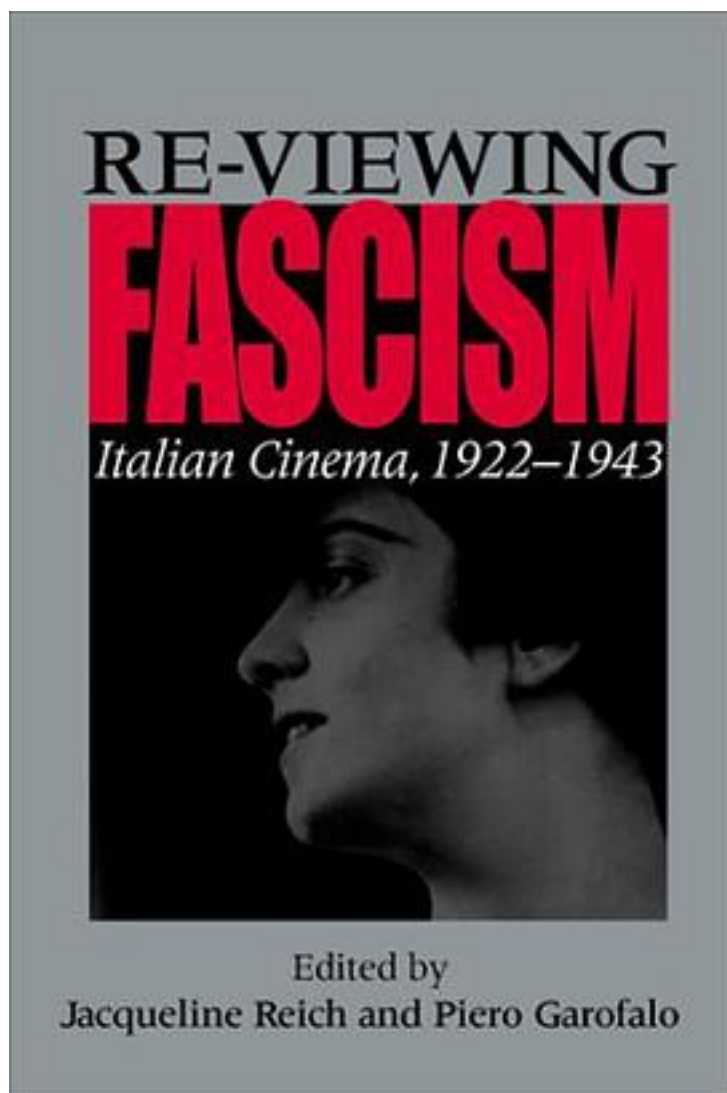


Re-viewing Fascism



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When Benito Mussolini proclaimed that "Cinema is the strongest weapon," he was only telling half the story. In reality, very few feature films during the Fascist period can be labelled as propaganda. If not propaganda, what were most films like? Rather than soldiers, schoolgirls dominated the screen; the boudoir, not the battlefield, was the setting of choice. In fact, many of these so-called "white telephone" films openly contradicted Fascist ideology. The first English-language anthology devoted to this subject, "Re-viewing Fascism" examines just how many films failed as "weapons" in creating cultural consensus and instead came to reflect the complexities and contradictions of Fascist culture. Revealed is a period of over twenty years worth of films ripe with ambiguity due to, as several contributors show, the influential models of American, Soviet and Hungarian cinema and the rapid growth of consumer culture. The volume also examines the connection between cinema of the Fascist period and neo-realism - ties that many scholars previously had denied in an attempt to view Fascism as an unfortunate deviation in Italian history. The post-war directors Luchino Visconti, Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio de Sica all had important roots in the Fascist era, as did the Venice Film Festival. And while government censorship was an important factor, it did not prevent frank depictions of sexuality and representations of men and women that challenged official gender policies. "Re-viewing Fascism" brings together scholars from different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds as it offers an engaging and innovative look into Italian cinema, Fascist culture and society.

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