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The playfulness of Ingmar Bergman: Screenwriting from notebooks to screenplays

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The voice: You said you wanted to ‘play and fantasise’.

Bergman: We can always try.

The voice: That’s what you said: play and fantasise.

Bergman: Sounds good. You don’t exist, yet you do.

The voice: If this venture is going to make sense, you have to describe me. In detail actually.

Bergman: Sit down on the chair by the window and I’ll describe you.

The voice: I won’t sit down unless you describe me.

Bergman: Well then. And how do I begin? You are very attractive. Most attractive.[1]

This is the beginning of Ingmar Bergman’s screenplay *Trolösa* (*Faithless*, directed by Liv Ullmann in 2000). The dialogue, which is a prologue to the story, is a playful depiction of the author’s creative development of a fictional character. Step by step ‘the voice’ in the scene is given a body, name, and characteristics. Gradually she becomes the character ‘Marianne’.

The question is how truthful this scene is to the actual creative process? Of course, it is not a description of what really happened in Bergman’s mind. The character Marianne probably did not appear as a sudden fantasy in the mind of the author. She is more likely a result of a long mental process over

many years. Marianne shares similarities with women in Bergman's life and fictional characters from Bergman's preceding *oeuvre*. Still, even if the scene in the prologue does not give a fully accurate depiction of how Marianne is created, there is some truth in the scene's portrayal of how Bergman develops his stories. The scene is an abstraction of the creative process and also somehow a fragment of it, a small part in the long and complex process of writing fiction. The scene's transgression of reality and fantasy shows the very core of fictional story telling; it also illustrates Bergman's characteristic playful interaction with the fictional world at the moment of creation. In his notebooks, Bergman sometimes converses with himself, often in a playful self-ironic manner, or even interacts with the fiction at the moment of writing, much like a child's make believe games or a daydream fantasy. The question is how to understand such games and playful distractions in the process of writing? What does the transgression of reality and fantasy represent in Bergman's filmmaking and screenwriting? In this article, I will address these questions and discuss the creative playfulness materialised in the writings of Ingmar Bergman.

Bergman's writings are examined from a perspective of genetic criticism in combination with perspectives on screenwriting as intermediate process across media and in stages. The focus lies on what Jedd Deppmann, Daniel Ferrer, and Michel Grodon in their introduction to genetic criticism label 'the movement of writing', an examination of 'tangible documents such as writers' notes, drafts and proof corrections' in order to understand 'the moment of writing that must be inferred from them'.^[2] This perspective is not equivalent to a biographical or even psychological approach to the creative mind of the author; it is rather an aesthetic approach to how the subject of the author's thoughts is materialised, or in Ferrer's words 'produced', in the text.^[3] In Bergman's case, the tangible objects in the writing process are notebooks, screenplay drafts, and versions of the finished screenplay, from working script to shooting script and published screenplays.

The Ingmar Bergman archives, where the notes and screenplay drafts are collected and digitised, allow such an examination of the writing process. The archive consists of the donation of Bergman's personal collection of notes, drafts, letters, and other documents – personal and professional – from his early career in the 1930s until the last productions in the early 2000s, across media and art forms. The archive gives a unique insight into the process of Bergman's creative work, yet few scholars have examined the material. Apart from my previous research on the topic,^[4] Jan Holmberg has published a

book on Bergman as a literary author.[5] Holmberg analyses the screenplays as autonomous artworks, while my perspective foregrounds the process – the process from notes to screenplays and the process from writing to film. Maaret Koskinen, who participated in the founding of the Ingmar Bergman archives, has also published on the writings of Bergman. Among her publications the case study of the film *Tystnaden* (*The Silence*, 1963) is particularly interesting here; in this study, the notebooks and screenplay drafts of the preparation of the film are presented as background to the film analysis.[6] However, my research on the topic is the first analysis of the writing process in Bergman's filmmaking as a whole. The playful dimension of Bergman's writing and filmmaking refers both to his method of creative writing and the playful dimension of the finished artwork, i.e. the films and screenplays. This article begins with a discussion of play and playfulness in art and creative work in general, and continues with an analysis of what I refer to as the aesthetics of play in Bergman's notebooks, screenplay drafts, and screenplays.

Play and artistic creation

The connection between art and play is conceptualised in aesthetic theory since Romanticism, in particular Friedrich Schiller's philosophy of the joy of play as the driving force of artistic creation. The correlation of art and play takes different forms in different theoretical contexts, from psychoanalysis, the theory of creativity, to theories of fiction or poststructuralist aesthetics. These different theoretical approaches share a notion of play as a positive, liberating, and transgressive activity in the psyche of the artist or in the artwork itself: play gives room for paradoxes of transgressing fantasy and reality, and play allows the artist at the same time to be present in and absent from the concrete actual space and time of the act of creation.

Concretely, play in literary writing can mean at least two things: first, play is a creative driving force that generates new ideas and develops stories. Second, play is an aesthetic dimension of the text that transgresses conceptual or narrative limits and borders.

In psychoanalysis, the concept of play is most central in Donald W. Winnicott's writings; for Winnicott, play is crucial for self-construction and can be traced in various activities such as artistic creation and psychoanalytical treatment.[7] Unlike Freud, Winnicott foregrounds the transgressive aspect of play and regards it as an activity on the threshold of fantasy and reality.

Play is also a key concept in Roland Barthes' and Jacques Derrida's early post-structuralism, where conceptual play destabilises meaning and decentres the unified structure of the text.[8] Also in theories on creative thinking play is central; here it generates new ideas and norm-breaking thinking as it allows us to associate freely and in unexpected patterns.[9]

In Bergman's creative work, playfulness is particularly visible in the notebooks where the writing develops spontaneously and with an open mind. The notebooks have the dual function of being at the same time a creative diary (documenting the real creative process) and fiction (with early versions of the fiction that is about to develop). It is not the author's personal life that is documented in notebooks, but the creative process of writing. This gives the text a self-reflexive dimension: the author continuously comments on the fiction that develops. The ambivalence between reality and fiction is also part of the final artwork, in particular in the screenplays' self-reflexive dimensions and how the 'I' of the text is articulated. The narrating agent of the screenplay can be Bergman the author; it can be a fictional character or a narrator. This ambivalence of agency of notebooks and screenplays represents the very core of the auto-fictitious dimension of Bergman's work, in which the autobiographical is given fictitious form and the fictional is nourished from real life.

Bergman's *oeuvre* is broad and varied; it is characterised by continuous renewal and rewritings of old ideas into new stories. Play is an activity driven by lust or joy, which gives liberty of creation within given frames. In comparison with games and gaming the activity of free play is more open; it is an activity that to a greater extent transgresses and changes given frames and rules. There are rules and frames also in play, although to a lesser degree.[10] In playful writing the frame can be the time frame or the physical tools used for writing, for instance pen and paper. In Bergman's case the disciplined daily routine of writing hours and the importance in his choices of pens and paper represent the conditions that set the rules for the spontaneity and freedom at the moment of writing. Bergman was a disciplined and well-structured writer: he wrote three hours daily and chose pen and paper with accuracy.[11] These daily writing routines bound with rules and habits constitute the frame of playful writing with free associations, self-ironic jokes, seemingly irrelevant comments, or playful interaction with the fictional characters.

Bergman himself has compared artistic work with child's play, and the playful side of his *persona* has also been highlighted in portraits of the *auteur*. The documentary film *Bilder från lekstugan* (*Images from the Playhouse*, Stig

Björkman, 2009), a film based on Bergman's short films that he made during the shooting of his feature films, shows Bergman making jokes in front of the camera and with the other members of the film team. The stage play *Arkivet för orealiserabara drömmar och visioner* (*The Archive of Unrealisable Dreams and Visions*, Marcus Lindeen, Stockholms stadsteater, 2012), a play based on Bergman's rejected screenplay ideas, shows burlesque scenes and profane jokes mocking characters such as 'the king', 'the queen', and various characters that represent the artist or the director. The playful should, however, not be confused with the humoristic or jokey. Humour and jokes are playful, but play can also be a fully severe and austere activity without humour. Bergman's humoristic side is part of the playful dimension of his creative work, but there are also other aspects of playfulness in Bergman's writing and filmmaking. In this study, the playfulness is not to be understood as being opposed to the serious tone, the demoniac presence, or the anxiety that is so present in Bergman's work.

The notebook: Diary and fiction

The notebook is a creative diary in which Bergman reflects on the writing process and at the same time gives form to the first ideas for a fictional story that will develop in the screenplay. The notes are for the most part either searching descriptions of characters or fragmentary scenes or situations without any clear ending or beginning. Also, Bergman often switches focus and begins a new story or a different line of thought and sometimes the fragments of a story that develop in a screenplay will turn into two different screenplays in the end. Now and then there are short dialogue sections or a general overview of the whole story, but for the most part the fiction in the notebook is fragments of scenes, descriptions, and narrative situations or character descriptions that may explain a character's back story or psychological constitution.

The notebooks do not only give unique insights into the creative process; they also show how much of the creative process that is not materialised in writing. The fragmentary form of the notebook reveals the absences and blanks in the note taking. The function of the notebook often seems to be problem-solving, which means that comments on the problems in the process of developing a scene or a character are more often described than the final solution or result. The notebook has an ambiguous address and purpose.

One purpose of the notes is to make thoughts clear in the present or to provoke new ideas in the act of writing; another is to create a memory for the future, to write a text that can be re-read at some time when the thoughts of the present are lost or forgotten. Each notebook entry is dated, which shows that the notebooks to some extent are written to be re-read by future readers, be it Bergman himself or a reader in a future public sphere. Throughout the notebooks there are words and sentences underlined with a red pen, which indicates that Bergman has re-read the notes. In the autobiographical book *Images* (1995) he also continuously refers to his notebooks in the description of the process of filmmaking.[12]

The sometimes self-ironically playful tone in the notebooks can be interpreted in terms of the author's self-distancing point of view. For instance, when he in one passage explains that he has been invited to Hollywood and adds the comment 'or whatever it's called and how it is spelled' we can assume that he very well knows what Hollywood is and how it is spelled, but that he jokingly wants to perform as a character who does not.[13] In the same manner as most diaries, Bergman's notebook, as a creative diary, is not only a tool to document but also to create a persona, perhaps with future readers in mind. It is telling that Bergman himself donated the collection of notebooks and screenplay drafts for the foundation of an archive before his death. Bergman's writing and filmmaking always perform on the threshold of the public and intimate, and this is also true of the personal notes in the notebooks. At the same time, the text in the notebook is far from being a fully conscious construction of the author's self, not even to himself as a future reader. It is obvious that the notes' primary purpose is to capture the thought in the present in its fluent nature, to allow spontaneous ideas in the moment to form the text. Coherence and context are lacking from the fragmentary form of the notebook writing, and the notes are often cryptic. Recent research has foregrounded Bergman's 'self-fashioning' and his aim to control his *persona* in the public sphere.[14] In order to fully understand the complexity of Bergman's creation we need to modify this image of the manipulating artist Bergman, or at least discuss the controlling side of Bergman's self fashioning in relation to the open, searching, and spontaneous writing that gives room for the unpredictable and the improvised.

The notebooks include frequent passages that seem to fill out gaps, perhaps temporary creative blanks or an inability to progress, or possibly distracting procrastinations. It is significant that Bergman continues to write also when the words are seemingly purposeless for the fiction that develops, that

he gives space to distinctions and gaps in his writing. For instance, there are many examples in the notebooks when Bergman interrupts the story in development to reflect on the pen he is writing with. One example is found in a notebook that sketches a story that is an early version of *Vargtimmen (Hour of the Wolf)* (and in part also a precursor to *Persona*): in the middle of a dialogue between the female protagonist (Alma) and a ghostlike creature Bergman interrupts the fiction and describes how his pen has fallen out of the window:

“Was someone there?”

Alma nods silently. It was but what was it?

“What did he look like?”

“I don’t know,” Alma says helplessly. “It was an inhuman.”

(I dropped my pen out of the window. First, I thought of leaving it there and writing with my two new pens. But, now I think that this blue pen is so alive and its tip jumps around like hell so I decided to go down and get it. Now it’s done.)

“Did you see anyone else?”

“No. I got scared and sneaked in. I think he is gone now.”[15]

The ambiguous function of the notebook, to document and at the same time to develop a fictional story, is particularly visible in such passages, where there is an abrupt shift between the here and now of the writing situation and the fiction.

The notebook as material object, or the pen that Bergman is writing with, could be understood in terms of what Winnicott labels ‘transitional object’, that is a tool that allows the transgression between the actual and the imaginary.[16] Tools like pen and paper are not, like the child’s teddy bear, an object that moves between reality and fantasy, but the author’s material objects enable in similar ways as the child’s toys a transgression of real and fantasy: the materialisation of fantasy in writing anchors the thoughts in an actual time and space at the same time as they give space for fantasy to develop freely.

The details of the material conditions of writing are important for many authors; the desk, the pen and the sheets of paper can play a quasi-ritual role for transferring into the fictional world at the moment of creation. To Bergman, well known for his nearly fetishised relation to paper material and writing routines, the tools are of great importance. The notebooks are simple

lined notepads and the pen a regular ball-pen, but the ordinary and causal does not mean that the choice of pen and paper is insignificant. Perhaps the simple notepad was the ideal in the early phase, characterised by free associations and where the written words are not yet ‘art’, but spontaneous thoughts and reflections in the moment. Reflections on the pen and the paper are both jokes and humorous comments with a self-ironic twist, but also self-reflexive comments that can be understood in terms of a media materialist aesthetics. This spontaneous free way of writing, where the pen follows the thoughts, has parallels with the aesthetics of the finished screenplay and film. The self-reflexive modernism in films such as *Persona*, where a projector is displayed and the story interrupted when the film strip burns, show a similar ambivalence of the here and now of the film viewing and the fictional world.

Other ‘distractions’ from the story in the notebook are more likely to be understood as a kind of mental enforcement to just continue writing also when there is no progression of thought. It can be a way to send off doubtful thoughts or fill the gap in creative pauses or impasses. Later in the same notebook as cited above, at a point when the story develops slowly the author repeats the word ‘tålamod’ (patience) until the word breaks into its components ‘tåla’ (endure or put up with) and ‘mod’ (courage).^[17] Perhaps the repetition of the word patience, in the wordplay with the components of the word, gives courage to continue and even feel satisfaction with the ideas that he doubts. This notebook is written at a period when Bergman takes aesthetic risks and searches for new aesthetic forms and ideas. The courage to develop new ideas can arise from the flow of writing. Using a typology by Siegfried Scheibe, Bergman can be described as a *Papierarbeiter*: an author who so to speak thinks with his pen.^[18] This stands in contrast to a *Kopfarbeiter*: an author who formulates thoughts mentally before writing them down. This improvised method characterises the early phase in Bergman’s writing, the reflections in the notebook.

There are few images or illustrations in Bergman’s notebooks. Unlike auteurs such as Stanley Kubrick, Agnès Varda, or Federico Fellini, Bergman does not prepare his films with images but almost only with words. There are, however, sometimes doodles in the margins, and at others more conscious non-verbal expressions that become part of the creative process. For instance, in one notebook there is a line titled ‘exercise in simplicity’ that crosses a sheet of paper. In this example, the seemingly irrelevant becomes a conscious method to develop aesthetic ideas beyond verbal language, some-

thing particularly important in Bergman's films in this period. The associations, digressions, and detours in the notebook are at the same time spontaneous comments of the moment and part of a creative method of writing fiction. The notebook is a tool to create original and innovative stories.

Edvard de Bono, theorist of creativity, describes in his classic work on lateral thinking how play, as well as jokes and humour, is essential to any kind of creative activity. De Bono develops creative games, such as role-play, that aim to break with the expected behaviour or patterns that open to new perspectives and ideas.[19] Such breaks with the expected characterises the notebook: a dramatic situation or comments can be interrupted by a reflection on the pen or by wordplay that transforms the written and gives it new meaning. It is no coincidence that Bergman begins with this fragmentary searching creative diary in a period when his artistic freedom and experimentation increased, in the late 1950s (even though he also kept notebooks before this).

In the example with the pen, the shift from fiction to reality of the here and now of the writing situation is clear and unambiguous. In other cases, the passages between fiction and the author's reality are more ambiguous and transgressive. The 'I' of the text sometimes refers both to Bergman as author and to a fictional character, and Bergman sometimes speaks to himself in third person. In one characteristic passage in a notebook the events are described from a first-person perspective, but it is not clear whether the narrator is Bergman the author, an anonymous narrating agent, or a fictional character. Suddenly, the prose is interrupted by reflections on the 'I' who is speaking. In the margins, the word 'I' ('jag' in Swedish) is written in capital letters and encircled with two arrows pointing at it from opposite directions. In the following sentence the 'I' is transformed into a 'he'.

Who is this secret 'I'? That's something to think about. I think it has to be ambiguous fission in wishes and dreams. Whole series of interesting personalities. They come and go – very surprising. But this is clear: He doesn't keep very good track of his characters. Now and then he is losing them.[20]

The notebook is characterised by such splits and fusions between identities; an 'I' becomes a 'he' or a 'she', and those pronouns refer at the same time to a fictional character and the narrating author.

In another passage in the same notebook, the author speaks to a fictional character at the moment of creation, a character he has difficulties with and does not know how to shape. 'How can I reach you? How can I feel you as real more than in brief moments? How can I experience you with emotions more

than in brief instants?’[21] This is the beginning of what later develops into the silent character of Elisabeth Vogler in *Persona*. Bergman’s initial difficulties in creating this character later develop into a silent mysterious person who has chosen not to speak. This is an example of how inability can still stimulate creativity by expressing the difficulties in writing. This passage continues with him turning the focus onto himself through the fictional character: ‘How do you experience me?’, he asks, and continues: ‘I have a feeling you know much more, are able to do much more. How can you experience me as real?’[22]

The character created by the author is also shaping the contours of the author materialised in the text, as if the character knows things about him that the author himself is unaware of. Like the child in a make believe game, the author simulates the fiction and therefore allows an integration of the real and the fantasy. The ambivalence of agency in the notebook – that is transgressions between author, narrator, and character – continues in the screenplays. In the screenplays this ambivalence is no longer a creative method but rather an aesthetics of self-reflexivity and auto-fiction. The latter undermines the autobiographical ‘pact’ between author and reader and negotiates the relation between fiction and the autobiographical: the ‘I’ in an auto-fictional story is sometimes identified as the author, sometimes as a fictitious narrator or character.[23] In Bergman’s case, the distinction between author, narrator, and character are constantly undermined in the screenplay, a negotiation of identity that can be traced in the author’s identification with the fiction in the notebook.

Narrator in the screenplays

The screenplay is, in Steven Maras’ words, an ‘intermediate’ text in a concrete sense of the word, that is, a text written to be transformed into another aesthetic form, i.e. the film.[24] Bergman’s screenwriting is at the same time anchored in the dramaturgical conventions of industrial filmmaking of the classical period (the context in which he began his screenwriting career) and experimental screenwriting of post-war cinematic modernism. Bergman’s screenplays most often follow the classic three-act structure with a development from set up to climax, but they can also be placed in the literary screenwriting tendency of the late 1950s and 1960s, with screenplays such as

Marguerite Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour* (1960) and Alain Robbe-Grillet's *L'année dernière à Marienbad* (*Last year in Marienbad*, 1961) as prime examples.

Bergman's screenwriting has always been regarded as 'literary' compared to most other screenwriting, and as such 'autonomous' in relation to the film.[25] His screenplays are published in book editions and translated into many languages. In recent years, they have also increasingly been used for stage productions. Many of Bergman's screenplays are written in a literary style that in some ways shares more similarities with the prose fiction of stage drama than conventional screenwriting. Some of his screenplays include scene text written in the past tense and even with a first-person narrator, a subjective voice that in most cases is removed in the film adaptation. The screenplay of *Persona*, for instance, begins with the words 'I imagine the transparent ribbon of film rushing through the projector. Washed clean of signs and pictures.'[26] In the film, the cinematic apparatus itself replaces the narrator; here the images running through the projector are displayed before the eyes of the viewer instead of viewed by a narrator. This is one of many examples of how Bergman's screenwriting and filmmaking oscillates between transmediation and media materialism. The screenplay is written to be transformed into film, yet the written text shows literary dimensions that are not adapted into film.

In other cases, fragments of a narrating voice are kept in the film, often with Bergman's own voice (for instance a short fragment in *Persona*, the final scene in *En passion* [*The Passion of Anna*], 1969, parts of *Viskningar och rop* [*Cries and Whispers*], 1973, and the introductory parts to *Scener ur ett äktenskap* [*Scenes from a Marriage*], 1973). However, classical continuous narrative voice-overs are only exceptions in Bergman's filmmaking. Instead, he often gives characters a narrating role, mainly in the many long monologues describing the characters' memories, experiences, and interpretations of the events or the characters' personalities. The blurred boundaries of character and narrator, as well as of showing and telling modes of representation, in these monologues can be traced in the transition from notebook to screenplay: the author's reflections on characters' back-stories in the notebooks are sometimes transformed into monologues in the screenplays. One example is the scene in *Scenes from a Marriage* when the character Marianne (Liv Ullmann) reads her diary to her husband. The words in the diary, explaining the backgrounds and psychological conditions of Marianne and her husband, are, in the note-

book, the author's reflections on the characters. The diary as the fiction functions as a *mise-en-abyme* of the notebook in the creative process, a depiction of the notebook as space for the author's reflections on the self and others.

The changing narrating subjects foreground the mobility of agency and Bergman's interest in transformations and changes across the process of creation. This indicates that it might be misleading to think of the literary qualities of Bergman's writing in terms of the artistic autonomy of each version of the story. Instead, the artistic quality is related to the intermediate process across different media forms and utterances, in the relations between the notebook, the screenplays, and the films. In the screenplay, the play of the transitions of the speaking 'I' is not used as in the notebook as creative method, but rather an aesthetic self-reflexive gesture that allows fusion and division of narrator and characters. This aesthetic can be conceptualised in line with Derrida's description of play as presence and absence of the self in a given structure, and therefore disrupts that structure.[27]

The play with the unity of the self is particularly visible in a screenplay that was never adapted into film, namely the screenplay *Människoätarna* (*The Cannibals*, 1964), an early version of what later became *Vargtimmen* (*The Hour of the Wolf*, 1968) but also contains elements that are later re-written into *Persona*. The story in *The Cannibals* is told by multiple more or less unreliable narrators. Most of the scene texts are quotes from a fictitious diary, other parts told by a person who found the diary. These two narrative frames also occur in *The Hour of the Wolf*, but they are only explained in the prologue and not continuously integrated in the story. The storytelling as act is particularly foregrounded in a section labelled 'Alma's story', where the narrator explains that his description is a re-telling of Alma's verbal, sometimes arcane, testimony. The narrators in the frame, both the diarist and the person tracing the diarist's testimony, are factious versions of Bergman as author, accentuated by the fact that the dating of the fictitious diary coincides approximately with the actual period when Bergman wrote the script. Just like the diarist in the fiction, Bergman dates his writing; apart from dating the notebook entries, Bergman also signs his screenplays with date and location. Bergman's interplay in *The Cannibals* between the fictions and the actual writing continues in the film *The Hour of the Wolf*, where the diary, showed once in the images, is the same kind of lined notepad that Bergman usually used for his note-taking. *The Cannibals*, as an un-filmed screenplay, is a fragment of an artwork, a text that never reached an audience as a film or in a published book version.

It is also a screenplay that is more ‘literary’ than most of Bergman’s screenplays, with the multiple narrative levels and storytellers.

Writing as memory and forgetting

Bergman’s scripts are generally written/edited in three versions: a handwritten draft and a typed so-called ‘working script’ that is later revised into the shooting script. In addition to these versions, there is also the published version, which is not identical with any of the script versions but closest to the shooting script. The differences between the versions are overall relatively small. Bergman’s screenwriting is in this sense characteristic of *auteurist* filmmaking where the director has much control of the filmmaking process and does not need to adapt the script to different readers or develop script versions that include technical instructions. There are generally fewer revisions between versions of a Bergman screenplay and changes in it than in conventional industrial filmmaking.[28] There are almost no revisions of the phrasing or stylistic changes from the first handwritten script to the other versions. Changes mainly include changes of content, removal, and revisions in a single scene. Bergman is obviously not an author who revises stylistic details in the scene descriptions or the dialogue. This indicates that he does not necessarily ‘think with his pen’ when writing the screenplay; this spontaneous writing method probably characterises the early note-taking primarily. In the screenplay, Bergman is a ‘Kopfarbeiter’ rather than a ‘Papierarbeiter’.

The screenplays that for one reason or another never made it on film are not rewritten or changed; instead, they serve as inspiration for new screenplays. The rich diversity of Bergman’s *oeuvre* is partly explained by his ability to use earlier writings in new productions. Traits of character, situations, and dialogue segments recur from one screenplay to another. The transformation of *The Cannibals* into *The Hour of the Wolf* and in part also *Persona* is a conspicuous example of the importance of rewritings. Bergman’s whole *oeuvre* can be regarded as variations of themes, motives, and characters. These variations negotiate the autonomy of the single individual artwork, as the process of rewriting continues also after the seemingly final version of a story. The artwork’s process of becoming can instead be understood as a network with links to a variety of different texts and versions, some links stronger than others.

The rewritings can be conceptualised in terms of how play changes memory and experience and turn it into fantasy: each new re-writing or adaptation ‘remembers’ the precursor and at the same time represents something new. Koskinen aptly describes Bergman’s last film *Saraband* (2003), a retrospective film that reflects explicitly on previous creations, as memory and forgetting together.[29] The paradox of combining remembering and forgetting that characterises Bergman’s whole *oeuvre* is particularly interesting when it comes to representations of violent events. In depictions of violence, the variations in the process of creation can be understood in relation to the psychosocial mechanisms of trauma, where repetition of the past event and repression of it, in the form of fantasy, intersect.[30]

In drafts, notes, and un-filmed screenplays, violent scenes are often more explicit than in the final versions or those seen by an audience. In *The Cannibals*, for instance, there is a cruel scene with a woman giving birth to a premature foetus and then, when she discovers it is alive, suffocating it and burying it. The scene text explicitly describes the actions with the words: ‘The foetus, five months old, is lying in a mush of blood and excrement whimpering weakly with shivering arms and legs.’ Then follows the cruel seemingly affectless violent action: ‘She squeezes the upper part of the bundle, where the head is, with both hands and suffocates in this way the snivelling noise.’[31] Later in the screenplay we are informed that the brutal scenes might have been a fantasy, a mental transformation, of what was actually a miscarriage, into murder. The screenplay somehow depicts how a memory is turned into fiction, a self-reflexive image of Bergman’s transformation of past writings or memories into new stories. In Bergman’s re-writings of *The Cannibals* into other screenplays, he transforms the representation of violence from the brutally explicit to the implicit. In *Persona* there are traces of the scenes with the dying foetus in the monologue where Elisabeth (through Alma’s voice) confesses her difficulties in pregnancy and motherhood. In this monologue, there are no descriptions of actual violent events, but fantasies and wishes regarding such violent actions. Elisabeth describes her ‘disgust’ and ‘hatred’ toward her child, how she tried to provoke a miscarriage and wishes ‘her child to die’. The brutal depiction in *The Cannibals* can be seen as a realisation of Elisabeth’s fantasies in *Persona*.

In *Persona*, the theme of the mother abandoning her child is linked to the historical trauma of the Holocaust and the Second World War: in one scene, Elisabeth observes the famous photograph from the Jürgen Stroop report with Nazi soldiers in the Warsaw Ghetto pointing their guns at a young boy

raising his hands above his head. The photo of the boy is paralleled with the image of Elisabeth's son, shown in a photograph that Elisabeth's wants to avoid looking at. In the notebook, the photograph of the boy is mentioned but not included in the fiction; instead, the photograph is the object of Bergman's reflections on the shortcomings of art and the inability of art to represent reality: 'My art can't melt, transform or forget that little boy in the picture', he writes and continues with a reflection on how these photographs reduce his art to 'buffoonery or something indifferent', meaningful only to himself.[32] The anxiety of the inability of art to represent the cruelty of history and reality characterises the postwar aesthetic crisis with the question of how to represent the Holocaust as the central issue. In Bergman's case, this aesthetic question on representation becomes an issue of the relation between the personal creation and the broader historical political context; it reveals a division between the artistic creation as intimate and historical reality as a sphere unreachable by the artist. The photo of the boy in the Warsaw Ghetto reveals in Bergman's eyes a personal anxiety and his shortcomings as an artist. At the same time, the reflections in the notebook also shed light on why violence as such cannot be represented directly, but only indirectly through mediations of it. This is revealed when the re-writing from *The Cannibals* to *Persona* goes from direct depiction of violence to an indirect re-telling of fantasies of violent actions.

Abandoned, punished children and parents who leave or neglect their children are recurrent themes in Bergman's filmmaking. The comparison between *Persona* and *The Cannibals* shows how this theme is depicted in different ways in one screenplay compared to another. In the final example in this article, I will compare two versions of the same scene from the film *The Serpent's Egg* (1977), a film depicting a couple living in Germany during the years before the rise of Nazism. Also, in this case, the rewriting moves from the direct and explicit to the indirect and implicit, and also in this case, historical trauma is linked to personal trauma and the intimate. The scene in question shows a psychological experiment carried out by a scientist and displayed on a film screen, testing a woman's endurance when isolated in a room together with a screaming inconsolable infant. The film within the film shows the woman's gradual despair growing into uncontrollable rage, and in the end she kills the infant. The German doctor carrying out the experiment represents the de-humanised ideology of Nazism. The violent action itself is

neither shown in the film images nor described in detail by the doctor assisting with the projection. Just before the killing, the projection is interrupted and the doctor explains that the apparatus is not ‘in perfect condition’.

In the collection of drafts and notes at the Ingmar Bergman archives there is an earlier version of this scene noted on some loose sheets of paper inserted into the notebook of the film *The Silence*. In this early version the historical-political context is not explicit. The man who is showing the film is not a doctor, but an amateur filmmaker who wants to show his ‘hobby’ to a friend. In contrast to the final version of the scene, in this first draft the violent action itself is described in great detail. The scene text depicts how the woman throws the infant against the wall and then stamps it to death.

The woman lifts the screaming infant and hurls it against the wall. Her face is unconscious with rage. The infant is screaming and moves in cramps on the floor. The woman stamps on it repeatedly until the screaming suddenly ceases in a gurgling noise. The woman’s face registers the sudden silence. She sits on the bed with her hands pressing against her stomach. And an open mouth.[33]

As in the other examples, the scene is re-written into a more implicit and indirect representation of violence. In this case, the re-writing also places the scene in a historical-political context that is lacking in the early draft. However, in both versions, in the film within the film, there is a self-reflexive dimension that foregrounds the mediation of violence and problematises the representation of violence. Also, in the case of *The Cannibals* the violent scene is indirect: it is a scene that is in between a nightmare fantasy and reality. In all versions the representation of violence is problematised, but the re-writing often adds layers of the mediated, the indirect, and the implicit to the depiction.

Conclusions

Bergman develops his stories in a playful creative writing. This playfulness is first and foremost an open and spontaneous writing mode, which generates a free and liberating space that transgresses reality and fantasy. This transgressive act shares similarities with the child’s make believe game, where the actual space of play co-exists with the fantasy being played out. The playfulness of Bergman’s writing can also be wordplays and ambiguous agency by playing with meaning of the word ‘I’ in the text. In the notebook it is the dual

function of the writing to at one and the same time document the creative process and develop the fiction that creates this ambiguity. In the screenplays the roles of narrator, character, and author intersect. The process from notebook to screenplay shows that the author's self as construction in the text takes different and changing forms.

In the notebook the playfulness lies in the creative method that allows distractions, detours, and open searching. In the screenplay the play with absence and presence of narrators and narrative levels is less a method and more an aesthetic dimension of the text. The freedom that characterises the early phase in the notebook lays the foundation for the creative process that generates new ideas and a variety of new original stories. The re-writing of old screenplays into new ones continues that process of the unexpected in the screenwriting process. Notebook and screenplay are two kinds of writing, playful in different ways, but part of the same creative process that in the end generates new stories and renewed aesthetic ideas.

The spontaneous is essentially about losing control by allowing yourself to be surprised. The scene from *Faithless* in the introduction of this article depicts the paradox in what happens when the author is, so to speak, surprised by the fiction that has developed in writing: at the moment when the author creates a fictitious character the author becomes someone else, a fantasy or a fiction that he cannot entirely control.

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Notes

- [1] Bergman 2000, p. 9. My translation.
- [2] Deppmann & Ferrer & Grodon 2004, p. 2.
- [3] Ferrer 2002, p. 57.
- [4] Rossholm 2017, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2011. The research presented in this article is previously published in Swedish (2017 and 2015).
- [5] Holmberg 2018.
- [6] Koskinen 2010.
- [7] Winnicott 2002.
- [8] Derrida 1995; Barthes 1977.
- [9] Most notably in de Bono 1993.
- [10] Pope 2005, pp 119-121.
- [11] Timm 2008, p. 165.
- [12] Bergman 1995.
- [13] Bergman, unpublished notebook 1975. My translation. A selection of Bergman's notebooks has been recently published (2018). In this article, I refer to the archive documents rather than the published texts. The reason for this choice is not only that I have examined the archive documents in my research but also because some aspects of the handwritten original are revised in the published text.
- [14] For instance in Staiger 2008.
- [15] Bergman, unpublished notebook 1962-1964. My translation.
- [16] Winnicott 2002, pp. 1-34.
- [17] Bergman, unpublished notebook, 1962-1964. My translation.
- [18] Scheibe 1987.
- [19] De Bono 1993, pp. 8-17. For games as creative exercise, see pp. 77-87.
- [20] Bergman, unpublished notebook 1962-1964. My translation.
- [21] Ibid.
- [22] Ibid.
- [23] The literary theorist Philippe Lejeune, in a study of auto-fiction from a perspective of genetic criticism, explains that the materialisation of the author's self in the text takes various forms and expressions. See, Lejeune 2007, p. 144.
- [24] Maras 2009, p. 6.
- [25] For instance, Ingemanson 1984, and more recently Holmberg 2018.
- [26] Bergman 2002, p. 23.
- [27] Derrida 1995, p. 294.
- [28] Described in Price 2010, pp. 63-73.
- [29] Koskinen 2008.
- [30] Walker 2005.

- [31] Bergman, unpublished screenplay 1964. My translation.
- [32] Bergman, unpublished notebook 1962-1964. My translation.
- [33] Ibid.