



American Cinema of the 1950s: Themes and Variations (Screen Decades: American Culture/American Cinema)

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From cold war hysteria and rampant anticommunist witch hunts to the lure of suburbia, television, and the new consumerism, the 1950s was a decade of sensational commercial possibility coupled with dark nuclear fears and conformist politics. Amid this amalgamation of social, political, and cultural conditions, Hollywood was under siege: from the Justice Department, which pressed for big film companies to divest themselves of their theater holdings; from the middleclass, whose retreat to family entertainment inside the home drastically decreased the filmgoing audience; and from the House Un-American Activities Committee, which was attempting to purge the country of dissenting political views. In this difficult context, however, some of the most talented filmmakers of all time, including John Ford, Alfred Hitchcock, Vincente Minnelli, Nicholas Ray, and Billy Wilder produced some of their most remarkable work.

Bringing together original essays by ten respected scholars in the field, *American Cinema of the 1950s* explores the impact of the cultural environment of this decade on film, and the impact of film on the American cultural milieu. Contributors examine the signature films of the decade, including *From Here to Eternity*, *Sunset Blvd.*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *Shane*, *Rear Window*, and *Rebel Without a Cause*, as well as lesser-known but equally compelling films, such as *Dial 1119*, *Mystery Street*, *Suddenly*, *Summer Stock*, *The Last Hunt*, and many others.

Provocative, engaging, and accessible to general readers as well as scholars, this volume provides a unique lens through which to view the links between film and the prevailing social and historical events of the decade.

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