



Pasolini after Dante: The 'Divine Mimesis' and the Politics of Representation (Italian Perspectives)

Emanuela Patti

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What role did Dante play in the work of Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-1975)? His unfinished and fragmented imitation of the *Comedia*, *La Divina Mimesis*, is only one outward sign of what was a sustained dialogue with Dante on representation begun in the early 1950s. During this period, the philologists Gianfranco Contini (1912-1990) and Erich Auerbach (1892-1957) played a crucial role in Pasolini's re-thinking of 'represented reality', suggesting Dante as the best literary, authorial and political model for a generation of postwar Italian writers. This emerged first as 'Dantean realism' in Pasolini's prose and poetry, after Contini's interpretation of Dante and of his plurilingualism, and then as 'figural realism' in his cinema, after Auerbach's concepts of Dante's *figura* and 'mingling of styles'. Following the evolution of Pasolini's mimetic ideal from these formative influences through to *La Divina Mimesis*, Emanuela Patti explores Pasolini's politics of representation in relation to the 'national-popular', the 'questione della lingua' and the Italian post-war debates on neorealism, while also providing a new interpretation of some of his major literary and cinematic works.



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