

The Art of Transgressing Boundaries: The Sacred and the Profane in Pier Paolo Pasolini's Cinema

Emanuela PATTI
Royal Holloway, University of London, UK

Abstract: *This article examines Pasolini's political discourse on the "sacred" and the subproletariat. I will explore how this has been articulated in his early cinema through intermedia experimentation. I will take into consideration the so-called "national-popular" phase of his cinema, namely Accattone (1961), Mamma Roma (1962), La Ricotta (1963) and Il Vangelo secondo Matteo [The Gospel according to Matthew] (1964). I will first argue why the concept of adaptation is limited when it comes to analyse Pasolini's films and his poetics. Second, I will illustrate how Pasolini's filmic style was mainly influenced by literary theory and, more precisely, by Erich Auerbach's masterpiece Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature, which was translated into Italian in 1956. I will analyse how Pasolini mixed artistic references from our cultural heritage to associate the figure of Christ to the subproletarians of his films. Ultimately, the aim of the article is to demonstrate how, by translating literary theory into film practice, Pasolini developed a unique style and multimodal discourse on sacredness and class.*

Keywords: *mimesis; Pier Paolo Pasolini; Erich Auerbach; intermediality; realism*