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| **Vittorio De Sica** |
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| [Enter an **abstract** for your article] |
| Vittorio De Sica(Vittorio Domenico Stanislao Gaetano Sorano De Sica. 7 July 1901, Sora –13 November 1974, Neuilly-sur-Seine) was an Italian theatre and film actor, director, and screenwriter. He is considered one of the fathers of Italian Neorealism and of the Commedia all'italiana [Italian-style comedy], the latter being an Italian film genre that was in vogue between the 1950s and the 1970s, which, taking Neorealism as its starting point, ironically – and sometimes bitterly – reflected the evolution of Italian society. De Sica’s career began as a theatre actor in the 1920s, and almost ten years later on the big screen.  De Sica started off as a film director in the 1940s with *Maddalena… zero in condotta* (1940), which recalls the cinema of *telefoni bianchi* (‘white telephones,’ taking the name from sets in the art deco style), made in Italy during the 1930s in imitation of contemporary American comedies. In the same year De Sica made, along with Giuseppe Amato, *Rose scarlatte* (1940), the story of a woman being courted by a mysterious admirer who is actually her husband. In the following years he directed *Teresa venerdì* (1941), based on a foundling girl who falls in love with the director of the orphanage, and *Un garibaldino al convento* (1942), a hilarious historical story taking place during Garibaldi’s epoch. In 1943 with *I bambini ci guardano* (which is considered a film precursor of Neorealism) as well as the 1945 film *La porta del cielo*, De Sica officially collaborated with the screenwriter Cesare Zavattini. This experience gave birth to the extraordinarily creative partnership that would lead to the famous neorealist tetralogy: *Sciuscià* (1946), *Ladri di biciclette* (1948), *Miracolo a Milano* (1951), and *Umberto D.* (1952). *Sciuscià*, considered the third neorealist masterpiece after Rossellini’s *Rome Open City* (1945) and *Paisan* (1946), tells the tragic story of two shoeshine boys who, in order to buy a white horse, get involved in a robbery and end up in a reformatory. The film was a commercial failure in Italy, but it received the Oscar for the Best Foreign Film in 1948. *Ladri di Bicliclette*, based on the novel by Luigi Bartolini (1946), is the story of Antonio Ricci (played by Lamberto Maggiorani), an unemployed family man who finds a job as a municipal billsticker and whose bicycle, indispensable for the job, is stolen. For this movie, De Sica won a second Oscar for *Best Foreign Film*. However, with *Miracolo a Milano*, a story of an orphan boy that dreams an imaginary world, winner of the *Cannes Palm D’Or*, De Sica moved slightly away from the neorealist path, mixing fable with realistic elements. *Umberto D.* – a masterpiece on the themes of old age and loneliness, and dedicated to De Sica’s father – is considered to be the last De Sica neorealist film. After *Umberto D*., the De Sica-Zavattini partnership ended briefly. De Sica shot *Stazione Termini* (1953) and the episodic film *L’Oro di Napoli*, but he and Zavattini later returned to work together on two realist pieces: *Il tetto* (1956), the story of a young married couple unable to find a house who decide to build one in one night, and *La ciociara* (1960), an adaptation of Alberto Moravia’s novel of the same title with Sofia Loren, who won the Oscar for Best Actress. They also worked together on the surrealist film *Il giudizio universale* (1961), as well as *I* *Sequestrati di Altona* (1962), which was based on a Sartre's drama and starred Sofia Loren. Sofia Loren also acted in De Sica’s episode ‘La riffa’ in the collective film *Boccaccio '70* (1962), as well as in the films *Ieri, oggi, domani* (1963) (alongside Marcello Mastroianni), *Matrimonio all'italiana* (1964) (De Sica’s third Oscar), and *I Girasoli* (1970). In 1970, De Sica obtained his fourth Oscar with the film transposition of Giorgio Bassani's novel, *Il Giardino dei Finzi-Contini*, a drama about the persecution of a Jewish family in Ferrara during the fascist period. The last film De Sica directed was an adaptation of Luigi Pirandello’s *Il viaggio* (1974), which again starred Sophia Loren. De Sica died in Neuilly (France) on 13 November 1974 following lung surgery. |
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