



American Cinema of the 1940s: Themes and Variations (Screen Decades: American Culture/American Cinema)

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The 1940s was a watershed decade for American cinema and the nation. Shaking off the grim legacy of the Depression, Hollywood launched an unprecedented wave of production, generating some of its most memorable classics, including *Citizen Kane*, *Rebecca*, *The Lady Eve*, *Sergeant York*, and *How Green Was My Valley*. In 1942, Hollywood joined the national war effort with a vengeance, creating a series of patriotic and escapist films, such as *Casablanca*, *Mrs. Miniver*, *The Road to Morocco*, and *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

With the end of the war, returning GIs faced a new America, in which the country had been transformed overnight. Film noir reflected a new public mood of pessimism and paranoia, in such classic films of betrayal and conflict as *Kiss of Death*, *Force of Evil*, *Caught*, and *Apology for Murder*, depicting a poisonous universe of femme fatales, crooked lawyers, and corrupt politicians.

With the threat of the atom bomb lurking in the background and the beginnings of the Hollywood Blacklist, the 1940s was a decade of crisis and change. Featuring essays by a group of respected film scholars and historians, *American Cinema of the 1940s* brings this dynamic and turbulent decade to life. Illustrated with many rare stills and filled with provocative insights, the volume will appeal to students, teachers, and to all those interested in cultural history and American film of the twentieth century.

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