Linda Rugg looks at Ingmar Bergman’s influence as an auteur projected onto other filmmakers. She looks to the roots of “auteur theory” by Luffaut and Godard, defines auteur theory in her own way, and then explains how auteurist films actually transcend national and personal boundaries.

Definition of auteur theory, according to Rugg:

- Definition of auteur theory, according to Rugg: “One might begin by saying that an auteur is an individual, usually acting both as director and screen writer, whose artistic vision is projected through his or her films” (221). My understanding of “auteur” is that each director has a characteristic style, trademarks, which make their way into the films and make them recognizable.
- “The reception of an auteur’s work seems to operate on a plane that exceeds an individual artist’s vision” (221).
- She quotes Birgitta Steene’s article on Bergman (1998): “Ingmar Bergman’s creative persona, embedded in the work itself, communicates directly with another human being” (221).
- Rugg wants to do away with “national viewership” and “cultural reception”—she looks instead at “creative persona” (referring to Bergman’s film Persona) that communicates directly with another human being and transcends boundaries and foreignness. (222)

Bergman a la mode

- Bergman claimed that film was a “universal language” (223). Godard even seemed to claim that language cannot be used to describe the experience of cinema: “It is sufficient unto itself.”
- Three characteristics of politique des auteurs as it appeared in the journal Cahiers du cinema:
  1. Photographic image should speak for itself: images do not explain or narrate, they show.
  2. “The creation, projection, and consumption of film should form a direct link between the auteur and the viewer” (225).
  3. Auteurist vision is independent of space and time (geographical culture, and history). Auteur films reveal personal vision, associated with artistic genius. It is like a confession, and yet it is also public.

- Godard calls Bergman a “filmmaker of the instant.” As Joyce and Proust are known to do in their writing, he begins with a snapshot and extends it. The nature of film is illusory—film consists of 24 individual frames per second that pass before our eyes are perceived as motion pictures. (224)
• Film is not chronological like a written text, it is a “spatial expression of time” (226).
• Rugg describes the biographical elements of Truffaut’s film *The 400 Blows*.
• Rugg compares the final scenes of *The 400 Blows* to the end of Bergman’s film *Summer with Monika*, which is referenced in the film (the boy steals a poster of this film). They each show the protagonist running away and then looking directly at the camera in a “direct gaze”. Therefore, this is “an account of his own persona as filmmaker in relation to a ‘father’ filmmaker” Bergman (227).
• Looking at the camera breaks the illusion of the “fourth wall” between the viewer and the action of the film

**Bergman’s Persona**

• Rugg explains that Bergman’s film *Persona* was born (loosely) from his personal experience of temporary aphasia, or inability to speak.
• It is one of Bergman’s most famous films. There are two women in it, Elisabet Vogler is a mute actress who is silently manipulative, the other woman is her nurse, Alma, who talks and establishes a level of intimacy even though the other woman never vocally responds.
• “Confusion of selfhood” becomes visible in a scene when halves of each of their faces come together to reveal one merged face.
• Rugg claims, “Boundaries between their psychic selves have been dissolved” but also “the boundary between the ‘real’ world and the projected film world is breached by the film” (230).
  o The film *Persona* shows the director and cameraman watching the film, and “calls attention to itself as a cinematic work of art,” (230).
  o This is almost identical to Patrica Waugh’s definition of metafiction: “fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (2, *Metafiction*, 1984).
  o The word *persona* refers to both mask and character.
  o Carl Jung uses the term *persona* as the mask we present to the world to present a certain images to others. This implies some level of concealment or secrecy.

• Bergman tries to break the boundaries of filmmaker and film, and film and spectator.
• Rugg claims that *Persona* challenges the idea of a single artistic genius behind a film. The making of films may seem to be the product of a single artistic genius, but in reality, producing a film is a collaborative effort, and films are illusory (232)
Questions:

• Do you think that a film can be transparently autobiographical?

• Rugg writes about “the voice of God,” the authoritative voice (Bergman’s own) that speaks in a voice-over in Persona. What is the significance of the scene when “God” the puppet appears to Alexander in Isak’s antique shop?

• Rugg concludes by stating that “primacy of the image as a conduit to the heart and soul of the viewer, regardless of national identity.” (240) Do you agree with this? Is it the images of a film that stay in our minds days, weeks, months, years later? Or is it perhaps a bit of dialogue? Or maybe the whole experience of the film sticks with us?

• How can the concept of a persona, a mask presented to the world, be applied to Fanny och Alexander?

• The dissolution of boundaries between reality and fiction occurs several times throughout Fanny och Alexander. For example, the prologue begins with a view of a toy theater. What other examples of this can be found in the film?

• Boundaries between selves are breached in the scene with Alexander and Ismael. How could Rugg’s explanation of boundaries merging in the film Persona be related to this scene?