



Pasolini's films are like his life. After all, he was a poet and novelist. One can closely watch a poet and storyteller in his film. In his one and half decade long active film pursuit, with 26 films, he put to trial the very pillars of humanism, Catholicism, Marxism, Psychoanalysis and Homosexuality. In fact, one of the strong criticisms against him was that he was an exponent of perverted sex in his films.

After his debut film *Accattone* (1961) he was under close observation. Alleging that his contribution to the film *Ro.go.pa.G* (1963) was blasphemous, he was arrested and sentenced. But his next film, *The Gospel according to Mathews*, quelled the critics and authority alike. This film presented the Biblical story in a totally realistic, stripped down style and making it as one of the honest portrayals of Christ on screen.

The film, *Therom*, an abstract film,

Pasolini Perturber of Celluloid

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Is there a limit to the tortures and sufferings that can be inflicted upon? You could badly conclude no on watching Pier Paolo Pasolini's last but not the least work, *Salo- 120 days of Sodom*. Succinctly, film buffs at Thiruvananthapuram got one more occasion to watch the terrific filmmaker Pasolini's much acclaimed six films in the film festival organized by FILCA. This filmmaker who believed that reality is the primordial force behind the thematic expression of film, has always agitated the authorities and conventional wisdom. Its sordid expression was *Salo 120 Days of Sodom*. In the film among other cruelties like cutting tongue, burning the skin, sodomy, needling genitals, a girl in naked is compelled to eat excreta for the love she had expressed towards her already executed mother. This film underscores his concomitant stand to expound the thorn

of Fascist-Nazi regimes. Pasolini's murder in mysterious circumstances shortly after completing this film alone is sufficient to propound that fascist remains and authority alike feared him.

This Italian filmmaker has made out films with complex themes challenging the pseudo-centric objectivity of the Europeans, often at the expense of his own life. From his first film *Accattone* (1961), which was based on his own novel dealing with the life of a pimp in the slums of Rome, to the last film *Salo-120 days of Sodom*, he had not spared the power at all. He, as a filmmaker was not a staunch supporter of socialism but at the same time, a vehement critic of Bourgeois society. His trilogy films *Decameron*, *Canterbury Tales* and *Arabian Nights*, which were shown in the festival are engulfed in his iron critique of bourgeois society. Similar is the case with the most abstract of his films *Theorem*.

topples our imagination and lays at rest human agony for peace. A young man arrives to spend sometime with a wealthy Milanese family. Emilin, the maid of the house starts to show some interest in him first. Thereafter, Pietro, the son, is drawn to the visitor and ends up in bed with him. It is then mother Lucia's turn to yield to the young man, while the father, Paolo, after





Therom

discovering that his son and the guest have been sleeping together, becomes seriously ill.

Forced to his bed, Paulo is lovingly attended by his daughter Odetta and the guest. Prompted by the young visitor's kindness towards her father, Odetta sleeps with him. Finally, even Paulo is "seduced" by the charismatic presence of the nameless young man, who is then called away by

another telegram. The maid Emilia leaves the family (to be replaced by another maid also named Emilia) and goes back to the farm where she sits and fasts, surrounded by an ever-larger family dissolve in despair over the guest's

absence. Pietro tries to recapture the young man's presence through painting, then leaves home and reiterates his need for transgression with an anguished attack against art. Odetta falls prey to an attack of catatonia and must be hospitalised. In a spiral of anxiety and addiction, Lucia picks up younger men and ends up in the shade of country church, where she searches for peace.

Pasolini's trilogy has its own permutations and combinations. He has adapted the 14th century Italian writer Boccaccio's *Decamerone* with its own name. It narrates ten tales from each of one different from the others with allegorical expressions. For instance, one of the stories goes like this. A notorious crook and homosexual, Ciappelletto is sent by his father on a business trip to Northern Europe. There he falls fatally ill and makes a lengthy, false confession on his deathbed. The priest is so impressed with his "holiness" that after his

death Ciappelletto is honoured as a saint. Similarly, each one of the stories contains social criticism with full fun and gaiety.

Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* has been adapted with the same name with shocking additions of his own perception of English morality. A group of pilgrims journeying to Canterbury – tell stories to one another. There are about eight stories in *Canterbury tales* that speak outwardly human triviality and exuberance. Pasolini depicts each of the stories like that of a parable or allegory expressing his own criticism on social morality. For instance in Reeve's Tale, Two Cambridge students take revenge on a miller by sleeping with his more than willing wife and daughter.

In *Arabian Nights*, Pasolini relocated and chosen some of the stories from the *1001 Nights* series. The Black Zummurrred is being sold in an auction. She chooses Nur ed Din as her master and enjoys initiating him sexually. She shares erotic stories with him. Later on Zumurrud is being kidnapped. Forty Thieves carry her away. But she succeeds in escaping from them and gets dressed as a man and reaches in a city where a first male is about to be enthroned. She is being married to the priest daughter and the two women become friends. They exchange their own secrets.

Pasolini's last film *Salo – 120 days of Sodom* is the severe attack on fascism and his one-man army to surface at least a snippet of the atrocities on humanity done by fascism. The film begins in the background of 1944 in Repubblica di Sals, a Nazi-controlled, Northern Italian town which tried to oppose the Allies' progress. After marrying each other's daughters, four dignitaries – a Duke, a Bishop, an Eccellenza (Chief Magistrate) and a President – organize arrests of youths in order to select sixteen perfect specimens and take them, together with guards, servants and fouteurs, in to a place near the town of Marzabotto. In addition, there are four middle-aged women. They will recount arousing stories. The fourth will accompany their narration on the piano. The dignitaries put the boys and girls for all sorts perversions, tortures and finally kills those who does not obey them. Each and every shots in the film would invariably shock the viewer to a point of no return. Indeed, his films enable man to hide down animal instincts in him. ■

