The fountain in the Bel-Air scene was made of marble and filled with cider, because water would not photograph with the sparkle needed to suggest wine.

Included among "The 1001 Movies You Must See Before You Die", edited by Steven Schneider.
For this film, which was to be his last box-office success, Griffith adapted a successful 1874 theatre play 'The Two Orphans', itself an adaptation of the French play 'Les deux orphelines' by Adolphe d'Ennery and Eugène Cormon. Despite the subtitle 'An Epic Film of the French Revolution', the film is not about the French revolution, but follows the story of two young girls at the time of the French Revolution.

Griffith demonstrates again with this film his mastery of the nascent cinematographic language in particular with the quasi-systematic use of different shots, from wide shot to close-up to present each scene from different angles and draw the attention on certain details. The narrative thread is mostly chronological, with cross-cutting between actions of the various characters and flashbacks to replace memories. As often with Griffith (see Intolerance or Way Down East), the suspense is well kept throughout the film and there is a spectacular scene at the end to save the heroin, here a cavalcade through Paris remarkably filmed from different angles, notably with a spectacular tracking shot.

A large part of the charm of the film comes from the acting of the two Gish sisters, who played here together for the last time and it is quite obvious that Dorothy was as gifted as Lilian. Supporting characters are rather archetypal: the good and the bad aristocrat, the good and the bad revolutionaries, the nasty ugly lady and the comical valet. Sets and costumes are very impressive and, combined with well filmed crowd and battle scenes with a large number of extras, keep the viewer's attention focussed despite the length of the film.
Lillian Gish ... Henriette Girard
Dorothy Gish ... Louise Girard
Joseph Schildkraut ... Chevalier de Vaudrey
Frank Losee ... Count de Linieres
Katherine Emmet ... Countess de Linieres
Morgan Wallace ... Marquis de Praille
Lucille La Verne ... Mother Frochard
Sheldon Lewis ... Jacques Frochard
Frank Puglia ... Pierre Frochard
Creighton Hale ... Picard
Monte Blue ... Danton
Sidney Herbert ... Robespierre
Lee Kohlmar ... King Louis XVI
Marcia Harris ... Henriette's Landlady
Adolph Lestina ... Doctor
Kate Bruce ... Sister Genevieve
Flora Finch ... Starving Peasant
Louis Wolheim ... Executioner
Kenny Delmar ... The Chevalier - as a Boy
James Smith ... Dancer
Herbert Sutch ... Meat Carver at Festival
Rose Smith ... Dancer
LILLIAN GISH! What a flood of pleasant memories rushes along at the mere mention of her name! YOU sympathized with her in "The Birth of a Nation." YOU suffered with her in "Hearts of the World." YOU pitied her in "Broken Blossoms." YOU cried over her in "Orphans of the Storm." YOU actually cheered her in "Way Down East." Now when you see her in Henry King's production of "The White Sister" you will be thrilled, captivated, and exalted as never before.

A young woman becomes a nun when she believes her sweetheart has been killed, but things get complicated when he returns alive.

"The White Sister," the picture recently finished by Lillian Gish in Rome. Sorrento and other Italian places, was unfolded last night upon the screen of the Forty-fourth Street Theatre before a most interesting assembly, which included persons prominent in society, distinguished politicians, well-known authors and writers, screen celebrities and heads of the motion picture industry. It seemed an occasion which revealed the standing of the films possibly more than any other photoplay presentation.
The production itself is a notable one, an artistic effort on which the producers seem to have leaned backward to cling to the sterling worth of the picture, which was entirely made in Italy under the direction of Henry King. It was a difficult task to undertake as it is a love story with little or no comedy relief, and one in which the heavy part is taken by a woman. The picturesque surroundings in most of the scenes lend some contrast to the story of a great love between Angela Chiaromonte, played by Lillian Gish, and Captain Giovanni Severi (Ronald Colman). It is a serious, enthralling narrative of a young girl who, believing her fiancé dead, takes the veil as a nun.

A remarkable and successful effort at characterization is made in several instances by the director and the players. The latter actually appear to live the parts they enact on the screen. There is also pictured a beautiful contrast between the lives of the Captain and Angela—the former having a great adventure and the latter living for a time in a modest, quiet way in an Italian town, with the love of Giovanni as a solace.

Despite the fact that this is a story of emotions and tears, Miss Gish's acting is always restrained. She obtains the full effect in every situation, being, as the Italians say, sympatico in all sequences.

Giovanni, it is true, is not brought out in a very good light at the inception of the story, as he has had an affair with the Marchesa di Mola, which he tells her cannot continue. Angela, hated by the Marchesa, falls in love with Giovanni, who immediately reciprocates her affection.
There is a splendid series of scenes showing the élite of that section of the world following the hounds at a hunt. Prince Chiaromonte, Angela's father, is thrown from his horse, and eventually dies. This sequence is a thrilling one as the photographs show the open country and the pack of hounds, with the men and women on their mounts. The Prince had desired to unite his family with the del Ferice family by the marriage of his daughter to Alfredo, but these plans are upset by the stealing and burning of the Prince's will by the Marchesa. So for a brief time the path of love seems free to Giovanni and Angela. Suddenly Giovanni receives orders to take an expedition to Africa. Here there are some realistic scenes of Arabs, the desert and camels. The small band under Giovanni is set upon and, according to the news received in Italy soon afterward, all are slain.

Angela is plunged into a state of hopeless grief by the report of the death of Giovanni. There seems to be no hope and she is taken to a hospital, where the white nuns nurse her.

An artist paints a picture of Giovanni, and Angela is seen patting the head on the painting and kissing the face. Hope abandoned, after talking with Mgr. Saracinesca Angela decides that she wants to do something to help in the world and she becomes a novitiate and finally is "wedded to the Church." The last step precludes her ever giving up the veil, of which she is warned. (Source The New York Times)

Lillian Gish ... Angela Chiaromonte
Ronald Colman ... Capt. Giovanni Severini
Gail Kane ... Marchesa di Mola
J. Barney Sherry ... Monsignor Saracinesca
Charles Lane ... Prince Chiaromonte
Juliette La Violette ... Madame Bernard
Gustavo Serena ... Prof. Ugo Severi (as Signor Serena)
Alfredo Bertone ... Filmore Durand
Roman Ibanez ... Count del Ferice
Alfredo Martinelli ... Alfredo del Ferice
Ida Carloni Talli ... Mother Superior (as Carloni Talli)
Romola (1924)

Director: Henry King
Writers:
George Eliot (novel)
Will M. Ritchey

“Adaptations of novels made up a large proportion of motion pictures in the 20s, as the medium of cinema began to see itself as continually more prestigious and legitimate. The trouble is they were still figuring things out when it came to translating from one narrative form to another. Romola is taken from a novel by the brilliant 19th century author George Elliot, and her work is typically rich in character detail and interwoven subplot. However this movie version pares the story down to a basic melodrama, with a handful of simple characters flitting from one plot point to the next. As if to compensate, the action is peppered with lengthy title cards, which while they preserve little snatches of the original text, break up the flow of visual storytelling.

But all is not lost. The language of images was well developed in Hollywood. Romola’s director is Henry King – not a well-remembered figure, although he ought to be. King’s shots are consistently stylish, and he has a good handling of space and framing. Take for example when Dorothy Gish is abandoned amid the festivities after her sham wedding. We see a close-up of her, distraught, while the dancing revelers around her make a wild, blurry backdrop – far more effective than some expressionistic process shot, because it is realistic as well as evocative of mood. But what was really King's greatest strength at this point was the slow, methodical performing he encouraged from his cast. It is this that really brings out all those layers of character that are missing from the screenplay. Look at the scene in which Lillian Gish gives the ring to her father to examine. The camera is simply held in mid-shot as the old man turns it over in his hands, and so much more comes out of that moment as a result.
And the strength of the mise-en-scene is proved as for some key scenes those pesky intertitles disappear altogether – such as when Powell proposes to Lillian. It's a pity so few directors these days are bold enough to simply performances play out like that.

And this approach really suits star Lillian Gish. After parting ways with her old mentor D.W. Griffith she briefly formed a production company with King and, while it's rarely acknowledged, she did some of her best work with in their handful of pictures together. In an age when overt mugging and gesture were the norm, Gish is beautifully subtle, the emotions drifting across her face like clouds across the sun. The villainous turn from William Powell is also nicely understated. Powell is probably better remembered for the series of jolly father-figures he played in the sound era, but as a young man his thin lips and piercing eyes marked him down a bad guy. But here he refuses to live up to the stereotype, portraying Tito as a villain by his deeds and not by his mannerisms. There are some nice touches from even the smallest parts in Romola, and it is generally very well cast." - Source: IMDB -
Lillian Gish ... Romola
Dorothy Gish ... Tessa
William Powell ... Tito Melema (as William H. Powell)
Ronald Colman ... Carlo Bucellini
Charles Lane ... Baldassar Calvo
Herbert Grimwood ... Savonarola
Bonaventura Ibáñez ... Bardo Bardi
Frank Puglia ... Adolfo Spini
Amelia Summerville ... Brigida
Tina Ceccaci Renaldi ... Monna Ghita
Eduilio Mucci ... Nello
Angela Scatigna ... Bratti
Ugo Uccellini ... Bishop of Nemours
Alfredo Martinelli ... Captain of the Barque
Attilo Deodati ... Tomaso
Lillian Gish learned that her mother had had a stroke in London and her sister, Dorothy Gish, urged her to get there on the first available boat. When Lillian informed director Victor Sjöström of the need to finish the film quickly, he created a shooting schedule that crammed two weeks worth of shooting into three days of non-stop work. The crew worked without complaint so that she could finish the film early and catch the earliest possible train to New York.
Lillian Gish’s puritan costume from this film was at one point housed in The Crocker Museum in Hollywood, the first museum dedicated to props and other artifacts from American films. The museum was started by actor Harry Crocker, circa 1928, and was located on Sunset Blvd.

Lillian Gish ... Hester Prynne
Lars Hanson ... The Reverend
Arthur Dimmesdale
Henry B. Walthall ... Roger Prynne
Karl Dane ... Giles
William H. Tooker ... The Governor
Marcelle Corday ... Mistress Hibbins
Fred Herzog ... The Jailer
Jules Cowles ... The Beadle
Mary Hawes ... Patience
Joyce Coad ... Pearl
James A. Marcus ... A Sea Captain
The Enemy (1927)

Director: Fred Niblo
Writers:
John Colton (titles)
Willis Goldbeck

The play "The Enemy" opened at the Times Square Theater (New York City) on October 20, 1925 and ran for 203 performances.

An incomplete print of this film--missing its last reel--survives in the MGM film library.

New York Times - 1927
Austria and the War.
By MORDAUNT HALL.
Published: December 28, 1927

Hysterical though it is in some of its chapters, the pictorial transcription of Channing Pollock's play, "The Enemy," which was launched last night at the Astor Theatre, is quite a strong though obvious argument, against war. The sufferings caused by the conflict of nations are hammered home with a bludgeon, but, as it flows along, there's no denying the truth of this preaching, not even the glorification of a hardened profiteer.

In this film, the scenes of which are laid in Vienna and, for a while, on the Austro-Russian battlefront, Lillian Gish fills the rôle of Pauli Arndt, whose young husband is taken from her arms the morning after her marriage. Although Miss Gish's acting is on her own familiar lines, she has, as always, that valuable asset of restraint.
Fred Niblo, who was responsible for the film version of "Ben Hur," does not display in his direction any great imagination in the handling of the players nor in the continuity of action. You feel at times fearful that he is going to adopt the methods of King Vidor in "The Big Parade," and when that is not actually done, but merely suggested, you are apt to feel grateful. He also indulges in tantalizing suspense, and where he strikes quite a good idea he sometimes overdoes it and thus loses much of its effect.

Mr. Niblo is rather irritating through his constant flashes of marching feet; his comedy is not especially bright, and some scenes that might be telling are spoiled by the zealousness of the title writer.

Occasionally, however, Mr. Niblo comes to the fore with a realistic glimpse, either of the fighting or of the deprivations suffered by Professor Arndt and his family. He gives an excellent idea of the cheer in the Austrian capital before the Serajevo assassination, and he makes the most of the shock of the declarations of war. It hardly seems necessary, however, to depict such gourmandizing as he shows in one scene to reflect the notion that the characters are enjoying the horn of plenty. As a contrast to this in later episodes, this director dilates upon the satisfied expression of the mother who is suddenly seized with the idea of serving up the parrot in the soup.

The hunger scenes in this subject are bound to bring to mind David W. Griffith's trenchant and artistic picture, "Isn't Life Wonderful," which was at all times well within reasonable limits, even in the matter of the amount of food. Mr. Niblo is invariably tempted to stamp in his pathetic incidents, especially when Pauli finally, after an awful sacrifice, obtains a half bottle of milk for her baby. In the trenches, he pictures the Austrian soldiers exchanging a spoonful of meat for a few cigarettes.
There is nothing particularly subtle about this production. Hokum is Mr. Niblo's standby, and with it he garnishes his story, even to having the young lieutenant, supposed to have been killed, brought back to life. While Mr. Niblo was about it, he might perhaps have had the profiteer, August Behrend, eventually, pay the penalty for his greed. August Behrend, however, is quite cheery at the end, when he appears with baskets of wine and food.

Ralph Forbes gives an efficient performance as Carl Behrend. Neither he nor Miss Gish are responsible for the hysteria of this picture. It is rather Mr. Niblo and the writer of the captions who are guilty of this shrieking. George Fawcett, in the part of August Behrend, does not impress one as an especially flint-hearted old cornerer of food. Karl Dane, one of the trio in "The Big Parade," figures as a minor character. Frank Currier is wonderfully sympathetic as the aged professor, Pauli's father.

The play from which this picture was adapted was presented at the Times Square Theatre in October, 1925, with Fay Bainter in the leading rôle.

THE ENEMY, with Lillian Gish, Ralph Forbes, Ralph Emerson, Frank Currier, George Fawcett, Fritz Ridgeway, John S. Peters, Karl Dane, Polly Moran and Billy Kent Schaefer; adapted from Channing Pollock's play of the same name; directed by Fred Niblo. At the Astor Theatre.
The Wind (1928) - Nov 27 USA

Director: Victor Sjöström
Writers:
Frances Marion (scenario)
Dorothy Scarborough (from the novel by)

It was one of the last silent films released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and is considered one of the greatest silent films.

Lillian Gish came up with the idea of making a film adaptation of the novel of the same name. Irving Thalberg immediately gave her permission to do so. Gish recalled wanting Lars Hanson as her leading man, she also assigned Victor Sjöström as the director herself. Sjöström directed Gish before in the 1926 movie The Scarlet Letter.

The Wind is considered to be a classic, and one of Gish's most brilliant performances. It is the last silent film starring Gish, the last directed by Sjöstrom, and the last major silent released by MGM. At its time it was simultaneously panned and hailed by American critics, and its late release at the dawn of the sound era contributed to a net loss for the production. However, the film had significant critical and considerable commercial success in Europe.
The British newspaper, The Guardian, in 1999 reviewed the work of director Victor Sjöström and they wrote, "And in America his three most famous works - He Who Gets Slapped (1924), The Scarlet Letter (1926) and The Wind (1928) - each dealt with human suffering. The Wind is almost certainly the best - a silent classic, revived in recent years by producer/director Kevin Brownlow with a Carl Davis score, which gave the great Lillian Gish one of the finest parts of her career...Sjöstrom treats the inevitable clash between Letty and her new surroundings with considerable realism and detail, allowing Gish as much leeway as possible to develop her performance. The entire film was shot in the Mojave Desert under conditions of great hardship and difficulty and this was probably the first 'Western' that tried for truth as well as dramatic poetry. One of its masterstrokes, which looks far less self-conscious than any description of it may seem, is the moment when Letty hallucinates in terror at the sight of the partially buried body of her attacker."

The wind in the film was created by the propellers of eight aircraft stationed on location in the Mojave Desert. The airplane propellers blowing hot air, sand and smoke were so dangerous that crew members were forced to wear long-sleeved clothing, eye goggles, bandannas around their necks and greasepaint on their faces whenever the machines were being run.
The average temperature for the location and season where the movie was filmed is between 90-105 and the record highs are around 115 degrees Fahrenheit. During filming, high temperatures made life miserable for both cast and crew. The intense heat caused the film stock to warp, and it had to be packed in ice to remain intact. Lillian Gish claimed that she touched an outside door handle, and was so severely burned that a small part of her palm’s flesh was scalded off.

Lillian Gish ... Letty
Lars Hanson ... Lige
Montagu Love ... Roddy
Dorothy Cumming ... Cora
Edward Earle ... Beverly
William Orlamond ... Sourdough
Carmencita Johnson ... Cora's Child
Leon Janney ... Cora's Child (as Laon Ramon)
Billy Kent Schaefer ... Cora's Child
One Romantic Night (1930)

Director: Paul L. Stein
Writers:
Maxwell Anderson (adaptation)
Melville Baker (adaptation)
3 May 1930 (USA)

Lillian Gish ... Princess Alexandra
Rod La Rocque ... Prince Albert
Conrad Nagel ... Dr. Nicholas Haller
Marie Dressler ... Princess Beatrice
O.P. Heggie ... Father Benedict
Albert Conti ... Count Lutzen
Edgar Norton ... Colonel Wunderlich
Billie Bennett ... Princess Symphorosa
Philippe De Lacy ... Prince George
Byron Sage ... Prince Arsene
Barbara Leonard ... Mitzi
This film is one of over 200 titles in the list of independent feature films made available for television presentation by Advance Television Pictures announced in Motion Picture Herald 4 April 1942. At this time, television broadcasting was in its infancy, almost totally curtailed by the advent of World War II, and would not continue to develop until 1945-1946. Because of poor documentation (feature films were often not identified by title in conventional sources) no record has yet been found of its initial television broadcast. It's earliest documented telecast was Wednesday 13 July 1949 on WJZ, New York City.

"One Romantic Night" is a highly satisfactory entertainment, even though it has lost some of its literary value in the studio transcription. Also, the acting of Conrad Nagel as the Tutor and Rod La Rocque as the Prince does not measure up to that of Basil Rathbone and Philip Merivale, who were beheld in these respective roles on the stage. A silent picture was produced of this play in 1925 and its chief claim to fame was the direction of Dimitri Buchowetzki and the excellent portrayal of the Prince of Adolphe Menjou. Besides the sensitive and gracious interpretation of Miss Gish, there is a splendid performance by Marie Dressler, who creates no end of fun in the part of Princess Alexandra's mother, Princess Beatrice. The venerable Father Hyacinth's name is changed in the film to Father Benedict, a part that is undertaken by O. P. Heggie.
This screen diversion was directed by Paul Stein, who has succeeded in making the action considerably clearer than it was in the mute offspring. Most of the photography is beyond reproach, but in a few scenes it is somewhat flat, due to the background being of the same shade as gowns worn by Miss Gish and Miss Dressler." - NY Times -
Duel in the Sun (1946)

Director: King Vidor
Writers:
David O. Selznick (screenplay)
Niven Busch (a novel by)
Nominated for 2 Oscars.

David O. Selznick reportedly spent $2,000,000.00, an unheard of sum in 1946, on the promotion of this film.

Adjusted for inflation in 2013, the film's US box office gross of $20,408,163 would be $410,714,300.

Martin Scorsese has said that the movie that influenced him most was this one.

Duel in the Sun was directed by King Vidor, a much more talented and personal director than Victor Fleming was on Gone With the Wind. Vidor scored in the silent era with films like The Jack Knife Man (1920), Tol'able David (1921), The Big Parade (1925), and his masterpiece, The Crowd (1928). Though he continued working steadily, he never regained the personal vision he imbued on those films. Along with Duel in the Sun, he was resigned to making camp films like The Fountainhead (1949), War and Peace (1956), and Solomon and Sheba (1959). However, as much as he was pestered and manipulated by Selznick, Vidor ultimately gives Duel in the Sun more immediacy than Gone With the Wind ever had.