This essay aims to investigate Alberto Moravia’s novel *L’uomo che guarda* (1985) through a psychoanalytic understanding of desire, specifically employed as an interpretive device. By primarily speaking of desire from a Lacanian perspective, I will focus in particular on Massimo Recalcati’s further elaborations of Lacan's theory, with special regard to his notion of 'hyper-modernity'. At the same time, by attempting a structural analysis of the novel, I will interpret desire as a drive that shape and organize the plot, following Peter Brook’s seminal work *Reading for the plot*.
My reading allows therefore to see desire as an interpretive device reassessing Moravia's novel in both thematic and structural terms. More specifically, the analysis of the main characters in the light of this perspective will enable a shift in interpretation from the level of the plot to a deeper inquiry into issues of social and generational conflict, thereby enabling a new reading of the novel in the light of the ideological, political and intellectual turmoil occurred in Italy between the Sixties and the Seventies.