



## Laurent Cantet (French Film Directors MUP)

*Martin O'Shaughnessy*

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Laurent Cantet is one of France's leading contemporary directors. He probes the evolution and fault-lines of contemporary society, from the home to the workplace and from the Republican school to globalised consumption more acutely than perhaps any other French film-maker. His films always put his characters on the spot, challenging their assumptions about the world they live in. But, they also demand that the spectator rethink their own position in relation to what they are seeing. This is what makes Cantet such an important film-maker.

Written by Martin O'Shaughnessy, a leading specialist on French film in general and political cinema in particular, this is the first book-length study of Cantet's work in English. It explores his unique working 'method,' and discusses his very particular way of constructing films at the uneasy interface of the individual, the group and the broader social context. It goes on to show how the roots of his well-known later films can be found in his little studied early works. It then explores all his major fictions from *Ressources humaines* to the recent *Foxfire*, combining careful close analysis with attention to broader cinematic, social and political contexts.

The book takes a particular interest in how Cantet's work helps us rethink the possibilities and limits of political cinema in a context in which old resistances have fallen silent and new forms of protest are only emergent. It will appeal to all those with an interest in French and European film as well as those who study contemporary France.

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