



Understanding Film: Marxist Perspectives

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"Marxism and Film share at least one thing in common: they are both interested in the masses." From the introduction Film remains one of the most dominant cultural forms in the world today. Crossing classes and cultures, it permeates many aspects of our consciousness. In film, perhaps more than any other medium, we can read the politics of time and place, past and present. The history of Marxism has intersected with film in many ways and this book is a timely reminder of the fruits of that intersection, in film theory and film practice. Marxist film theory returns to film studies some of the key concepts which make possible a truly radical, political understanding of the medium and its place both within capitalism and against it. This book shows how questions of ideology, technology and industry must be situated in relation to class - a category which academia is distinctly uncomfortable with. It explores the work of some of the key theorists who have influenced our understanding of film, such as Adorno, Althusser, Benjamin, Brecht, Gramsci, Jameson and others. It shows how films must be situated in their social and historical contexts, whether Hollywood, Russian, Cuban, Chinese or North Korean cinema. The authors explore the political contradictions and tensions within dominant cinema and discuss how Marxist filmmakers have pushed the medium in new and exciting directions.

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