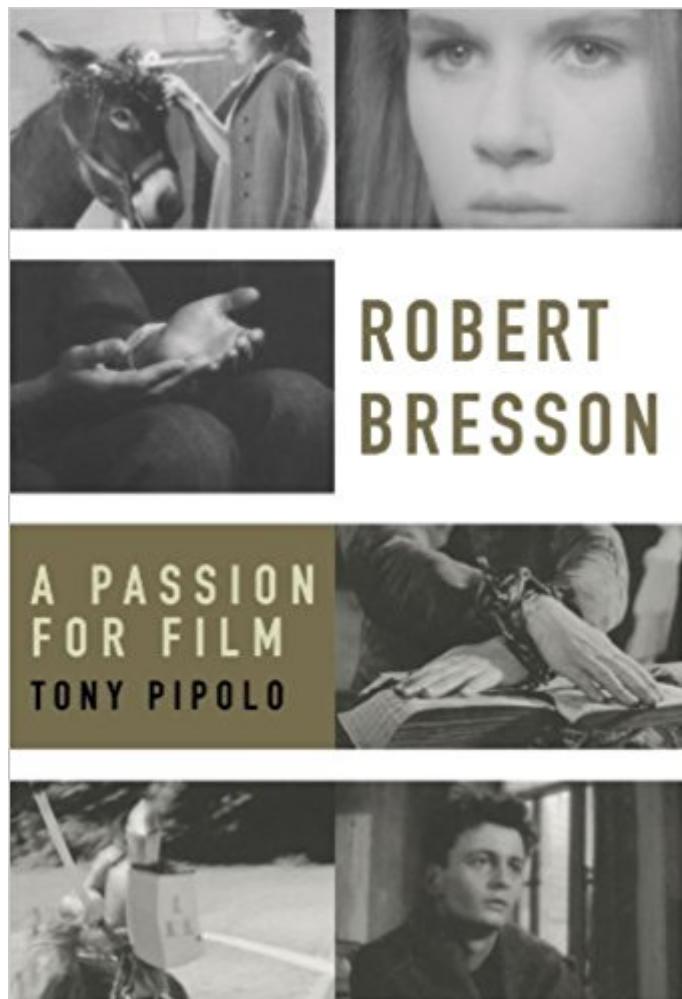


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# Robert Bresson: A Passion For Film



## **Synopsis**

Perhaps the most highly regarded French filmmaker after Jean Renoir, Robert Bresson created a new kind of cinema through meticulous refinement of the form's grammatical and expressive possibilities. In thirteen features over a forty-year career, he held to an uncompromising moral vision and aesthetic rigor that remain unmatched. Robert Bresson: A Passion for Film is the first comprehensive study to give equal attention to the films, their literary sources, and psycho-biographical aspects of the work. Concentrating on the films' cinematographic, imagistic, narrative, and thematic structures, Pipolo provides a nuanced analysis of each film-including nearly 100 illustrations-elucidating Bresson's unique style as it evolved from the impassioned *Les Anges du pÃƒÂ©che* to such disconsolate meditations on the world as *The Devil Probably* and *L'Argent*. Special attention is also given to psychosexual aspects of the films that are usually neglected. Bresson has long needed a thoroughgoing treatment by a critic worthy to the task: he gets it here. From it emerges a provocative portrait of an extraordinary artist whose moral engagement and devotion to the craft of filmmaking are without equal.

## **Book Information**

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"Impressive...Robert Bresson: a Passion for Film is an eloquent and often persuasive demonstration of Bresson's importance as a filmmaker, and is a model of auteurist reading, both as analysis and interpretation." H-France "We are all still coming to terms with Robert Bresson, and the peculiar power and beauty of his films. This thoughtfully argued, wonderfully lucid book goes a long way

toward giving us a clearer understanding of one of the cinema's greatest artists."--Martin Scorsese "Bresson is among the most meticulous, moral, and profound of filmmakers. Tony Pipolo evokes and celebrates his genius with this readable, engrossing study."--Roger Ebert "It becomes clearer all the time: Robert Bresson's films demand and deserve a lifetime of intense scrutiny. Tony Pipolo has given them just that, a lifetime of viewing, analysis, and exploration. Following the pathways of the films, following the footsteps of their inscrutable creator, he brings us a Bresson at once more ascetic and more majestic than we had imagined possible."--Dudley Andrew, Yale University "Pipolo explores Bresson's sources and methods across his career, tracing the course of spiritual grace in a fallen world. Trained both as a film historian and a psychoanalyst, Pipolo sees Bresson's odysseys as not unlike those of the psychoanalytic journey, highlighting their common goals of liberation and transformation--and provides profound new insight into one of cinema's most elusive auteurs."--Tom Gunning, University of Chicago "[T]his book is, as Pipolo writes, a 'highly personal response' to Bresson's body of work and a chronological, in-depth dissection of the films with particular attention paid to Bresson's style. ... This is a scholarly yet accessible study."--Library Journal "As the book methodically progresses from film to film, Pipolo's unique dissection of Bresson's characters prompts readers to search beneath the visual chiaroscuro of Bresson's scene 'painting' and explore the core emotions, the underlying moral fiber, of the on-screen players. On every page of his masterful work, Pipolo's observations serve as a potent reminder to the serious spectator: it's often what's left unspoken--the slightest trembling of a lip or a downcast gaze--that can prove most vital to a film."--Film Comment "Pipolo's volume is a thorough chronicle, imbued with warmth and personality."--Bookforum "This compelling volume is the most comprehensive effort in English yet to celebrate and analyze the thirteen features Bresson (1901-1999) made ... . Author Tony Pipolo ... brings a sophisticated respect for the life of the mind to what is obviously a labor of love."--PRI's The World "[Pipolo's] familiarity with [Bresson's] works is breathtaking. He constructs a meticulous commentary for each film in chronological order, citing individual shots and cuts that illustrate Bresson's mastery of his art. With an austerity that matches his subject matter, the critic pares away extraneous material and focuses directly on the films themselves. ... Professor Pipolo has provided the definitive academic study of the films of Robert Bresson to date ... . Future scholars will undoubtedly use this text as their point of departure for further research."--America Magazine "One of the most careful and thoroughgoing studies of Bresson that we have, adding appreciably to both scholarship about his work and our critical understanding of it...When it comes to single book-length studies, Pipolo's is...clearly the best we've had so far, in English or in French." --Jonathan Rosenbaum, Cineaste "Offers an aesthetic biography of Bresson's monumental canon. It

works...Pipolo does the reader--and Bresson--a huge service by working through each of the 13 features in turn, combining brilliant close readings with a clear command of philosophic, religious, and literary contexts. Because he is solid on film, psychology, and philosophy, Pipolo provides what is probably the best companion to date on this auteur...Highly recommended." --Maurice Yacowar, Choice

Tony Pipolo is Professor Emeritus of Film and Literature at the City University of New York. He is a practicing psychoanalyst in New York City.

Well written, free of arcane theorizing, and knowledgable, Pipolo's review of Bresson's oeuvre is a delight. While I have not finished it yet, it is a welcome addition to the growing body of work about Bresson.

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