

# Ideology

## Hannah Mitchell

*The primary author is the individual who drafted the first version of this section; a section that could have been modified since it was originally published.*



Every person, group, or culture has their own ideologies, or group of ideas, that express the social needs they may have. Film, among other types of media, is a great way to express ideologies that filmmakers want to share with the world. Sometimes, this means adding a political aspect to the film that may or may not be prominent. Nearly every film has at least an implied ideology, because the director has their own sense of what is right and wrong. Based on the director's ideology, the film tells the audience either implicitly or explicitly which way to behave based on the characters' actions. Films may also be neutral, due to their main purpose being to entertain rather than persuade the audience one way or another. It is important as an audience member to recognize ideologies in film, because often they tell you what the director is really trying to say.

The main type of ideology in film that is used is implicit. Implicit ideology films are where the protagonist and antagonist represent conflicting ideologies. But, ideology is not a huge focus of the film. It represents the world we know that is diverse and full of different value systems.

Explicit ideology films are made to persuade the audience to think a certain way. Westerns or Patriotic films are often associated with being more explicit in terms of ideology because there is a clear perspective that the director wants the audience to take away with them at the end of the film.

Ideologies in film help expose audiences to a broad range of beliefs and value systems. They challenge the audience to think about how they feel, and often attempt to persuade moviegoers to feel a certain way. Incorporating ideology in film gives the director a chance to speak without speaking themselves and also helps to make the story rich with multiple perspectives when used to its advantage.

Theorists such as Cesare Zavattini and Siegfried Kracauer believed that cinema is photography but expanded; allowing the filmmaker to capture the real world around them to share with audiences. These theorists fall into the category of realism and their ideas led to the Italian neorealist movement. This movement combined ideological and stylistic elements to create films that stated "this is the way things are."



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Photo Credit: The final speech in [The Great Dictator \(1941\)](#) explicitly states the ideology of the film.

Ideological characteristics of the Italian neorealist movement included five major themes. One being the "new democratic spirit" that concentrated on the importance of the members of the working class. Other ideologies were a nonjudgmental point of view, an emphasis on the fascist past in Italy, and the aftermath of war, a blend of Christian and Marxist humanism theories, and a concentration on the emotional aspect of the story rather than abstract ideas. These ideologies can be seen in movies such as [The Bicycle Thief](#) (1948). This film focuses heavily on a working class laborer who was previously unemployed and had no choice but to accept the job. This film heavily relies on the aftermath of the fascist government, since the main storylines relate to poverty, devastation in the aftermath of war, and unemployment. But, ideologies are not the only aspect of these films that makes them what they are. The technical elements are equally as important.

Stylistic elements in neorealist films are loose storylines that evolve realistically from the situation of the characters, documentary style shots, the use of real locations, nonprofessional actors in the leading roles, conversational speech between characters instead of literary dialogue, and simple editing that results in an almost style-less style. All of these stylistic elements tie together to form stories that lack structure and favor a natural course of events, with artistry that is not showy but rather similar to documentary type films.

Both stylistic and ideological aspects of Italian neorealist films lead to the end result of films that aim to show the audience a portrayal of real life that mimics the truth in the filmmaker's world.



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