

A bibliographic essay of 1,000 words, demonstrating the ability to carry out library-based research, to compile a bibliography and to use an appropriate referencing system.

When researching the work of Ingmar Bergman for the first time, one is not left unaware of the filmmaker's ability for long, and it soon becomes apparent that many film scholars unanimously agree that "[his] filmic oeuvres are best known for their psychological and spiritual themes and their communicative power." (Hjort and Lindqvist, 2016, P.560). Mette Hjort and Ursula Lindqvist here, for example, acknowledge Bergman's admiration of spiritual themes within film and a viewer's ability to identify with psychological imagery. Furthermore, they fondly state that the unique and charismatic style that Bergman is so famously known for is not only a preference of taste but a very particular approach to filmmaking that led to his reputation as an "internationally renowned auteur." (P.203) In addition, they argue that Bergman's works have an ability to allow audiences to find empathy, catharsis or other mental satisfaction from a viewing. The "communicative power" that is mentioned suggests a level of competence that surpasses the typical viewing experience and rather results in a much more engaging one.

Hjort and Lindqvist, like many other academics, believe that Bergman's works are more so about the psychological undertones than the narratives taken at face value. Some writers, however, differ on their detailing of how Bergman created meaning and investigated such dense and complex themes. Hjort and Lindqvist reflect on the writings of P. Adams Sitney and argue that "[he] made the cut not only for his signature use of mise-en-scène, but also for his skillful filmic narration, achieved through his careful editing of shots and scenes in post-production." (P.547). This infers imagery of a committed and patient director paying attention to each minute detail in an effort to encapsulate convoluted themes and ideas. They argue that it was not only his talent and dedication to the art form that set him apart from other filmmakers, but also his attentive mindset when editing his films in post-production.

Direct readings from P. Adams Sitney argue that Bergman would passionately explore "the psychoanalytic ramifications of connotation in film construction." (Sitney, 2015, P.41). Again, Bergman's focus and fascination of the psychoanalytic aspects of filmmaking becomes very apparent. Sitney not only draws attention to the prominence of the psychological themes that run throughout his oeuvres, but also the troublesome consequences that can come as a result of these issues by going as far as suggesting that "Bergman's attitude toward psychoanalysis suggests that it was a problematic issue for him." (P. 41). This

only emphasises the intimate nature of the director's work and the distinct aura of sentiment that is felt throughout; this interest in character psychology is not just a fascination, but a personal investment.

In contrast to Hjort and Lindqvist's summation, however, Sitney offers a different description of Bergman as a director: When writing about the "displacement of shot-countershot" (P.43) found in the climax sequence of *Persona* (1966), Sitney argues that the absence of any indication of this technique allows the viewer to "assume Bergman improvised this startling scene while editing the film... In an act of personal discovery." (P.43) Though this does, once again, highlight the intrusive and revealing process of Bergman's filmmaking, it also infers a very different understanding of his style. Here, the image of a concise director with a perfectionist attitude is replaced by one with a much more freeform and liberating method of filmmaking. This statement counters the idea of a director with detailed and articulate working in the post-production stage, as inferred by Hjort and Lindqvist - Sitney, instead, calls attention to both the ambiguity of Bergman's work and its inspirations, as well as the inner dialogues and issues that were of part of his process, leading the reader to reconsider just how much of his work (and the psychoanalytical thematic elements within them) was simple story storytelling and how much was a reflection of his own inner struggles.

When reading Jesse Kalin's *The Films of Ingmar Bergman* (2003), one is greeted with an introduction featuring a definition of metaphysics in the context of Bergman's early 1960's trilogy being described as "a reduction." (Kalin, 2003, P.1) This leads on to Kalin's point that Bergman's subjects' primary role is to consider "what is deepest and most true and essential about us, and what meaning we can find for our lives in the face of this truth." (P.1) This, once again, returns to the notion that Bergman's work was more than simply a storytelling experience, but rather an investigation into the rawest and most fundamental elements of human psychology. The statement brings immediate attention to the emphasis that his work places on the primal thought processes in humans, and the minimalistic way in which Bergman's characters confront these issues. Kalin later speculates: "What seems central in Bergman is an openness (a willingness to see from a perspective outside of oneself, and so to see oneself along with others)..." (P.199) The ideologies in Bergman's works that Kalin seeks to investigate seem to include (though are not limited to) self-awareness, reflection and philosophy, three traits that have definitely not been absent in my two other sources. The "openness" that is mentioned describes a confrontational atmosphere in his films, and once again reminds the reader of the sentimental thematic elements.

When speaking of the “reduction” seen within Bergman’s films, Kalin claims that this “provides a mirror in which we can see ourselves as we truly are, face to face.” (P.1) Though this does not explicitly mention stylistic choices of the director, it certainly acknowledges the conviction that a minimalistic approach to psychology can have on an audience. This acts as another example of how a viewer can empathise with the themes of the films, and how Bergman’s oeuvres connect with audiences through their own transparency.

Word Count: 978

References

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