



The Apartment Plot: Urban Living in American Film and Popular Culture, 1945 to 1975

Pamela Robertson Wojcik

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Rethinking the significance of films including *Pillow Talk*, *Rear Window*, and *The Seven Year Itch*, Pamela Robertson Wojcik examines the popularity of the “apartment plot,” her term for stories in which the apartment functions as a central narrative device. From the baby boom years into the 1970s, the apartment plot was not only key to films; it also surfaced in TV shows, Broadway plays, literature, and comic strips, from *The Honeymooners* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* to *Subways are for Sleeping* and *Apartment 3-G*. By identifying the apartment plot as a film genre, Wojcik reveals affinities between movies generally viewed as belonging to such distinct genres as film noir, romantic comedy, and melodrama. She analyzes the apartment plot as part of a mid-twentieth-century urban discourse, showing how it offers a vision of home centered on values of community, visibility, contact, mobility, impermanence, and porousness that contrasts with views of home as private, stable, and family-based. Wojcik suggests that the apartment plot presents a philosophy of urbanism related to the theories of Jane Jacobs and Henri Lefebvre. Urban apartments were important spaces for negotiating gender, sexuality, race, and class in mid-twentieth-century America.

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