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Study Guide



fresh film

Stolen Children

Gianni Amelio, Italy/France, 1992, 112 mins

Issues and Themes

Performance

- Amelio has used non-actors for the parts of the brother and sister. Discuss the reasons why filmmakers sometimes prefer to use non-professional actors.
- One of the themes of the film is the loss of innocence namely, though not exclusively, as a consequence of the issue of prostitution. However, during the making of the film, Amelio ensured that neither of the children who played the protagonists ever became aware of this element. Was he right to do this and do you think this has hindered or aided their performances ?

Genre And Style

- Generically, *The Stolen Children* is a road movie. Do you think this film is typical of its genre ?
- Is the road movie format appropriate to the concerns of the film ?
- Does the film owe more to this genre or to the stylistic tradition of neorealism ?

History

- Neorealism is a film movement associated with a very specific past chapter in Italy's history, and yet Amelio invokes the style in his contemporary film of 1992.
- Explore the possible reasons why the director felt it appropriate to utilise a form which had currency in the 40s and 50s.

Ideology

- The director is presenting the audience with certain events and issues, some of which are potentially controversial or emotive.
- How is the subject matter presented, what are we being asked to think or believe ? What stylistic or narrative devices are being used to achieve this ?

Further Reading

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art : An Introduction*, New York: McGraw - Hill Inc, 1979 (1993).
Pam Cook (ed.), *The Cinema Book*, London: BFI, 1985 (1995).
Pierre Sorlin, *European Cinemas, European Societies, 1939 - 1990*: Routledge, 1991.

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