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## IL GRIDO

ITALIAN (1957). *Title Translation: "THE OUTCRY."* A Co-Production of S.P.A. CINEMATOGRAFICA and ROBERT ALEXANDER PRODUCTIONS. Released in the U.S. by ASTOR PICTURES. Producer: FRANCO CANCELLIERI. Director: MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI. Screenplay: MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI, ELIO BARTOLINI and ENNIO DE CONCINI; Based on a Story by MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI. Photography: GIANNI DI VENANZO. Music: GIOVANNI FUSCO. Art Direction: FRANCO FONTANA. Editor: ERALDO DA ROMA. Sound: VITTORIO TRENTINO. Asst. Director: LUIGI VANZI. English Subtitles. 115 Mins.

Aldo . . . . . STEVE COCHRAN  
Irma . . . . . ALIDA VALLI  
Elvia . . . . . BETSY BLAIR  
Virginia . . . . . DORIAN GRAY  
Andreina . . . . . LYN SHAW  
Edera . . . . . GABRIELLA PALLOTTI  
Rosina . . . . . MIRNA GIRARDI  
Virginia's Father . . . . . GUERRINO CAMPANILLI  
Edera's Fiance . . . . . CAETANO MATTEUCCI  
Old Fisherman . . . . . PIETRO CORVELATTI

### Synopsis

For seven years Aldo, a laborer in a sugar refinery in a small Italian town, has been living with his mistress Irma and their small daughter. When word arrives that Irma's husband has died, Aldo announces that they will marry immediately and legitimize their child. But Irma rejects him and chooses another man instead. Distraught and disillusioned, Aldo takes his daughter and sets out to find a new meaning in life. His wanderings through the Po Valley lead him to three other women — Elvia, a former girl friend, now a forlorn seamstress; Virginia, an independent woman who runs a roadside service station; and Andreina, a prostitute as lost and desolate as himself. After sending his daughter back to her mother, he continues his search but, haunted by his memories of Irma, he eventually returns to his village. The town is about to be demolished to make way for a jet airfield and Irma is contentedly living a new and better life. Filled with despair, Aldo climbs to the top of the refinery where he once worked. Irma follows him and sees him jump — or fall — to his death.

### Critique

THE N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE. "*Il Grido* (The Outcry) is a 1957 film by Michelangelo Antonioni, that pre-dates his *L'Avventura* and *La Notte*. Those characteristics of style that in the later films have made Antonioni so impressive to his followers are already visible in this picture. . . . As usual the fatalistic calm of Antonioni's protagonist, like a man throwing himself into Vesuvius with his hands in his pockets, impregnates the whole mood of the picture. No matter what is happening on screen, an overbearing sense of misery inhabits not only the man but the entire drizzling countryside through which he travels. . . . Antonioni's workman-hero may not be intellectually as subtle as the men in the director's later pictures but he is just as subtle emotionally. Antonioni is a scholar of loneliness — a sense of isolation makes everything as sodden as a mattress left out in the rain. No amount of seeking elsewhere can repair for his hero the rip that his mistress has made in his spirit. Still, within this context of misery there are in parenthesis, as it

were, sudden bursts of insight into all sorts of people, the old man who sneaks wine out of the cupboard whenever his daughter isn't looking and generally pursues a course of stubborn rebellion against everything around him, or the girl whose violent recognition of her own hunger makes Cochran face his." *Paul V. Beckley (10/23/62).*

TIME. "*Il Grido* is the rough draft of a masterpiece. In it Michelangelo Antonioni mines and examines the material that he later elaborated in *L'Avventura*, his sublime lament for the living dead. . . . Technically, the film is not impressive. The views of the Po Valley, wide and still and parqueted with poplars, silver the screen like scenes from the hand of Ruisdael; but the script is often awkward and the acting consistently crude. Yet the picture is a moving experience. *Il Grido* means The Cry, and the cry comes from the heart. With it, Antonioni opens the aorta of his talent and releases the cold grey mainstream of his feeling, the chilling theme of all his art: that modern man has somehow lost the meaning of his life, that God alone knows when he will find it again, and that God may not exist." (11/16/62).



COCHRAN

THE N.Y. TIMES. "Italy's noted writer and director, Michelangelo Antonioni, whose elliptical, mystifying but often engrossing approach in such dramas as *L'Avventura* and *La Notte* has made him the darling of the avant-garde, illustrates that these films were the natural outgrowth of *Il Grido*. This tragic search of a man for a lost love is as realistically bereft of hope as its predecessors. But grey and cheerless as the lower Po Valley in which it was filmed, *Il Grido* is nevertheless a fairly lucid story that puts no undue strain on a viewer's imagination or intellect. . . . Unlike the later films, Mr. Antonioni is focusing on the lower classes in *Il Grido*, but he is again seeing life through a glass darkly, and his outlook is dismal and depressed. One is made to feel that Mr. Antonioni is not interested in explanations so much as

in character and situations. In *Il Grido* there is no dearth of either... The fade-out, abrupt and somehow inexplicable, is nevertheless in keeping with the somber proceedings that lead up to it. Steve Cochran is remarkably sensitive in the role of the wanderer seeking surcease from the pangs of love. Although he is speaking Italian here, the synchronization is faulty and distracting, as it is in the case of Betsy Blair, who quietly does well by the role of an ex-sweetheart. Alida Valli is excellent as the tortured light of his life. She conveys her pain, despair and emotional conflict in sharp, convincing style... The English subtitles help in literal translation of the dialogue, but they do not indicate the director's reasons for underlying the miseries. An observer is left to his own interpretations of Mr. Antonioni's sequences — such as the inclusion of a farmer's revolt. All that remains is simply an interesting, sometimes arresting slice of life at the lower depths." *A.H. Weiler (10/23/62).*

SATURDAY REVIEW. "An early Antonioni film, *Il Grido*, has found its way here after a five-year delay, caused no doubt by its inexplicable failure when shown in Italy... The by now familiar Antonioni theme emerges as we see the bewildered hero, played by Steve Cochran, who is astonishingly good, presumably torn apart by his inability to fit himself into his time, make the final gesture of despair. But Antonioni has remorselessly, at the end, tied the character to his own need for statement, and a less drastic ending might have been more believable. The style, by the way, is closer to conventional neo-realism, in that the people are shown with more warmth and, sometimes, humor. And *Il Grido* does make it clear that in 1957 Antonioni was already the most sensitive of Italian directors." *Hollis Alpert (11/3/62).*

THE NEW REPUBLIC. "*Il Grido*, made in 1957, Antonioni's last film before his trilogy [*L'Avventura, The Night, Eclipse*], was released recently and offers substantial comparisons... It is a meaty but relatively unrefined film. There is little in it of what we would now call Antonioni's style. (Chiefly a scene where the daughter wanders through a group of asylum inmates who have been taken out for a walk.) But two points about it are closely related to his subsequent work. First, it begins with a woman leaving a man, as do all the films in the trilogy. In *L'Avventura* and *Eclipse*, the parting is literal; in *The Night* the wife has figuratively left her husband. Second, it is a chronicle of a human being looking for a modus vivendi in a hostile world. In *Il Grido* the story, emotionally impelled, gathers social-political weight and includes some dollops of propaganda. (The old man teaching the child the *Internationale*, the peasants' demonstration against the air base.) In the trilogy Antonioni has moved inward; one may infer that he no longer sees solutions in dogma of any kind." *Stanley Kauffmann (12/29/62).*

VARIETY. "This slow-paced filmization of an interesting story is a difficult film to appraise as a commercial entry... Cochran is excellent in the lead as are Valli, Lyn Shaw and Betsy Blair.

A standout thespic job is turned in by Dorian Gray as one of his wayside loves. Antonioni's pace is often obsessively slow in rendering the grey, depressing setting and life in his native Po Valley countryside, but it contains many telling slices of life. He has had a top-drawer assist from lenser Gianni Di Venanzo. Other technical credits are excellent." *'Hawk' (Venice Film Festival—9/25/57).*