



Cinema of Anxiety: A Psychoanalysis of Italian Neorealism

Vincent F. Rocchio

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The "new" realism of Italian cinema after World War II represented and in many ways attempted to contain the turmoil of a society struggling to rid itself of Fascism while fighting off the threat of radical egalitarianism at the same time. In this boldly revisionist book, Vincent F. Rocchio combines Lacanian psychoanalysis with narratology and Marxist critical theory to examine the previously neglected relationship between Neorealist films and the historical spectators they address.

Rocchio builds his analysis around case studies of the films *Rome: Open City*, *Bicycle Thieves*, *La Terra Trema*, *Bitter Rice*, and *Senso*. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, he challenges the traditional understanding of Neorealism as a progressive cinema and instead reveals the anxieties it encodes: a society in political turmoil, an economic system in collapse, and a national cinema in ruins; while war, occupation, collaboration, and retaliation remain a part of everyday life.

These case studies demonstrate how Lacanian psychoanalysis can play a key role in analyzing the structure of cinematic discourse and its strategies of containment. As one of the first books outside of feminist film theory to bring the ideas of Lacan to theories of cinema, this book offers innovative methods that reinvigorate film analysis. Clear and detailed insights into both Italian culture and the films under investigation will make this engaging reading for anyone interested in film and cultural studies.

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