

Italian Film

- ▶ Twenties – lackluster
 - industry devastated by war
 - Influence of fascism (1922)
- ▶ Thirties – Under fascist control
 - Combination of propaganda and entertainment
 - So-called white telephone films
 - *Mother Earth* (Alessandro Blasetti 1931)
- ▶ Forties Neo-realism
 - *Ossessione* (Luchino Visconti 1942)
 - ▶ Moving camera
 - ▶ Long take shooting
 - ▶ Blunt and gritty prose
 - ▶ Desperation in contemporary Italy
 - *Rome: Open City* (Roberto Rossellini 1946)
 - *The Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica)
 - Cesare Cavattini

Precepts of Neorealism

- Show things as they are not as we wish them to be
- Use facts rather than fiction
- Depict common man not heroes
- Reveal the everyday not the exceptional
- Show man's relationship to his real society rather than his romantic dreams

He above part of the credo championed by
Zavattini

Themes of neorealism

- Social issues
 - End of war devastation
 - Poverty of lower classes
 - Unfeeling nature of bureaucracy
- Common man
 - Workers
 - Unprofessional actors
- Anti-fascist
 - Left oriented movement
 - Opposed by centrist to right government

Open City

- Roma città aperta (more place specific title)
- Roberto Rossellini
- Film of Italian partisans in WWII
- Mix of neorealism and melodrama

The Bicycle Thief

- Ladri di biciclette (*The Bicycle Thieves*)
- Vittorio de Sica
- All non professional actors
- Too critical for right
- Not critical enough for left

Legacy of Neorealism

- Brief movement (1945-1951)
- Influenced films of Third World Cinema
- Non glossy productions
- Non professional actors
- Interest in social conditions not entertainment
- Gave name of a style of unadorned filmmaking