Ingmar Bergman, *Persona (1966)*

Inspelningsår: 1966  
Regi: Ingmar Bergman  
Skådespelare: Bibi Andersson, Liv Ullmann, Margaretha Krook, Gunnar Björnstrand  
Längd: 85 min.

At some time or other, I said that *Persona* saved my life—
that is no exaggeration. If I had not found the strength to make
that film, I would probably have been all washed up.

(Ingmar Bergman)

Diskussionsseminarium

Sekundärlitteratur:


Frågeställningar:

1. I Gwendolyn Audrey Fosters artikel argumenteras det för att ”*Persona* challenges the regime of heterosexuality and its norms through the performance of lesbian desire between Alma and Elisabet”.

Ge exempel på de scener i filmen där, enligt Foster, sexualitet och begär i den här betydelsen visualiseras.

2. I Susan Sontags artikel påpekas att det kan vara svårt att uppfatta om vissa scener äger rum i det förflutna, i nutid eller i en framtid och om vissa episoder är realistiska, dvs. speglar verkliga händelser eller utgör en vision (fantasi, dröm, hallucination).

Det enda kritikerna verkar vara eniga om är att filmen gestaltar en process där de två kvinnorna växlar identitet med varandra.

Ge exempel på de scener i filmen som, enligt Sontag, kan diskuteras utifrån begreppsparet verklighet/fantasi.

3. Vart är Alma på väg när hon ensam stiger på en buss i slutet av *Persona*?
Några ord om filmen

“Persona is difficult to characterize in simple terms, but it may be helpful to describe this complex film as being an exploration of identity that combines elements of drama, visual poetry, and modern psychology. The central story revolves around a young nurse named Alma (Bibi Andersson) and her patient, a well-known actress named Elisabet Vogler (Liv Ullmann). Elisabet has stopped speaking, and the attending psychiatrist treats the actress by sending her to an isolated seaside cottage under Alma's care. There the nurse, who must do all the talking for both women, becomes a little enamoured of the actress. One evening Alma tells Elisabet about some exhilarating sexual experiences she once had and their unpleasant aftermath. Soon after sharing this confidence, the nurse reads a letter Elisabet has written and is shocked to learn that the actress thinks of her as an amusing study. The relationship between the women becomes tense, and they wound each other. Then Alma has a long dream in which her identity merges with that of Elisabet, but when the nurse awakes, both women have apparently come to at least temporary terms with their psychological problems.”

(All Movie Guide)

“A watershed film in its economy, symbolism, and frank sexuality, Ingmar Bergman's Persona ranks as one of the director's most personal pieces, breaking from his earlier, more explicit work in favour of the abstract, intuitive style that he would continue to develop in such films as Hour of the Wolf (1968), Shame (1968), and Cries and Whispers (1973). Bergman started work on Persona after a long hospital stay, and he described the seemingly random images that begin the film as a "poem," a proclamation of his renewal as an artist. The opening sequence sets the tone for the film to come, in which the characters are at the mercy not just of fate and desire but of filmmaking itself. When Bibi Andersson's nurse Alma comes to the bedside of Liv Ullmann's Elizabet one night, the mere suggestion of their hallucinatory encounter is enough to shake the film off its sprockets -- the celluloid literally breaks and melts on screen, before our eyes. At no other time in his career had Bergman seemed more trusting of his performers; he purges Persona of any narrative conventions but its two characters and their seaside setting. The final shot pans around to expose the crew and equipment making the movie, a self-reflexive gesture, as in the later A Passion (1970), which suggests that not even filmmaking can completely dissect the mysteries of the human heart.”

(Michael Hastings, All Movie Guide)

“Bergman at his most brilliant as he explores the symbiotic relationship that evolves between an actress suffering a breakdown in which she refuses to speak, and the nurse in charge as she recuperates in a country cottage. To comment is to betray the film's extraordinary complexity, but basically it returns to two favourite Bergman themes: the difficulty of true communication between human beings, and the essentially egocentric nature of art. Here the actress (named Vogler after the charlatan/artist in The Magician [sv. Ansiktet, 1958]) dries up in the middle of a performance, thereafter refusing to exercise her art. We aren't told why, but from the context it's a fair guess that she withdraws from a feeling of inadequacy in face of the horrors of the modern world; and in her withdrawal, she watches with detached tolerance as humanity (the nurse chattering on about her troubled sex life) reveals its petty woes. Then comes the weird moment of communion in which the two women merge as one: charlatan or not, the artist can still be understood, and can therefore still understand. Not an easy film, but an infinitely rewarding one.”

(Tom Milne, Time Out)