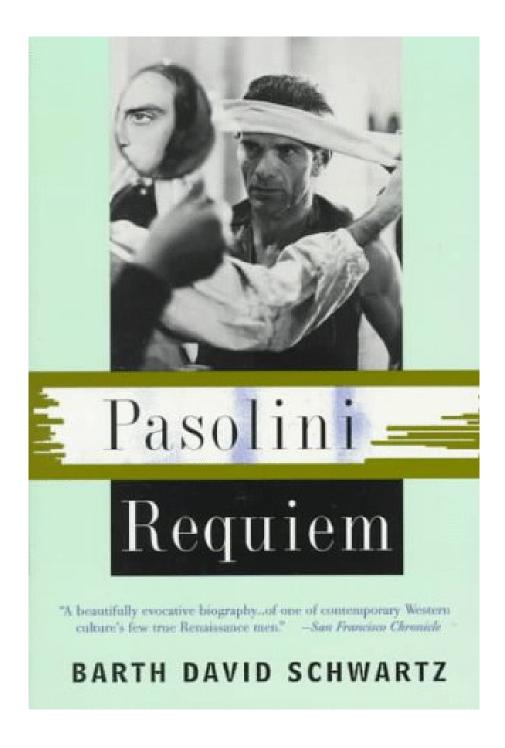


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Schwartz examines the life of late Italian filmmaker Pasolini in this detailed, ambitious biography. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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This much-needed biography of one of modern Italy's towering intellectual figures combines vital data, refresher glimpses at recent Italian history, and analysis of public reaction to his many gadfly polemics. During the 30 years of his productive life, this "reactionary of the Left" was in the spotlight; whether as poet, critic, filmmaker, or novelist, his message was not to console. Thus, in his film Salo, members of the haute monde dine on their own excrement; Pasolini is telling us in his inimitable way that consumer society will end up consuming the fruit of its own uselessness. An unwavering homosexual taken to court 33 times yet never found guilty, Pasolini had typically complex views on homosexuality. Probably because he needed alienation to be creative, he had no interest in organizations to promote individual liberation. Schwartz starts the book with the gripping details of Pasolini's murder and at the finale returns to chronicle the tragic recidivism of the 17-year-old murderer. Recommended for all literary collections.

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Riveting, obsessive, impassioned, and scandalous, here is a major biography of one of the great Renaissance men of the 20th century. Pier Paolo Pasolini was uncompromising, homosexual, anti-Fascist, anti-Communist, anti-clerical, even as he yielded to his callings as world-renowned novelist (A Violent Life, The Ragazzi), poet, polemicist, and filmmaker. Photographs.

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4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

The Intellectual Icon

By Stefania Casi (The Cultural Sojourner)

With rigorous scholarship, this biography captures the complexity of Pasolini and his time. Politics and

culture are intertwined, as with no other country except Russia. Pasolini saw himself as a writer and teacher. Italy was his classroom. From scholar, poet, philologist, professor, writer, editor, critic, intellectual, polemicist, and, finally, filmmaker, Pasolini was doggedly communicating to the Italian populace.

His early films are reflections of reality ~ the life of the subproletarian, a symbol of fascism and its failed recovery. With the advent of capitalism, consumerism, and bourgeois middle-class, the marginalized no longer retain their innocence. The people and culture were becoming more homogenized. Pasolini is rendered aphasic, as the culture no longer listens or understands. His films are increasingly metaphoric, symbolic, and allegorical in attempts to communicate. With his final film, there is no hope for humanity. Provocation never led to understanding, nor would it be possible until the messenger was dead. The mythos is created.

Discussions of anti-Fascism, Marxism, and Freud are simplifications of his work and art (as is the above commentary). Pasolini's epoch demands further scrutiny. Only in this Italy, with its reigning triumvirate of ecclesiastic, monarchist, and dictatorial rule, could a Pasolini and this symbiotic relationship with culture exist.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

One of the greatest biographies I've ever read....

By Grigory's Girl

This is a magnificent book, as magnificent as its subject, Pasolini. It's an absolutely fascinating, mesmerizing, incredibly researched and meticulous biography of one of the greatest artists the 20th century ever produced.

Many (especially in this country) know Pasolini for his notorious, shocking, deeply disturbing film Salo or the 120 Days of Sodom. The reality is that he was a true Renaissance man, writing novels, plays, poems (he was a well known poet before he became a filmmaker), essays, and of course, his filmmaking. He was an astoundingly brilliant man, but a deeply disturbed man as well. This book manages to encompass the whole story of Pier Paolo Pasolini, not just his filmmaking. It also goes into Pasolini's notorious personal life, and his senseless, brutal murder. As another reviewer said, the book never judges Pasolini, preferring the verdict to be left to the reader. The book is filled with amazing quotes from Pasolini himself, ones that speak volumes about life, love, the world, politics, everything. He was a truly remarkable man, and Barth David Schwartz has written a remarkable, brilliant novel, worthy of Pasolini.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Excellent, thorough, and unbiased

By Jeb Schubert

"Pasolini Requiem" is by far the most complete biography of the fascinating filmmaker, poet, painter, and political commentator. Schwartz presents as clear a picture as possible of an ambiguous, ambitious, controversial (and to some ways of thinking pretentious and immoral) artist balancing a compulsion to create wholly original products with a desire to revive and continue ancient, nearly dead traditions.

One of the more impressive aspects of this massive bio is that it manages to explain Pasolini's well-documented quirks, deviancy, and combativeness without moralizing or defending the subject. PPP's life makes for absorbing reading, though the author's dedication to presenting seemingly every available fact sometimes bogs down the flow of the narrative. With that one relatively minor caveat, I can easily recommend the book for those interested in artist bios that go beyond superficial criticism, the birth of independent cinema in Europe, the conflict between art and censorship, or Italian life during the World War II era.

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