



# Alexandra Noemina Răduț

## The Nudity of the Visage Ingmar Bergman and *Persona*

### ABSTRACT

This research undertakes to analyze the most expressive technique in Ingmar Bergman's films: the facial close-up. The Swedish director creates, by virtue of an objective lyricism, a fundamental correspondence between the cinematograph and the idea of visage. Divided between light and shadow or in a particular relation with the unconsciousness, the visage in *Persona* seems to be split and, paradoxically, expanded and pressed. Not only do the two feminine characters exchange personalities, but also their faces are presented as a coalescent species. Indeed, the enormous visage emerges spectrally on the screen in order to describe the film's enchantment with its own possibility to communicate in a cinematic language "from soul to soul," moreover, with the artifice and the unmasked psyche.

### KEYWORDS

Visage; Close-up; *Cinéma d'auteur*; Affection-image; Surface of Faceification; Effacement; Mask.

**ALEXANDRA NOEMINA RĂDUȚ (CÂMPEAN)**  
Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca,  
Romania  
noeminaradut@yahoo.com

Ingmar Bergman's artistic creed<sup>1</sup> that the cinematic *poiesis* begins with the physiognomy rewrites Sven Nykvist's<sup>2</sup> effort to step inside the human being with the help of light and to photograph a soul; on the one hand, Bergman believes that cinema should be able to illuminate the human soul. The filmmaker wonders about the faculty of the magic lantern to portray, but also to transcend his own world. The process of making film is similar to hunger and thirst. On the other hand, Bergman hopes to find "a crack through which to penetrate the twilight land of supraréality"<sup>3</sup>; this "geography of the soul"<sup>4</sup> constitutes inextricably "the distinguishing quality of the film": "There are many directors who forget that our work in film begins with the human face. We can certainly become completely absorbed in the aesthetics of montage, we can bring together objects and still life into a wonderful rhythm, we can make nature studies of astounding beauty, but the approach to the human face is without doubt the hallmark and the distinguishing quality of the film."<sup>5</sup>

The human face expresses truth and depth, the intimate spark of life in Bergman's own view. Consequently, the human face represents the most cinematographic thing. As Geoffrey Macnab confirms, "Bergman was one director who treated the human face with the same rapt curiosity as any filmmakers in the silent era."<sup>6</sup> The film



actor is an invaluable instrument, he is not only the person who interprets, but he must also create a plausible character; his affects and reactions are concentrated in his gaze; they are then recorded by the movie camera, an (apparently) objective observer. In his confessions, Bergman concedes he suddenly realized that his movies had been mostly conceived in the depths of his soul, of his heart and of his brain, no wonder that the critics have not as yet stopped emphasizing the singularity of the *bergmanesque*. Moreover, the exploration of the human face implies the transfer of rhythms and atmosphere into words and sentences, a painful and challenging journey from script to film: “The close-up, if objectively composed, perfectly directed and played, is the most forcible means at the disposal of the film director, while at the same time being the most certain proof of his competence or incompetence. The lack of abundance of close-ups shows in an uncompromising way the nature of the film director and the extent of his interest in people.”<sup>7</sup> We tend towards simplicity, Nykvist suggested in his interviews, towards what we might call, poetically, “an unbearable lightness” of brightness, an essential portrait of the human being exposed to the world with its pulsations, with its fears and anxieties, without protective illusions, evasions or lies – a *face-to-face* similar to that of Emmanuel Levinas. This kind of epiphany represents a privileged moment in which The Other reveals himself in his *alterity* not in a negation of the “I,” but as a primordial phenomenon of gentleness.<sup>8</sup> The camera captures the inner act of creation, as well as a natural identification (between the actor and his role).<sup>9</sup>

In order to separate the foreground and the background, Bergman creates an essential connection between the cinema and the idea of *visage*; the most expressive technique, which gives rise to various interpretations, is the act of approaching the human

face: the close-up.<sup>10</sup> The face and the hand reveal detailed emotions, the intimate existence. In his autobiography, the Swedish director recounts how he tried to recover his mother’s face in almost every feminine character. In this regard, *Karin’s Face* (*Karins Ansikte*, 1983), a short film of 14 minutes, represents a form of gratitude.<sup>11</sup> The film consists of a series of photos taken off from the family albums; Karin Bergman was born Åkerblom in 1889 and the last image is actually a passport photo taken in 1964, a few months before her death. After marrying Henrik, she becomes increasingly less present in family photos. From the very first pages of the book *The Best Intentions*<sup>12</sup> we find out that the family members enjoyed being photographed. Looking back into his parents’ unhappy marriage, Bergman explains the anguishing family relations in terms of mythical fascination: “I look at photographs and feel a strong attraction to those two people who in almost every way are so unlike the somewhat introspective, mythical, larger-than-life creatures who dominated my childhood and youth...”<sup>13</sup> Like the illusionist boy in *Persona*, Bergman “touches” his parents’ faces and destinies; among these, he finds particular postures and gestures, clothes, jewelry, curtains, mustaches and so on, but, most importantly, he contemplates faces, especially faces. He feels like watching a silent movie. The inherited pictures reveal the “fatality of occurrence”; the faces, in the moment of their “birth”/ appearance<sup>14</sup> on celluloid, cannot escape being gazed at; the act of forgetfulness causes pain or sorrow: “Le visage est moins ici la trace d’une transcendance que la fatalité du paraître, avec sa finitude douloureuse.”<sup>15</sup>

Bergman’s reputation and importance in the history of cinema is due to his programmatic insistence on the human face. Here we have a witty comment from an



interview: “Perhaps I’m wrong, but to me the great gift of cinematography is the human face. Don’t you think so? With a camera you can go into the stomach of a kangaroo. But to look at the human face, I think, is the most fascinating.”<sup>16</sup> Obviously, the value of the cinematic work of art arises from the authenticity of the images and from their ability to “produce” art. The entwining of face and movie camera connotes a feeling of completeness. In this sense, we may speak about a “dreamlike realism” or “stylized realism”<sup>17</sup> in Bergman’s creation: developing a “dreamlike” film aesthetics, he strongly believes in his autobiography *The Magic Lantern* that film embodies a dream: “Filming for me is an illusion planned in detail, the reflection of a reality which the longer I live seems to me more and more illusory.(...) When film is not a document, it is dream. (...) Film as dream, film as music. No form of art goes beyond ordinary consciousness as film does, straight to our emotions, deep into the twilight room of the soul.”<sup>18</sup> On this occasion, reality and non-reality form a particular structure; moreover, the stylization evolves into a “phenomenological realism”<sup>19</sup>: this concept, alongside “the cinema of the face” reveals what is generally accepted under the title of *le cinéma d’auteur*.<sup>20</sup> Technique means style, authenticity and truth, the signature of the author through which he arrives at his version of the essence. Bergman structures his work into a personal and subjective universe – he was designated by Truffaut as the purest representative of the “camera-pen” aesthetics. The art of directing becomes a genuine and trustworthy writing, since Marcel Martin idealizes this new language as the “cinema of poetry.” Take the case of Pasolini who creates a “cinema of poetry” and a camera-consciousness, an equivalent of the free indirect discourse.

The close-up raises the human face from the condition of simple object to the

state of affection (Deleuze), entity and expression (Béla Balázs). By virtue of his movie camera, Bergman visualizes the nudity of the visage, *i.e.* its inhumanity. The originality and the distinguishing quality of cinema resides, as we have mentioned earlier, in the possibility of approaching the human face and bringing it to the stage of a ghost (Deleuze and “la fantomalité”/ “the vampire”). We therefore consider that Deleuze’s conceptions of face as “a surface of faceification”/ “une surface de visagéification”<sup>21</sup> are suitable for our argument. In front of its nothingness, the visage experiences delusion and disillusionment, disenchantment and reification. For instance, Carl Theodor Dreyer in *La Passion de Jeanne d’Arc* (1928), a film entirely composed of close-ups, presents the human face so close to the screen, that it appears monstrous and intimidating; furthermore, Dreyer highlights the actors’ features and emphasizes them by removing all traces of make-up. The actors are some kind of disconnected spatial skulls, they express extremely well the state of things (the historical facts) for the reason that the human expression is converted to nature: “Also, Joan’s face is often pushed back to the lower part of the image, so that the close-up carries with it a fragment of white décor, an empty zone, a space of sky from which she draws an inspiration. It is an extraordinary document on the turning toward and turning away of faces.”<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Deleuze notes that inside each character we may identify the category of “internal”<sup>23</sup>, neither eternal, nor suprahistorical. Bergman was decisively influenced by the manner Dreyer and Stroheim treated physiognomy.

Indeed, the visage seems captured inside the close-up as it seeks a redemption outside the cinematic frame. It donates its visual aspect/ mask and, subsequently, it retreats itself. Bergman’s characters (without exception and unceasingly) look beyond



the frame<sup>24</sup> with a particular purpose: to find an empty space immune to life. Where do the character and his face appear from? We shall presume that they belong to an immaculate imaginary: for Bergman, there is a coalescence between the face and the void of existence. Equally important, Deleuze, commenting on the philosophy of Bergson, considers that the affect is expressed in the visage itself; close-up is face and together they form the “affection-image”/ “l’image-affection”<sup>25</sup>: “The affection-image is the close-up, and the close-up is the face... (...) The face is this organ-carrying plate of nerves which has sacrificed most of its global mobility and which gathers or expresses in a free way all kinds of tiny local movements which the rest of the body usually keeps hidden.”<sup>26</sup> Also, the visage, a “reflecting and reflected unity,” makes visible what the rest of the body usually buries: it incorporates and represents itself, it shows us its “traits of faceicity”/ “les traits de visag  t  .”<sup>27</sup> Bergman creates an atemporal visage which passes through a lyric abstraction; Nykvist expresses it in a similar manner in his interviews: “The face is a world in itself. I think it is almost my specialty. If you are interested in human beings, you must be interested in faces. I always try to catch light in the actors’ eyes, because I feel the eyes are the mirror of the soul. Some directors are annoyed at seeing reflections in the eyes. But there are always reflections in the eyes; some people just don’t think about it. I feel that if I have that reflection, you can see the human being thinking. There’s a presence there.”

Nevertheless, the psychic “facts” (the inner reality) of the actors are transformed into tangible signs<sup>28</sup>. Phenomenologically speaking, in modern art, the faces emerge predominantly disfigured and disintegrated, with traits of morbidity.<sup>29</sup> In its symbolic death, the face has the privilege to turn its eyes on itself and it is now able to record

the event of abandonment and deformation. Whereas the cinema is inscribed in all its shapes with the emancipation of time, Jacques Aumont writes in the final pages of his study dedicated to the human face in cinema that: “Le visage est l’apparence d’un sujet qui se sait humain, mais tous les hommes sont mortels: le visage est donc l’apparence d’un sujet qui se sait mortel. Ce qu’on cherche sur le visage, c’est le temps, mais en tant qu’il signifie la mort. La perte du visage, si perte il y a, a pour finir cette signification: elle est la mort perdue, la privation de la mort.”<sup>30</sup> Definitely, it is a condensed passage from “le visage-dans-le temps” to “le visage-pour-le-temps.” In addition, the face, a transitional allegory representing *Janus bifrons*, is emblematically divided between light and shadow or past and future. Aumont<sup>31</sup> describes in a clear manner that there are four types of visage in Bergman’s films: the pressed face, the opposition face / profile, the close-up which tightly frames the face in details and, finally, the split face. The film critic B  la Bal  zs<sup>32</sup> considers that cinema is not only a form of art, but an instrument of knowledge: the invisible face behind the visible one appears at the origin of cinema. For Bal  zs “the individual voices of all things which go to make up the great symphony”<sup>33</sup> materialise in the moment when the movie camera reaches the entire element, *i.e.* the invisible expression. Physiognomy is synonymous with *Stimmung*<sup>34</sup>: “The mood of an individual human being is likewise a totality that – as such – cannot be grasped in a single image. But there are moments when it has the expressive look of a human gaze. A close-up of such moments makes it possible to convey a subjective image of the world and, notwithstanding the objectivity of the photographic apparatus, to depict the world as coloured by a temperament, illuminated by a feeling. This is a projected lyricism, a



lyricism made objective.”<sup>35</sup> In Bergman’s films the microphysiognomy connects

the facial aspect with the unconscious: “the close-up brings it to light. It is not the face we wear, but our actual visual appearance that is decisive. For all of us appear in the end just as we are. (...) This microphysiognomy is the direct making visible of micropsychology.”<sup>36</sup>

In *Persona* (1966) the necessity of the illusion is based on a “real irreality”<sup>37</sup> that produces the impression of reality. Every form of representation is based on what Christian Metz calls a “partial illusion.” Between an undetermined realm of shadows and the world of cinema there is a permanent transfer of affection and effectiveness, fiction and memories, that reveals the significant *hic et nunc* of the cinematography – “injecter dans l’irréalité de l’image la réalité du mouvement et réaliser ainsi l’imaginaire jusqu’à un point jamais encore atteint.”<sup>38</sup> That’s the split moment when life is overshadowed and death establishes its kingdom. Bergman feels that in *Persona* he went as far as he could go – *i.e.* he touched “wordless secrets that only cinema can discover.”<sup>39</sup> The experience of convalescence and the recounted imminence of death determined him to believe that this film, originally entitled *Kinematografi*<sup>40</sup>, saved his life: “The lost hours of that operation provided me with a calming message. You were born without purpose, you live without meaning, living is its own meaning. When you die, you are extinguished. From being you will be transformed to non-being. A god does not necessarily dwell among our increasingly capricious atoms.”<sup>41</sup> *Persona* represents the ontology of cinema, being charged with a “personal agony” and with a “passionate agonized relationship”<sup>42</sup> between two women. Since the beginning of his career, Bergman was considered to be a “demonic director”: he used to “speak” to

his demons (metaphysical forces inspired by Strindbergian “powers”) in front of the whole crew. As each event possessed its own demon – the demon of disaster, the demon of fear, the demon of profession –, the period preceding the creation of *Persona* is similarly inhabited: “Ghosts, devils and demons, good, evil or just annoying, they have blown in my face, pushed me, pricked me with pins, plucked at my jersey. They have spoken, hissed or whispered. Clear voices, not particularly comprehensible but impossible to ignore.”<sup>43</sup> On one hand, Bergman admitted indirectly that a director has to squeeze the last drops of life blood from his young actors, violating them spiritually; on the other hand, he thinks that his relation to his profession has always been “non-neurotic.”<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, *Persona* appears as a metafilm, a self-reflexive work of art and a poem about the origination of the “face mask.” The viewer becomes aware of the frontier between traditional (the presence of the movie camera is almost imperceptible) and modern cinema; the latter questions the film in its quality of aesthetic object: although it meditates on its own *poiesis*, the film represents a finished object as well – in the end, it withers and dies, declaring itself irreversibly damaged.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the close-up fractures the narrative discourse, the visage is fragmented and all characters incorporate or somatize these wounds under the form of symptomatic disfigurements. In this sense, Noël Burch considers that the director’s final cut symbolizes an entirely “hidden benign wound,” that functions as a serious aggression<sup>46</sup>. In fact, *Persona* is the document of specularity and the groundwork for subjectivity and its ideas were foreseen in the essay *The Snakeskin/Ormskinnet*<sup>47</sup> (1965). Bergman subjects himself to an intimate investigation in order to discover the foundations of his creativity: “Artistic creativity in me has always



manifested itself as hunger. With quiet satisfaction I have acknowledged this need, but I have never in my whole conscious life asked myself where this hunger has come from and why it kept demanding satisfaction.” Obviously, cinematography became his only means of expression, as long as it turned into a substitute for the language that he lacked: “Suddenly I had an opportunity to communicate with the world around me in a language that literally is spoken *from soul to soul* in expressions that, almost sensuously, escape the restrictive control of the intellect.” Finally, Bergman declares that art is unimportant, free, shameless, irresponsible, almost feverish, and that it resembles a snake’s skin full of ants; although the snake is already dead, the skin moves, “full of bustling life” and creates a “colossal” piece of work: “This, and only this, is *my* truth. I don’t ask that it be true for anybody else, and as solace for eternity it’s obviously rather slim pickings, but as a foundation for artistic activity for a few more years it is in fact enough, at least for me.”

*Persona* describes the confrontation between a talkative character (rather a face that speaks through a voice) and a silent one – the nurse Alma (Bibi Andersson) and the actress Elisabet Vogler (Liv Ullmann). After a period of psychiatric hospitalization, Elisabet retreats into herself by the seashore (Fårö Island); nevertheless, she takes Alma with her, in the doctor’s holiday home. The psychiatrist (the actress Margaretha Krook) formulates the diagnosis as follows:

The hopeless dream of being. Not seeming, but being. In every waking moment – aware, alert. The tug of war... what you are. With others and who you really are. A feeling of vertigo and a constant hunger to be finally exposed. To be seen through, cut down... even obliterated. Every

tone of voice a lie.  
Every gesture false.  
Every smile a grimace.  
Commit suicide? That’s unthinkable.  
You don’t do things like that. But you can refuse to move and be silent. Then, at least, you’re not lying. You can shut yourself in, shut out the world. Then you don’t have to play any roles, show any faces, make false gestures. You’d think so... but reality is diabolical. Your hiding place isn’t watertight. Life trickles in everywhere. You’re forced to react. Nobody asks if it’s real or not, if you’re honest or a liar. That’s only important at the theater, perhaps not even there. Elisabet, I understand why you’re silent, why you don’t move. Your lifelessness has become a fantastic part. I understand and I admire you. I think you should play this part until it’s done... until it’s no longer interesting. Then you can leave it, as you leave all your roles.

Both characters wear a mask: Alma (Spanish *soul*) has the impossible mission to snatch off Elisabet’s mask and to proceed from symbiosis to individualization/ personalization. The Latin word *persona* (probably derived from the Etruscan word *phersu* and from the Greek *prosōpon*) means the mask worn by an actor in a theatrical performance. To be a person, then, is to possess a mask (the English noun *person*) and to assume an inherent negativity (the French negative pronoun *personne* – nobody, no one – that indicates the non-existence of people or things). Therefore, both faces are represented in a mixed manner, not in a chaotic one; the space is manipulated by the mental states and emptied by the repetition of the musical word *ingenting* (the Swedish for “nothing” – Bergman’s favorite word). For Elisabet, the truth is dissolved into a lie and, what’s more, the cinema itself



transforms the truth into an atrocity or, as Bergman says it, into “a pornography of horror”: “I am unable to grasp the large catastrophes. They leave my heart untouched. At most I can read about such atrocities with a kind of greed – a pornography of horror. But I shall never rid myself of those images. Images that turn my art into a bag of tricks, into something indifferent, meaningless.”<sup>48</sup> Falling into a catatonic silence, Elisabet actually refuses all symbolic order. This silence seems to utter the language of defeat and the tragedy of consciousness: “The only thing is, she refuses to speak. In fact, she doesn’t want to lie. (...) When you bleed, you feel bad and then you don’t act. (...) Then I felt that every inflection of my voice, every word in my mouth, was a lie, a play whose sole purpose was to cover emptiness and boredom. There was only one way I could avoid a state of despair and a breakdown. To be silent. And to reach behind the silence for clarity or at least try to collect the resources that might still be available to me.”<sup>49</sup>

The encounter with the other/ the double connects the characters with the symbolism of the mirror and the metaphor of the penetrating gaze, both perspectives being equivalent in this case with *the droste effect* (known as *mise en abyme* in art). The exchange of personalities is rather traumatic, implying a doubled monologue and, without any doubt, a cosmic anxiety. Bergman and Nykvist agreed to keep half of the actresses’ faces in complete darkness and, as a result, to let them float together in order to become “one face.”<sup>50</sup> In his article, Gilles Visy considers that *Persona* reinterprets Rimbaud’s thought “Je est un autre” and explains Bergman’s personal technique in filming Ullmann and Andersson: “Le visage de la première [Alma] devient subtilement flou, ensuite celui de la deuxième [Elisabet] apparaît immobile quelques instants un peu

comme un miroir grossissant. La partie sombre du visage de l’une s’unit à la partie peu éclairée de l’autre. L’intensité blanche et le demi éclairage facial dévoilent la persona: les visages ont un bon côté et un mauvais côté comme Janus.”<sup>51</sup> Then, the good face is reconstructed in whiteness, innocence and transparency – we may speak, in short, about a “pictureless background.” Elisabet breathes the air of a deceitful Creator and she is placed *ab initio* on the verge of the “phantomatic.”<sup>52</sup> Time and space, two impossible possibilities, are suspended; in this specific context, the visage becomes a landscape or rather a mindscape (in French *paysage*)<sup>53</sup>; additionally, it changes itself into a “face-world”<sup>54</sup>; simultaneously, it shows the expressiveness of a “primitive face,” given that the hereditary resemblance existed before the intervention of the movie camera. The miracle of physiognomy implies other aspects: “the invisible face”<sup>55</sup> holds the central role and contains a certain dose of nobility (Germ. *das Antlitz*) – it produces the “phenomenalisation” of the soul. Firstly, the film actor is the unique creator of these forms (*Gestalten*); secondly, the actor signifies *Stil und Weltanschauung* because his face is the mirror of the entire ambiance. In his confessions, Bergman is fascinated by Ullmann’s expanded visage in *Persona*<sup>56</sup>: from the moment of her identification with the character, this role fades away. In fact, in its place appears the person, *i.e.* the “real” visage that faces directly the *persona*, as Liv Ullmann says in her diary: “J’aime les gros plans. Pour moi ils sont comme un défi. Plus une caméra est près et plus j’ai envie de montrer mon visage à nu, de montrer ce qu’il y a derrière la peau, derrière les yeux – dans la tête. De montrer les pensées qui se forment. Travailler avec Ingmar, c’est partir à la découverte en moi-même.”<sup>57</sup>

As we have shown in these pages, the close-up devours the visages, it engulfs them in its void and effaces them: “The facial



close-up is both the face and its effacement. Bergman has pushed the nihilism of the face the furthest, that is its relationship in fear to the void or the absence, the fear of the face confronted with its nothingness. In a whole section of his work Bergman reaches the extreme limit of the affection-image, he burns the icon, he consumes and extinguishes the face as certainly as Beckett.<sup>58</sup> Only beyond the void, the visages are able to find their lost energy and the moment of glory.<sup>59</sup> Whereas Bergman reveals, through this effacement, “a nudity of the face much greater than that of the body, an inhumanity much greater than that of animals,” modern film evacuates the narrative discourse and creates a “dedramatization.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, the film is a manufactured product and it cannot define, for any reason, a dead time, even if the space is evacuated, like in Antonioni’s works. In the center of Bergman’s films lies a completely nude visage whose affinity to knowledge forms a fundamental “obsession” of Western culture, acting as a pivot between body and expression, consciousness and unconsciousness.

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### Filmography

*Karin's Face (Karins ansikte)*, dir. Ingmar Bergman, Sweden, 1986, 14 mins.

*Persona*, dir. Ingmar Bergman, AB Svensk Filmindustri (Sweden), 1966. 84 mins.

*The Passion of Joan of Arc (La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc)*, dir. Carl Theodor Dreyer, Société Générale des Films (Denmark/France), 1928. 110/ 82 mins.

*The Best Intentions (Den goda viljan)*, dir. Bille August, Samuel Goldwyn Company (US)/ Artificial Eye (UK), Sweden, 1992. 323/ 174 mins.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The article is based on a chapter from my PhD thesis – "August Strindberg and Ingmar Bergman. Comparative Perspectives on the Pain of the Innocent".

<sup>2</sup> Sven Vilhem Nykvist (1922-2006), Swedish cinematographer. He is known especially for his work with Bergman: Nykvist won the Academy Award for Best Cinematography for two of Bergman's films, *Cries and Whispers* (1973) and *Fanny and Alexander* (1982). He collaborated with Louis Malle, Roman Polanski, Andrei Tarkovsky, Volker Schlöndorff and Woody Allen.

<sup>3</sup> Bergman's essay *Each Film is My Last (Varje film är min sista film, 1959)* is divided into three sections: *The Script, The Studio* and *Professional Ethics*, and it is an important document regarding Bergman's principles of film creation. The essay was published by Svensk Filmindustri (SF).

<sup>4</sup> Jesse Kalin, *The Films of Ingmar Bergman*, p. 2: "geography combines the idea of spiritual places and spiritual journey with the more literal sense of physical places and travel between them. Such a fusion of the literal and spiritual is directly suggested by Bergman himself."

<sup>5</sup> Bergman, *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Macnab, *The Life and Films of the Last Great European Director*, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Bergman, *op. cit.*

<sup>8</sup> See Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essai on Exteriority, passim.*

<sup>9</sup> Bergman builds up his personal "company" of actors (Max von Sydow, Erland Josephson, Bengt Ekerot, Anders Ek, Gunnar Björnstrand) and actresses (Liv Ullmann, Bibi Andersson, Harriet Andersson, Ingrid Thulin, Gunnel Lindblom) and he made use of them repeatedly, almost obsessively.

<sup>10</sup> The question is if the close-up, frequently used by Bergman, serves to articulate a narrative continuity. Our position in regard to this subject is a radical one: we would like to emphasize a poetic fragmentation, *i.e.* the fragmentation of the narrative discourse. For instance, for Robert Bresson (*Notes sur le cinématographe*, p. 95), the



appeal to fragmentation is absolutely necessary in order not to fall into representation: “Isoler ces parties. Les rendre indépendantes afin de leur donner une nouvelle dépendence.”

<sup>11</sup> There is no narration in this film. The photos are presented chronologically with piano accompaniment performed by Bergman’s former wife, Kåbi Laretei.

<sup>12</sup> Danish director Bille August directed in 1992 *The Best Intentions* (*Den goda viljan*). Bergman renamed his mother after his grandmother’s name – Anna. The film won the Palme d’Or at the 1992 Cannes Film Festival.

<sup>13</sup> Bergman, *The Best Intentions: A Novel, Prologue*.

<sup>14</sup> The French word *connaissance* (knowledge) contains another essential word for our demonstration: *naissance* (birth).

<sup>15</sup> Agacinski, *Drame des sexes. Ibsen, Strindberg, Bergman*, p. 195.

<sup>16</sup> See William Wolf, “Face to face with Ingmar Bergman” in Raphael Shargel (ed.), *Ingmar Bergman: Interviews*, p. 148 sqq.

<sup>17</sup> See Botz-Bornstein, *Films and Dreams. Tarkovsky, Bergman, Sokurov, Kubrick and Wong Kar-Wai*, p. 45: “*Persona* is perceived as a dream without being a recording of Bergman’s (or anybody else’s) dream.”

<sup>18</sup> Bergman, *The Magic Lantern. An Autobiography*, p. 73.

<sup>19</sup> Ayfre, *Conversion aux images?*, p. 214. Amédé Ayfre writes about an internal tension inherent in Bergman’s style.

<sup>20</sup> Alexandre Astruc in his essay “Naissance d’une nouvelle avant-garde: la Caméra-Stylo”/ “The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: La Camera-Stylo” considers that “the cinema will gradually break free from the tyranny of what is visual, from the image for its own sake, from the immediate and concrete demands of the narrative, to become a means of writing just as flexible and subtle as

written language. (...) I will even go so far as to say that contemporary ideas and philosophies of life are such that only the cinema can do justice to them.” There will no longer be *the* cinema, there will be several cinemas. Fundamentally, the modern cinema expresses the thought: “The filmmaker/author writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen.”

<sup>21</sup> Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, p. 88.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 107.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup> For the importance of the space situated outside the cinematic frame (“the-out-of-the-frame”), see Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, chapter 2: “*Nana* or Two Kinds of Space”: “To understand cinematic space, it may prove useful to consider it as in fact consisting of *two different kinds of space*: that included within the frame and that outside the frame. For our purposes, screen space can be defined very simply as including everything perceived on the screen by the eye. Off-screen space is more complex, however. It is divided into six ‘segments’: The immediate confines of the first four of these areas are determined by the four borders of the frame, and correspond to the four faces of an imaginary truncated pyramid projected into the surrounding space, a description that obviously is something of a simplification. A fifth segment cannot be defined with the same seeming geometric precision, yet no one will deny that there is an off-screen space ‘behind the camera’ that is quite distinct from the four segments of space bordering the frame lines, although the characters in the film generally reach this space by passing just to the right or left of the camera. There is a sixth segment, finally, encompassing the space existing behind the set or some object in it: A character reaches it by going out a door,



going around a street corner, disappearing behind a pillar or behind another person, or performing some similar act. The outer limit of this sixth segment of space is just beyond the horizon.”

<sup>25</sup> See Deleuze, *op. cit.*, *passim*. The affection-image is different from the perception-image and the action-image (types of movement-image). Depending on their dominance, the three types of images create three types of montage: active, perceptive and affective. In fact, the affection-image is made up of two elements: the intensive face (*le visage intensif*) that expresses a pure Power, and the reflexive face (*le visage réflexif*) that expresses a pure Quality. Furthermore, Deleuze draws a comparison between admiration (the reflexive face) and desire (the intensive face).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 87-88.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 88.

<sup>28</sup> See, as an illustration, *The Kuleshov Effect* (Russian filmmaker Lev Kuleshov, 1910s-1920s).

<sup>29</sup> See the following examples: in film and literature – *Morte a Venezia* (directed by Luchino Visconti, 1971, after a novella by Thomas Mann, 1912); in painting: Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso or Francis Bacon.

<sup>30</sup> Jacques Aumont, *Du visage au cinéma*, p. 197.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 160. Here we have the classification in French: “le visage pressé,” “la conjonction/opposition d’un visage de face et d’un visage de profil,” “le visage de face, en plan rapproché ou très rapproché,” “le visage rongé.”

<sup>32</sup> Balázs, *Early Film Theory. Visible Man and The Spirit of Film*, chap. “The Close-up.” A face must be pressed (Germ. *gerückt*) as close to us as possible. We should contemplate it (*Anblick*) in order to be able to actually read in it. The major paradigm is the face of the Danish actress Asta Nielsen.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 38.

<sup>34</sup> The German word *Stimmung* has several meanings: mood, atmosphere, disposition, temper, ambiance and so on. This word is the noun formed from the verb *stimmen* (to harmonize) and it is related to *Stimme* (voice).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 44.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 104.

<sup>37</sup> See Metz, *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, chapter “A propos de l’impression de réalité au cinéma.”

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 24.

<sup>39</sup> Bergman, *Images: My Life in Film*, p. 65.

<sup>40</sup> The film had multiple titles: *Sonata for two women/ Sonat för två kvinnor, A piece of cinematography/ Ett stycke kinematografi, Opus 27*.

<sup>41</sup> Bergman, *The Magic Lantern. An Autobiography*, p. 204.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Sontag, “Bergman’s *Persona*” in Lloyd Michaels (ed.), *Ingmar Bergman’s Persona*, p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> Bergman, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>44</sup> See Bergman, *Images: My Life in Film*, p. 46 – “Although I am a neurotic person, my relation to my profession has always been astonishingly non-neurotic. I have always had the ability to attach my demons to my chariot. And they have been forced to make themselves useful.” See also Assayas & Björkman, *Conversation avec Bergman*, p. 53: “Je suis très névrosé, mais ma relation à mon travail est complètement anévrotique. Ça n’a jamais bloqué la création. Chez moi, l’autocritique n’a jamais été destructrice. L’autocritique a toujours été très objective, sans complaisance.”

<sup>45</sup> See Sontag, *op. cit.*, p. 74: the film is “a finite object, a made object, a fragile, perishable object, and therefore something existing in space as well as time.”

<sup>46</sup> Burch, *op. cit.*, chapter “Fictional Subjects”.



<sup>47</sup> See the entire essay in Bergman, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-51.

<sup>48</sup> Bergman, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 54 & 59-60.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 61.

<sup>51</sup> G. Visy, the article “‘Je est un autre’”. *Persona* de Ingmar Bergman.”

<sup>52</sup> On the concept of “le fantomatique”, see Morin’s study about the imaginary man, *Le cinéma ou l’homme imaginaire. Essai d’anthropologie sociologique*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 77: “Le visage est paysage. (...) L’univers fluide du film suppose des transferts réciproques incessants entre l’homme microcosme et le macrocosme.”

<sup>54</sup> The “face-world” (“le visage-monde”) represents unquestionably the only thing that the human being is capable of contemplating in the mirror. For Aumont, this special face constitutes the quality of a resonance between the soul and the idea of cinema – the prototypical feelings are inscribed on the character’s face: “Nous vibrons avec les visages représentés, au coeur même de ces Visages, le cinéma est cette vibration.” (Aumont, *op. cit.*, p. 99)

<sup>55</sup> See Balázs, *op. cit. passim*.

<sup>56</sup> We hereby refer to the scene in which Alma holds an erotic monologue.

<sup>57</sup> L. Ullmann, *Devenir*, pp. 285-286.

<sup>58</sup> Deleuze, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>59</sup> Deleuze describes a bidirectional movement of “turning towards – turning away” (*tournement – détournement* (turning away is not the opposite of turning towards, *se tourner*). Here we have the elucidation:

“Both are inseparable; the one would be rather the motor movement of desire, and the other the reflecting movement of admiration. (...) Even a single face has a coefficient of turning away and turning towards. It is by turning towards – turning away that the face expresses the affect, its increase and decrease, whilst obliteration goes beyond the threshold of decrease, plunges the affect into the void and makes the face lose its features.” (*Ibidem*, pp. 104-105)

<sup>60</sup> See Metz, *op. cit.*, p. 185 sqq. Modern film is under the influence of Michelangelo Antonioni (*l’antonionism*).