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| **Umberto D. (1952)** |
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| *Umberto D*. is a film by Vittorio De Sica, which is often said to mark the end of the Italian neorealist film movement. Its modernism is expressed through its hybridity, unusual optics and changing points of view. |
| *Umberto D*. is a film by Vittorio De Sica, which is often said to mark the end of the Italian neorealist film movement. Its modernism is expressed through its hybridity, unusual optics and changing points of view. Dedicated to the political, economic and moral rebuilding of Italy in the postwar period, neorealist films radically broke with earlier cinematic codes, emphasising on-location shooting, unobtrusive editing, nonprofessional actors and simple everyday narratives.  The film follows Umberto D., a retired man who is threatened with eviction because of his failure to pay rent. He fakes illness, is hospitalised and returns to find his bedroom destroyed and his dog missing. Umberto contemplates suicide, but decides against it because of his dog. Released towards the end of the movement, *Umberto D*. represents a more heterogeneous filmic approach through its use of obtrusive camerawork, subjective viewpoints and meta-cinematic moments. While the first neorealist film, *Roma città aperta* (*Rome Open City*, 1945) by Roberto Rossellini, reflected solidarity and hope for a promising new social order, *Umberto D.* represents the failure of these hopes as it depicts characters who remain disconnected and unable to understand one another. At the same time, the film comments on, refers to, and utilises other filmic styles such as melodrama and other media including *fumetti,* or ‘photonovels’. Since socio-political critique is filtered through popular art forms and subjective rather than objective neorealist aesthetics, the film suggests that the ethical and political goals of the neorealist movement can be achieved through other cinematic modes. |
| Further reading:  (Bondanella)  (Marcus)  (Young) |