

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY
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**INGMAR BERGMAN'S
NESTED DOLLS
NARRATIVITY AND FICTIONALITY IN CINEMA**

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Dedication

Ingmar Bergman
and other explorers and scholars of cinema

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For always encouraging my studies irrespective of the end goal

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ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY
ABSTRACT
FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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Swedish filmmaker Ingmar Bergman's cinema is often seen as a classic nexus between several generic categories: narrative, fiction, art cinema, auteur films. While generic approaches pursue the potential traits and underlying structures that distinguish one class from another, they also ingrain and idealise restrictive preconceptions. By exploring Bergman's formally and thematically related *The Silence* (1963) and the prologue of *Persona* (1966), my research attests that generic approaches are seriously inadequate to explain the multidimensionality of cinematic narrative.

In the first part of my study, I develop a three-tier analytical framework by reviewing the key approaches to narrative and cinematic fiction. Considering the insights of rhetorical narratology and C.S. Peirce's sign theory, I also postulate applicable theses for *narrativity* and *fictionality* in the cinematic context. The second part of the study demonstrates that this nested narratological model offers an illuminating approach to elaborate on how audiences exploit cinematic narrativity and fictionality as communicational resources and acts. Instead of relying on the predetermined *macro-structures* like syuzhet, plot, fabula, or story of Bergman's individual films, I explore *micro-relations* of Bergman's cinema across the proposed analytical tiers offering new readings of these canonical films.

Bergman's cinema not only advances cinematic images, experiences, and their references temporally with narrativity but also stratifies them across various levels with cinematic fictionality. Thus, cinematic narrativity not only hinges on the diegetic tier (or structural-story), but the extra-diegetic and thematic tiers also determine narrativity. The immediate experience and discursive dynamics in Bergman's cinema interweave author, audience, actors, medium, themes, and other artworks into integrated textual threads with fictional characters, events, and stories.

My study argues that cinematic narrative is not a predefined medium, component, or structure, but a text-external communicational event that engenders multifarious cinematic effects and signifying instances. As its original contribution to knowledge, I elaborate cinematic narrativity and fictionality as referential dynamics as well as communicational resources. These resources integrate immediate cinematic experience as well as interpretive engagement for communicational goals. I also maintain that my exploration helps to revisit the ambivalent takes on cinematic authorship, communication, and fiction/reality dichotomy.

Keywords: art cinema, narrativity, fictionality, rhetorical narrative theory, Bergman

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Images

Film stills from *Persona* (1966) and *The Silence* (1963)
in Chapter 1, 4, and 5

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I declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for any other award and that it is all my own work. I also confirm that this work fully acknowledges opinions, ideas and contributions from the work of others.

I declare that the Word Count of this Thesis is 79330 words

1. Introduction

1.1. Cinematic Image and Its Narratives



This is an image sequence extracted from two deceptively simple, consecutive scenes of Ingmar Bergman's *The Silence/Tystnaden* (1963). Although visual and film theorists have relentlessly debated what we see in the cinematic images¹, here I highlight the key areas relevant to my specific enquiry:

1.1.1. The Phenomenal Experience of Cinema

First, in a sense, these images evoke a parallel space-time continuum to the world and the moment we live in. When we look at the images, we can 'see' a boy, several men and women, their surroundings, and their actions: the boy is also looking into an image, a painting; we can intuitively distinguish the painted figures and the 'real' people. The two women in the last two frames seem to be looking at us. Especially, when our eyes meet the women's eyes, their space and time appear to continue with ours. With this sense of immediacy, these images seem as open windows to their content; simply, the signifier/signified relationship of the images becomes extraneous. Therefore, rather than imagination, hallucination, fantasy, or fictionalisation, the immediate

¹ Here, I consider cinematic images with their moving content. I discuss these debates in section 3.5.2

phenomenal experience of cinema seems to simply disregard some ‘realities’ that separate our world from the cinematic images. In other words, although cinema seems to be an embodied and immediate experience², this dimension does not exhaust all its possibilities.

1.1.2. The Diegetic Story

Secondly, we can also assume that the individuals in the images occupy a different space-time continuum from ours. The boundaries of the images appear to frame their space-time from an imaginable ‘whole’, which we cannot verify but can speculate about. The juxtaposition of the cinematic images also enhances both the continuity and discontinuity of the space-time across adjacent images. For example, the first few frames seem to constitute their own continuous space-time whereas the last three frames constitute a different space-time continuum from that of the earlier frames. If we watch these two original scenes in the cinematic form with its movement, we learn that the woman in the penultimate image is not looking at us but a bathroom mirror; the woman in the last image also catches the other woman’s eyes through the mirror from the adjacent room. This temporal and spatial flow of the events further reinforces the immediacy and verisimilitude of the cinematic experience. However, it also complicates the continuity between us and the world of characters: rather than a window, the cinema screen now becomes a mirror for the characters; since the cinema screen lets us know that we are in a different space from the characters, it also holds a ‘reflective’ mirror to us. If we watch more scenes from the film, we will come to know the identities and relationships between the characters of *The Silence*: at this point, the little child Johan, his mother Anna, and her ailing sister Ester stay in a hotel in an unknown foreign

² Elsaesser and Hagner (2015, p. 9) reasonably explain that in the ‘theories’ that consider cinema as a window, “perception is treated as almost completely disembodied because of its reduction to visual perception”. However, here, the specific phenomenal experience (not the theories) of cinema as an open window or continuous reality across ‘in’ and ‘out’ can be described as an embodied experience.

city; Johan is exploring the desolate corridors in the hotel; while he is engrossed in a painting, the old butler of the hotel playfully seizes him from behind. In this perspective, the images seem a 'medium' that provide partial access to a unique space-time continuum, different from ours. However, to coherently invoke this unique referential world—or the diegesis—of the film, the audience also needs to speculate and fill gaps following their quotidian intuition and artistic conventions³. Generally, this speculative construction is deemed as the fictional story of the film.

1.1.3. The Non-Fictional Story

Thirdly, we can also locate what we see in these images in the same space-time continuum as ourselves in a different but a more concrete sense: these are actual events that happened in the past in our own 'real-world'. The philosopher Stanley Cavell (1979, p. 23) captures this temporal rift phenomenologically: "the reality in a photograph is present to me while I am not present to it"⁴. In this sense, the above images are a cinematic trace of 'actual' non-fictional events: the boy actor is acting as if he is looking at the painting; the female actors are intentionally looking at the camera (not at a mirror), and their surrounding is a film set. This reality also expands beyond the present frames. Although the above images isolate a selective area from a larger event, the audiences can assume that the film crew of *The Silence* were acting outside the frame at the time; for instance, the eminent Swedish director Bergman was directing the film. The shots were organised and composed at the shoot, captured with a camera, juxtaposed in editing, dubbed, and mixed with sounds to produce a fiction film. Each recognised camera movement, composition, actor-expression, dialogue,

³ Narrative theorists and neo-formalists explore this contribution especially with the forms of story/discourse or fabula/syuzhet/style; fictional theorists inspired by the Possible Worlds Theory study the ontology and the referential relationships of fictional worlds. I discuss these aspects in section 2.2-2.3.

⁴ Cavell (pp.39-40) appears to suggest that this temporal split is firm and therefore, makes movies magical and ontologically unique (specificity); but I want to suggest that the other dimensions of cinema (discussed here) also make this rift unstable and inconclusive.

cut, or music is an indexical reference to the real-world historical act of authoring a film. Audiences can also learn and know the actors and crews' identities, their biographies, and the historical reports of the making of the film, *The Silence*. Such extra-textual knowledge inevitably influences audiences' intra-textual interpretations. For instance, audiences often subliminally construe the ethnicity, gender, and stereotypes of the characters based on the features of actors; some unique qualities of the actors can impress audiences beyond their fictional character, or, intertextually drawing on their other characters and public personas. These are also valid experiences and possible referential inferences of the cinematic images. However, it is important to note that even here, we construe, assume, imagine, and extend what we see, although we do not consider this imagination as fictional.

1.1.4. The Thematic Story

Fourthly, the particular configuration of these two scenes appears to invoke interesting relationships across the discussed domains: for instance, all of these images together trigger a virtuous circle of the theme, *gaze*: the little boy gazes at the naked couple through the frame of the painting; the brawny man in the painting ogles the nude woman's breasts while the nude woman is staring away; the old butler secretly watches the little boy while the boy is staring away; the two women in the last frames look at each other through the mirror; this active array of gazes suddenly remind us that we, as the audience, witness all of these events through the screen. The gazes through and within frames (painting, mirror, screen) and the exposure of *nudity*—since it reveals a view otherwise unseen—further reinforce the theme of *gaze* and its ethical dimension (intrusion of privacy and power relationships). It also invites us to associate and compare the intricacies of our spectatorship with the characters' actions. Many cinematic aspects like camera movements, angles, compositions, and timely cuts also

coherently contribute to this theme⁵. In this sense, these aspects can acquire their own contextual meanings rather than just being the way to simply ‘reveal’ the fictional world. Put differently, the themes of *The Silence* become the ‘presentation’ that impart meanings to the compositions, cuts, camera movements, and action, challenging the supposed dualism between story and its presentation. In this light, the progression of the fictional story of *The Silence* may also seem to be dynamically determined by its themes, without its characters’ awareness. Moreover, the mythical story depicted in the painting (Nessus and Deianira) can also present interesting intertextual meanings that are eventually reinforced with the progression of the film. Such a curious coherence among various cinematic dimensions inevitably indicates a conscious or subconscious agency behind the film.

1.1.5. Resistance to the Stories

Furthermore, despite these various possibilities, certain aspects of the images may hold some audiences spellbound, disrupting their ongoing engagement with the temporal flow of the film. This conflict between the possible meanings and the resistance to meaning seems to indicate a different experience of cinema *before*⁶ or *beyond*⁷ meanings. For instance, the explicitly naked breasts in the images, a facial expression, or a sudden howl may sensuously perturb some audiences. Nevertheless, such cinematic effects can also develop into motifs or themes in a film, and they might highlight a different

⁵ I discuss their functions and significance for this scene in section 4.4

⁶ The realm of ‘before’ meanings most likely belongs to the explorations of Affect Theory. Shivaro (2010, p. 3) explains that “affect is primary, non-conscious, asubjective, or presubjective, asignifying, unqualified and intensive; while emotion is derivative, conscious, qualified and meaningful, a ‘content’ that can be attributed to an already-constituted subject.” In this sense, affect is independent of representations, but still is not pre-social and may have a reflux back from consciousness; it can encourage or diminish bodily capacity to act. (Clough and Halley, 2007, p. 2); for Bergson, “there is no perception without affection” (2002, p. 112).

⁷ Too many possible meanings may baffle or transfix audiences. For instance, Barthes (1977, p. 10) frequently refers to Kristeva’s notion of ‘signifiante’ that disrupts significance: “a moving play of signifiers, without any possible reference to one or some fixed signified”. In ‘The Third Meaning’ (1977, pp. 52–68), he develops the notion of obtuse ‘filmic’ that resists the cinematic progression: “a signifier without a signified” (p.61); “the representation which cannot be represented” (p.64).

aspect or a cinematic experience that is otherwise indistinct. While these effects and relationships are directly related to our ‘actual world’, they also interweave both the fictional and actual references of the film and its cultural context.

1.2. Cinematic Acts and Resources

As this exploration establishes, cinematic images can induce various harmonious and competitive experiences, simultaneous meanings, and continuing ‘stories’ across multiple levels from the same images. Then, reducing multiple cinematic dimensions to one of the discussed domains seems a conventional or goal-oriented choice rather than an intrinsic quality of cinema. Although it seems reasonable to distinguish fiction from non-fiction, story from its presentation, seeing from imagination, comprehension from interpretation, rhetorics from poetics, and text from the context⁸, the multidimensional possibilities of cinema indicate that these dualisms are not conclusive. In this context, within the scope of this study, I maintain that the categorical divisions between narrative and non-narrative, or, fiction and non-fiction debilitate our ability to appraise complex and challenging films⁹. Films like Bergman’s *The Silence*—ironically, despite its association with thematic reduction¹⁰—demand interpretational frameworks beyond generic reductions and dualisms. As discussed, such films undeniably inspire ‘stories’ outside their fictional world(s) and encourage non-fictional as well as fictional engagements from the audiences.

In this context, exploiting the recent innovations in rhetorical narratology¹¹, my study strives to investigate how cinematic *narrativity*, *fictionality* and *non-*

⁸ In Chapter 2 and 3, I discuss these dichotomies.

⁹ As I further elaborate in section 2.6-2.7, this is not to say that such genres are useless, or the distinctions are untenable.

¹⁰ Bergman (1967, p. 5) describes his trilogy in 1963: “The theme of these three films is a ‘reduction’—in the metaphysical sense of the word. *Through A Glass Darkly*—certainty achieved. *Winter Light*—certainty unmasked. *The Silence*—God’s silence—the negative impression”. Later he claims that this idea was contrived to promote the publication of the three scripts together (Bergman, 2011, p. 245).

¹¹ A narratology usually focuses on narratorial practice, recurring narrative structures, constitution, or functions (Schmid, 2010, pp. 1–2). Shen (2005b, p. 143) observes that sometimes

fictionality function as communicational acts and resources rather than the generic and structural constituents of a film. As its original contribution to knowledge, I elaborate cinematic narrativity, fictionality, and non-fictionality as referential dynamics as well as communicational resources. These resources integrate immediate cinematic experience as well as interpretive engagement for communicational goals. In the second part of my thesis, exploring Bergman's *The Silence* and the prologue of *Persona* (1966), I demonstrate that this approach provides an effective framework to study the interplay between the fictional and non-fictional dimensions of 'fictional cinema'. Furthermore, I argue that Bergman's use of fictionality, non-fictionality, and narrativity challenges the often-invoked theoretical dualism between the *fictional story* and its *cinematic presentation*¹².

1.3. Cinematic Narrative as an Event

1.3.1. Images and Narrative

The above raised context crosses the paths of various theoretical inquiries and disciplines that scrutinise images and narratives. Firstly, the visual communication theorists conduct their investigation with images in relation to seeing, perceptions, and imagination. Richard Gregory (2015, p. 1) acknowledges that "we are so familiar with seeing that it takes a leap of imagination to realize that there are problems to be solved". As Keith Kenny (2004, p. 99) summarises, the investigations of these 'problems' are predominantly threefold: phenomenologists attempt to explicate immediate personal experience with images; semioticians scrutinise how viewers link their internal world (thoughts) with the external world (the reality) through

the term extends to cover the narrative criticism with narratological terminology and concepts. The rhetorical approach to narrative (rhetorical narratology) considers narrative as a dynamic communicational event (Phelan, 2005, p. 500; Herman *et al.*, 2012, p. 3).

¹² As I elaborate in section 2.1-2.2, this dualism takes various forms: medium vs content, syuzhet vs fabula, discourse vs story, etc.

images/signs; rhetoricians study how imagemakers persuade their audiences to understand images in a certain way.

Secondly, film theorists strive to ascertain whether cinema has its own essence distinct from other types of images and mediums extending the phenomenological, semiotic, and rhetorical investigations into moving images¹³. In this sense, the cinematic movement, continuity, interruption, contiguity, multimodality, and the phenomenal experiences of the cinematic apparatus (screen size and quality, projection methods, verisimilitude of audio, etc.) pose more challenges to the problems of seeing, perception, and imagination. Following W. J. T. Mitchell's (2013, pp. 9–46) influential exploration, it is evident that the various interconnected categories, which the term 'image' covers are ever-expanding: *graphic objects* like pictures, statues, maps, designs; *optical events* like mirrors, projections, reflections, shadows; *perceptual forms* like sense data, sounds, appearances, resemblances; *mental phenomena* like dreams, memories, ideas, concepts, imaginations; *verbal usages* like metaphors, idioms, descriptions, stories. Mitchell's elaboration indicates that 'image' is a versatile metaphor that can virtually stand for anything in the context of representation. Since cinema constitutes 'images' with all its multimedial potentials, it can also embody all these overlapping categories in a more material sense. Put differently, while cinema is an inseparable part of our reality, cinematic representation, or our mediation with the cinematic reality, seems a direct and tangible engagement with *images* in all these forms.

Thirdly, narrative theory has become a theoretical blackhole that absorbs all the other disciplines into its scope. Lapsley and Westlake (2006, pp. 129–130) claim that "our culture is saturated in narrative" from the beginning, and the "cinema was overwhelmingly narrative in form". If the default definition of the

¹³ Medium specificity of cinema is an enduring debate; for example, Price (2013, pp. 436–440), and Stam (2000, pp. 119–122) charts its history. While Gaut (2010, pp. 282–306) holds the idea of comparative specificity, Carroll (1996, pp. 1–74, 2008, pp. 1–9) vehemently argues against the medium specificity. Sinnerbrink (2011, pp. 20–23) suggests exploring pragmatic specificities beyond the ever-changing materiality of the cinema.

narrative is “the representation of one or more real or fictive events” (Prince, 2003, p. 58) as classical narratology maintains, it appears a rather apt description of cinema itself. In this context, the phenomenological, semiotic, and rhetoric investigations of the cinematic images should necessarily take the narrative possibilities of cinema into account. Similarly, the investigations of the cinematic narrative should also seriously consider the phenomenological, semiotic, and rhetoric dimensions of the cinema.

1.3.2. Narrative and the Story

Despite the above-discussed context, most narrative investigations exclusively focus on a specific predefined content: the story. As the philosopher Gregory Currie’s (2010, p. xvii) stance explicitly testifies, for many narrative theorists, “the representational content of a narrative is the story it has to tell, and we can provide a notion of representational content which fits both fictional and non-fictional narratives”. Although ‘narrative’ and ‘story’ seem interchangeable in colloquial language, in classical narratology, the term *story* has a specific meaning. In the eminent narratologist Gerald Prince’s words, story is the “the *content* plane of *narrative* as opposed to its *expression* plane or *discourse*” or “the *what* of narrative as opposed to *how* of narrative” (2003, p. 93 emphasis in original). Even though these explanations (what and how) sound broad and inclusive, their scope often becomes restricted with specific theoretical definitions. For example, when Prince (p.93) encapsulates E. M. Forster’s influential formation, a *story* is one or more represented “events with an emphasis on chronology”, whereas a *plot* is the represented “events with an emphasis on causality”. In this view, the ‘what’ of narrative can have two *forms* as *story* or *plot* with different emphases, but ultimately, they are *representations of events* conceived according to the chronology (story) or causality (plot)¹⁴.

¹⁴However, text, plot, or even ‘discourse’ occupies ‘what’ as well as ‘how’ under different theories. See section 2.2 for a discussion.

In classical narratological framework, “how” of narrative amounts to the *narration* (telling, or production of narrative) or *discourse* (Prince, 2003, pp. 21, 58); but, often *what* and *how* both are textually represented ‘contents’. The pioneer narratologist Gérard Genette (1983, pp.27–29) defines *narrative discourse* as the signifier, *story* as the signified, and *narrating* as the intermediary process between these two, which needs to be construed within the text. For Genette, “narrative discourse is the only one directly available to textual analysis” (p.27). As Michael Scheffel (2014, p. 514) observes, despite Genette’s apparent triadic form, he often includes narration as a component of discourse; all these positions ultimately presuppose an interdependent dualism within narrative texts: the story and its presentation.

In David Bordwell’s (2008, pp. 85–135) influential neo-formalist view on cinematic fiction, a film narrative has three dimensions: the first is the *story world* by which he means the domain of “agents, circumstances, and surroundings”; the second is the *plot structure* or “the arrangement of the parts of the narrative as we have it”; the third is *narration*, which he defines as “the moment-by-moment flow of information about the story world” (p.90). Elsewhere, Bordwell (1991, p. 8) explicates that “in making sense of a narrative film, the spectator builds up some version of the diegesis or spatio-temporal world, and creates an ongoing story (fabula) occurring within it”. Moreover, Bordwell (2008, p. 98) employs the Russian formalist concepts *fabula* and *syuzhet*, merging them with the above-discussed concepts, story and plot: “*fabula*, the story’s state of affairs and events, and *syuzhet*, the arrangement of them in the narrative as we have it”¹⁵. Then, it is evident that his three narrative dimensions presuppose a specific signified content that can have a *spatial* and *chronological* structure: a *mimetic* story-world¹⁶. Although he considers *syuzhet* or plot structure as the given

¹⁵ As Pier (2003, pp. 76–78) elaborates, plot/story, syuzhet/fabula, and story/discourse are system dependent dichotomies, and their conflation creates unnecessary conceptual problems.

¹⁶ Bordwell (2013, pp. 3–7) adapts the term *mimetic* to simply mean the visual dimension (perspective/spectacle etc.) against the verbal/linguistic reports etc. (i.e. showing vs. telling). But I use the term for its broad meaning *imitation* (generating resemblance to something else): See section 2.2. In this sense, a spatio-temporal story-world often resembles the ‘real-world’.

narrative arrangement (like Genette's discourse), it is also a variant of story/fabula that needs to be inferred or constructed. Therefore, ultimately, his system also relies on the distinction between story-world (fabula/syuzhet) and narration (or the construction of story-world).

In Bordwell's description, the narrative *representation* or story is not only determinant over other aspects of a narrative but also not necessarily bound up with a communicative medium. Bordwell (2008, p. 130) concurs with the renowned narratologist Marie-Laure Ryan, quoting her words "narrative is a medium-independent phenomenon" (2004, p. 15). Elsewhere Ryan reiterates Seymour Chatman's words "narratives are indeed structures independent of any medium" (Chatman, 1980, p. 20) with the assertion "as a mental representation, story is not tied to any particular medium" (Ryan, 2007, p. 26). She divides narrative differently from Bordwell: "most narratologists agree that narrative consists of material signs, the discourse, which convey a certain meaning (or content), the story, and fulfil a certain social function" (p.24). Despite their differences, the putative split between the narrative *medium*, *discourse*, and the narrated *story* necessarily portrays the 'medium' as means or a vehicle for a story; but, the definitive qualities of a narrative come from its medium independent story. Put simply, 'how' is the means of 'what'; but 'what' is always a spatio-temporal (mimetic) story.

Furthermore, for Bordwell (2008, p. 86), narrative "cuts across distinctions of art and science, fiction and nonfiction, literature and the other arts"; accordingly, narrative (or story) is the crucial content beyond fictionality and non-fictionality. With a narrative film, "the perceiver may construct a concrete "world," be it avowedly fictional or putatively real" (Bordwell, 1991, p. 8). For Currie (2010, p. viii), narrative is an exclusive category that can bear a fiction because there are no fictions outside narratives: no fictional science, law, or

cooking¹⁷. But, plausibly, there are two types of narratives (fictional/ non-fictional) and the genre defines their fictional status. In this context, many discussed dimensions of the cinematic images (of fiction films) become, not the non-fictional representation of fiction films, but the material—or the ‘medium’—that delivers the fictional story-world.

1.3.3. Structural Story and Excess

The significance of the medium-bound dimensions of cinema indicates that the notion of medium independent mimetic story is not enough to explain the richness of the cinematic totality. When Peter Verstraten (2009, p. 11) claims that “a complete narrative analysis is always ‘narratology plus X’”, he highlights an ‘X’ of cinema, which escapes the usual scope of narratology. Following Roland Barthes and Stephen Heath’s scruples, Kristin Thompson (1986, p. 142) draws attention to this inherent tension between cinematic ‘narrative’ and its ‘other’¹⁸; she acknowledges that there are many aspects in cinema that can be identified as ‘excess’, against the unifying impulses and structures.

A perception of a film which includes its excess implies an awareness of the structures (including conventions) at work in the film, since excess is precisely those elements which escape unifying impulses. Such an approach to viewing films can allow us to look further into a film, renewing its ability to intrigue us by its strangeness; it also can help us to be aware of how the whole film—not just its narrative—works upon our perception.
(p.142)

Thompson (p.133) agrees with Heath claiming that “excess arises from the conflict between the materiality of a film and the unifying structures within it”. But, when the ‘materiality’ or ‘excess’ is defined against the notions of unifying

¹⁷ He further asserts that as well as non-fictional narratives, there are many other non-fictional communications, which are not narratives: recipes, manuals, legal documents; in his view, fiction is a sub category of narratives.

¹⁸ Various theorists observe this tension from different perspectives: for the philosopher Jacques Rancière cinema is an ironic synthesis (thwarted fable) between narrative (representational regime) and its direct sensorial effects (aesthetic regime) (Tanke, 2011, pp. 111–112). For Tom Gunning (2005, pp. 39–41), ‘cinema of attractions’ (direct visual aspects that solicit spectator-attention) lurks beneath the cinematic narrative.

structures, Thompson also explicitly presupposes the primacy of the story/plot¹⁹ as the unifying force in narrative films. In this sense, narrative and excess are some irreconcilable components that arise from the materiality of the “whole film”; but excess material that is “counter-narrative”, “counter-unity” (p.133), or “non-narrative” (Verstraten, 2009, p. 11) refuse to serve the unifying impulses. Thompson identifies many represented elements as ‘excess’ (acting, expressions, compositions, costumes, props) that are not explicable with regards to the unifying narrative but nevertheless become disturbingly significant. She reiterates, “every stylistic element may serve at once to contribute to the narrative and to distract our perception from it” (p.134). For Verstraten, only by appraising the excess, “can the viewer safeguard himself from overly straightforward or naïve readings” (p.11). Conversely, Bordwell (2013, p. 53) assumes that not only does this “excessive” dimension lie outside the narrative concerns, but it is also “utterly unjustified even by aesthetic motivation”²⁰. Nevertheless, the thematic discussion of *The Silence* indicates that many medium-bound references, attractions, and aesthetics, can feed progressive meanings and themes independent of its mimetic story. Furthermore, as I elaborate in this study, without recognising the interplay between cinematic ‘distractions’ and underlying themes (aboutness), it is difficult to explain some causal and chronological relationships of the cinematic narrative(s).

Edward Branigan (2013) elaborates a more detailed and comprehensive narratological framework for cinema that includes fictional and non-fictional aspects, drawing on a wide range of resources from literary theory, cognitive psychology, and narratology. His model comprises non-fictional and fictional levels in fiction films (pp.86-91). Nevertheless, his model also presupposes the mimetic story and its components (narrators, characters, events, affairs) as the goal of narrative: “narrative in film is the principle by which data is converted

¹⁹ Thompson also follows “narrative as the interplay between plot and story” (p.131).

²⁰ Consequently, for Bordwell (2008, pp.152–153), art films become a different genre, which its representation is not motivated by the “classical narrative mode”, in which the “narrative form motivates cinematic representation”.

from the frame of the screen into a diegesis—a world—that frames a particular story, or sequence of actions, in that world” (p.36). Consequently, for Branigan, the *cinematic narration* “exists” whenever the authors or audiences transform “data” between various postulated epistemological boundaries (p.112). In this sense, the cinematic *narration* is an extra-textual activity, but its process and purpose are determined by the mimetic story world. Although the narrative comprehension relies on other aspects like metaphors, textual relationships, and the context, ultimately, they serve a version of a world (pp.13-17). Therefore, while the non-diegetic references of films invoke the *narration* in this world, a *narrative* is necessarily a *story world* in the making (p.36). Furthermore, he is not committed to the communicational/rhetorical models because “if a text is sometimes a “communication”, it is almost certainly operating in other ways as well” (p.110, emphasis in original). Therefore, his structure-oriented analysis also seems to marginalise the interplay between phenomenological, semiotic, and rhetorical aspects of cinema.

1.4. Representation as Narrativity and Fictionality

Considering these challenges, in this research I argue for a different position, mostly following the post-classical innovations in narratology²¹ under the constructive influences of poststructuralism. Mark Currie (2011, p. 7) affirms that “poststructuralists moved away from the treatment of narratives (and the language system in general) as buildings, as solid objects in the world, towards the view that narratives were narratological inventions construable in an almost infinite number of ways”. Already, the highlighted possibilities of cinema showed that their experiential and referential potential is polyvalent. The fictional-world, its structure, and its temporal unfolding is mostly a convention, expectation, as well as a textual inspiration; other than the chronology and causality of the *mimetic worlds*, the non-fictional, thematic, and contextual dimensions of

²¹ Dan Shen (2005b, p. 146) argues that even the post-structuralist questions on narrative ‘constitution’ are ‘narratological’.

cinema can also provide different chronological and causal models for narrative progression. Therefore, rather than reflecting on the friction between narrative and cinematic aesthetics/attraction/excess, I aim to propose a relatively inclusive concept of cinematic narrative in which these aspects are its intrinsic resources.

As Branigan claims, cinematic texts can operate in many ways, and an audience can interpret them for different purposes other than communication. For example, Meir Sternberg and Tamar Yacobi (2015, p. 437) suggest that purely reader-centred narrative *poetics* can maximise the interpretational possibilities to an authorless extreme. However, I argue that the communicational perspective provides a way to work out how the different aspects/dimensions of texts correlate with each other to achieve larger contextual goals. While different cinematic dimensions appear to be in irreconcilable conflict, the specific mediation/management of these conflicts seem to turn those very dimensions into resources that guide our interpretations within certain possibilities and restrictions. In other words, when cinema is considered an intersubjective communicational medium, the interplay between the cinematic possibilities and our activities with cinema become its rhetorical resources. If there are various—perhaps countless—ways, which audiences can interpret artistic works or texts, a communicational context develops specific parameters and discourses to integrate and stabilise their textual features. In this context, I maintain that rather than the story world, the communicational dynamics determines the specific arrangement of a narrative film.

If a narrative is a shared communicative medium between communicators and the audience, James Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz (Herman *et al.*, 2012), provide a “default” definition for narrative from the perspective of rhetorical narrative theory.

Narrative is often treated as a representation of a linked sequence of events, but we subsume that traditional viewpoint under a broader conception of narrative as itself an event—more specifically, a

multidimensional purposive communication from a teller [communicator] to an audience. The focus on narrative as purposive means that we are interested in the ways in which the elements of any narrative (e.g., character, setting, plot structure) are shaped in the service of larger ends. The focus on narrative as multileveled communication means that we are interested not simply in the meaning of narrative but also in the experience of it. Thus, we are as concerned with narrative's affective, ethical, and aesthetic effects—and with their interactions—as we are with its thematic meanings. (p.3)

When a narrative is taken as a communicational or rhetorical event, rather than a structure, genre, or component of a work/product, the cinematic images are perceivable as purposive expressions that involve all their communicational dimensions (e.g. experientiality, meanings, and significance). Furthermore, the rhetorical perspective helps recognise the relevant resources of cinema across various tiers and how they are organised to communicate coherent and multi-dimensional concepts and experiences, beyond the apparent mimetic ruptures.

From this perspective, first, I contend that the cinematic narrative, with its potentials of polyvalent 'image making', is a broader phenomenon than the above-referred formalist/structural positions. Although narrative has generally been portrayed as a specific structural component within films, I maintain that the cinematic narrative is a communicational act and event that involves the phenomenal, semiotic, and rhetorical dimensions of cinema. Further, instead of the dominant narratological model, which assumes the plot/syuzhet as the given narrative presentation and the story/fabula as the narrative representation, I contend that both the narrative presentation and representation are extra-textual historical events between the authors, text, and audiences. The second part of this study explores a specific episode of Ingmar Bergman's cinema to elucidate the advantage of such an approach.

1.5. Ingmar Bergman and Image Making

The proportions of the global commemorations organised in 2018 for Bergman's centenary show that his stature as one of the greatest auteur

filmmakers—once contested and anticipated to wane with time²²—now seems indisputable. As Maaret Koskinen (2008, pp. 2–3) asserts, Bergman’s reputation in academia has partly correlated with the reputation of Auteur Theory itself. Although the post-structuralist critique positively deconstructed the initial forms of auteur theory (the author as the origin of meaning), the recent resurgence of new author concepts ironically builds upon those very post-structuralist postulates: textual/semiotic constructs, stylistic signatures, biographical legends, myths, and implied authors²³. Put succinctly, the dominant authorship theories now seem to rely on the semiotic and discursive analyses (textuality). As Janet Staiger (2008, pp. 89–104) elaborates, Bergman’s self-fashioned biographical legend through various mediums adds a dynamic intertextual dimension to the socially constructed aspects of his cinematic authorship and discourse.

In this context, if any director wishes to establish his or her auteur image²⁴ today, bolstering the ‘myth’ of the auteur also seems an indispensable part of their success. Interestingly, many legendary auteurs have attempted to define their auteur image associating it with Bergman in some sense²⁵. Inversely, this

²² In 1998, Darke (1998, p. 488) charts the decline of Bergman’s critical profile, regretting that Bergman has been side-lined from academic attention owing to contemporary approaches to films. However, ironically, the recent innovations in film theory and the interdisciplinary approaches have decisively overturned such assumptions. For instance, recently Blackwell (1997, 2008), Hubner (2007), Staiger (2008), Koskinen (2011), Rugg (Rugg, 2008, 2014), and Humphrey (2013) have opened portals to various uncharted territories in Bergman’s films from diverse new perspectives.

²³ Staiger (2013, pp. 27–52) discusses seven approaches to cinematic authorship that mark the conceptual departure from the author as origin to author as construct and performance; Meskin (2008, pp. 23–26) charts the new trends concerning cinematic authorship-constructs and their limitations.

²⁴ Here I use *auteur* as the historical term related to cinema against the general concept of *author*. In section 3.7, I discuss the difference and my stance on the cinematic authorship.

²⁵ For example, Kubrick (1960) writes to Bergman: “I should like to add my praise and gratitude as a fellow director for the unearthly and brilliant contribution you have made to the world by your films [...] I believe you are the greatest film-maker at work today”; moreover he mentions Bergman’s cast, personal vision, mood, and characterisation, which perhaps evoke budding Kubrick’s wish list. The recent documentary *Trespassing Bergman* (2013) shows many eminent auteur filmmakers visiting Bergman Estate on Fårö. In this documentary, Michael Haneke expresses his empathy with Bergman and Dostoevsky. Ang Lee reflects on his first Bergman film experience: “I felt that my virginity was taken by this man”. Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu declares that “if cinema was a religion, this would be Mecca, or the Vatican. This is the centre of it all.”; Von Trier playfully claims that Bergman treated him (and his repetitive letters to Bergman) the same way that Bergman treated his own children: no interest whatsoever. The

association increasingly helps portray Bergman as the auteurs' ideal auteur²⁶ who possesses all the vital components of the auteur image: expansive multimedial oeuvre, repetitive motifs and developing themes across the oeuvre, creative control, a dedicated ensemble, and the (auto)biography as the main creative reservoir²⁷. In this sense, the primary significance of Bergman's cinema for this study is twofold: first, my research aims to establish that narrativity and fictionality are the key resources that build and deconstruct the textual postulates like auteurs, characters, and fictional worlds. Bergman's cinema possibly is the epitomic case study to substantiate this theory.

Secondly, the theoretical questions that motivate this research mostly stem from my personal struggles with Bergman's cinema. While the 'stories' of Bergman's films may seem apparent and simple, the implacable conflicts within his cinematic images always challenge the structural/generic understanding of narrative, fiction, and cinema. Instead of disrupting the assumed border between representation (cinema/narrative) and life/reality, Bergman's cinematic discourse seems to suggest a more dynamic relationship between the representation and reality beyond their dualism. For instance, exploring Bergman's cinema under the theme of 'illusion', Hubner (2007, p. 1) suggests that "there is a gradual shift from concentrating on dichotomies between falsity and truth to looking at life and film as a set of constructs". My research aims to revisit this theme of representation and reality exploring the interplay between narrativity and fictionality.

French female filmmaker Claire Denis seems in distress: "it is too much for me to enter this house and it's freighting to me [...] I'm going to faint. it's too intimate."

²⁶ Marking the 50th anniversary of the Cannes film festival 1992, all the past Palm d'Or winners elected to award the one-off 'Palme des Palme' to Bergman (Craig, 2018, p. 92); The filmmaker Todd Field (2007) summarises Bergman's importance to the fellow filmmakers: "He was our tunnel man building the aqueducts of our cinematic collective unconscious. Supplying water to a people who heretofore didn't know they were thirsty".

²⁷ While, Gado (1986), Koskinen, Staiger, Rugg, Steen (2008) and White (2017, pp. 94–109) variously evaluate the textual and biographical dimensions that reinforce Bergman's authorship, Livingston (1997, pp. 132–148, 2009, pp. 63–83) evaluates the production related aspects of his authorship.

Furthermore, Steene (2008, p. 228) highlights the significance of Bergman aesthetics under three components after the seminal *Bergman Symposium* in 2008: the audience as a participatory element; the striving for “inter-art synaesthesia”; “artistic creativity as a pendulum between collective act and self-projection”. All these aspects relate to the main themes of my research: the cinematic image as a nested array of multiple experiences; cinematic narrativity and fictionality as communicational acts/resources; and the ‘cinematic auteur’ as a co-creation between filmmakers and audiences (self/other). Additionally, as Staiger (2013, pp. 45–49) reviews, the notion of cinematic authorship as a textual construct or interpretational (reading) strategy is often seen as a ‘fantasy’ or ‘fiction’ of the audience. However, with the rhetorical framework I develop in this study, it can be argued that the *author construct* is still an indexical, non-fictional, and extra-textual agency that mostly derives from the extra-diegetic matrix of cinema.

I have selected a specific episode of Bergman’s cinema (although it is from two films) for my analysis: *The Silence* (1963) and the prologue of *Persona* (1966). This asymmetrical selection helps me show how Bergman’s cinematic discourse at this stage blurs the boundaries of individual film texts and interlaces separate texts with common resources, transcending their material limits: while the various dimensions of *The Silence* bleed into *Persona*, the prologue of *Persona* itself appears to be an individual text that is intertextually connected to Bergman’s other films and *Persona*’s so-called ‘narrative proper’. I have already indicated how *The Silence* complicates the apparent simplicity of its cinematic images across many levels. The subtitle of Koskinen’s (2011) book-length study on *The Silence* inventively captures Bergman’s subjective dilemma and the cinematically manifest tension between the images and language: “pictures in the typewriter, writing on the screen”. As well as being a formative milestone within Bergman’s oeuvre, *The Silence* is the ideal film for my main research because it seems to embody an intriguing fusion between traditional mimetic form and modernist reflexivity. In Chapter 4, I pursue how *The Silence* expands

the immediate cinematic experience (phenomenal images) into contextual and symbolic (interpretational) levels chronologically, closely exploring its fictionality and narrativity.

In the words of famous film critic Roger Ebert, “*Persona* is a film we return to over the years, for the beauty of its images and because we hope to understand its mysteries”. Even in 2017, Peter Bradshaw (2017) exalts the contemporary experience of *Persona* with sparks of awe: “It is stark, spare, endlessly questioning and self-questioning, a movie whose enigmas and challenges multiply, like the heads of Hydra”. While this study cannot deal with the full length of *Persona*, I explore how cinematic narrativity and fictionality help multiply the ‘hydra heads’ of its prologue with a dedicated chapter. Despite its short duration (approx. 6 min), the formal intricacy and multivalent referentiality of this prologue demand close narratological scrutiny. The detailed elaboration of my theoretical framework with *The Silence* sets a useful background to concisely and efficiently approach the prologue of *Persona*. Despite the length difference between Chapter 4 and 5, the focus given to each text is motivated by the narratological relevance of their content. This investigation also foregrounds shared thematic concerns, developing formal characteristics, and intertextual narrativity between both texts.

Furthermore, I contend that my research also helps to revisit some enduring and elusive debates of cinema: cinematic authorship; communication; *fiction/reality* dichotomy. Political theorists, realists, and formalists usually recognise a ‘counter-cinema’ against the ‘institutional’ or ‘quintessential’ cinema. In these views, a counter-cinema interrogates narrative forms, conventions, fiction, cinematic subject, and ideology. For instance, in his renowned article ‘Godard and Counter Cinema’, Peter Wollen (1999) explores how Jean-Luc Godard defies the “deadly sins” of orthodox cinema with the “cardinal virtues” of counter-cinema. Bordwell (2013, p. 275) enthusiastically analyses Godard’s films in his generic category of *parametric narration*, in which

“the film’s stylistic system creates patterns distinct from the demands of the syuzhet system”.

In this light, Bergman has often been seen as an uninteresting, evasive, or even a reactionary artist. His films seem different from—or rather indifferent to—counter-cinema, because they do not unambiguously present ‘intervals’, ‘attractions’, or ‘excess’ of cinema against the mimetic story. In other words, despite the resounding and tenacious self-reflexivity, Bergman does not simply interrupt the fiction in order to reveal the ‘materiality’, ‘truth’, or *non-fictionality* behind them. With this perspective, Robert Kolker (2009, p. 120) claims “Bergman’s modernism belongs to the obscurantist wing of the movement” because they “work towards mystifying the narrative”. In the final discussion of my study (section 6.1.4), I contend that this view derives from the dualistic view of narrative (story/presentation) and the presumed fiction/reality dichotomy. On the contrary, with *The Silence* and *Persona* Bergman exploits narrativity and fictionality to explore the interminable ‘reality’ of cinema and life beyond the dualisms of story/presentation and reality/fiction. I argue that this approach helps Bergman to develop a more unique and insightful cinematic discourse that dissects the micro-relations between authorship, fiction, and self.

1.6. Research Methodology and Structure

1.6.1. Research Context and Focus

At this point, it seems useful to recapitulate my research context. When narratives, fictions, and cinema are taken as generic categories, narrative and film theorists often attempt to establish the universal features and structures that distinguish them from other text types. Consequently, I contend that the mimetic story is recognised as the determinant structure and textual component that determines the parameters of narrative cinema and narrative presentation. However, my explorations in section 1.1 establish that generic approaches are seriously inadequate to explore the multidimensionality of Bergman’s cinema.

These approaches also encourage the view that cinematic textuality (as structures) and cinematic reception (experience and interpretation) are distinct domains.

1.6.2. Research Goals and Outcome

Considering this context, my study aims to establish that narrative is a text-external socio-historical event, and such a narrative event creates communicational mediums (a specific material means of connecting communicators and audiences), diegeses (mimetic referential domains), and thematic discourses. In this sense, exploring Bergman's cinema, I demonstrate that cinema is not a predefined medium or a priori structure; narrative communication is what makes all these outcomes possible. Bergman's narrative events constantly change the transitory structures of cinema exploiting its materiality and the rhetorical resources. Moreover, I show that cinematic narrative events can also develop non-mimetic signifying structures. In this context, as my original contribution to knowledge, I demonstrate that cinematic narrativity and fictionality are referential dynamics as well as communicational resources, rather than structural components. These resources integrate immediate cinematic experience as well as interpretive engagement for communicational goals. My approach also helps to rethink the cinematic authorship, communication, story/presentation, and fiction/reality dichotomy.

1.6.3. Thesis Structure

I divide my research into a two-fold investigation for this exploration. In the first part, exploiting the recent innovations of rhetorical narratology and Peircean Sign Theory, I develop a new rhetorical framework for my study to analyse Bergman's cinema. Reviewing the relevant narrative and film theories, I also present new descriptive accounts for narrativity and fictionality that are applicable in the cinematic context.

With this aim, in Chapter 2, I explore why and how key narrative theories often posit the mimetic story (a series of mimetic events) as the most important outcome and structure of a narrative. Secondly, I investigate the new theoretical avenues that highlight the significance of communicational context and narrative possibilities beyond the dualist and mimetic models. In the second half of the chapter, I employ C. S. Peirce's semiosis model to reconsider the prevailing narratological concepts and narrativity.

In Chapter 3, following Phelan and Rabinowitz's rhetorical approach and the Peircean Categories (firstness, secondness, and thirdness), I propose three conceptual tiers—functioning in a dynamic nested relationship—to analyse the cinematic representation: *extra-diegetic*, *diegetic*, and *thematic*. This framework helps me to elaborate on how the immediate cinematic experience develops into more abstract contextual meanings with cinematic narrativity and fictionality. In this chapter, I evaluate key approaches to cinematic fiction in order to develop a referential account of cinematic fictionality. Finally, I review how the rhetorical approach draws on contemporary views on cinematic authorship.

The second part of my study is dedicated to exploring Bergman's selected films with the analytical framework developed in the first part. Accordingly, Chapter 4 presents a detailed analysis of the interplay between narrativity and fictionality in Bergman's *The Silence*. Rather than organising the aspects of the film under different themes, this chapter examines how narrativity and fictionality advance the potential senses, diegesis, meanings, and themes along the temporal unfolding of the film. In this analytical semiosis, I demonstrate that the diegetic and extra-diegetic matrixes of *The Silence* independently as well as cooperatively serve its broad thematic discourse. Although such a lengthy chapter may seem to deviate from the familiar conventions, I maintain that a detailed analysis along the film's temporal flow is essential for an effective exploration of narrativity and fictionality. I organise this chapter into episodes with subtitles and present relevant images excerpted from *The Silence* for the convenience of reference.

In Chapter 5, I examine the prologue of Bergman's *Persona*. This close analysis highlights how a purposive use of narrativity and fictionality can advance multivalent cinematic experience, textuality, and intertextuality into a coherent cinematic discourse. This chapter also argues that the prologue of *Persona* thwarts the audiences' involuntary diegetic engagement to achieve its communicational goals.

I divide the final chapter into two distinct sections: Contextualisation and Conclusion. In the first part of this chapter, considering the relevant scholarship, I discuss the impact of my research on Bergman's authorship, cinematic communication, and fiction/reality dichotomy. In the conclusion, I revisit the main arguments of the study and the efficiency of my methodology. Finally, I discuss the impact and the future potentials of my research.

Part One

2. Narrativity as Textual Progression

In the introduction, I noted that the usual definition of narrative (i.e. representations of events) already appears as a fitting description of cinema itself. It perhaps indicates the inherent narrative potentials of cinema; however, it may also indicate the vagueness of narrative definitions. Therefore, this chapter first highlights the difficulties in defining narrative and what is at stake with different approaches to definitions. My investigation particularly shows that when narrative is considered a unique category against the other text types, the theoretical focus has often been on the differential ‘content’ of narrative texts. I argue that this focus on the usual content of prevalent mimetic narratives induces theorists to recognise *mimetic story* as the differential and prototype content.

Secondly, I scrutinise the most influential narrative dualisms like play/mythos, syuzhet/fabula, and discourse/story. Since various film narratologies implicitly or explicitly rely on these dualisms, it is important to explore their underlying functions within related theories. In this section (2.2), I argue that projecting an unseen but familiar whole (often a version of mimetic story), helps theorists to interpret the meanings and significance of individual events and how they relate to each other. Consequently, dualistic models often bifurcate their own internal logics. Thirdly, I review the post-structuralist influences on narrative theory and the resultant move towards the concept of *narrativity*. This approach allows narrativity to be recognised as a gradient quality that can even emerge outside the generic narrative texts. However, I contend that many post-classical narrative theorists also assume that narrativity is the ‘sense’ that derives from the prototype mimetic story.

The rest of this chapter develops an alternative account of narrativity by adapting Peircean Semiosis. According to this approach, I propose that the ‘how’ or discourse of narrative is an extra-textual, dynamic event or activity by

authors and audiences. Instead of the prevalent narrative definitions (representations of events), I describe narrativity as the ‘textual progression (events) of representations’. Narrativity (or sense of progression) is a result of the formal, thematic, and contextual interplay in any text, and the mimetic dimension is possibly the most conventional source/effect of narrativity. In the next chapter, I further exploit this approach to elaborate cinematic narrativity and fictionality.

2.1. Narrative Definitions and Their Nested Problems

As David Herman (2005, pp. 19–35) and Monika Fludernik (2005, pp. 36–59) chart, narrative as a complex cultural artefact has been investigated from diverse perspectives like classification, configuration, content, medium, context, diachronic evolution, ethics, and reception. Narratology is a practice as well as a theory of narrative among many other theories and approaches to narrative. According to Meister’s (2014, pp. 623–645) review, narratology scrutinises the formal constitution and universal structures of narrative, persistently seeking to improve or revise the related concepts and definitions. The representation of an event, sequence, or web of events constitutes the core of many prevailing definitions proposed for narrative; these definitions also present various conditions to define the link between events such as causality, temporality, chronology, spatiality, or coherence²⁸.

Nevertheless, Prince (2004, p. 13) observes that it has become more and more difficult to distinguish narratives from what they are not. The term *narrative* increasingly substitutes the contentious terms like argumentation, theory, ideology, or message because, in his view, the term has become euphemistic and versatile. Perhaps, this also indicates the possibility of common traits across different text types that escape the prevailing definitions of narrative. For example, Genette (1976, pp. 5–8) acknowledges the inextricability between

²⁸ For example, these theorists put forth various definitions on this direction: Genette (1976, p. 1); Chatman (1990, p. 9); Prince (2003, p. 58, 2004, p. 11); Herman (2011, p. 14); Abbott (2008, p. 13); Fludernik (2009, p. 6); Landa and Onega (2014, p. 3)

narrative and *descriptive* writing: the represented actions are also descriptions. However, he argues that the distinction is increasingly perceivable at higher semantic levels. Chatman (1990, pp. 6–21) proposes *narrative*, *description*, and *argument* as overlapping text types but they each have dominant qualities; Fludernik (2000, p. 280) suggests that description is a common and necessary mode within any text type. Evaluating these difficulties, in his review on text types, Aumüller (2014, p. 864) concludes that the parameters employed by theorists to distinguish text types are often purposive.

David Rudrum (2005, 2006), in his debate with Ryan (2006b, 2006a), pinpoints that the established definitions of narrative are based on the syntax and semantics of narrative, disregarding the context and pragmatics. He shows that many texts like instruction manuals and recipes that are categorised as *non-narratives* can also be considered the representations of events. Therefore, opposing Ryan, Rudrum argues that semantic-based definitions are unsuccessful in differentiating narrative from non-narrative.

Interestingly, when Rudrum interprets his non-narrative examples as narratives—although the motivation is contextual—he also has to heavily rely on what the text represents and their formal relationships. Elsewhere, Dan Shen (2005b, pp. 161–164) challenges Michael Kearns’s (1999, pp. 1–46) strong contextual position on narrative (a radical version of Rudrum’s view), which is inspired by speech-act theory. She convincingly demonstrates that the critics who grant “the context all the determining power” also have to exploit textual features when they attempt to deny generic classifications. This argument emphasises the dynamic tension between the formal features of texts and pragmatics.

Both semantic and pragmatic aspects of narrative are further complicated by the burdens of representation: interpretation and ideology. Abbott (2008, pp. 46–49) describes how socially ingrained skeletal narratives or *master-plots* influence players to *underread* or *overread* texts in forming pragmatic

judgements. They inspire interpretations, sometimes overruling the factual/textual evidence and the accuracy of events²⁹. In *S/Z*, Barthes (1974, pp. 16–20) presents a more fundamental version of ideological forms that influence narrative interpretation as codes. Codes can be recognised as *a priori* (culturally ingrained) forms of textual configurations and interpretation; in Robert Scholes's (1982, p. 1) words, codes "are rules governing text production and interpretation". In this sense, master-plots or codes embody *ideology* in the form of deep-rooted *representations*; they instruct how to read other narratives and their internal relationships.

Furthermore, the putative division between 'narrative proper' and 'narrative medium' is a constant focus in narratology. According to Ryan (2014a, pp. 263–264) and Ibáñez (2008, p. 216), the idea of *narrative medium* as a language that shapes information has often been privileged over the idea that it is a passive conduit of information. Narrative *semantics* can perhaps be assumed as *sign constellations* of a particular narrative medium; but intersubjectively demarcating such constellations in any medium is impossible. Furthermore, an acceptable grammatical structure is far more indefinable without fixed types of narrative signs equivalent to nouns, verbs, and adjectives³⁰. In the classic essay 'Semiology and Rhetoric', Paul de Man (1973) contends that when the tropological or figurative meaning of a text is dominant, the grammatical or literal meaning collapses. De Man also adds that the tropological meaning too is unstable because it derives from the grammatical and referential construction. Consequently, textual meanings—or *semantics* by extension—is unstable (p.30). Further, deconstructionists famously theorise that the relationship between signifier and signified is inherently treacherous. In this light, a semiotic system of narrative seems more vulnerable because it is a complex tropological

²⁹ As an instance, in court trials, the decision can slide towards the prosecution or defence, based on the competence of each party's narrative depictions, without even violating the legal codes.

³⁰ For example, Todorov (1969, pp. 70–76) advocates the possibility of considering narrative as a *language*-like configuration; although he proposes a set of grammatical criteria for narrative, their syntactic relations appear unpromising beyond simple narratives.

construction even without fixed units of signifiers—like *words* in language³¹. As Ryan (2007, pp. 24–26) summarises, the attempt at recognising narrative sign systems reveals the inadequacies in all three branches of semiotics: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics; therefore, narrative cannot be successfully reduced to a self-sufficient semiotic system.

In this challenging context, Ryan (2007, p. 26) contends that the semantics of narrative should not be based on a system of narrative signs, grammar, and constitutive meanings. Instead, it should consider “the type of mental image that a text must evoke as a whole”. Seymour Chatman’s (1980) seminal treatise *Story and Discourse* presents a versatile semantic configuration for the notion of ‘medium independent’ narrative³². Under Chatman’s strong structuralist model, “narratives are *langues* conveyed through the *paroles* of concrete verbal or other means of communication” (1980, p. 24 italics in original); and *story* is the *signified* of the *signifier*, narrative discourse. Further, Chatman applies Louis Hjelmslev’s (1961, pp. 29–38) *expression/content* and *substance/form* model to narrative; he establishes narrative discourse in the expression plane and story in the content plane, both as forms. Consequently, the sign system of employed *medium* (the substance of expression) engenders narrative *discourse* (the form of expression); narrative events and other existents (the substance of content) ultimately shape the *story* (the form of content).

	Expression (signifiers)	Content (signified)
Substance	Semiotic System	Events, Characters, Settings
Form	Discourse	Story Relations (plot/story)

Table 1 Chatman's Narrative Domains

³¹ The sought-after narrative unit has always been elusive despite the many proposed basic elements of narrative: plot elements (Aristotle and Heath, 1996), functions and roles (Propp, 2010), actants (Greimas, 1983), Motifs (Tomashevsky, 1965, pp.61-98), narremes (Dorfman, 1969), Events (Genette, 1980), kernels and satellites (Chatman, 1980, pp.53-78).

³² Chatman (p.9) indicates that his model is influenced by Genette’s (1983) foundational narrative taxonomy presented in *Narrative Discourse: Essay in Method* (first published in 1972). Although Chatman adapts some aspects from Genette’s model, Genette’s theory exclusively relates to the linguistic medium.

Ryan (2007, p. 26) describes her idea of abstracted ‘story’ as a mental entity that is “independent of the distinction between fiction and nonfiction” and the semiotic medium. Therefore, in this model, the classified content as a whole (langue) corresponds to Ryan’s *mental image*, seemingly resolving—or evading—the elusive problem of narrative signs and the medium. According to this stance, narrative discourse employs a medium as the means of communication but the true realm of narrative—or story—is independent of the medium employed. I later elaborate that such a medium independent mental ‘template’ presupposes more or less a *mimetic* version of the real-world. Chatman (1980, p. 20) assumes that this dualistic model (discourse/story) is the key explanation for the *transposability* of story across different discourses and semiotic mediums³³. The upshot of this argument suggests a decisive rift (dualism) between narrative medium/presentation/discourse and the signified story. As I argued in the introduction, it also reinforces the idea that *story*—in a predetermined form—is the structurally determinant element of a narrative. As I later discuss in this chapter, when classical narratologists focus on the *act* and *manner* of narration (discourse/how), they assume that the signified content (story) and its mimetic relationships determine the parameters of discourse: order, distance, mood, perspective, etc. Consequently, for classical narratologists, discourse (how) becomes an aspect of the story (what) and both merge into an inextricable mimetic whole (content) that is internal to the narrative text.

³³ Barbara H. Smith (1980, pp. 214–215) and Walsh (2007, pp. 63–64) present alternative explanations.

2.2. Narrative Dualisms and Their Genealogy

2.2.1. Play and Plot

As I maintained in the introduction, the polyvalent character of cinematic narrative is difficult to be reduced to straightforward dualisms (e.g. presentation vs story). Therefore, at this point, it seems crucial to reconsider the dualist premises that influence narrative theory³⁴ and their functions within relevant theories. According to Halliwell's (2014, pp. 129–132) review, Plato's initial division (in *Republic III*) between *diegesis* (narration in the voice of the poet) and *mimesis* (narration as someone else) already indicates two ethical attitudes towards authorial mediation: Plato considers *diegesis* to be sincere and *mimesis* to be deceitful³⁵. For Aristotle, *mimesis* (imitation) is the general term for artistic/poetic representation, and accordingly, *diegesis* is also a mode of *mimesis*; in this view, dramatic imitation is superior. As Heath (Aristotle and Heath, 1996, pp. xii–xv) elaborates, Aristotle assumes that dramatic imitation invokes likeness (resemblance to something we already know) in a more stimulating sense that encourages contemplation. On the other hand, Sörbom (2002, p. 20) emphasises that enacting the *distinction* between *resemblant thing* and *real thing* is also paramount for the Greek concept of *mimesis* or “the theory of imitation”. This indicates that even the first known theory of representation and its artistic poles concerns the puzzling zone between appearance and reality³⁶.

³⁴ Interestingly, Puckett (2018, pp. 13–28) argues that appearance vs thing itself (Kant), the dialectics between parts vs whole (Hegel), superstructure vs base (Marx), conscious vs unconscious (Freud), parole vs langue (Saussure) etc. foreshadow the narratological dualism between discourse vs story.

³⁵ Halliwell notes that these terms have also been used in different and broad meanings by Plato in other contexts.

³⁶ However the notion of ‘real’ in Greek philosophy might be instructive to this discussion: in Plato's view, reality (forms) is something ideal and abstract (atemporal, aspatial) from appearances (Baofu, 2011, pp. 135–137). Although Aristotle differs from Plato's atemporal and aspatial ‘forms’, even for him, the reality is abstract from the ordinary appearances (Shields, 2016, sec. 5). As Havelock (2009, p. 238) elaborates, while Plato believes that imitation further impedes engaging with ideal truths (forms, abstract reality), Aristotle believes that poetic imitation helps to uncover universal truths in mundane reality (Aristotle and Heath, 1996, p. xxviii; Shields, 2016, sec. 9).

In *Poetics*, Aristotle (Aristotle and Heath, 1996, pp. 13–14) affirms that a well-constructed *plot* should have a *whole* with a beginning, middle, and an end. Although this claim appears to be a trivial one at first impression, here Aristotle implicitly drives a wedge between the play itself (or text) and something abstract called *plot (mythos)* that resides beyond the appearance³⁷. A play already is an *apparent* whole with an obvious beginning, middle (with an inevitable flow and order), and an end; but, positing another underlying structure as a *plot* with a beginning, middle, and end, enables questioning the order, gaps, values, limits, and integrity of the apparent level (text). As Kent Puckett (2016, pp. 46–54) convincingly elaborates, the projection of an unseen whole motivates to make transient individual events meaningful because the meaning often emerges related to a whole through coherence³⁸. It is also useful to stress that Aristotle’s approach is an attempt to understand narrative or plot of a tragedy as an ‘inclusive/larger structure’ (not a reductive component of a text) that is inferable from the condensed textual arrangement. In *Poetics*, he repetitively refers to the events and scenarios, which fall *outside* the play but still belong to the plot. For instance, when a new event (or character) is introduced, the audience tacitly assume that this event/character has a context (whole) with other preceding and following events (history) as in a real event. The progression of the play subtly marks the relevant frontiers (plot with beginning, middle, and end) of this history and context. In this sense, a play or narrative text is an economical but evocative presentation of a larger unseen plot/whole; the meanings of a play emerge according to this projected whole.

Furthermore, Aristotle advocates that poetic imitation should involve various parameters like *universality* rather than *particularity*³⁹, and *necessary*,

³⁷ Malcom Heath (Aristotle and Heath, 1996, pp. xxiii–xxiv) and N. Lowe (2004, p. 6) highlight this dualism.

³⁸ This is also a version of familiar *hermeneutic circle*: in Friedrich Schleiermacher’s (1829) words, “the whole is, of course, understood in reference to the individual, so too, the individual can only be understood in reference to the whole” (as cited in Mantzavinos, 2016, sec. 2)

³⁹ Aristotle (p.16) declares that: “Poetry tends to express universals, and history particulars”.

probable, and *plausible* things rather than the things that *actually happen* (Aristotle and Heath, 1996, p. 16). These assumptions deviate from the theory of direct correspondence between the representation and reality; instead Aristotle seems to invoke a theory of coherence and universality that relies on human mediation (emotions, perspective, and intellect). In this sense, even proto-narratology recognises that a representation of individual events (a play or narrative) needs an unseen but orderly, causal, and coherent whole (plot or story) that makes the represented events and their interrelationships meaningful. Accordingly, the subsequent narratological history can be seen as an attempt to *theorise* or *challenge* the relationships between the projected whole (coherence) and its apparent parts.

2.2.2. Syuzhet and Fabula

In his 1917 pivotal essay ‘Art as Technique’, the pioneer Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky (1965, pp. 3–24) sets out to challenge a prevalent transparency theory of language and art. Against the idea that the purpose of art is economically evoking images, he famously argues that “the purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known” (p.12). Like Aristotle, Shklovsky too here stresses the importance of artistic form, driving a wedge between *ordinary knowledge* and *artistic perception*. He further adds that by making objects ‘unfamiliar’, art removes “automatism of perception” (p.13). In his later essay on Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, Shklovsky establishes his theory of *syuzhet*—or plot: a *syuzhet* is the way that the narrative materials (motifs) are organised by the “aesthetic laws” (p.57). According to his manifest view in both essays, these aesthetic laws demand strategies like digression, transposition of order, or the styled language that encourage “deautomatized perception” (p.22). In this sense, like Aristotle, Shklovsky maintains that narrative art should necessarily involve a specific emotional and intellectual engagement, which is distinct from audiences’ everyday experience. Consequently, art seems an ironic means to generate unique meanings out of

the materials that are organised in a syuzhet, by applying a resistance (literariness in literature) to ordinary perception. When narrative materials are conceptualised devoid of any artistic organisation, form, or resistance, Shklovsky defines them as *fabula* or storyline (p.57).

As Scheffel (2014, p. 510) confirms, here Shklovsky attempts to theorise *fabula* as a formless, reductive, and independent abstract. However, when Shklovsky implies that digression, transposition of order, or stylised, impedimental language as the strategies of syuzhet form, its ‘formless other’ also acquires a counter form: objectivity, directness, ‘natural’ order or chronology, familiarity, etc. Schmid (2010, pp. 178–179) admits that although Shklovsky wants to keep *fabula* as an unformed concept, it is often seen as some ‘other’ to be *overcome* by syuzhet’s defamiliarisation. Therefore, *fabula* rather seems a foil for syuzhet (artistic/causal arrangement) that complements the unseen holistic *form* (Aristotle’s plot) of a mimetic narrative⁴⁰. Perhaps, the culmination of this circular and complementary form is apparent when Forster (2005, p. 87) famously establishes (in 1927) that a story is “a narrative of events arranged in their time-sequence. A plot [in the sense of syuzhet] is also a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality”.

However, the way Shklovsky presents syuzhet closely corresponds to the artistic *presentation* of a work itself, unlike Aristotle’s plot; Shklovsky’s objective is to highlight the artistic mediation at the immediate experiential level. Consequently, his defamiliarisation seems a way to celebrate the artistic resistance (of literariness/syuzhet) to narrative (*fabula*/story) in the sense of ‘excess’. Nevertheless, in both theories, invoking the *difference* between ordinary experience and artistic experience is attributed to the narrative

⁴⁰ As some theorists (Carter, 2006, p. 33; Walsh, 2007, p. 52) seem to believe, Aristotle’s plot (*mythos*) is not the presentational structure of a play akin to Russian formalist syuzhet. Lowe (2004, pp. 13–16) explains that plot, *fabula*, and syuzhet have different scopes and functions. But lately, plot has become the most frequent translation of syuzhet.

organisation/mediation; the contrast between two posited levels is considered as the fundamental way to highlight the artistic representation (imitation).

Later formalists seem to consider Shklovsky's definition of fabula or story (free, formless materials) as a less effective concept to highlight the power of syuzhet—or artistic representation. Consequently, they exalt the concept of syuzhet (usually translated as plot) by further polarising both concepts from each other. For instance, Boris Tomashevsky asserts:

[T]he story [fabula] is the aggregate of motifs in their logical, causal-chronological order; the plot [syuzhet] is the aggregate of those same motifs but having the relevance and the order which they had in the original work [...] But the aesthetic function of the plot is precisely this bringing of an arrangement of motifs to the attention of the reader. (Lemon and Reis, 1965, p. 68)

First, in this view, generating a logical, chronological, and causal fabula becomes the main function of syuzhet; or, fabula is the *purpose* and *result* of syuzhet. Secondly, when fabula is conceived with all these mimetic attributes, a syuzhet—which has the potential of generating them—appears artistically dominant. In this way, internalising fabula (world) into syuzhet (text) is perhaps an effective move to achieve the formalistic goal of portraying a text as a self-sufficient system. Rather than using everyday terms like *events*, formalists use terms like *motifs* to highlight the textuality of narrative components.

Paul Fry (2012, pp. 90–91) resolutely argues that formalists' tenets should be understood as a theory of form; for them, text is nothing but form, and forms are relationships with functions. In Fry's view, fabula, like defamiliarisation, is a function of syuzhet; it is not content. However, as García Landa (2005, sec. 2.2) explicates, in the later phase of Russian formalism, *motifs* are depicted almost as content (either as irreducible *units*, pre-linguistic materials, or referent events), that can be organised into different forms as syuzhet or fabula. In Vladimir Propp's (2010, pp. 20–21) study on fairy tales, he identifies specific action sequences as *functions*; in almost all fairy tales, Propp suggests that a particular

order of functions repeats (p.xxi). In other words, a higher temporal order of fabula dictates the arrangement of syuzhet of fairy tales, indicating the possibility of a determinant fabula/story over syuzhet.

The above discussion shows that proto-narratology establishes several influential theoretical schemes: the possibility of vertical stratification of narrative beyond its apparent linguistic presentation; developing principles to generate and analyse different strata, their interplay, and hierarchy; increasing importance attached to the projected story (holistic, causal, mimetic, determinant). Later, structuralist narratologists borrow principles from then influential linguistic paradigm to define their stratifications. It is also important to scrutinise their underlying tenets because they have a lasting effect on post-classical and cinematic narratology.

2.2.3. Story and Discourse

In their pioneering articles, Todorov (2014, pp. 384, 413), Barthes (1977, pp. 79–124), and Genette (1976, p. 8) explicitly admit the influence of the eminent linguist Émile Benveniste. As Stéphane Mosès (2001, pp. 509–525) expounds, Benveniste critically develops his ideas on and also contests Saussurean linguistics. According to Mosès's (pp. 521–224) illuminating exegesis, Benveniste's influential story/discourse (*récit/discours*) distinction does not exactly tally with Saussure's celebrated *langue/parole* distinction. For Saussure (1959), *langue* is a holistic (p.9) system of rules (pp.21–22) that dictates the individual instances of heterogeneous utterance, or *parole*. The relationship between *signifier* and *signified* (Saussurean sign) is *arbitrary* and internal to the system, and language acquires meaning (correspondence between signifieds and signifiers) solely through their relative *differences* (pp.117–121).

Benveniste deviates from the idea that meaning is strictly internal to the language system (Mosès, 2001, pp. 512–514). He separates the semiotic system or the 'language qua language' from the extra-linguistic activity of using language (*la parole*), which he calls discourse. Although the *semiotic system* of

language is a closed whole that depends on arbitrariness and relative difference, he maintains that the intersubjective historic meanings arise only in the practical contexts with the acts of utterances (enunciation). In discourses, interlocutors test already acquired meanings (learned memory) with actual situations and confirm or change the existing semiotic system. For Benveniste, language has two dimensions (double significance): pre-discourse *semiotic* dimension and the *semantic*⁴¹ dimension or *discourse*, which subjectively appropriate the semiotic system to create meanings (p.516). With this model, he seems to acknowledge the extra-linguistic context (discourse) that makes the part/units (language) meaningful. Moreover, in his view, correspondence (contextual reference) and coherence both contribute to meaning making (p.513).

Benveniste later builds his notion of *story/discourse* on his double significance (language system/discourse) theory (pp.521-524). He recognises that some grammatical forms can eliminate the subjective/historical features of enunciation (e.g. third-person reporting: she enters the house); the other forms can retain them (e.g. first and second-person reporting: I saw her enter the house). Benveniste defines *story* as the mode of impersonal enunciation (without the traces of the narrator) and *discourse* as the personal mode of enunciation with references to the narrator. In this strictly linguistic model, enunciation is always the source of story as well as discourse. This approach is a way to demonstrate how linguistic utterances *internalise* the traces of external communicational context.

Following Benveniste's linguistic principles⁴², structural narratologists adapt story and discourse (Genette, 1976, pp. 8–12; Barthes, 1977, pp. 85–88;

⁴¹ Benveniste's use is suggestive of *pragmatics* in general linguistics; but while pragmatics usually studies the non-literal meanings beyond words and expressions (Korta and Perry, 2015, sec. 1), Benveniste (1971, pp. 22–25) explains how signs acquire referential meanings within discourses.

⁴² Cristian Metz (1982, pp. 89–97) also exploits Benveniste's story/discourse binary to explain cinematic narrative. He argues that the institutional mode of narrative *discourse* masquerades as pure *story* by obliterating the traces of enunciation; therefore, audiences believe that they are in control of the story.

Todorov, 2014, pp. 383–384) as two essential levels to analyse the narrative enunciation⁴³. In their version, story almost becomes the ‘what’ or content of a narrative that is free of discursive (enunciative marks) features. Contrarily, discourse (how) bears the marks of enunciation. For Genette, “discourse can *narrate* without ceasing to be discourse. Narrative [in the sense of story] can’t *discourse* without betraying itself” (1976, p. 11 emphasis in original). Put differently, a ‘story’ is only available as a narrative discourse. Consequently, Genette (1993, p. 56) considers non-linguistic presentations (e.g. films, drama) are inherently non-narratives. They are not narrated, mediated, or represented linguistically but presented directly (Genette, 1976, pp. 2–3). Therefore, for Genette, the term ‘narrative’ only applies to the linguistically *narrated* ‘stories’.

Since a linguistically represented discourse is inevitably a personal *enunciation* with the traces of interlocutors, structural narratology necessarily presupposes a *textually represented* enunciator or narrator—and its counterpart, audience. This approach also deems that the enunciator/narrator of a fiction is necessarily distinct from the author (Genette, 1993, pp. 68–71). Besides, structural narratologists usually appropriate archetypal fictional narratives (mostly novels) to explain the relationship between story and discourse. Therefore, they tacitly assume that a linguistic discourse is a make-believe ‘report’ of independently existing mimetic events (story) to an audience. In other words, the author pretends to be someone else in fiction: the narrator or a character. In Genette’s (1993, p. 57) words, “a fictional narrative is purely and simply a pretence or simulation of a factual narrative”. This conviction seems to restrict the classical narratological capacities to the linguistically *cognisable* and *reportable* phenomena: the phenomena of a mimetic world⁴⁴. Consequently, theorists like Todorov (p.385–402), and Chatman (1980, pp. 43–145) go on to

⁴³ Admitting the formalist influence, Barthes also employs a three-level model: functions, actions, and discourse. His model seems considerably eclectic beyond Benveniste’s premises.

⁴⁴ I contend that this restriction is not applicable to cinema; cinematic images affect audiences even without linguistic interpretations. However, the linguistic capacity is not necessarily limited to the mimetic domain; metaphysics, mathematics, logics, etc. transcend mimetic representation (resemblance to something else/imitation).

classify various elements of the story that correspond to the real-world categories: characters (people); events (incidents); actions (activities). With the heightened importance of the story, and story's inability to appear without discourse, the story/discourse distinction becomes the fundamental core of classical narratology. In Phelan's (2011a, p. 4) words, it is the "mother's milk of narratology". However, against Benveniste's original goal, and moving more towards the Saussurean premise, this dualism functions as an internal system that indicates the coherence of a narrative.

According to the above discussion, it is possible to note several observations about the typical narratological methodology. First, from Aristotle to structuralist narratology, narrative inquiries have predominantly been conducted in the linguistic medium. Therefore, linguistic traits invariably influence their theories. The symbolic nature of the linguistic text (the signifier/signified dualism) often seems to encourage theorists to decisively separate semantic and pragmatic levels from the *language* (semiotic) level. The textual meanings often seem distinctive at the word level, sentence level, contextual level, and tropological level; all these levels also seem to have their own rules and conventions.

Following the same motivation, first, narratologists separate the narrative 'medium' or text (signifier) from 'narrative' (signified). Secondly, they posit various principles to distinguish the apparent level (signifier: play/syuzhet/discourse) and a content level (signified: plot/fabula/story) in narratives⁴⁵. As I argued, the underlying purpose of these levels seems the need of a universal whole that can make the individual, apparent units/events coherent and meaningful. However, as narratologists mostly scrutinise generic literary narratives, they tend to accept a text-internal mimetic story as this holistic

⁴⁵ Heath clearly notes that Aristotle too presupposes a higher level of meaning that arises from the linguistic composition (akin to discourse); a plot arises from this level, which he calls 'rhythmic language'; also, for Aristotle, the literary level (stylistics) and play or performance is secondary (Aristotle and Heath, 1996, pp. xix–xx, xlviii).

archetype. When the narrative 'content' is theorised as a mimetic story, narratologists can remove the medium interpretation per se and the communicational context from the narrative considerations. Secondly, story (fabula/plot) and discourse (text/syuzhet) can be used as a universal system that indicates the formal coherence of narratives.

However, an internalised syuzhet and discourse too are only aspects of the mimetic story rather than the narrative presentation. The 'actual' narrative presentation (by authors) takes place outside of the narrative text/representation. A narrative interpretation (by audiences) is also a text-exterior activity. As Benveniste claims, an arbitrary and differential system can only achieve meanings through an exterior historical practice but not within. David Sless further clarifies this perspective:

We need to *ask* how a particular sign *stands for* a particular referent, and in more general terms how it is that anything *stands for* anything. This missing ingredient is the community, individual or organism, which invokes the *stand-for* relation, which uses an object (sign) to *stand for* another object (referent). (1986, p. 5 Italics in original)

In this sense, semantics and pragmatics cannot be given a predetermined form within a text. Similarly, narrative cannot have a text-internal mimetic model as its determinant essence. A narrative can even help audiences to contest the mimetic model of real-world. Therefore, a *presupposed* 'mimetic story' (or a non-fictional hypothesis of the real-world) is only a contextual, ideological, and hermeneutic prototype that is confirmed or challenged by a narrative presentation. If a 'story' is only available as a discourse, Barbara H. Smith (1980, p. 216) asserts that "unembodied and unexpressed, unpictured, unwritten and untold" hypothetical story is just a "Platonic ideal". Nevertheless, as I established in the introduction and this chapter, many narratologists seem to consider 'story' as a text-internal, given system as well as the most primary outcome of a narrative text. This is even evident at the level of narrative events. Jonathan Culler (1980, p. 32) encapsulates this necessary paradox of narratological

interpretation: “one logic assumes the primacy of events; the other treats the events as the products of meanings”.

In this context, I propose that the ‘actual’ *hermeneutic force* of narrative is not a text-internal ‘story’ but the text-external, contextual activity. It is difficult to separate this extra-semiotic contextual activity (authorial and audience mediation) that lends meanings to a medium per se from any secondary level (e.g. narrative, story, discourse). The meanings of the higher levels also seamlessly determine how the language/semiotic level acquires meanings. Especially, the semiotic resources of cinema, which has many more referential dimensions than symbolic (signifier/signified) capacity, demand more dynamic models to explain cinematic narrative. Therefore, the rest of this chapter explores alternative approaches that transcend dualist and mimetic-oriented narratology.

2.3. Beyond Dualism: Narrative to Narrativity

Mark Currie (2011, pp. 6–14) explains that classical narratologists often tend to suppress the textual complexities that contradict their theoretical scheme. However, erratic and perplexing works constantly resist their partial readings and autocracy. Especially, as Brian Richardson (2005, pp. 24–25) elaborates, post-modernist ‘anti-narratives’ disrupt the mimetic story/discourse model with unfamiliar features: transgression of conventions and paratexts; excessive integration of factual events; blatant authorial intrusions into the fictional world; the lack of temporal relationships between events. In such narratives, the same events repeat identically or somewhat differently, timelines circulate, reverse, conflate, freeze, contradict themselves, or progress differently for different characters (Richardson, 2002, pp. 47–63)⁴⁶. The hybrid genres that interweave fictional and real-world events and characters further complicate the

⁴⁶ Focusing on these ‘anti-mimetic’ aspects, Richardson and others develop an alternative narrative theory: Unnatural Narratology (Alber and Heinze, 2011). However, in my view, they too use the same classical narratological toolset to analyse ‘unnatural’ narratives and their anti-mimetic aspects rather than the non-mimetic aspects of any narrative.

ontology of fiction. As a theoretical reaction to such difficulties, postclassical narratologists revise *narrativity* and *fictionality* as qualities that can reside in any text, even beyond the narrative genres. As Abbott (2014, pp. 508–607) explains, this move helps to observe narrativity as the textual potential to elicit ‘narrative response’ from an audience. Nielsen, Phelan, and Walsh (2014, pp. 70–71) also suggest that fictionality and non-fictionality should be considered rhetorical resources rather than generic categories. Although these revisions offer a more flexible and aspiring approach independent of generic assumptions, narrativity and fictionality still appear to grapple with some deep-rooted theoretical constraints that re-emerge with new forms.

First, if *narrativity* is what makes a text or a section a narrative, again, the prevalent theories differ whether it stems from textual semantics, syntactic relationships, or pragmatics. Prince (2011, pp. 19–28) addresses the complexities of narrativity by recognising its diverse aspects that are divided between these three dimensions. The complete status of a text as a narrative, which he calls *narrativehood*, is fulfilled by six selective criteria: *representation* of at least *two*, *logically consistent* and *asynchronous events* that do not *presuppose or imply* each other. Such criteria that mainly impart the *qualities* of narrative are called *narrativeness*. Texts that have not acquired full narrativehood—by not fulfilling all six criteria—are, for Prince, *quasi-narratives*. Although *narrativehood* and *narrativeness* are aspects of *narrativity*, Prince admits that the thematic aspects and the context further influence narrativity. He calls this extra-textual, reader-dependent quality of narrativity, *narratability*. However, he also acknowledges that all the criteria listed above do not equally impart narrativeness. Alternatively, Ryan (2007, pp. 28–31) presents, what she calls a *fuzzy set definition* for narrative, charting a set of different criteria that expand across spatial, temporal, mental, and pragmatic dimensions. Both theorists agree that different audiences recognise narrativity prioritising some of these criteria. Narrativity may mean many things to different audiences and it could be textual as well as contextual. Multivalent narrativity may even depend

on the factors such as authors, particular era, situational, cultural, and socio-political context of consumption and production, and audience psychology.

Secondly, the criteria presented by Prince, Ryan, and others are still restrained by the prototype narrative, narrative fiction. Certainly, their approach to narrativity is compatible with *degrees* or gradations of narrativity and does not overtly refer to fictionality. However, rather than a quality of formal relationships of a text, their narrativity still predominantly depends on the *specific* contents of what a fictional text represents. Herman (2011, p. 135) encapsulates the consensual view of post-classical narratologists: “narrativity has been defined as a property by virtue of which a given text or discourse is more or less readily interpreted as a story”.

Ryan’s (2007, p.29) interpretation is evidently influenced by fictional worlds theories and she presents her first condition as “narrative must be about a world populated by individual existents”; and a later condition includes “intelligent agents” who “react emotionally to the status of the world”. Ryan’s (2005, p. 446, 2014b, pp. 729–731) version of fictional worlds theory presupposes a complete and self-sufficient world implied by the discourse, which departs from the actual world according to *the principle of minimal departure*. Fludernik (2009, p. 6) attempts to maximise her demands for the *minimum* narrativity claiming “the existence of a human character in and of itself will produce a minimal level of narrativity”. Consequently, these frameworks still echo a logical cohesive story or an ontologically *complete* world. In his version of fictional world theory, Lubomír Doležel (2000, pp. 37–38) objects to this fictional *completeness*. He believes *incompleteness* to be an imperative aspect of narrative. Understandably, Prince’s *quasi-narrative* is so-named, because not satisfying all the presented conditions fails to invoke a properly functioning story-world. Therefore, in this view, the degrees of narratives are degrees of abstract stories or incompletely manifested worlds. *Narrativity* is still part of an ideal narrative, which yearns for a complete totality of a world. It is percentages, rather than the qualitative grades, determined by the hundred per cent prototype structure.

Phelan and Rabinowitz's (2012, p. 3) "default" narrative definition too seems to indicate what a text should represent. They replace 'representation of series of events' with "somebody telling somebody else [...] that something happened to someone or something". These substitutions sensibly elaborate the concepts *representation* and *events* according to their rhetorical stance, but still seem to suggest what should be 'told' for a text to be a narrative: something happened to someone. Arguably, their 'default' position presupposes narrative within the generic boundaries borrowed from fiction, rather than a formal quality that can reside in any presentation. If it is a restriction in any sense of the *substance* of narrative, this definition also seems inadequate; however, their cautious term 'default' leaves room for other possibilities. Therefore, I particularly explore these other communicational possibilities of narrative in this chapter and also argue that a 'story' is a specific mimetic aspect/genre of narrative communication, which attains a higher degree of narrativity.

In this context, it is important to develop a new narratological framework that integrates semiotic medium, narrative discourse (including context) and the subject matters (themes) beyond a predetermined and fixed outcome (story). I argue that narrativity is an integration of all these dimensions. It does not arise only from its mimetic dimension (story worlds or real world). The recently elucidated aspects of *Peircean Semiosis*⁴⁷ can be adapted to explain the narrative interpretation as an integrated process (beyond linguistics) and how signs contribute to engender dynamic narrativity.

2.4. Peircean Signs: Infinite Semiosis

Peircean Semiotics offers several significant theoretical insights into many aspects of this study. Besides developing a theory to explain any posed levels of narrative and their seamless integration, later, it can also be used to analyse

⁴⁷ Peirce philosophy is known to be extremely fragmental since it was always in development. The recent Peircean scholars like T. L. Short (2007) and Albert Atkin (2016, pp. 124–160) explain his theory more coherently.

the complex intricacies behind cinematic signification. An outline of the relevant aspects of Peirce's theory is vital here because several interpretations and terminologies prevail. Semiosis is presented to theoretically interpret the general process of signification, but it can be exploited to solve many problems related to narrative presentation.

While Peirce declares that “all thought is in signs” (Peirce, 1992, p. 24), according to Albert Atkin’s (2016) detailed analysis of the Peircean system, a sign can also be inferred as a conceptual, metaphorical and relative unit of human thought (p.124-127). Any *experienced* aspect of a material object or seemingly independent *mental* concept that incites a *sign* is a signifying element or a *sign-vehicle*; such a sign refers to a *specific aspect* of another object—again this object can be a *mental* representation of material object or a concept. In familiar Saussurean or semiological terminology, *sign-vehicle* is the *signifier*, and *signified* is always a *particular mental aspect* of an object. This clearly shows that various sign vehicles can be drawn—or experienced—from the same material objects or concepts in different contexts. Such sign vehicles become mediating *signs* in thought that can evoke another aspect of the same object or another object—Peirce names this form of intermediate sign as *Interpretant*. As a result, unlike the dyadic Saussurean sign, the Peircean sign is a metaphoric triadic process that can simultaneously mean a specific mental property of an object (signifier), a mediating thought unit (interpretant) and a specific mental quality of an object (signified). Consequently, any intermediate interpretant, or rather correctly, any *particular aspect* of an interpretant can be a sign vehicle for another interpretant and therefore, can generate an infinite number of signs in the thought process. Peirce (1998, p. 414) calls this process of cognition *semiosis*. Although any *sign* is ultimately an interpretant, for the sake of terminological convenience, Peirce names three relative stages, *representamen* (this is what is called a *sign* in general terminology), *interpretant* and *object*, considering only the main forms of one particular *signifying instance*. Here,

confusingly, *object* is a term he uses to name relatively the last stage of particular sign instance, and therefore it is also mental.

As an example, Atkin (2016, pp. 129–130) considers the relationship between *mole* and *molehill*: *molehill* evokes a sign for *mole*, if one is culturally or empirically familiar with the relationship between these two *concepts*. Here the mental signs, molehill and mole are experienced mental impressions of the real molehill and mole. But all the aspects of two real objects are not relevant for a particular signifying instance. If the *arrangement of soil* is the dominant sign vehicle for a particular instance, the height of the mound, the colour or quality of soil may not participate in that signifying instance. However, the *arrangement of the soil* can be a sign for *the mole's ability to dig burrows*, but may or may not be a sign for the size, shape or the gender of the mole etc. Consequently, a chain of interpretants can be generated to translate the first sign (*arrangement of the soil*) towards the interpretant (*the mole's ability to dig burrows*, in this instance) in the process of semiosis. Next, *the mole's ability to dig burrows* will be a sign for another signifying instance that ends up signifying *mole* the animal. In reality, a myriad of signs can be generated in a single signifying instance, with all the listed sign vehicles above and much more; and ultimately there may be many such signifying instances involved in the whole signifying relationship between molehill and mole. However, it is also important to grasp that this explanation is an *a-priori* interpretation of the thought process; and therefore, any signifying instance can be considered in reverse order too: a mole can be a sign for molehill and a molehill can be a sign for mole; it depends on the goal and the purpose of interpretation.

With regard to the literary context, the written or printed word *mole* can generate many other *sign vehicles* based on its different aspects: visual appearance, spelling structure, textual context, similar words, etc. Those instances may direct the semiosis towards moles, similar other animals, personal experiences about them etc.; even for someone who does not have any idea about moles it may evoke myriads of other relevant or irrelevant

concepts. However, there will also be many other sign vehicles generated from other words, phrases, sentences, grammatical structures, author, subject context etc.; all these *signifying instances* generate interpretants and objects—and they multiply in the process—to stabilise or confuse a particular meaning. Thus, the relationship between signifier and signified is a result of a complex mental operation and cannot be reduced to a direct dualistic form, or differences between them. Arguably, visual or audio-visual mediums become more complex in this sense because they can generate more types of sign vehicles, interpretants, and objects.

Furthermore, Peirce defines the relationship between object and sign, emphasising that object *determines* the signifying instance, “perhaps best understood as the *placing of constraints* or conditions on successful signification by the object, rather than the object *causing or generating* the sign” (Atkin, 2016, p. 130 emphasis in original). Then, although semiosis is a cyclic mental process, the object—in a way *signified*—determines the signification, rather than the initial sign or signifier. According to Peirce’s theory, interpreters prioritise a particular signifying instance by keeping the process of semiosis active, until they reach a particular practical stage of a dynamic object. This makeshift stage is the *immediate object* and in Atkin’s (2008, p. 68) words, it is “some informationally incomplete facsimile of the dynamic object generated at some interim stage in a sign-chain”. Furthermore, in Peirce’s sense, signification and the stabilisation of meaning depend on myriads of textual, intertextual and contextual signifying instances related to a sign, rather than mere textual signifying instances.

2.5. Semiosis: Dynamic Narrativity

Although hypothetical narrative signs appear to have a confusing relationship with sign structures of communication mediums, Peirce’s semiosis opens up a portal. The concept of sign vehicle shows that anything mentally experienced (including texts) generates signifying instances; although there are practical units like objects, concepts, pictures, sounds, words, sentences, and

texts (relationships), meaning is not necessarily located in those units; meaning can be in them (denotative), underlying them (semantic/syntactic/connotative), beyond them (figural), and in contexts (pragmatics). Further, in the process of semiosis, extra-textual, paratextual, and intertextual signs may also contribute relevant interpretants towards a particular signifying stream.

Peirce's perspective indicates that signs are necessarily mental processes although they are decisively *constrained* by the features of communication mediums and contingent goals—Peircean *objects*. The signifying instances can be initiated by the external material structures, or internally motivated imagination based on the prior knowledge and experience. However, most importantly, rather than the sign or *representamen*, *object* (as a conceptual stage) seems to be more determinant in semiosis. As an example, if the audience of a narrative cannot conceptualise *known objects* that are relevant to narrative signification through semiosis, a particular textual element fails to provide signs and interpretants: e.g. without being familiar with a mole's behaviour one cannot infer molehill as a sign for mole. This is not to deny that molehill can still be a sign for other known objects or scenarios like the nature of soil, or as an unrecognised threat. However, if someone has sufficient other experiences comparable with this particular scenario, such prior-knowledge—or interpretants—may contribute to form a successful guess⁴⁸.

Nevertheless, identifying irrelevant signs just because they are present is not beneficial for narrative signification. According to Peirce's sign theory, the relevance is constrained by its purposeful object: the dualistic view of narrative presupposes that *story* is the object of narrative, and therefore, conventional audiences will prioritise story-oriented reading, with or against to the textual cues. A semiosis would not also preclude possible thought patterns and inclinations of minds, when texts invite. However, when texts do not offer

⁴⁸ Frank Kermode's (1980, p. 88) influential concept of *underreading* and *overreading* seems an alternative account of such contextual or goal-oriented reading activities.

conventional structures, a semiosis can attend to other signifying instances because it is essentially a synthesis between a priori, textual, and contextual signs. Therefore, it can also attend to the non-narrative qualities of texts (and so-called excess) that do not essentially culminate in a closed, mimetic story.

The theory of semiosis is arguably more disposed towards ideological, cultural, non-universal, and malleable mental patterns. Narrative semiosis cannot be established as a strictly self-regulating, goal-oriented process that reads anything as a mimetic narrative. Any individual semiosis process can be always regulated, challenged, and diverted by the text and context. Therefore, it seems a more flexible model than the stereotypical, schema-based models that rely on schema theory, which most cognitive narratologists promote⁴⁹. As Shen (2005a, p. 157) contends, “cognitive narratology in general focuses on the... *generic context* of narrative reception, leaving aside the varied socio-historical contexts”. Contrarily, a semiosis can be a structural as well as a structure-free process that integrates pragmatic and socio-historical signs. However, Peircean semiosis is presented to explain the general thought process and engagement with signs; therefore, it is also important to investigate how to distinguish a narrative semiosis from general interpretation.

2.6. Narrative and Its Nested Junctures

In his article, ‘Language, Narrative, and Anti-Narrative’, Robert Scholes (1980) adapts Peircean semiosis to explain narrative, and he compares *events* to the *object* of semiosis, *text* to sign, and *discourse* to interpretant. Unfortunately, this proposition is indefensible for several reasons. First, Scholes’s theory is a metaphoric analogy rather than a theoretical application. It is still influenced by the structuralist narratology and the *story/discourse* dualism. He too presupposes a predetermined outcome from narrative semiosis. Consequently, he implies that events come first in the “semiotic circle”, perhaps

⁴⁹ These theorists offer cognitivist interpretational models: Jean Mandler (2014, pp. 31–74); McVee and et al. (2005, pp. 531–566); Bordwell (2013, pp. 27–47)

because *events* seem to be ontologically antecedent to text. Secondly, he submits to a chronological order: events first, text second, and interpretation last. Here, Scholes seems to emulate the objective story, subjective discourse, and the consumption of narrative.

In contrast, Peirce does not privilege any order within semiosis, but only asserts that sign-object cycles predominantly determine semiosis. In this sense, reading, watching, feeling, and thinking can stimulate *signs*, but they are not necessarily directed towards a series of narrative events or stories; that is only one possibility according to the nature of sign vehicles (stimulants) and *objects*. Thirdly, instead of considering the Peircean *sign vehicle* aspect, Scholes's analogy reduces the whole text to a *sign* or a text as *a set of signs*. The work/text as the whole may or may not contribute to particular mimetic events or story, and therefore, this classification prevents considering potential non-mimetic elements of the text and their implications towards narrative signification. Scholes seems to either assume that all texts are necessarily narrative, or he overlooks the problem of non-mimetic aspects of texts.

However, if a theoretical application is sought for the Peircean semiosis, it is more pertinent to compare work/text—the semiotic composition—as an organised structure of *sign vehicles*. These sign vehicles can generate myriads of mental signs for various *signifying instances*. The users of texts—authors, filmmakers, readers, listeners, spectators, analysts etc.—can use texts to derive sign vehicles for many purposes like beholding, descriptive reading, narrative reading, world making, thematic reading, analysing, criticising, comparing etc. Texts either facilitate these attempts or frustrate them. Any of these interpretative processes can be named a unique type of *semiosis*: descriptive, mimetic, analytical, critical semiosis etc. As an instance, an individual can evaluate a book for its printing quality, grammatical structure, descriptive details, stylistics, facts, narrativity, artistic construction, morals, events, story, themes etc. These contingent but interrelated goals are the ultimate *object* of narrative semiosis. In these processes, semiosis may generate many interpretative

junctures, *interpretants*. Streams of interpretants can generate more specific semiosis for particular concepts. If necessary, they can be *temporarily* categorised or named according to the already classified narrative concepts: descriptions, grammatical forms, tropes, existents, exposition, characters, narrators, narratees, settings, events, motifs, themes, temporality, causality, focalisation, order, speed, frequency, stylistics, plot, syuzhet, story, fabula etc. Any of these concepts may become another sign, interpretant, or object; or, they can contribute to the signifying instances (for further interpretation) as *interpretants*. They are meaningful distinctions to discuss various aspects of narratives but only as textual abstractions. As Peirce maintains, any interpretant can be another sign for another interpretant; all these theoretical junctures of discourse are interrelated: the descriptions are veiled in events; the events are descriptions of more complicated scenarios; focalisation, order, speed, frequency, themes, and morals are interpretants derived from the events, descriptions, and contexts etc. Smith (1980, pp. 222–223) suggests that when a core ‘story’ seems to be transposed into different instances (narratives) and mediums, they are just different *versions*. Although audiences’ experiences of them can have some resemblances according to the specific textual features, she argues that there is no discourse-free, soul-like, story-structure that is shared by different narratives. In other words, the ‘core-story’ (fabula) is another version, which theorists develop from multiple narratives. Similarly, I maintain that the accounts of characters, events, plot, syuzhet, fabula, story, and story synopses are just different goal-oriented versions according to the various concepts and theories.

Finally, if considered in Benveniste’s original (textual, intertextual, contextual) meaning, the act of *discourse* can be compared with the process of *semiosis*. However, an actual discourse/semiosis (*how* of narrative) is not a represented aspect of narrative, but an extra-textual activity in the real-world by real agents. The *signs* and *interpretants* related to the discourse itself (the awareness of artificiality, authors, context, interpreter) and prior

discourses/semiosis (previous readings, criticisms, intertextuality) can influence a particular narrative semiosis at any point. This aspect makes a narrative semiosis distinct from the general every-day semiosis. I propose that this model is the apt semiotic foundation for my study, and I apply this primary model with other Peircean ideas (firstness, secondness, thirdness) to further develop a framework for *cinematic semiosis* in the next chapter.

2.7. Narrative Semiosis: Revisiting Narrativity

The most significant insight that Peircean semiosis can offer narrative theory is the continual evolution of signifying instances. Peircean *sign*, *interpretant*, *object*, and *semiosis* are useful interpretative elements of the same signifying *process* that cannot cease permanently. Therefore, it does not promote any stage as a discrete and independent entity, but as an interpretative, transient, and contingent intermediate. Rather than analysing texts as merely vertical stratifications (medium/narrative; text/plot; syuzhet/fabula; story/discourse; functions, actions, discourse), the theory of semiosis acknowledges the vertical and horizontal (nested) possibilities of interpretation. It is necessarily a temporal model based on dynamic progression.

Semiosis further helps to discern the common ontological foundation between different interpretative parameters of discourse. Narrative theorists generally tend to separate distinct ontological dimensions: communicational acts (writing, narrating, shooting, editing, performing, reading, listening, watching, analysing, criticising etc.); semiotic presentation (book, audio, drama, film, etc.); textual arrangements (medium, syuzhet, plot, discourse); interpretational outcomes (plot, fabula, characters, events, story, themes). This division further leads to the seemingly irreconcilable division between pragmatics and semantics as discussed earlier. However, in the realm of *semiosis*, the both semantic and pragmatic dimensions participate merely by furnishing *signs*. Consequently, both dimensions are indispensable for narrative meaning. Signs produced by *act* (narration/discourse) help to stabilise or

destabilise the signs produced by the *text*. Furthermore, authors, filmmakers, or artists may try to incorporate signs of *act* into their texts as authorial intrusions, digressions, de-familiarising, intertextuality, self-reflexivity etc.

Finally, the logical end of the Peircean semiosis evaporates the strict narratological dualisms and hierarchies into thin air, because it establishes sign, interpretant, and object as interpretative stages of the goal-oriented semiosis (narrative interpretation). There is no tenable ontological priority for any of these concepts. This view also calls for a revision of traditional way of looking at the narrative constitution, which is divided into two or three ontological realms.

First, it can be observed that text, syuzhet, plot, discourse, story, and fabula overlap each other even transgressing their putative ontological boundaries in different theories. For example, Mieke Bal's (2009, pp. 5–9) interesting revision, *text/story/fabula*, which aims to overcome the limits of structural narratology, presents a reconciliation between formalism and structuralist narratology. In her model, *text* acts for the given semiotic arrangement, *story* acts for a blend between *syuzhet* (given contents and their relationships) and discourse (point of view, subjectivity), and *fabula* acts for the structuralists' *story* with events and characters. For Robert Belknap (2016, pp. 16–17), 'plot' resides in two different worlds in two guises with two possible forms. He defines these two different worlds as the world of characters or events, and the world of text.

For the purposes of my study, the best translation for *fabula* is "plot" and the best translation for *siuzhet* [syuzhet] is also "plot". In both cases the plot can be defined as the relationship among the incidents, but these two sets of relationships exist in two different worlds. (p,16, emphasis in original)

In comparison, Belknap's *syuzhet* overlaps with Bal's *text* and *story*; Bal's *story* and *fabula* both overlap with Belknap's *fabula*. Bal's *text* and *story* together overlap with Genette's discourse; Bal's *fabula* overlaps with Genette's *story*. Belknap exploits the polysemic term *plot* for both *fabula* and *syuzhet*, strictly imposing the implicit ontological boundary, which other theorists invoke

implicitly. Semiosis explains why these ontological ascriptions by different theorists are inconsistent; because there seem no such tenable discrete distinctions. All these concepts stem from the same ontological source and range on the same ontological plane of semiosis.

As discussed earlier (see section 2.2.2), formalists come to see *fabula* as an abstract reconfiguration derived from the tangible *syuzhet*. The classical narratologists come to portray that events or story determine the tangible *discourse*, or vice versa (2.2.3). However, according to Peircean semiosis, it is more logical to acknowledge that all narratological abstractions are useful interpretative and theoretical junctures generated through semiotic presentation (work/text) and semiosis (text/interpretation). From the authorial perspective, the active authorial agents weave narratives through creative semiosis and texts. Without interacting with the sign vehicles (verbal or written words, performances, images, sounds) and communicative mediums they cannot author narratives. Therefore, descriptions, grammatical forms, tropes, existents, exposition, characters, narrators, narratees, settings, events, motifs, themes, temporality, causality, focalisation, order, speed, frequency, stylistics, plots, *syuzhet*, story, story-worlds, *fabula*, excess are all interrelated generations on the same semantic and ontological plane. The theorists, who segregate these concepts according to prevalent dualistic agendas and hierarchies, seem to impose concrete and objective existence (givens) on some of them while trying to make others subjective and variable entities (outcome). The different theories ascribe cause and effect to different concepts according to their ontological distinctions. Furthermore, they try to discriminate semiotic oriented devices like grammar, compositions, media conventions and stylistics prior to or independent of the narrative meanings. But the attempts to reify these frameworks as inevitable essential structures appear arbitrary, perspectival, or goal-oriented. Further, such approaches are disinclined to acknowledge the interrelations between these categories and the underlying ideological agendas behind such frameworks.

However, I also insist that all above narratological terms are indispensable as pragmatic and terminological junctures of narrative interpretation, but without their underlying essentialist, dualistic, and ontological divisions. As semiosis is a theoretically infinite process, there are no steadfast boundaries within its evolution. Consequently, reading for narrative, analysing and criticising etc. can be interpreted as varied and extended semiosis-driven acts that a user can perform with a text. Other than the intra-textual signs, a user can also exploit various intertextual, extratextual, and contextual signs to enrich the process of semiosis. In fact, such activities are inexorable aspects of semiosis (in Chapter 4 and 5, I will elaborate these activities with examples). Accordingly, semiosis also reveals the limits of strict prescriptive reading conventions like New Criticism or Psychoanalytic Criticism. However, this does not mean that the practical, conventional, and interpretative boundaries and goals are invalid or useless. Narrative Semiosis just offers a theoretical mirror to cover the hazardous blind spots; it is a methodology to justify the interrelations and seamlessness of textual meanings, and the same time, their interpretative signposts.

The preceding discussion also shows that most narratological interpretations leave semiotic systems and their specificities aside as if they are just channels independent of narrativity. These theories also overlook the uniqueness of different narrative mediums and their inimitable ways of producing narrativity; different mediums provide distinct sign vehicles. Discourse and syuzhet are mostly perceived in a higher interpretative level distinct from the semiotic level, which is more relevant to the chronological variations, perspectival variations, diegesis, and the worlds conceived. In this sense, the narrative meaning is generally ascribed to two discrete levels as *discourse/syuzhet* level and *story/fabula* level. The initial *semiotic* level including grammar and stylistics, is considered pre-narrative or extra-narrative. However, the Peircean model shows that the higher narrative levels (*objects*) determine which initial signs are relevant for a particular semiosis. Therefore, now it is vital

to establish the seamless integration between these levels for a more comprehensive theory of narrativity. Without such a framework, the discussion of complex narrative mediums such as cinema seems inadequate and facile.

In this context, this study recognises *narrativity* as a *dynamic quality* that defines potential formal relationships between all the interpretative constituents of a text—including the textual stylistics and thematics. It stems from the interplay between the text and the communicational context. To reiterate, here *this interplay* progressively engenders the concrete semiotic system (with its all-inclusive *sign vehicles*), discourse level (with *narrating instance* including voice, tense, levels, mood, order, speed, frequency, and focalisation etc.), story level (events, characters, plots, fabula etc.), and also the thematic relationships. In the analytical context, *narrativity* is also just another *interpretant* or *object* of semiosis conceived by the narratological analysis, which is not necessarily determined by events, structured stories, or ontologically complete worlds. Although the concept of a formal quality determined by context may sound contradictory, *semiosis* shows that any formal quality is ultimately contextual.

Phelan and Rabinowitz's (Herman *et al.*, 2012, p. 57) rhetorical approach aptly defines narrative progression as the synthesis between textual dynamics and readerly dynamics: audiences interpret the textual dynamics—the structural organisation of a text—predominantly along the temporal axis. Therefore, to be meaningful, narrative progression should be defined with specific readerly dynamics triggered by specific textual dynamics. According to the Peircean framework, I propose that narrativity is engendered when signifying instances—sign vehicles of a text and their objects—*progress* in a more consistent way, and when they produce relatively more *intermediate* interpretants. Following the insights of rhetorical narratology and the Peircean sign theory, narrativity can be conceived as the quality that engenders from an interpretational act when the textual and readerly dynamics collectively develop and sustain continuous threads of senses and meanings. This interpretation recognises that narrativity is always associated with *progression*, which can be interpreted in many diverse

but interrelated forms: causality, temporality, chronology, theme, and so forth. However, it upholds that narrativity should not necessarily be restricted to mimetic structures or world making. In this sense, narrativity is a textual form, configuration, or dynamic design that needs to be recognised with particular instances (texts). It cannot be reduced to a rigid universal structure. In this sense, I outline *narrativity* as the textual progression (events) of representations; it is not the textual representations of progression (in the sense of events). In familiar words, narrativity is *events (progressions) of representations*.

This description is conceptually contrary to the structuralist notions of narrative: *representations of events* (Genette) or *representations of two or more events* (Prince). As Walsh (2007, pp. 56–57) rightly emphasises, the theorists who insist on two or more events for narrative definitions assume that progression is *in between* events; events themselves do not consist of progression. The theorists who admit that a representation of one event is a narrative assume that the progression is *within* an event. Although Genette's and Prince's terms *events* and *two or more events* attempt to present the concept of *progression*, they indicate a progression (events) prior to representation, discourse and text. Thompson's (1986, p. 130) neo-formalist definition of "narrative as an interplay between plot and story" is also strictly based on the idea of the events outside the text as signified by her phrase "the *real* chronological order" (emphasis in the original). Bordwell and Thompson's (2008, p. 75) narrative definition, "a chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space" is also influenced by structuralist creeds; it hides 'narrative' behind 'events' taking events for granted.

When *narrativity* is described as I propose, *narrative* (in terms of its *content*) is defined by the interplay between its form, presentation, and act of interpretation. Therefore, narrative can be used for *theory*, *ideology*, or *message* in some sense notwithstanding Prince's warning (see 2.1), when they are communicated with *textual progressions* of representations or *narrativity*. In this

sense, an event, plot, diegesis, story, or fabula are also a particular outcome of a narrative discourse, as a result of its narrativity.

3. Nested Dolls of Cinema: A Framework

In the previous chapter (section 2.2), I explored the influential dualistic frameworks advocated by narrative theorists to explain the internal constitution of narratives. Although these frameworks often comprise a given level and a construed (or constructed) level, I argued that often the ‘given level’ is also a tacit abstraction according to a presupposed holistic system. Moreover, I showed that such dualistic approaches to narrative let various other possibilities, levels, and channels escape from the narratological focus.

Following the rhetorical and Peircean approaches, I proposed that many narratological concepts can be understood as goal-oriented interpretational stages or nexuses. In this approach, narrative as a product, genre, or component becomes a less useful concept. Therefore, I explored *narrativity* not as a component of a text but as a resultant quality of an interpretational act by the text-external audiences. In this sense, I outlined *narrativity* as ‘textual progression of representations’. This approach helps to elaborate how an audience exploits a temporally (or spatially) presented semiotic arrangement (narrative) to generate meaningful sign-constellations according to the text-external and textually-inspired goals.

In this context, a cinematic image⁵⁰ can be deemed as a synthesis of sign-constellations in various modalities: visual, aural, verbal, musical, synaesthetic, etc. A cinematic semiosis necessarily involves all these modalities and attempts to develop *narrativity* by integrating them. The semiotic arrangement of cinema (cinematic image) is not merely a temporal presentation like a literary or verbal narrative (controlled by textual dynamics and audiences’ will) but also has a spatial dimension. Furthermore, cinema follows a standard presentational speed and makes significantly substantial amount of sign vehicles available for a

⁵⁰ Including its formal aspects and temporality.

semiosis. As discussed in the previous chapter, any semiosis also involves *signs* (in the modes of representamens, interpretants, and objects) from audiences' interpretational goals, ideological inclinations, contextual knowledge, intertextuality, and so forth. Moreover, as suggested in the introduction, cinema can also affect audiences *before* and *beyond* meanings. Although literary texts need to be interpreted/decoded through a conventional/symbolic language, the sensorial effects of cinema and their mimetic potentials can be immediate and intuitive. In other words, cinema has non-representational, non-mimetic potentials (that stand for itself) as well as representational mimetic potentials (that stand for something else). Therefore, I suggest that narrative mediation and semiosis sometimes work *with* and sometimes work *against* the immediate phenomenal effects of cinema in order to generate cinematic representations. Considering this intricate context, this chapter develops a pragmatic framework to explain cinematic narrativity and fictionality based on Peircean semiosis. Such a framework also helps to explain how a cinematic semiosis exploits fictionality and non-fictionality as communicational resources.

3.1. The Three Tiers of Cinematic Narrative

As I reiterated, rhetorical approaches to narrative consider narrative as a communicational event rather than a product. Also, these approaches cannot ignore the phenomenological and semiotic dimensions of narrative because narrative rhetorics necessarily involve them⁵¹. The rhetorical narratologists Phelan and Rabinowitz (Herman *et al.*, 2012, pp. 7–8) propose three analytical components of narrative engagement as *mimetic*, *thematic*, and *synthetic*. They argue that audiences' responses are distinct to these particular aspects of a narrative. In this model, audiences take the *mimetic* component of narrative as the most familiar dimension⁵². The mimetic response includes the recognition of

⁵¹ On the other hand, phenomenological and semiotic investigations are not necessarily committed to study the communicational context of a narrative.

⁵² In Chapter 2.2.1, I briefly discussed the originating context of the term *mimesis*.

people (characters), events, and spatial-temporal relationships similar to the audience's real-world experience. Audiences empathise with the characters, emotionally react to the events, and compare them with their own cultural inclinations. Concerning the *thematic* level, audiences derive particular ideas, themes, relationships, and beliefs evaluating the textual representations. Audiences respond to these abstractions very differently, mostly considering their ethical, ideological, and philosophical consequences. Audiences also react to the *synthetic* component of narratives, evaluating the artificial construction of narratives. Because this engagement takes narrative as an artificial construction, it attempts to contextualise narrative meanings within their authorial, ethical, and socio-political context. Phelan (2017, p. 6) stresses that "rhetorical narrative theory identifies a feedback loop among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations), and reader response". Therefore, a rhetorical approach considers narrative as a multidimensional and purposive communicational event, which should be analysed under proposed narrative engagements (pp.3-4).

According to Phelan and Rabinowitz's model, my exploration in this study is predominantly *synthetic*. I aim to investigate how *narrativity* and *fictionality* function as communicational resources, integrating authorial design, cinematic text, and audience-response in Bergman's selected films. On the other hand, I maintain that cinematic *narrativity* and *fictionality* derive from all three components/responses of Phelan and Rabinowitz's model. However, unlike in the literary medium, the *mimetic* component of cinema is not confined to the signified fictional world. The *cinematographic* level (motion-photography, visual viewpoints, and synchronised audio) and the *diegetic* level (fictional universe) both offer relatively independent mimetic referential domains, and therefore, I suggest that both domains need specific theoretical attention. By attending to this double referentiality and their interplay, a rhetorical-narratological approach to audience-response can engage with the subject-formation theories proposed by film theorists (see Section 6.1.3-6.1.4).

Since I expect to scrutinise this double referentiality of the mimetic tier of cinema (and their interplay), my study needs different analytical tiers from Phelan and Rabinowitz's model. Following the influential narratological themes, I propose the first and second *mimetic* tiers of cinema as *extra-diegetic* and *diegetic*. For the third tier, I retain Phelan and Rabinowitz's term *thematic*. Although I discuss these three domains variously as tiers, layers, levels, channels, registers, strata or matrixes in this study, they need to be understood as pragmatic lenses or nested analytical filters employed for the methodical

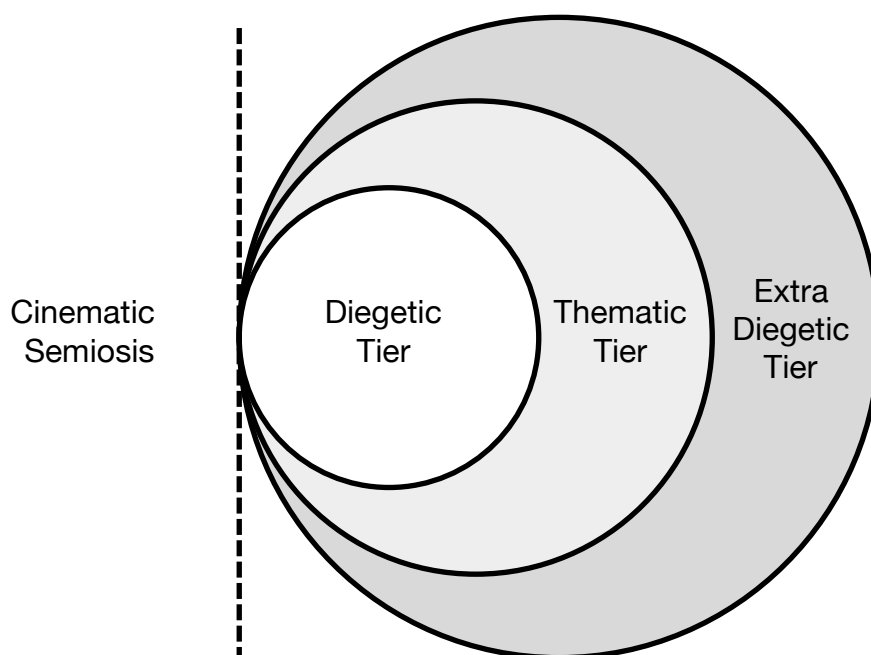


Figure 1: Three Tiers of Cinema

purposes of this study. Rather than formal components of a narrative, I describe them as relatively distinct audience-engagements. The same audio-visual elements or some *aspects* of them can be considered in relation to any of these tiers, and therefore, all three tiers are theoretical abstractions. As depicted in Figure 1 (p. 64), audiences can more or less ignore, prioritise, or engage with a specific tier or several tiers according to their predilections and interpretational goals.

The term *extra-diegetic* level is already in use within film studies but in a very limited sense, mostly concerning the intermittent thematic music, voiceovers, and on-screen titles that are not parts of the *diegesis*. Nevertheless,

in the section 3.2.2, I propose a wider scope for the extra-diegetic domain that is always active in cinema following narratological insights. Often, the *thematic level* of a film appears as a secondary interpretation of the story or *diegetic level*⁵³. However, I uphold that many characteristics of the thematic level dynamically influence how audiences recognise and define the extra-diegetic as well as the diegetic level (story-world).

3.2. The Diegetic Tier of Cinema

3.2.1. Diegetic Tier as The Story

Guido Heldt (2013, pp. 20–21) explicates that when the French philosopher Étienne Souriau first employed the term ‘diégétique’ to refer to “the world ‘behind the screen’ of a fiction film” (p.20, emphasis in original), he did not consider its narratorial dimension. For Souriau, the *diegetic* level concerns the entire representation of a film as a signified *reality*. Therefore, it is an expansive hypothesis rather than the ‘mimetic-story’ and portrays a mimetic-world or universe as an autonomous reality. On the other hand, it is a reductive version of *representation* because it overlooks the non-mimetic dimension (materiality of cinema) and the artificiality of cinematic representation.

When Genette (1983, p. 228) elaborates the concept of *diegetic levels*, he considers a diegesis as inevitably a *result* of a narration, acknowledging the artificiality of a diegesis. In this sense, a *diegesis* is always a framed narrative component in a narrative utterance in a literary medium; there is always a narrator outside a diegesis (extra-diegetic) at the time of utterance⁵⁴ (Prince, 2003, p. 29). Nevertheless, Genette also adapts Souriau’s term *diégèse*⁵⁵ to

⁵³ For instance, Bordwell (1993, pp. 95–96) assumes that “[c]omprehension grasps the meanings denoted by the text and its world [...] Interpretation, by contrast, ascribes abstract and nonliteral meanings to the film and its world”.

⁵⁴ However, some narrators can also be a character of their own uttered diegesis (intradiegetic).

⁵⁵ Genette (1988, pp.17-18) explains that the French word for the Greek concept of pure narrative (author as the narrator) is *diégèsis*; comparatively, the indirect narration through

indicate the possibility of an imaginary universe beyond the narrated story. For Genette (1988, p. 18), *diegesis* is “a universe rather than a train of events (a story)”. Therefore, in this approach, a narrated ‘story’ is always an (ambiguous) part of an assumed world or universe (*diegesis*). As discussed in section 2.2, narrative events and characters become parts because a projected whole demarcates their limits and possibilities. This urge for negotiation with a familiar whole⁵⁶ (nature/world as it is) engenders the *mimetic* dimension of a narrative. Therefore, the concept of *diegesis* helps to make single mimetic events causally and temporally meaningful. Consequently, many narrative and film theorists increasingly come to understand *diegesis* as predominantly a psychological construction by an audience, often blurring the putative boundary between the *story* and *diegesis*⁵⁷.

The mimetic dimension of cinematic narrative (*diegesis*) naturally appears to override its communicational context. In Metz’s (1982, pp. 91–95) well-known view (following Benveniste’s dichotomy *story/discourse*), mainstream cinema nurtures the technical devices and institutional conventions to conceal the traces of discourse, in order to present cinema as an autonomous ‘story’. According to Metz, this is a way to fulfil audiences’ voyeuristic desires. Although Bordwell (2013, pp. 22–23) differs from Metz’s linguistics and psychoanalysis-inspired premises, he also defines *narration* merely as an audience activity: narration is the process of audiences’ construction of *fabula* (story-world) from the interaction between given *syuzhet* and *style* (p.50-53). Bordwell portrays *narration* as a cognitive mechanism that is directed towards *a priori* story-world. Therefore, he assumes that the inevitable *diegesis* (a story-world) of a narrative implicitly defines the features of narrative content (events, characters, story, *fabula*) as well as what is ‘given’ (*syuzhet/style*). For Bordwell (2008, pp. 121–

characters is *mimésis* (see section 2.2). *Diégèse* is a different term used for the new concept ‘story-universe’; but unfortunately, in English, the term *diegesis* is used for both meanings.

⁵⁶ This is the necessity for Ryan’s principle of *minimal departure* (See section 2.3)

⁵⁷ As presented in the introduction, many theorists including Bordwell and Branigan portray ‘story-world’ or ‘diegesis’ (rather than the story) as the key outcome of narrative.

133), narrative is not even a communication. In his view, filmmakers collectively contribute to build a film, and spectators *construct* a story-world with their inferences by recognising “cues sown through the film” (p.123). For Bordwell, “this framework doesn’t mean that communication takes place”; a fictional film is rather like a rollercoaster ride in an amusement park built by engineers and craftsmen (p.124). In short, although Metz assumes that cinematic narration masquerades as story in Hollywood narrative, Bordwell seems to assume that story is the necessary goal of audience-driven narration in any fiction film.

However, in Bordwell’s theory, when *style* is separated from *syuzhet* (2013, p. 50), *syuzhet* is another skeletal version of the story, which already is an abstraction of a diegesis. The concepts of *syuzhet* and *fabula* seem secondary abstractions of an imaginary diegesis (a form of mimetic real-world) rather than its cause. Without an initial projection of a possible diegesis from a text, it is difficult to infer a *syuzhet* (the ‘given’ form) as well as a story (the constructed form). Bordwell (1991, p. 8) himself explicitly claims, “the spectator builds up some version of the diegesis or spatio-temporal world, and creates an ongoing story (*fabula*) occurring within it”. In this sense, a *syuzhet* (the given arrangement of a story world) also cannot be the source of a diegesis. Therefore, the core dynamics that motivate Bordwell’s theory in fact hinge on *diegesis* (that includes *syuzhet* and story) and *style*; he defines style as “film’s systematic use of cinematic devices” (p.50). I already suggested that Bordwell’s idea of ‘systematic use’ is also implicitly determined by a presupposed story or diegesis. Bordwell’s theory posits that audiences use the interaction between the given ‘*syuzhet*’ and ‘*style*’ (structures) to infer implied diegesis and *fabula* (more structures). However, as I argued in section 2.7, it seems more reasonable to propose that audiences use cinematic signs to infer a diegesis, *fabula*, *syuzhet*, themes, style, and (not necessarily) the communicational context (authorial intentions, intertextuality, genre, etc.). A *style* (systematic use of cinematic devices) can only be inferred according to a recognised communicational goal.

3.2.2. The Diegetic Tier as The Phenomenal Experience

Although cinema or cinematic narrative cannot be reduced to its mimetic dimension (diegesis), admittedly, the *mimetic* dimension is the most immediate and intuitive outcome of cinema. Cinematographic representation (with its multimodality) more faithfully invokes the mimetic experience than literary narratives, which need intentional decoding (symbolic and learned) by an audience. The synthesis of audio-visual potentials, their sensorial stimulants, and cinematic temporality (set by the medium) affect audiences even prior to audiences' interpretational activities. For example, 'rain' in the cinematographic medium is more immediate, detailed, and intensely mimetic experience than the literary concept of 'rain'. Consequently, *narrativity*—or the textual progression—of the cinematographic representation seems almost inherent, involuntary, and even pre-textual.

As I noted in the introduction (see section 1.2), phenomenological approaches to cinema specifically study this phenomenal/mimetic experience of cinema. A pioneering phenomenologist, Merleau-Ponty (2002, p. vii emphasis in original) asserts that phenomenology is a "philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begins—as an inalienable presence". Merleau-Ponty's (2002, p. 78) notion of visual perception also seems a version of the discussed hermeneutic circle between parts and whole (see section 2.2.1): "the inner horizon of an object cannot become an object without the surrounding objects' becoming a horizon".

Although images and reality generally appear at the two ends of a spectrum, Henri Bergson (2002, pp. 81–82) defines *image* as an instance in motion, or intermediate section, we experience *between* 'things' and our 'representations' of them. Images are more than representations and less than things in themselves. In this sense, 'images' are the most immediate and inevitable phenomenal actuality. As Bergson elaborates, since we intuitively

perceive images with embodied affect⁵⁸ (pp. 81–86), and memory (pp.121–123), the knowledge about ‘things’ or ‘representations’ are reductive abstractions or snapshots (p.205) of the ‘real’ images. In this view, cinema is also a ‘Bergsonian image’ in motion *between* things and subjective representations.

As Alberto Baracco (2017, pp. 40–42) summarises, film phenomenology generally considers cinematic experience as an embodied (corporeally-oriented) and intentional (being directed towards *something else*) presence in a world. This unceasing intentionality towards an outer-world in turn makes the situational perception, *synaesthetic* senses and meanings possible. Therefore, in phenomenological sense, the highly mimetic events, characters, and objects (also time and space) of cinema objectively ‘appear’ before the audience, with their organic familiar relations⁵⁹. Put differently, they appear to emerge ‘by themselves’ within audiences’ primordial horizons (consciousness). Vivian Sobchack (1992, pp. 128–43) develops this mimetic phenomenality between a film and a spectator into a two-way embodied encounter. She contends that a film has an invisible (transparent) but empirical (not metaphoric) and palpable *lived-body*. As Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich (2016, pp. 40–41) encapsulate, this *communicative* body has “perceptual and expressive capacities that are equivalent to that of the viewer”. Laura Marks (2000, pp. 127–193) and Jennifer Barker (2009, pp. 4–13) also reinforce the hypotheses of filmic body (film as skin and haptic viscosity) and cinematic perception as a full-fledged bodily communication beyond aural-ocular engagement.

However, Sobchack’s influential approach seems to convert the cinematic phenomenal encounter (the spectator’s a priori, primordial capacity) into an autonomous empirical body (other) with embodied intelligent agency against the spectator; and then she describes the communication between film and

⁵⁸ Affect can encourage or diminish bodily capacity to act (Clough and Halley, 2007, p. 2); For Deleuze (2013, pp. 9–46), there is no perception without affect.

⁵⁹ I described this cinematic phenomenal experience in the introduction (section 1).

spectator as an intersubjective communication⁶⁰. Therefore, I posit that Sobchack develops a goal-oriented semiosis of filmic body (a predetermined structure) in her theory, rather than considering the phenomenal experience of cinema as a multifarious and multivalent mimetic experience. Baracco (2017, p. 49), Ferencz-Flatz and Hanich (2016, p. 43) also find that Sobchack's move (filmic body) is dispensable, despite the many influential and illuminating insights she offers with her theory. If Sobchack's theory is a generalisation of the overall cinematic experience⁶¹, such an approach again attempts to restrict the scope of cinematic outcome and disregard the other dimensions of cinema, which I highlighted in the introduction. For example, in various instances in her treatise, she has to take selective narratives (diegeses) and referentiality for granted to develop the idea of proposed cinematic body. Therefore, according to the rhetorical perspective, I maintain that the phenomenal experience of cinema is not a predetermined unitary structure that can be decisively reduced to an anthropomorphic *body* or *agency*⁶². The communicational contexts and goals of different films invent various means, forms, and potentials with phenomenal experience of cinema, and it is an integral source, stage, and outcome of cinematic narrativity.

3.2.3. Diegetic Tier as a Rhetorical Resource

In this context, I uphold that a specific organisation of *sign vehicles* can encourage experiencing a 'filmic body', skin, haptic visuality, as well as hypothesising the pro-filmic situation, a *syuzhet*, or story. All these mimetic entities are further goal-oriented and heuristic abstractions of the overall experience of cinema. As I suggested in the introduction, even a single

⁶⁰ This recalls Bordwell's (or formalist) theory that presents a version of diegesis (*syuzhet*) as the source of other versions of diegesis (*fabula/story*).

⁶¹ Sobchack's (1992, pp. xiii-xx) preface to her influential treatise *Address of the Eye*, appears to suggest such a possibility. However, her later essays in *Carnal Thoughts* (2004) consider the phenomenal experience of visual mediums in more versatile terms.

⁶² Daniel Frampton (2006, pp. 73-102) develops the idea of film mind: 'filmmind' in his book *Filmosophy*.

cinematographic image is sufficient to inspire (or project) a mimetic experience—the pro-filmic world or an embryonic diegesis. The mimetic dimension is not a rigid or invincible fictional entity (closed diegesis); cinema can restrict the mimetic outcome by weakening the mimetic and fictional narrativity and also encourage the non-fictional engagement⁶³. A cinematic mediation can also control the imagination (semiosis) of a spectator within more specific and stable parameters (more or less fictional) than a literary narrative. For instance, cinematically depicted *rain* is a specific and perceptible rain by default⁶⁴ rather than the *rain* denoted by the word ‘rain’. The mimetic dimension of the direct cinematographic reference and synchronised audio always reinforce this impression. However, the narrative relationships of the depicted action, events, and the authorial mediation can work against this pro-filmic certainty of films in order to construct the diegetic universe (fictional). In the diegetic level, a specific rain (e.g. shot in a Hollywood film studio), can become a rain in a fictional universe (e.g. in Gotham City). Although the cinematographic depiction is not a direct fictional depiction, it appears as an integrated aspect of a fictional diegesis within the narrative progression (spatial and temporal). Consequently, the ontological distinction between the cinematographic level and the diegetic level appears insignificant for the general audience. Therefore, the fictional reference could be the audiences’ immediate and habitual impression. However, as indicated in the introduction, the inevitability of the ‘other’ mimetic referentiality (the pro-filmic level) and the non-mimetic aspects (cuts, framing, scale, etc.) inexorably complicate the mimetic dimension of cinema. In the purview of rhetorical approach, all these domains are also rhetorical resources of cinema that mediate fictionality as well as narrativity. As I elaborate in the next section, the extra-diegetic perspective brings these aspects into focus.

⁶³ I elaborate these aspects in detail with examples in Chapter 4 and 5.

⁶⁴ As Robert Sinnerbrink (2011, pp. 37–38) reviews, the phenomenal experience does not count the technological background of cinematic image (celluloid, digital, CG, post production, etc.) but the impression of it.

3.3. The Extra-Diegetic Tier of Cinema

3.3.1. Extra-Diegetic Frame and Perspective

Classical narratologists (Genette, 1983, p. 229; Prince, 2003, p. 29) define the extra-diegetic level as the primary narrative level that is external to *any diegesis* in the literary narrative. Here, they presuppose a narration as a linguistic enunciation, and believe that the default narration that is *external to any diegesis* entails a text-internal agency (narrator) in fictions (see section 2.2.3). In this perspective, the extra-diegetic *space* can be theorised as the primary communicational level in any narrative text (including cinema) that determines the diegetic (story universe) and thematic levels (motifs, ethics, ideologies, etc.). As discussed in Chapter 2, in literary narratives, meanings are interpreted symbolically (signifier/signified), and the narrative levels are inevitably higher abstract concepts. In cinema, however, the primary mediation (narration) permeates across all narrative dimensions and channels in cinema, and it cannot be reduced to a single horizontal level or an external narratorial frame as in classical narratology. Cinema audiences can experience and recognise more tangible means and channels like mise-en-scene, visual composition (framing/scale/depth), editing, music, voiceover narration, dialogues, titles, and so forth that constitute the cinematic presentation.

In his influential study of cinematic narrative, Branigan (2013) argues for a detailed account of narration, which involves eight narrative levels (pp.86-118). Although Branigan is keen not to situate cinema in the communicational paradigm⁶⁵, he states that narration “exists” whenever the spectators (or authors) transform “data” between the levels he proposes: the *historical author*, *implied author*, *extra-fictional narrator*, *non-diegetic narrator*, *diegetic narrator*, and many other levels of focalisation (p.112). In this model, other than the *historic author*, the narrative levels and anthropomorphic agents are theoretical

⁶⁵ He is disinclined to favour the communicational paradigm because his notion of *communication* relies on the sender->message->receiver model (107-110).

constructs postulated to explain the process of narration. In his later study *Projecting a Camera: Language-Games in Film Theory*, Branigan (2006, pp. 53–54) uses *camera* as a versatile metaphor to explore how the ‘point of view’ is mediated between the narrative levels he proposes. As he delineates, in many theories including his model—which he considers as Wittgensteinian language games (p.xv)—narration, narrators, point of view, and camera are heuristic constructs, and therefore can take any guise, anthropomorphic or impersonal (pp.36–39).

However, I maintain that the ontological distinction between the represented characters (diegetic) and the authorial/spectatorial agencies (as represented or acknowledged in the extra-diegetic perspective) is important. In any medium, the represented characters/narrators cannot be the *real* mediators or authors of a narrative. Furthermore, in cinema, postulating default intra-textual narrators, when they are not textually indicated as entities or characters, is not convenient as in the linguistic medium. A represented *utterance* of words in a linguistic narrative, mimetically evokes an anthropomorphic agency (e.g. narrator, character, speaker, author)⁶⁶. Classical narratologists (Genette, 1993, pp. 75–76; Prince, 2003, pp. 29, 40) assume that such primary *heterodiegetic* (not represented in the diegesis) narrators in fictions are always extra-diegetic but *non-character* anthropomorphic narrators. Walsh (2007, p. 78) argues that such literary utterances need necessarily to be ascribed to the real text-external authors. Therefore, in his view, a narrator is *either* a fictional character (homodiegetic) *or* the real author. He also argues that the primary extra-diegetic level (as a frame) is superfluous because characters are always diegetic, and the authors are extra-textual (pp.71–72).

⁶⁶ Some fictional heterodiegetic narrators [e.g. *Tom Jones* (Fielding, 1992)] with extended imaginative features (e.g. omniscience) can be interpreted as fictional narrators in the sense of *characters*. However, in some fictions the author-narrator distinction is extremely schematic [e.g. *Hills Like White Elephants* (Hemingway, 1993, pp. 259–263)].

In my view, however, the best course is to accept that *when* such a represented agency is not a definable character, its ontological status between the *narratorhood* (fictional) and *authorhood* (non-fictional representation of the author/authors) is theoretically indeterminate. Even their fictional status and the degree of anthropomorphism (with or without non-mimetic qualities) are interpretational and contingent upon the particular text. However, most importantly, in any case, it is always possible to read every word in a literary fiction as the extra-textual *author's* words; the authorial narration is inexorably an *extra-textual* activity and its effects can be observed in the presentational, diegetic, and thematic perspectives. Therefore, rather than considering the extra-diegetic engagement as a level or frame *outside* a diegesis (mimetic-world), I propose that it is an approach to consider the *communicational* effects of a narrative. While it is a goal-oriented approach, I contend that different narratives can present the extra-diegetic signs/effects more passively, competitively, or prominently over its diegesis.

If a film presents a narrator, filmmaker, or storyteller as an anthropomorphic character⁶⁷ who narrates, shoots, edits, and presents, such a narrator is a *diegetic narrator*⁶⁸. But many films do not present such diegetic narrators, and unlike the linguistic narrative, a *diegetic filmmaker* is not generally plausible. A fictional film may easily evoke an invisible *diegetic observer*⁶⁹ at most but a cinematic narrator, presenter, or filmmaker in the *fictional universe* is a far-fetched postulation without a textual implication. However, any narrative film as a complex artefact inevitably evokes an extra-textual mediating/authorial agency. Therefore, when a film indicates the narrators, filmmakers, or image-

⁶⁷ e.g. *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder, 1950); *The Blair Witch Project* (Myrick and Sánchez, 1999)

⁶⁸ However, a diegetic narrator never replaces the implied filmmaker's extra-diegetic narration.

⁶⁹ The invisible *diegetic observer* is an agency behind the shot/camera that is not recognised by the diegetic characters. It seems a mimetically motivated anthropomorphised camera. Bordwell (2013, pp. 9–12) discusses its historical variants. J. Levinson (2016, pp. 163–173) advances a recent version of this theory.

makers, they are more logical to be situated in the extra-filmic, non-fictional world than in the story universe.

The authorial mediation/narration or the dynamic organisation of sign vehicles (scriptwriting, directing, acting, compositing, editing, etc.) and the cinematic interpretation by a spectator or cinematic semiosis are distinct activities. Conflating or ignoring the ontological differences between these different activities is seriously reductive. For example, a sympathetic view (thematic/ethical/symbolic aspects) towards a child character could be a result of a perspective of an adult character in the fictional universe. If mimetically-immersed audiences recognise this as a 'reality' within the observed diegesis, it is a mimetic response. However, if a spectator recognises this effect as a result of a particular audio/visual composition, directing, acting or scriptwriting (extra-diegetic/indexical), s/he recognises the authorial mediation. Such a spectator can also further analyse the psychology or ideologies behind the hypothetical intentions and the authorial context considering the cohesive relationships within three proposed textual tiers. In this sense, experiencing and recognising the extra-diegetic tier distinct to the diegetic level is paramount for the cinematic communication. In the process of cinematic communication, rhetorically-oriented audiences' semiosis attempts to hypothetically and pragmatically map the authorial discourse (intentional, unintentional) through cinematic signs.

3.3.2. Narrative Stylistics

Furthermore, there is a very important reason to retain the concept of intra-textual, but extra-diegetic analysis for any narrative. The medium specific aspects that are known as *stylistics* predominantly function in the extra-diegetic level. As Shen (2005a, pp. 136–149) observes, classical narratology is not equipped to recognise the micro-level mediations like textual rhythm, descriptive order, choice of words, and quality of language. She convincingly demonstrates how stylistics drastically change narrative outcomes. In Genette's (1993, p. 133) own words, *style* is "the formal properties of discourse that are manifested on

the level of properly linguistic microstructures... or the level of texture rather than that of structure". This indicates that *stylistics* is mostly outside of the structural explorations of narrative but nevertheless indispensable for the discursive functions or extra-diegetic domain. Dawson (2013, p. 483), in his review of *stylistics*, proposes to include *style* alongside the other *extra-diegetic* functions of narrative *voice*, which Genette defines in *Narrative Discourse*. He recognises *style* as a predominant aspect of authorial *trace* that is an inevitable quest in rhetorical reading⁷⁰.

The *stylistics* in cinematic communication also reinforce the *extra-diegetic* domain because they are also filmmakers' communicational resources. In this sense, surface qualities of images (texture, clarity, colour, smoothness of motion), *mise-en-scène* (framing, blocking, visual compositions, camera movements, lighting), editing, speed of motion, and post-production contribute to filmmakers' narratorial *stylistics*. When the authorial voice or expression (in the sense of narratology) is taken as a metaphorical concept in the cinematic context, *stylistics* is a predominant mode of it. In this sense, even the specific manipulations of the immediate sensory experience (intentional and unintentional) are also an outcome of cinematic *stylistics*. Moreover, as I go on to discuss, filmmakers sometimes communicate certain thematically relevant ideas through extra-diegetic level of films *in parallel* to the diegetic level. Rather than merely serving the *diegesis*, some techniques, patterns, conventions, phenomenal effects, and recurrent devices at this level become profoundly expressive and communicational. They can reinforce thematic aspects of films independently of the *diegesis*. In such circumstances, the extra-diegetic level can be deemed another competitive communicational domain to the diegetic level⁷¹. The systematic explorations of such devices can reveal interesting

⁷⁰ Phelan (2014, p. 54) later includes *style* (diction and syntax), *tone* (narrator's or implied author's attitude), and *values* (ethical and ideological) within the larger category of *Voice*. He stresses that analysing *Voice* with these sub categories is imperative for the rhetorical investigations of literary narratives.

⁷¹ In next chapters, I discuss how Bergman employs these distinct channels for his communication.

relationships that communicate thematic threads. As proposed in Chapter 2, cinematic narrativity is not a mere result of the diegetic representation or *story* as the structuralist narratologists assume. Rather, in the next chapters, I argue that the *narrativity* at the extra-diegetic level and the thematic level can dynamically reorganise the audiences' interpretation of the diegetic tier or story. Put differently, I elaborate that the extra-diegetic domain of films including cinematic stylistics is not necessarily determined by the demands of a *diegesis* but the communicational context.

3.3.3. Excess and Materiality

The extra-diegetic level in cinema is an inevitability even without any narratological support. As the absence is always a presence in Derridean logic, the sense of the extra-diegetic is always a suppressed challenge to the cinematic diegesis. As I noted in the introduction, many theorists recognise it as simply the *alterity* of narrative. This challenge is ironically threatening to the idea of narrative cohesion or homogeneity in cinema in the conventional sense that equates narrative with story and fiction. As Heath (1975, p. 10) claims:

Homogeneity is haunted by the material practice it represses and the tropes of that repression, the forms of continuity, provoke within the texture of the film the figures—the edging, the margin—of the loss by which it moves; permanent battle for the resolution of that loss on which, however, it structurally depends, mediation between image and discourse, narrative can never contain the whole film which permanently exceeds its fictions.

Here, Heath observes the interplay between the material practice of films and the quest for narrative cohesion as a kind of dialectical struggle for unity. However, despite any success, cohesion is always haunted and threatened by material practice because the apparent cohesion of narrative or fiction is built on the material practice of cinema. Furthermore, the audio-visual materiality of cinema and its unique qualities offer a more tangible ground for the notion of *extra-diegetic* than the literary medium that is inevitably symbolic. The fictional story primarily depends on various non-fictional, non-symbolic, and tangible

constructions: projection, surface features, scripts, camera works, artificial lighting, actors, filmmakers, props, sets, etc.

However, I contend that this apparent paradox is a result of considering narrative as an internal, structural, and unitary component. In the introduction, I already showed that the idea of the unitary mimetic narrative inspires theorists to ‘detect’ *anti-narrative* cinematic excess. As I already suggested, the cinematographic level can function as phenomenal and referential levels that are theoretically extra-diegetic but still expressive and communicative. The sounds and the motion pictures of cinema make sense and arouse *sensory* experience even without any intellectual and inferential involvement. In this sense, the cinematographic effects act as if they were an unmediated reality that cannot even be subsumed into the concept of *mimesis* (imitation or resemblance to something else)⁷². This is a major deviance from the literary medium, in which both phenomenal effects, denotation, and connotation are inevitably inferential and phenomenally distant. According to Peircean semiotics, the *sign-object* relationship of *words* is predominantly *symbolic*. As I explain in the section (3.6), audio-visual media have an *iconic* dimension that evokes resemblance to something else, and an *indexical* dimension that indicates some physical determination by something else⁷³. Secondly, when the audiences recognise the specific aspects like surface texture of images, actors, sets, props, dialogues, acting, cuts, frames, compositions, and rhythm of editing, they cannot be taken as the parts of a *diegesis*. As Heath elaborates, these aspects invoke the material practice that builds the narrative, fiction, or the cinematic cohesion. However, still, all of these aspects also show representational and expressional potential in their own rights. In this larger perspective that considers narrative as an event and act, nothing is essentially and structurally cinematic excess. Different

⁷² This domain may recall an aspect of a dualism proposed by the philosopher Jacques Rancière: the ‘sensible’ (aesthetic regime) of cinema against the ‘intelligible’ (representational regime) (Tanke, 2011, pp. 111–112).

⁷³ Nevertheless, literary medium as a whole also has indexical (authorial context) and iconic aspects (resemblance can be a way to identify verbal sounds, letters, words, grammar while reading).

narratives can exploit any dimension of cinema including the supposed ‘excess’ and unintelligible sensorial effects for their communication.

3.4. The Thematic Tier of Cinema

3.4.1. Theme as a Metaphor

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (2008, pp. 1–6) suggest that the entire ‘human thought system’ including language is fundamentally a *metaphorical* system. Words substitute ‘things’ and ‘concepts’ with abstract signs and other concepts. So-called *literal* meanings are ultimately not literal but metaphorical (analogical replacements). In practical terms, metaphor is also a specific process that makes something *about* something else. In an exegesis, Julian Wolfreys encapsulates Derrida’s more dramatic view: language is “never quite metaphorical and never quite not” (Derrida, 1998, p. 23). Meanings are achieved with substitutions, comparisons, associations, and differences in a slippery process, which is never stable or conclusive. Moreover, Forceville and Urios-Aparisi (2009, p. 4) argue that *metaphor* is not limited to language because other mediums also derive from thinking paradigms. However, since metaphors depart from the direct semiotic meanings, they appear more contextual, and anti-structural, but also ironically palpable.

In the Peircean perspective, if a *sign* is something that stands for something other than *itself*, signs are also metaphoric by definition and dynamic in the process of *infinite semiosis*. As I elaborate later in this chapter, the notion of infinite semiosis helps to explain how primary signs (iconic, indexical) develop into more arbitrary *symbolic* and *metaphoric* stages. In higher symbolic stages, the resemblances and associations between a *sign* and its *referent* become almost arbitrary, conventional, or contextual metaphors (e.g. an image of heart for love; doves for peace; a broken mirror for mental disruption). In short, a semiosis can also be considered a process of developing *metaphors* in various stages. Its ultimate purpose is to make signifying instances acquire *aboutness*

or intentionality (of something). In this sense, for the purpose of this study, I propose that when several instances of incidental aboutness develop into coherent instances to cover a larger and general aboutness (concepts, metaphor), they become *motifs* or *themes*. While accepting that theme is a pragmatic and elusive concept, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan (1995, pp. 14–16) proposes that a theme amalgamates various discontinuous elements into a conceptual construct. Menachem Brinker (1995, p. 33) observes that such conceptual constructs emerge across different texts intertextuality. Therefore, themes are also a strategical form of merging and transcending the various temporal and textual boundaries within and beyond texts.

3.4.2. The Real-World as a Theme

From a different perspective, William Gass (2003, pp. 30–39) portrays narrative fiction itself as a *metaphor* (not imitation but substitution) for the real world. Metaphors always explain concepts in a more relatable, convincing, flexible, and pragmatic way beyond the literal meaning of an expression. In this sense, the literal meanings or the mimetic dimension of a narrative fiction (characters, events, diegesis etc.) do not express the final transcendent level it attempts to communicate. Audiences read, watch, or feel for characters, follow events and stories; but fictional discourses also aspire to communicate something beyond these mimetic depictions, stages, and arrangements. In this *reality/fiction* model, authors and audiences are in one side of the metaphor (reality) but they themselves create the other side of the metaphor (fiction) to understand themselves and their own world.

According to Gass's (pp.vii-xiv) versatile view, which is itself a metaphor, fictional texts ultimately creates a "different kind of reality" (p.123) through metaphor in a more relatable, convincing, and pragmatic way. Metaphors create social truths, lies, ambiguities, and ideologies with non-literal forms. In this sense, the narrative's larger relationship to 'reality' (aboutness), or its *thematic* tier is an inevitable outcome of narratives despite the medium. Accordingly, I

maintain that the thematic motivation or constructs fundamentally encourage recurrent patterns and ongoing progressions in a narrative, and therefore, they are a main form of *narrativity*. Doležel (1995, p. 59) grants that “referential themes are macro-instructions for world-description” and “fictional themes serve as macro-instructions for world-construction”. In other words, thematic narrativity not only amalgamates various discontinuous elements into conceptual constructs as Rimmon-Kenan establishes, but it is also instrumental in conceptualising mimetic worlds (or diegesis) and stories.

According to the *cinematic semiosis* model I present, the extra-diegetic and the *diegetic* dimensions (mimetic domain) of cinema evolve into the thematic dimension that invokes the ethical, cultural, and ideological concerns. Simultaneously, themes are also Peircean *objects* that set interpretational goals for semiosis. Not only do cinematic themes function as semantic fields (the whole) that make a semiosis coherent (by lending meanings to the parts) but also guide audiences how to relate to the diegetic and extra-diegetic dimensions of a film. As I discuss later in this chapter, Peircean semiotics provides an insightful model to explain this dynamic evolution of cinematic signification through *iconicity*, *indexicality*, and *symbolism*. Since the thematic/metaphoric senses never technically become literal (e.g. the thematic concepts like love, death, redemption, or justice cannot be mapped into the real-world material referents), they always rely on the series of abstractions and conventional associations related to the real-world relationships. In this sense, both the diegetic and extra-diegetic tiers of cinema furnish relevant phenomenal effects, signs, and metaphors for the thematic narrativity. From the rhetorical perspective, cinematic and narrative resources contribute to the synergies and purposes beyond themselves, and the thematic tier is a specific and decisive stage in this process. In other words, the thematic tier is the dynamic zone where the fictional, cinematic, and real-world horizons merge together and thereby inspires the cinematic narrativity.

3.5. Nested Paradoxes in Cinema

3.5.1. Cinematic Engagement

Although the *possibility* of the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers is justified in the previous sections, this study also needs a descriptive model to explain audiences' evolving experience across these tiers. The concept of *progression* seems inherent to cinema (with moving images and continuous audio) and narrativity as the *textual progression* further complicates the cinematic narrativity. Rather than the structural and dualist models, my exploration shows that cinema calls for dynamic and versatile theories to probe cinematic narrativity and fictionality. In this section, I evaluate some relevant theoretical avenues to lay the foundation for the cinematic semiosis I propose.

As I have already indicated, my study attempts to approach the *mimetic* dimension of cinema through three distinct domains: the phenomenal experience, cinematographic domain and the fictional/diegetic domain. However, the cinematographic level itself can be understood at two levels: surface level (the quality of texture, colours, motion, and sounds) and the photographic depiction (pro-filmic). From the rhetorical perspective, both these domains are rhetorical resources; they can be used as means, signs, and textual constitution for expression and communication. Meanwhile, from the audiences' perspective, the cinematographic depiction has its own referential domain. Audiences can see, recognise, and refer to actors, locations, props, and certain organised pro-filmic events mediated through camera, editing, and post-production. They can also hear the recorded dialogues, sound effects, and music delivered by certain actual people and things. Therefore, the *cinematographic* depiction seems to offer *non-fictional* references and representing a *non-fictional* domain. If this is acceptable, it seems to mean that audiences do not empirically see or hear the characters and story worlds. Even in cartoons and 3D films, the drawings or the computer-generated models of characters, backgrounds, dubbed voices, and sound effects are materially

present as distinct representations. With this awareness, while watching *Tom and Jerry*, audiences seem to be unable to assert that they actually see the Tom and Jerry ‘characters’⁷⁴ and listen to their actual voices. When audiences recognise drawings, models, and animation per se, they are still specific mimetic representations of concepts (cats, mice, and their actions) prior to the diegetic level. Similarly, while watching Bergman’s *Persona*, audiences perhaps believe that they see Alma and Elisabet. However, with the awareness of the pro-filmic domain, they may also believe that they see Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullman. In casual terms, they seem ‘only’ able to see and *listen* to the *cinematographic representations* of actors, Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullman.

3.5.2. Cinematic Reduction

The aforementioned paradoxical context has been an intensely contentious and enduring subject among visual and film theorists as well as philosophers. As Carroll (1996, p. 224) summarises, these intricacies even motivate different theories to uphold that all films are inevitably fictions as well as all films are inevitably documentaries. It also depends on the various assumptions of cinematic ontology, epistemology, fictionality and non-fictionality. Richard Allen (1997, p. 76) streamlines the essence of this debate into four manageable factions: illusion theories, transparency theories, imagination theories, and recognition theories⁷⁵.

Illusion theories uphold that cinematographic images involve some version of illusion or false impression. In its basic version, the surface qualities of images (pigments, pixels, colours, textures), cinematic apparatus (shuffle of still images, projection, digital rendering) and human perception (pi phenomena, beta movement) amalgamate to construct an *illusory* impression of a ‘real’ *perception* (people, things, perspective, depth). Currie (1995, pp. 30–33) asserts that the

⁷⁴ The term *character* rather than person or animal implicates the duality of the concept.

⁷⁵ Alternatively, inspired by Peircean Categories, Kenney (2004, p. 100) divides the debate on pictorial representation into resemblance theories (iconicity), causal relation theories (indexicality), and convention theories (symbolism).

cinematic impression including movement is ‘real’ or objective like any other perception; *phenomena* are always a synthesis of external stimuli and human perception/cognition⁷⁶. As I described in the introduction (see section 1.1.1), it is helpful to recognise this immediate engagement as the phenomenal level of cinema. It is an involuntary personal experience that tentatively disregards the scientific understanding of cinema and the viewing context. Currie (pp.22-30) further distinguishes perceptual illusions (sensory delusions) from the cognitive illusions (mistaken beliefs). Cognitive illusion theories claim that audiences come to believe that the fictional content of cinematic images are ‘real’ in some sense. Allen (pp.78-81), Currie (pp.22-28), and Gaut (2010, pp.62-64) variously argue that such illusions are impossible because audiences are most probably aware of their contexts; for them, this thesis ignores the causal and cultural context of cinema and the competence of perceptive faculties.

Kendal Walton’s (1984, 1990, 1997) *transparency thesis* argues that spectators *indirectly* see objects *through* mechanically captured photographs (not an illusion but a reality). For him, such *presentations* (not re-presented) are almost similar to *seeing through* glasses, mirrors, and telescopes (1984, pp. 255-258). The cameras and the recording devices are tools that facilitate indirect *seeing*, and inevitable in *continuous correlation*—or indexicality. While painters *intentionally* decide what to paint of his subject, in cinematographic films, spectators indirectly but actually see the actors, props, and locations *through* the screen. Walton’s (1990, pp.35-43) influential definition of *fictionality* can be understood as audiences making believe or imagining that certain things (props) or propositions are conditionally true within a certain context or a ‘world’. In his view, the transparent photographic presentation acts as *make-believe* props for *imagined seeing* in fiction films (1997, p.68)⁷⁷. Thus, in the cinematic context,

⁷⁶ Deleuze (2001, p. 2) famously proposes a more radical (anti-phenomenological) version of this stance: “cinema does not give us an image to which movement is added, it immediately gives us a movement-image. It does give us a section, but a section which is mobile”.

⁷⁷ For example, while watching the film *Hamlet* (Olivier, 1948), the spectators *see-through* a real man with costumes; they may or may not recognise the particular actor (e.g. Laurence Olivier), but they *imagine seeing* the character he acts (Hamlet).

Walton subsumes the concept of *seeing* into the realm of *imagination*: by indirectly but actually seeing (with transparency) the pro-filmic level, audiences imagine that they see the fictional characters, events, and worlds (pp.4-8).

In an elaborated version of the *imagined seeing* thesis (Levinson, 2016, pp. 163–173), spectators even turn into the invisible *participants* and *observers* in the diegetic world of characters. In his version, Currie (1990, pp. 19–21, 1991, pp. 131–132) argues against Walton that make-believe imagination should be deemed as a holistic attitude towards fictional worlds; it cannot be extended to each and every preposition, look (seeing), or the content of film shots separately. Films show events from unfamiliar angles, scales, and abrupt time mediations (edits, speeds, etc.); audiences cannot imagine that they see a fictional world with such unfamiliar mediations. George Wilson (2011, pp. 52–77, 2013, pp. 155–171), another fervent contender of *imagined seeing* thesis, argues for a *mediated* version of the thesis to answer such challenges posed by cinematic medium. He agrees that the spectators *imagine* seeing the fictional worlds that are also imagined to be ‘real’. But, according to Wilson, the spectators further imagine that these (mimetic) worlds are captured by cinematically *mediated* way.

As a major proponent of a recognition theory, Carroll (1996, pp. 78–83) claims that the surface qualities of images cue audiences to recognise familiar objects. In this sense, audiences never see the actors, locations, or pro-filmic events in ‘real’ sense; neither do images re-present what they depict. However, audiences *recognise* category depictions (man, horse, house) and specific depictions like particular actors, locations (Ibid., p.46-47). Like Carroll, Currie (1995, pp. 49–78) also rejects the notion of transparency thesis; recognition is a better way to describe photographic depiction. Both agree that imagined *seeing* is a superfluous concept to explain cinematic fictionality. Their theories of fictionality can be described as the variants of ‘make-believe’ thesis. For Carroll (Ibid., p.47), cinematographic depictions “stand for” (props) nominal depictions (fictional characters, events) that are developed in the narrative means; for Currie

(1991, pp. 138–141), pictorial recognitions pave the way (props) to imagine or believe fictional worlds as a whole.

As Allen's (1997, p. 91) survey reveals, transparency theories and illusion theories respectively try to defend or deny the *causal* relationship between actual entities (text external reality) and photographic/fictional depictions (textual reality). Imagination and recognition theories rely on audiences' cognitive competence (resemblance/ recognition and beliefs/ imagination). However, as exposed by each other's criticisms, all these theories are competitive but partial explanations. Following Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous *aspect-seeing* thesis⁷⁸, Allen (Ibid., p.98) contends that audiences can 'see' many images in an image, and *seeing* is a pragmatic use or a certain selective description rather than a strict physical activity; in this sense, the sense of transparency is an effect of seeing. A transparency between levels arises because of this selective and purposive disregard.

Following a similar approach, Robert Hopkins (2008, pp. 149–159) develops the concept of *collapse* to explain the mechanism between the successive levels of cinematographic *seeing-in*⁷⁹. The marked surface level (grains, pixels, screen) collapses to give way to the photographic *seeing-in* (e.g. actors, props, locations etc.). The photographic *seeing-in* collapses to give way to the fictional level (characters and their story world). Audiences shift awareness between each domain because they can only experience one domain at a time. Hopkins further asserts that the photographic collapse to the fictional level is tentatively *illusionistic* since the fictional characters are actually not present on/through the screen. Nevertheless, Hopkins also believes that audience

⁷⁸ The human capacity to see one thing in many ways cued by the aspects of phenomena. Famous examples of aspect-seeing: DuckRabbit Image; family resemblance among relatives etc. (Wittgenstein, 2010, p. 204)

⁷⁹ Richard Wollheim (2015, pp. 137–151) elaborates the concept of seeing-in; to challenge the illusion theories (mistaken beliefs) he argues that spectators are always aware of the surface level and depiction (two-foldness). Fabian Dorsch (2016) further expands the seeing-in thesis as aspect-seeing.

actually *experiences* and sees the fictional world due to the photographic *collapse*.

3.5.3. Cinematic Heterogeneity

However, I contend that these theories conceal the complex processes of audience-engagement behind single concepts like *seeing*, *transparency*, *recognition*, *imagination* and *collapse*. Carroll (1997, p. 184) rightly protests that imagination or make-believe is a “catch-all” category. In light of the above discussion, I contend that this criticism also applies to the terms like ‘seeing’, ‘believing’, ‘recognition’ or ‘imagination’; they can each subsume all the other concepts into one category with different theoretical approaches. As Allen and Hopkins suggest *aspect-seeing* or *collapse* seem simple explanations but they only explain how one level supresses another level. Perhaps, such Wittgensteinian theories are insightful to explain natural perception and how a particular goal-driven perception works in quotidian contexts. They may also be adequate enough to explain how audiences attend to the surface level, pro-filmic level, or diegetic level separately. However, they seem to be inadequate to explain how these levels become rhetorical resources and engender narrativity and fictionality (*synergistically* and *synesthetically*). These different theories are required for specific analytical goals, and as I argue in this study, many of them explicitly presuppose a dualistic form of narrative, in which one level makes way to another level. However, as I established in the introduction (see section 1.1 and 1.6), Bergman’s films, which I consider seem to call for more dynamic and versatile models to explain the cinematic image and audience- engagement with them.

As the details of the discussed debate reveals, the photographic level can never be equal to the pro-filmic reality as the *transparency* theses imply. Cinematography enfolds an intricately mediated *version* of pro-filmic ‘reality’ and produces a completely new reality. Although audiences can recognise context-specific *versions* of actors, locations, props, and performances, the cinematic

representation of the photographic level is a unique phenomenal, referential, and rhetorical field. It cannot be ontologically, temporally, or spatially separated from the cinematic whole that includes the diegetic, extra-diegetic, and thematic dimensions. Some cinematic engagements seem predominantly phenomenal, sensorial, involuntary, subliminal, repressive, or cultural, whereas others are purposive, inferential, analytical, and intellectually demanding. Different cinematic texts can encourage, discourage and coalesce these engagements for its communicational goals. In this sense, exclusively cognitive and inferential theories and the pure phenomenological approaches arguably scrutinise a limited dimension of cinematic potentials⁸⁰. Therefore, the rhetorical approach to cinema must seek theories that can retain all these unique domains (sensible and intelligible).

3.5.4. Fictionality in General

As I have already indicated, fictionality is a major dimension and possibility of cinema, and therefore, at this point it is useful to consider different approaches to it. Simona Gjerlevsen (2016b, sec. 3.1) notes that the term fiction derives from the polysemic Latin word ‘*ingere*’ that means, *to shape*, *to invent*, or *to pretend*. Interestingly, it is also observable that the key theories on fictionality variously follow these three directions.

Theorists of the ‘to shape’ approach focus on the textual dynamics to define fictionality. As a result, in their post-structuralist studies, fictionality and narrativity often seem to merge together. For instance, Hayden White (1980, pp. 5–10) argues that the process of *narrativisation* integrates the ‘real’ facts (or history) into coherent plots (fictions); in other words, narrativising or plot making *shapes* actual facts into fiction. Paul Ricoeur (2012, pp. 31–90) presents another

⁸⁰ Robert Sinnerbrink (2011, pp. 37–38) establishes that the explanations of phenomenological level and causal levels are irreconcilable and consequently, their confusion is unhelpful.

theory of *emplotment* based on a three-stage temporal version⁸¹ of Aristotle's Mimesis and Mythos. He also proposes an immanent theory of narrativity that is difficult to separate from fictiveness or creative imagination; both are inevitable dimensions of coherence. In their deep level analyses, narrativity and fictionality merge together and become almost indistinguishable. However, as Ryan (2010, pp. 417–518) reviews, such conflation between narrativity and fictionality can reduce all texts to panfictionality. Against Metz's (1982, p. 44) claim that "all films are fictional" (or imaginary)⁸², Carroll (1996, p. 237) complains that "ill-defined and overblown concepts" confuse the difference between non-fictionality and fictionality. As Carroll establishes, fictionality cannot simply be the *differences* between the reality and representation (e.g. the absence of actors, temporal gap between production and reception) or the inevitable artificiality (constructedness) of texts (Carroll, 1997, p. 177). Like Carroll, Walsh (2007, p. 14) acknowledges that narrativity cannot fully account for fictionality because it cannot offer an explanation for the *different* rhetorical effects of factual and fictional narratives.

The rhetorical approach to narrative connects fictionality with authors and audiences. Although textual features (fictional signposts) may be elusive, authors usually signal, and audiences distinguish fiction from non-fiction. Invoking the second sense of *fingere*, 'to invent', Gjerlevsen (2016a, p. 179) portrays "invention" as the "unchanging and defining feature of fictionality". Accordingly, Nielsen and Gjerlevsen (2017, p. 5) later define fictionality as "intentionally signalled invention". They explicate that "intentionality is added to emphasize that the communicator who uses fictionality has to deliberately signal that he or she is employing a fictional discourse". In their view, fictionality is "a rhetorical resource in a real-world communicative framework [...] inside and outside fiction" (2017, p. 2). While Walsh (2007, p. 47) assumes that "fictionality

⁸¹ (i) prefiguration: a-priori presuppositions (ii) configuration: formal construction (iii) transfiguration: audience-mediation (pp.53-76)

⁸² Metz claims that depicted actors and events are absent in the movie theatre, and therefore, their appearance (presence) is an imaginary or fictive act by audiences.

has no determinate relation to features of the text itself”, Nielsen, Phelan, and Walsh (2014, p. 66) later concede that “techniques can contextually signal fictive intent”.

The third direction of fictionality (fingere) or pretence is noticeable in the discussed theories of make-believe (Walton and others: section 3.5.2). John Searle’s (1975, pp. 329–332) thesis also upholds the idea that fictionality is a pretended non-serious act that is signalled by authors and recognised by the audiences. The earlier discussion (see section 3.5.2) already highlighted that the notion of ‘make believe’ or prop theory (despite their varieties and versions) is the most popular approach to cinematic fictionality. It indicates a particular attitude that authors expect and audiences assume concerning fictionality and fictional texts. Meanwhile, Dorrit Cohn (1990) attempts to understand the possible formal differences between fiction and non-fiction as distinct genres⁸³. She argues that while the fictional story and its “pseudo” or “non-ostensive” referentiality (p.779) are resultant products of a discourse, actual non-fictional references (despite emplotment) exist in the real-world and precede a discourse (pp. 780–783).

In Walsh’s view (2007, pp. 45–46), fictionality and non-fictionality are pragmatic interpretative frames according to the paratexts and frames of presentation. He rightly asserts that the approaches such as ‘pseudo’, ‘non-serious’ or ‘pretence’ undermine the real-world relevance and the rhetorical import of fictionality (pp. 75-76). He also argues that the referential theories like fictional/possible worlds theory⁸⁴ (fictions as alternative referential fields) attempt to make fictional-worlds comparable to the real-world (pp. 16-20). Such theories try to claim that fictional-worlds are complete and internally self-sufficient (also see section 2.3). However, thereby these theories isolate ‘fictional content’ or

⁸³ However, as Carroll (1997, p. 176) notes, even in cinema, many technical devices and stylistics are common for both fictional and non-fictional films. Some fictional films even imitate the apparent features of non-fictional films.

⁸⁴ As a main contender, Ryan (2005, pp. 446–450, 2014b, pp. 726–742) reviews the history, goals, and factions of Possible worlds Theory.

(diegesis) from its broad textual, communicational, and rhetorical context⁸⁵. Walsh denies that fictional discourse has its own formal, intentional, or ontological frame (p.37). His closest distinction is highly pragmatic and figurative (pp.50-51): non-fictionality is the direct *use* of narrative engagement whereas fictionality is the *use* of narrative engagement as an ‘exercise’.

3.5.5. Cinematic Fictionality

The foregoing discussion shows that the different theories of fictionality (as well as narrativity) seem also to advance distinct semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic approaches to fictionality (see section 2.1 and 2.3). Within the rhetorical camp, however, scholars seem to increasingly recognise the significance of all three dimensions⁸⁶. Nevertheless, specific definitions still incorporate sweeping terms like ‘invention’⁸⁷, ‘imagination’, and ‘presumption’. In the cinematic context, Carroll (1997, pp. 184–186) postulates the fictional stance as *suppositional imagination* and fiction as *unasserted* propositional content. Next, he divides non-fictional cinema into the films of presumptive *assertion* (artistic/creative documentaries) and presumptive *trace* (news, reports etc.). In the fictional case, Carroll assumes that an author signals: “I intend you to hold these propositions (p) before your mind unasserted” (p.184). In the non-fictional case, an author signals that (p) is asserted. Thus, Carroll’s model ultimately relies on the criteria of supposition (hypothesising), authorial intention, and assertion (serious and sincere claims).

I have already indicated that when the narrative is an act, the fictional mimetic tier (diegesis) is a pragmatic and dynamic *stage* rather than a specific

⁸⁵ As I described (see Chapter 2.2.1), if the artistic *mimesis* highlights the zone *between* the resemblant thing and the real thing, fictional world theories seems to have an unhelpful approach.

⁸⁶ In ‘Ten Theses About Fictionality’ (2014) and ‘Fictionality As Rhetoric’ (2015), Nielsen, Phelan, and Walsh’s discussion involves all three dimensions.

⁸⁷ For example, the concept “intentionally signalled invention” ignores the theoretical debate surrounding the *emplotment* (re-invention) within non-fiction. It also seems to overlook non-signalled invention (ironic: e.g. documentaries) and signalling as non-invention (pretence: e.g. propaganda films).

content or an internal referential world. In this sense, firstly, Carroll's model seems to stem from linguistic presuppositions (direct authorial assertions) and the idea that a fiction is fundamentally a mimetic story (unasserted, non-existent). However, from the rhetorical perspective, a narrative is a specific communicational activity that exploits fictionality and non-fictionality as rhetorical resources to various extents. As I described in the introduction, cinema itself seems a synergetic medium that exploits fictionality and non-fictionality. This is to say that fictional cinema involves all Carroll's cinematic categories at various levels and significance: assertion, un-assertion, and trace. Furthermore, I assume that some narratives have serious and assertive motives⁸⁸ while others lack them to various extents despite their generic status (fictional or non-fictional)⁸⁹. In this broad sense, assertive and unassertive intention seems an inadequate criterion to define fictional status. Secondly, constructing, predicting, or 'reading' an authorial intention (assertion) is itself a non-fictional engagement with a cinematic text. In Carroll's terms, this amounts to say that fictionality is an 'asserted unasserted' propositional content. Thirdly, every interpretation of a cinematic text is an activity of hypothesising within multifarious possibilities (semiosis) across different signs, channels, levels, and resources. Therefore, authorial intention is not predictable, ascribable, or relevant for each and every signifying instance directly as in the literary medium (linguistic enunciation). Rather, cinematically hypothesised authorial intention seems a broad pragmatic ascription owing to the authorial collaboration and multimodality of cinema (see section 3.7).

Therefore, all these challenges inherent to cinematic fictionality indicate that cinematic medium demands a more versatile conception of fictionality. According to the rhetorical perspective, fictionality is a rhetorical resource.

⁸⁸ Many rhetorical narratologists (Nielsen, Phelan and Walsh, 2014, p. 63; Nielsen and Gjerlevsen, 2017, p. 5) suggest that fictionality is distinct from lies, truths, and deceptions. However, I maintain that this distinction is unnecessary. Intentional lies, truths, and deceptions are communicational goals whereas fictionality is a communicational resource.

⁸⁹ The *assertive intention* of authors can be more relevant to the ethical evaluations of narrative rather than the formal investigations.

However, I have suggested that even the rhetorical narratologists' proposals based on *invention* or *paratextual assumption* are not helpful to understand how audiences employ fictionality in actual interpretation. In this context, I suggest that the only recourse is cinematic referentiality itself. However, rather than an internal field of a fictional world, I consider cinematic referentiality as a rhetorical and interpretational activity across the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers of a film. In Barbara H. Smith's (1983, p. 26 italics in original) illuminating words, the essential fictiveness of a narrative is "not to be discovered in the unreality of the characters, objects, and events alluded to, but in the unreality of the *alludings* themselves". Put differently, fictionality is a distinct *act* of referencing from the act of non-fictional referencing⁹⁰. Otherwise, the *textual realities* that arise from narratives (fictional or non-fictional) have the same ontological status due to emplotment or narrativity. In this context, I describe fictionality as the flexible use of referentiality (act) that does not firmly fix its referents in the 'real world'. Then, non-fictionality is the interpretational act (or the consciousness) of firmly fixing referents in the real world. Therefore, I assume that non-fictionality is a specific possibility within the larger act of fictionality (hypothetical engagement with references). According to this approach, the other rhetorical resources like metaphors, tropes, symbolism etc. are also local modes of fictionality (flexible non-literal use of references)⁹¹. Therefore, as Gass rightly implies (see section 3.4.2), generic fictional texts (e.g. fiction films, novels) can be seen as 'global fictions' or metaphors. In the next sections, I develop a cinematic referential model (semiosis) presupposing this conception of fictionality and the notion of dynamic narrativity (textual progression) developed in the previous chapter (see sections 2.4-2.7).

⁹⁰ It also recalls the discussion of *mimesis* (see section 2.2.1): *mimesis* as an *act* that invokes the difference between *resemblant thing* and *real thing*.

⁹¹ Walton (2013) also presents a *metaphor as fiction* thesis within the framework of 'make-believe' while Elisabeth Camp (2009) highlights their differences.

3.6. From Phenomenality to Signs

3.6.1. Cinematic Signs and The Referential Act

C.S. Peirce's philosophy and classification of signs further help to elaborate the complex nature of cinematic signs, references (signifying instances), and *cinematic semiosis*. As surveyed in the second chapter (see section 2.4), anything can engender a sign because "all thought is in signs" (Peirce, 1992, p. 24). If some aspect (sign vehicle) of something is a *sign* (representamen), it stands for some aspect (or object) of something else. Making something stand for something else (the act) is the referentiality and the basis of representation. It is very different to the idea of representation as a *reflection* or *correspondence*, which indicates the lack of user mediation. Letting something stand for something else is not an automatic and predetermined quality but an intersubjective *activity* of agents who are motivated by *something else* (object/goal). Although a semiosis starts as a personal activity, it involves sign structures organised by *others* and contextual, cultural, and conventional interpretational activities; therefore, I assume that as a whole a cinematic semiosis is inevitably a process across asubjective (affective), subjective, and intersubjective domains.

In this sense, cinema is a different domain that invites intentional sign generation for various goal-oriented purposes. Its inherent dynamism (progressive moving images and sounds) and audience commitment keep semiosis constantly active. The different aspects and *sign vehicles* of visual and audio fields constantly generate myriads of interconnected *signifying instances* and *semiosis* processes in audiences. The progressing *narrative* interpretants in thought and the cultural, ideological, and ethical stances of audiences also contribute to the further signifying matrixes. *Dynamic narrativity* gives prominence to certain *signs* out of the whole sensory experience. Therefore, the notion of semiosis recognises the immense influence of audiences' socio-cultural background and textual qualities over innate biological propensities. It

also indicates that rather than the pre-programmed structural schemas, any trivial aspect of texts can evolve into an astonishing force that significantly changes audiences' pleasure, attitudes, and overall outlook. Filmmakers can intentionally (as well as subliminally) aid and redirect these processes of sign generation or *cinematic semiosis*.

Peircean semiotics also reveals that considering crude cinematic units like *shots, sequences, or scenes* as *signs* equivalent to the language categories of *units, words, sentences, and paragraphs*⁹² is facile. Such approaches simply presuppose a cinematic sign (shot) as a unit/block of a mimetic world. Rather, in cinema, any visual or audio component of a single shot may generate myriads of signs and signifying instances. The signifying instances may develop across shots, sequences and even across the intertextual and extra-textual domains in very complex ways. Any textual aspect like a colour, costume, gesture, frame, scale, camera movement, cut (edit), or a composite concept like a character, editing rhythm, and a theme can become cinematic *signs* that generate *signifying instances* for semiosis. Consequently, the *cinematic narrative semiosis* is a complex nexus of these various signifying networks that emerge from the cinematic phenomena.

3.6.2. Cinematic Phenomenology as Semiosis

In Peirce's philosophy, the *triadic* nature is a recurrent theme. *Triad* as a conceptual strategy helps escape the dualist thinking and elaborate the evolutionary process behind experience. Peirce's phenomenology divides experience into three universal categories as *firstness, secondness, and thirdness* (Peirce, 1992, pp. 267–288; Atkin, 2016, pp. 226–241). *Firstness* is the primordial, monadic experience without reference to anything else. *Secondness* (or otherness) is when something specific (a sign) emerges from this

⁹² For instance, in Carroll's words: "It would be more natural to characterize such a shot with a sentence." (2007, p. 103); "The single shot is the basic unit of film communication in the sense that, without the single shot, other levers of cinematic communication, like film editing, would remain mute." (2007, p. 112)

whole/firstness in relation to something else (an object). *Thirdness* is the mediation between firstness and secondness (an interpretant). According to the Peircean model, a comprehensive experience (semiosis) begins as a complex *objective* monad (oneness) with the sensory experience. Then it relates to other experiences/concepts and gradually evolves into *subjective* choices/divisions making fully-fledged hypotheses and convictions. In this context, a cinematic semiosis also emerges as a complex monadic phenomenal experience of spectators (firstness); then it gradually evolves into divisions, separations, and distinct subjective domains (concepts) determined by other objects (secondness); next, these subjective domains generate contextual relationships (meanings) between each other (thirdness). However, most-importantly, a cinematic semiosis is only an integral part/stage of audiences' general semiosis (consciousness/whole) but not a self-sufficient and closed activity that is strictly determined by a cinematic text.

In the previous chapter (see section 2.4) I discussed Peirce's basic triad: *representamen*, *interpretant*, and *object*. Peirce develops a few other triadic taxonomies according to his universal categories (Peirce, 1998, pp. 289–299; Atkin, 2016, pp. 124–163). He recognises three types of *sign vehicles* or *representamens* (qualisign, sinsign, and legisign), three types of *sign-object* relationships (icon, index, symbol), and three types of *interpretants* (rheme, dicisign, and argument). Wollen's influential essay 'The Semiology of the Cinema' (1972, pp. 116–154) famously emphasises the importance of Peirce's second trichotomy (icon, index, symbol) in the cinematic context. With examples, Wollen argues that cinema has the potential to engender iconic (resemblances), indexical (causal connections), and symbolic signs (conventional relationships). However, rather than discussing them as discrete instances in Wollen's manner, Peirce's *sign-object* triad makes more sense when they are understood as the progressive stages of signifying instances in an object-oriented semiosis.

Peirce's explanation also helps to propose that cinematic signs always emerge from the phenomenal experience as resemblances or analogies to something else (iconic signs: visually recognisable objects, sounds, human figures, spatiotemporal relationships, etc). Next, they *may* develop to indicate a certain causal determination by their objects (indexical/non-fictional signs: titles, edits, frame, the real-world humans/actors, objects, originating context, authors). It is important to note that Peirce's indexicality is also only an assumption of a real-world causal relationship. Such an assumption does not need to rely on empirical veridicality: in Peirce's (1998, p. 16) own words, "icons and indices assert nothing"⁹³. In this sense, indexicality often tends to develop into contextual, conventional, or ideological convictions. Therefore, the signifying instances that derive from iconicity and indexicality subsequently establish contextual associations as specific rules or conditions (symbolic/fictional signs: characters, fictional events, themes, etc.). By considering these aspects of dynamic *semiosis*, it is possible to develop a more detailed hypothetical model to describe the dynamism behind cinematic references. This hypothetical model is a pragmatic simplification of the infinite and dynamic cinematic semiosis; however, it helps to focus on various aspects of cinematic image that escape the sweeping and partial terms like imagination, supposition, recognition, or collapse. I will apply this model of semiosis to analyse Bergman's *The Silence* and the prologue of *Persona* in the next chapters. I demonstrate that it provides a detailed methodology to analyse the interplay between cinematic fictionality, non-fictionality, and narrativity.

3.7. Cinematic Author

Finally, it is important to consider how a cinematic semiosis engages with the originating context of a film. In the introduction, I already indicated that the audiences' conception of an author most probably arises as a presupposition

⁹³ Therefore, digitally captured, manipulated, or generated verisimilar image can offer unverified indexical signs.

and textual (semiotic) abstraction⁹⁴. However, Paul Sellors (2007, p. 263) rightly argues that authorship *itself* “is not a concept to be derived from a text but an intentional action of an intending agent that causes a text”; audiences’ presuppositions or textual constructions cannot create authorial texts/works or ‘real’ authors. Therefore, the *authorship as an act* in a real-world socio-cultural context and the *textually hypothesised function* according to a different socio-cultural context are two different notions. As another clarification, Peter Lamarque (1990) admits that if Foucault’s *author function* is a logical reader postulation based on the existence of texts, it is a reasonable concept. However, Lamarque rightly adds that Foucault cannot attack this *reader postulation* for authorial intentionality, propagator of value, and its ideological slants (p.328). In *The Death and Return of the Author* (2008), Sean Burke observes that “the principle of the author most powerfully reasserts itself when it is thought absent” (p.6); the concept of the author is never more alive than when thought dead” (p.7). Burke explicates that the *authorial absence* famously implicated by Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida is allegorical but not literal: “[t]he denial of an absolute authorial centre implies not the necessary absence of the author, but the redistribution of authorial subjectivity within a textual mise-en-scene which it does not command entirely” (p. 177). Foregrounding many contradictions in Foucault’s arguments, Burke (2008, pp. 86–111) and Wilson (2004, p. 360) also suggest that audiences often construct author as a *person* (who) rather than a *text immanent* function (what).

In this context, it is reasonable to accept that the actual cinematic authorship (the act) is generally a highly complex and inextricable collaborative endeavour as Sellors (2007, pp. 266–270) and Gaut (2010, pp. 98–151) maintain.

⁹⁴ The authorship debate in cinema is saturated but far from resolution. Its dimensions include a few vigorous theoretical strands: the philosophical scepticism of author in any medium intensified by Barthes’s ‘The Death of the Author’ (1977, pp. 142–148) and Foucault’s ‘What is an Author’ (1998, pp. 205–222); actual authors, virtual authors vs. author function (Meskin, 2008, pp. 12–14); the collaborative and alternative authorship theses against the *director as author* (Sellors, 2007; Gaut, 2010, pp. 98–151) and restrictive authorship thesis based on the utterance meaning (Livingston, 1997, 2005, pp. 62–90).

However, it is also possible to recognise the conception (myth) of single/hybrid/ascribed authorship (*against* and *within* the notion of collective authorship) with paratextual ascriptions and critical/social discourses. The synergetic multimodality of cinema also motivates audiences to recognise the cinematic authorship as a holistic *authorial agency* (mythical self) rather than discrete contributions. In this sense, I propose that the concept of *implied author* is the most useful notion to encapsulate the cinematic authorship with all its intricacies.

Wayne C. Booth (2005, p. 86) conceptualises implied author as “the created self who has created the work”⁹⁵. He/she is a synergetic result of authorial, textual, and audience dynamics. However, Shen (2013, pp. 143–144) and Phelan (2011b, pp. 135–136, 2014, p. 52) show that the *implied author* needs to be recognised as a particular version/instance of the actual author(s) rather than an independent textual construction by an audience. In this sense, implied author is the *extra-textual* mediating agency that is invoked by a textual design. An actual author variously indicates (intentionally and subliminally) specific artistic, moral, intellectual, and ideological positions within a textual work. When the audiences attempt to recognise them, an implied version of the actual author emerges. The actual author may continue with or change these positions, but the implied version is attached to the originating context of the work. The actual author may claim his or her private intentions, which are contradictory to the communicated textual intentions, but the implied author cannot do this. Consequently, the actual authors are ultimately accountable for the manifest implied author’s intentions, accidents, success, failure, ethical values, and ideological slants.

This notion can be more efficiently explained with a cinematic example. While portraying a character, a cinematic actor permanently registers his or her

⁹⁵ Booth (2010, pp. 74–76) first introduces the notion of implied author as a version of the real author(s). Further, he proposes a career-author: all the implied authors of an author’s oeuvre (pp. 428–453).

unique performative and audio-visual *version* in a film. Unlike the portrayed character, this implied version of the *actor* refers to the extra-textual, extra-diegetic, indexical, and historical person who is responsible for the portrayed version. In this sense, Liv Ullmann (during July-September 1965)⁹⁶ is the implied actor for the character Elisabet in Bergman's *Persona* (1966). It is a textual implication of a real person but not a mere audience-construct. The actual actor ages and his or her appearance and skills undergo changes, but the recorded version is relatively stable. This is the *implied* actor in the film. Similarly, any artwork/text implies an extra-textual, indexical, and implied author who is a version of the actual author (or authors). In this sense, the work of the implied author(s) can be experienced phenomenally (while watching a film) and interpreted textually.

In one of his later articles, 'Is There an "Implied" Author in Every Film?' (2002), Booth himself contemplates the concept of implied author in the cinematic context. Booth's reflections clearly reveal the extra-textual and concrete nature of the concept. He argues that many artistic films indicate a *unified* author who commands almost all the mediating voices implied by the film. Booth incisively emphasises the importance of authoritative extra-textual agents—single or many—who intentionally unify and command inevitable intra-textual cinematic voices. He warns against the analysts who falsely recognise the intra-textual representations (narrators/characters) as mediating agents.

Therefore, in cinema, the implied author arguably corresponds to the one or several individuals who *lead* or are ascribed by a collaborative team rather than the empirical authorship. This extra-textual agency inevitably acquires some distinct attitudes, qualities, and ideological slants, which each collaborator is hierarchically liable to. In this sense, the implied cinematic author is also a pragmatic necessity that mitigates some interpretational pitfalls and

⁹⁶ *Persona* was shot between this period (Duncan and Wanselius, 2008, pp. 336–337)

complexities⁹⁷. When the *cinematic text* has a broad scope beyond linguistics, and *cinematic authorship* is established as the hierarchically dominant authority for the artistic collaboration, the cinematic context does not need controversial neologisms for the implied author⁹⁸. Within my framework, the extra-diegetic tier provides indexical and non-fictional references to reinforce the idea of the implied author. While the diegetic tier itself can be experienced as an ‘authorless’ textual reality, the rhetorical approach to cinematic narrative assumes that the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers are dynamically determined by the authors’ and audiences’ interactions. While authors work with their works/texts, their conceptions of hypothetical audiences (in the script, camera, acting, editing etc.) also influence their work. In this sense, the concept of an implied audience is also a rhetorical dimension of cinematic texts.

Considering this context, I assume that each of Ingmar Bergman’s films implies a cinematic authorial version—in the sense explained above—of the historical *person* Ingmar Bergman. The historical person Ingmar Bergman is *predominantly* responsible for these implied authors as the same way human beings can be responsible for their other affairs: with their mistakes, oversights, and achievements. Overall, the *artist/auteur* Ingmar Bergman is the extra-textual cinematic author implied by the artistic, moral, and ideological values of his cinema, plays, literature, interviews, techniques, subjects and themes, artistic leadership and authority over his long-time loyal crew and cast, and his unique historical context.

⁹⁷ Gerstner and Staiger (2013, pp. 3–59), Lamarque (1990), and Livingston (1997) discuss different aspects of this issue.

⁹⁸ Implied author is an extra-textual and concrete agency unlike the other intra-textual concepts, which attempt to replace the diegetic or extra-diegetic narrators/devices: Cinematic Narrator (Chatman, 1990, pp. 124–138), Grand Image-maker (Metz, 1974, pp. 20–21), Grand Imagier (Wilson, 2011, pp. 29–51), Image-maker (Kozloff, 1989, pp. 43–48), Filmic Composition Device (Jahn, 2003, sec. F4.1) etc. Furthermore, it also departs from the ways, for example, Hodsdon (2017, p. 10) likes to accept it: as *pseudo authorship* or *artificial authorship*.

Part Two

4. A Semiosis: *The Silence*

4.1. The Silence (1963)

A customary synopsis of *The Silence* would predominantly be an outline of its diegesis: two sisters named Ester and Anna and Anna's preadolescent son Johan are on a homebound train journey from a holiday. As Ester's health weakens, they briefly stay at a hotel in a city called Timoka. The latent tension between Ester and Anna becomes escalated when Anna engages in a spontaneous sexual relationship with a man who is working in the bar next to the hotel. Meanwhile, Johan explores the hotel and liaises with a vaudevillian troupe (whose members are all people with dwarfism) and an old hotel butler. Eventually, Anna and Johan leave the hotel while Ester is still recuperating.

Although there are many other noteworthy and seemingly trivial events that can be added to this diegetic skeleton, the recountable 'story' of *The Silence* may seem a mediocre construction until the 'other' to its *diegesis* is scrutinised. In Mosley's (1981, p. 117) words, it is minimal cinema, "minimal in terms of plot and location, the film being pictorially baroque and copious". According to Koskinen (2011, p. 10), any synopsis of *The Silence* on mere narrative actions always fails and goes against the very grain of the film because its qualities lie elsewhere. However, these views may seem to imply that *The Silence* earns its artistic significance more in relation to its stylistic and thematic dimensions, reinforcing the story/discourse binary. However, as I have already suggested, a *rhetorical* cinematic semiosis can be considered a dynamic interplay between the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers rather than a dualistic process. Therefore, as a methodology, developing a possible rhetorical *semiosis* of *The Silence* is effective in examining the relationships between these matrixes. It also helps to explain how *narrativity* and *fictionality* function as communicational resources/acts in the interpretational process.

In most cases, audiences of *The Silence* may have some prior sense of its director, his oeuvre, and its cinematic context. The contextual knowledge enhances the interpretational experiences of Bergman's films because his prolific oeuvre develops a shared set of motifs, stylistics, and even a continuous thematic discourse with some intermittent deflections. However, rather than providing a possible deductive or contextual interpretation of *The Silence*, I follow its cinematic unfolding through an inductive semiosis, with a special attention to fictionality and narrativity. Such a semiosis helps to demonstrate how the film itself engenders cinematic allusions to its context with its specific cinematic signs, signifying instances, referential nexuses, and intertextuality.

The title sequence of *The Silence* is very simple and plain: white letters over a black background. If the spectators have already seen the earlier films of the God trilogy, this title sequence inevitably recalls them. In *Through a Glass Darkly/ Såsom i en spegel* (1961), white titles on black continue over Bach's cello suite No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1008, which is described by Wilfrid (2009, p. 15) as "monophonic music wherein a man has created a dance of God". In *Winter Light/ Nattvardsgästerna* (1963), the same visual pattern plays over the sounds of church bells that most likely indicate a call for a communion service. Contrastingly, the title sound track of *The Silence* presents an amplified rapid clock ticking sound that tends to elicit an irksome phenomenal reaction in audiences. Its abstract sensation tends to perturb the lucid thought and referential associations; it may also refer to the absurdity of time/consciousness foreshadowing the impending dreamlike experience. However, fresh audiences do not have adequate interpretational resources at this stage. With hindsight, the three variations of the title tracks in the God trilogy can signify an evolution of a single theme: the deteriorating attitude towards God. If Bach's music is an unconditional praise to God, a summon with church bells indicates a compromise; in this context, the clock ticking sound that suggests the hypersensitivity of silence, inflated triviality, and difficulty of associations can signify 'God's silence' or complete absence.

4.2. The Train Scene and the Three Tiers of Cinema

The first scene (Duration: 6m 40s) starts with a close-up of a boy who is sleeping over an outspread arm of a young woman. The dry and hollow background sound is indefinable but contributes to the overall mood of this



scene; the sudden cessation of the amplified clock ticking sound further accentuates this otherwise indistinct soundtrack. After a few seconds, the camera pans to a visibly drained, sweating woman who almost involuntarily flaps a piece of paper; then it reframes another woman seated next to her. She also looks exhausted but her determination to compose herself is also perceptible⁹⁹. Suddenly the boy stands up to the centre of the frame, wipes his eyes, and spends a few seconds facing towards the audience/camera, without making a direct eye contact. The shadows around his eyes draw extra attention to his eyes



because they somewhat obscure his eyeline. Then he turns his back towards the audience and walks away across an open door of the cabin to a window to peer through it. By now, it is apparent that these three people are in a berth of a moving train; consequently, the hollow background noise becomes meaningful within the diegesis. The boy attempts to read a notice on the wall and asks its

⁹⁹ The film does not reveal their names until it reaches the second half of the film and I discuss its significance later. But I use their character names early in the analysis for the convenience of reference.

meaning from the second woman; she kindly replies that she does not know, perhaps indicating that it is in a foreign language. The boy recites it loudly (possibly as it sounds in his language) and then decides to sit between the two women. Perhaps unsettled by this stuffy atmosphere, the first woman moves to the opposite seat. After a little contemplation, the boy follows her and leans over her. She decides to comfort the boy letting him lie beside her; this action indicates that perhaps she is his mother. Still, the initial long take continues over two minutes and it constantly reframes to capture the entire action, sometimes in close-ups and sometimes in mid shots as the actors move to and fro.

Although the above transcription may seem like a close observation of the first shot of *The Silence*, understandably, such a transcription is founded on complex selective processes and various background assumptions. First, based on cultural knowledge and prior experience, the spectators may generally know that they are watching a film and aware of the distinction between projected cinematic images and spectators' real surroundings. With ideal conditions (theatre, darkness, comfort, concentration etc.), the awareness of the spectator's ambience tends to gradually wane, and the cinematic semiosis primarily relies on the intra-cinematic domain. Secondly, accepting that *The Silence* is a fiction film, the audience is likely to believe that the above-outlined sequence is a fictitious and staged performance. It is immediately evident that *The Silence* explicitly capitalises on these assumptions and also reinforces them. In particular, when the initial act starts with a very close shot, and when the camera persistently pans across and tracks its subjects in a highly choreographed manner for a long time, it further escalates the contrived nature of the sequence for a rhetorical audience. The tight coordination between the camera, high contrast lighting, expressions, and action emphasise its performativity, artificiality, and fictionality¹⁰⁰.

¹⁰⁰ By contrast, a less composed, less coordinated, and unchoreographed shot from a *distant* camera will raise the sense of spontaneity, naturalism (non-fictionality), and the documentary like *mimetic realism* of a sequence.

In this context, the spectators of *The Silence* would usually start to *fictionalise* the on-screen visuals; here, I use *fictionality* in the sense of *flexible reference* (See Chapter 3.5.5). This means that audiences first acknowledge that these aural and visual cinematic signs refer to more than one *referent*, and secondly, they do not strictly and continuously hold on to the actual real-world referents. In other words, the *humans* recognised by the *spectatorial perception* (Peircean *representamen*) at least refer to the (1) immediately recognisable on-screen *human-like* images/sign vehicles—or self-reflexive *signifiers*, (2) recognisable real (non-fictional) people or *implied* actors in the real world, and (3) the fictional characters formulated by the cinematic semiosis. According to the Peircean framework, sense (1) indicates *iconic signs*, sense (2) indicates *indexical signs*, and sense (3) indicates *symbolic signs*. However, it can be safely said that at this initial stage of the cinematic semiosis, the non-fictional referents (1) and (2) can be relatively stronger than the fictional referent (3). Even without any contextual information, the audiences can easily recognise photographed ‘generic’ people on screen (immediacy/denotation), but still, they are not familiar with the fictional characters. If the spectators are familiar enough to recognise the implied actors (Jörgen Lindström as the child, Gunnel Lindblom as the first woman and Ingrid Thulin as the second woman) the indexical, non-fictional aspect may become stronger than the generic sense. Furthermore, if the spectators are familiar with Bergman’s other films, Gunnel Lindblom and Ingrid Thulin become more significant. They are predominantly known because of Bergman’s films. These *signifying instances* may also recall some of the characters they have acted in those films when relevant.

As explained, the first long take of *The Silence* is intricately timed and calculatedly choreographed. From the perspective of *filmmaking*, the purposeful movement of the camera and the continuous re-composition of the frame become very manifest since the shot is often framed as a close-up shot. Even

when the events become wide shots, the central action is obvious owing to the lighting and composition. This choice produces very different effects than capturing the same pro-filmic action as a static wide shot, which could eliminate the camera activity. For example, dynamic close compositions calculatedly include and exclude specific elements from the pro-filmic event, and also call attention to this function. It also actively and progressively changes the significance of each represented action, overtly communicating a specific authorial intention/expression. Unlike a wide, deep-focus shot, in which the spectator is given the relative discretion to choose where to concentrate in the frame, the *indexical* implied filmmaker (Bergman) here authoritatively dictates the narrative progression on the micro level. He systematically steers the spectator's attention along the timeline with his *mise-en-scene*. The dark and bland background, high contrast, and the dynamic composition often sharply emphasise the point of interest. In other words, the *sign vehicles* available for interpretation are conspicuously specific and controlled, and the cinematic *semiosis* is assertively guided. If this assertive agency is acknowledged by an audience, it is a result of the extra-diegetic representation and interpretation. As I will elaborate, such acknowledgements contribute to produce a specific set of meanings that are not available to the diegetic interpretation.

The next shot, which is also approximately two minutes in length, presents the continuation of the same space-time in a similarly choreographed dynamic close-up. In this sequence, the action becomes more dramatic and suspenseful. It progressively 'communicates' that the second woman (Ester) is having a serious health problem, and the relationship between two women is not pleasant. When the first woman (Anna) tries to comfort Ester, she aggressively shoves her aside and leaves their cubicle (and the frame). As Anna follows Ester out of the room (and also the frame), the awoken boy (Johan) rises into the empty frame watching them. Then, both women enter the cabin again leaving the boy outside. Anna closes the cabin door and the boy watches two women

consecutively from the corridor. It is now apparent that Anna and Ester resent each other but they are forced to stay together for some reason.

By this point, the cinematic mediation effectively grabs the audience's attention to characters' distinct features and their interrelationship. The relatable bond between characters and their unique situation within the diegetic signs/representation gradually gains momentum over their extra-textual *indexical* signs/representation (non-fictional references). Consequently, the sense of Jörgen Lindström, Gunnel Lindblom and Ingrid Thulin (or their generic identity) start to wane. Meanwhile, the characters they represent (as Anna, Ester and Johan) and their mutual interrelationships flourish in the spectatorial perception buoyed by the *symbolic* signs (fictional references). In the Peircean perspective, this means that the cinematic signs encourage the interrelated, textually constructed *signifying instances* towards the symbolic *objects*. In other words, the cinematic text gradually implements a set of intra-textual cinematic *rules* (Peircean symbolism) to define the *iconic* signs, downplaying their *indexical* references. As a result of the ongoing familiarity, the attention to the photographic level (formal/iconic) also diminishes. While the characters, their relationships, and the diegetic level develop and stabilise, the audience also gradually becomes familiar with Bergman's commanding narrational style. The two women's emotive reactions to each other, the concealed history between them, the boy's preadolescent innocence and his fate in this strange situation collectively arouse audiences' *mimetic* reactions: empathy, sympathy, suspense, and curiosity. Motivated by these forces, the audience who attends to the diegesis may project possible diegetic relationships between the *parts* (actions) and the imaginary *whole* (character relationships).

In addition, the actor/character action of this sequence gradually builds up the spatial environment and its unique organisation along the cinematic progression. The possible window in the cabin, the opposite seats, the sliding door as a separating device between spaces etc. gain a certain significance not because they are necessarily visible, or 'exist', in the diegesis but because the

actors' action—as a part of mise-en-scene—*constructs* them for the audiences' perception. In other words, actors (not the characters), as a part of authorial mediation, *narrate* 'space' at the extra-diegetic level. This interpretation based on the communicative dimension of *actors* is not available to the diegetic interpretations: Anna, Ester and Johan's motivations necessarily need to be located within the diegesis because they do not act for communication to an audience. In other words, actors' intentions are different from characters'.



At the thematic level, the window in the corridor that exposes the exterior barren landscape and the continuous lacklustre movement (in relation to the train) provides a harmonious backdrop to the characters' miserable mood. Moreover, from the perspective of *narratorial action*, Bergman also efficiently exploits this evolving *space-time* to *communicate* another dimension of the *thematic* tier. The first few seconds keep the three characters together on the same seat; despite their emotional isolation, this may rhetorically indicate that they are bound together. It communicates a possible relation between the characters and also the *thematic unity* between the *signs* borne by characters. The boy sleeping over Anna's hand signifies a special relationship between them: the mother-child bond. Ester stays somewhat away from them as an independent entity. The clothes, accessories, and body language clearly distinguish the two women's contrasting traits and tastes. Although Ester is

formally dressed, she looks impervious to the sultry ambience. This might also indicate a health problem at the diegetic level or a contrasting trait to the other woman at the thematic level. As the action progresses, the mother and child move onto the opposite seats widening the distance between two groups. Subsequently, while the centre of attention is on the tension between the two women, the mother sends the child outside the cabin. When the scene ends, the three characters are apart *emotionally* as well as *physically*: two women are on the opposite seats; the boy is sent outside, and the cabin door is closed to him. This *thematic* arrangement of the *initial harmony* and the *subsequent discord* between the actors/characters gradually gains more significance as the film progresses. The thematic significance of these compositional aspects reveals the impact of ‘reading’ the extra-diegetic communication implied by mise-en-scene, and its aboutness (theme); the coherence across different representational tiers of the film also indicates a reliable agency behind the cinematic narration.

In diegetic terms, the next few shots cover the boy’s activity in the compartment corridor and his encounters with the surroundings. After watching the blazing sun outside the window for some time, the boy falls asleep on the corridor floor. An officer enters and announces something in an unidentified language while opening doors of each cubicle¹⁰¹. The awoken boy peeps into another cubicle, which is occupied by two military officers and furtively hides when an officer comes out. Next, he curiously observes a long parade of military tanks passing his window, perhaps another train carrying military vehicles. Then the train approaches a drab cityscape. Anna also joins him as the train scene ends. They now seem to be in a strange miserable city, which is perhaps bracing itself for an impending war.

¹⁰¹ The word *Timoka* can be recognised in a second viewing as this name becomes significant later in the film as the name of the city, in which they are going to stay. Then the officer perhaps announces that the next station is *Timoka*.

In this episode, there are some lengthy choreographed takes and also a few brief takes. This perhaps indicates that Bergman employs lengthy takes when they serve a specific task beyond its style. In most of these shots, he maintains the medium close-up composition, keeping the child at the centre of attention. The entire train scene systematically establishes the child as a constant observer of a perplexing world. Besides his active engagement with his surroundings and other characters, his *preadolescence* (a symbolic sign) has a very effective thematic relevance for the boy's narrative existence. It signifies the character's naivety and relentless curiosity; adults can comfortably ignore his presence and relevance. In this sense, the boy's intervenient presence and his beholder status increasingly imply that he cannot just be reduced to the diegetic sphere; his presence attempts to communicate more. This intra-textually acquired thematic significance by the *boy character* sparks a specific *signifying instance* towards an important symbolic/metaphoric referent: as many commentators have noted, the boy is a metaphorical *sign* for the audience.

Although this referential activity is based on the *open* use of references, it is somewhat different from the *fictional* activity. Instead of *substituting* one referent with another, *metaphors* engage with both referents and invite a side-by-side comparison between their attributes¹⁰². The boy and the audience share a similar sentiment and fate: both attempt to curiously follow what is available to experience; both see and hear things but are not immediately competent to understand their meanings. In Koskinen's (1997, p. 84) view, because the child's role is shaped "as kind of a phenomenological explorer of a mysterious and unknown world, the boy double-performs as a kind of visible counterpart to the spectator". Furthermore, the boy's preadolescence indicates a sexual neutrality or "infantile bisexuality and androgyny" (Humphrey, 2013, p. 126). Therefore, Johan can be taken as a *sign* for female and queer, as well as male spectators with some gender-neutrality and latent masculinity. Interestingly, the

¹⁰² See section 3.4.1 for a discussion of theme as metaphor

child/spectator metaphor has many more dimensions. The child and the audience are disregarded at the diegetic and extra-diegetic levels for different reasons: the adult characters seemingly disregard the child assuming his bodily and intellectual passivity; the actors appear to disregard the camera/audience because it is the artistic convention. Nevertheless, the characters are deeply (consciously and unconsciously) aware of the child's presence, and the actors/filmmakers are aware of the camera/audience. In this sense, the child and the implied audience profoundly influence the development of the diegetic and extra-diegetic domains of *The Silence*, also restructuring the thematic domain, which is the convergence between them.

The progression of the film gradually refines this fecund metaphor (or the comparative reference) between the child/audience duplet. If the spectators follow this line of *narrativity*, its signs are remarkably coherent. The film starts with a close shot of the sleeping boy. Once the camera has established the three characters, the awakened boy rises into the frame directly encountering a possible invisible window. If there is a window or not in the diegetic space (this is not established), he inevitably encounters the camera/screen/audience: the boy turns towards the audience and the audience watch him face to face, mirroring each other. Simultaneously, this disturbing act can remind that the audience is also watching the actors/characters through this *fictional* window/screen. As Blackwell (1997, p. 122) notes the child's blocking of the audience's field of vision and the two women, establishes "his function as the mediating consciousness". Then he turns to the opposite window to watch through it replicating the audiences' parallel viewpoint. Thereon he continues to imitate the audience in the represented diegetic domain assuming the curious observer's role. He tries to read a notice written in an unknown language. Interestingly, this moment brings the first dialogue of the film: "What does this mean?" Its thematic significance resonates throughout the film with Johan's perplexed presence. Ester, who is a translator by profession as the film reveals

later¹⁰³, fails to answer this question; Johan and the audience have to discover it themselves.



In several instances, when the adult characters (two women and the officer) leave the audiences' vantage point, the frame/screen becomes fleetingly empty. At all these points, without any cuts, Johan fills the empty frame in the role of the puzzled observer, giving a diegetic personification to the curious audience. When Johan peeps into the military officers' cabin, the first officer's immediate close-up shot logically appears as Johan's point of view; but in the same shot, the camera suddenly pans to capture peeping Johan, refuting this sense. This can be explained as the opposite of the previous effect; the audience replaces Johan as the subject in his own point of view. Furthermore, the entire corridor sequence variously highlights the theme of *gaze* with Johan's act of watching and subject/object relationship.

When the mother leaves Johan outside the berth closing the cabin door, it is a very plausible reaction at the diegetic level from Anna considering the emotional heat in the cabin. However, at this moment, the child's situation is similar to the audience in the thematic sense. From one dimension, as Koskinen (2011, pp. 118–120) notes, he is separated from his mother, with whom he often seeks unification (wholeness) throughout the film; the strikingly calculated composition of the maternal body (womb) and the child reinforces this thematic separation. At this point, the *metaphoric* incentives in the scene again encourage comparative interpretations. The audience also continuously pursues narrative

¹⁰³ This dimension of Ester's character is not available to the spectator at this moment. But its relevance becomes prominent in a post-evaluation or second viewing.

wholeness through parts, although it seems always evasive in *The Silence*. Although the child can observe the berth through the glass panel from the corridor, the artistic decorative pattern on the glass ironically allows him (and the audience) only a mediated view; similarly, the audience must perceive the cinematic meanings penetrating the cinematic/artistic mediation.



From a psychoanalytic perspective, this scene may have more resonances. Although Johan's mother Anna sends him out, Ester's (translator, the bearer of language, the name of the father) outburst leads to the separation between mother and child. Instead of looking at his mother, the child intensely watches Ester. Does the child fear or empathise/sympathise/identify with Ester? Does Ester enact the father's authoritative role (symbolic order/patriarchy) in this group? If an anti-patriarchal spectator is convinced that this is the case, can such a spectator sympathise with Ester? Or, inversely, can such sympathy encouraged in the film undermine this line of thematic interpretation? Is this situation mirrored in the relationship between the cinematic mediation/authority (Ester) and the audience (the child) in some sense? This context shows that the thematic/aboutness tier also engages in gaps, suspense, and curiosity. It can also contribute to harbour sympathy and empathy towards characters. Rather than a *diegetic* paraphrasis, the fine details of the extra-diegetic tier (composition/mise-en-scene/editing) are decisive to an understanding of such manipulations in *The Silence*.

In this way, the narrativity or the *textual progression* systematically develops different sets of *signifying instances* across different tiers of *The Silence*, beginning from its initial scene. The cinematographic level, which is a part of the extra-diegetic domain, constructs visual and aural *signs* that are

perceptible and recognisable through resemblance—or *iconicity*. In a literary fiction, the proper nouns (e.g. Clarissa Dalloway), and the relevant pronouns (e.g. she) continually recall a character or specific objects throughout the text. This constant repetition of the words/nouns at the textual level correspondingly helps to sustain the diegetic narrativity and the character continuity. In cinema, the continuation of the *iconicity* at the photographic level fulfils the same function. As long as each frame, each cut, or each scene maintains the iconicity (facial and physical features, particular human voices, etc.), the continuity of cinematic characters and objects (Peircean *symbols*) is more stable. This is the main significance of the cinematographic level to the diegetic narrativity in fiction films; it sustains iconicity throughout extra-diegetic narrativity. Even when the actors or voices are replaced by someone else (e.g. stunt actors, dubbing artists) at the cinematographic level, as long as the iconicity (resemblance) continues, the extra-diegetic narrativity continues. For example, in *The Silence*, the surrogate actress, Kristina Olausson replaces Lindblom for Anna's nude scenes inconspicuously (Koskinen, 2011, p. 62). The extra-diegetic narration/mediation ensures that this replacement does not generate any *signs* (iconic or indexical) by not revealing their more distinguishable regions like face; therefore, in turn, this replacement does not provide signs for the diegetic and thematic levels (symbolic). On the other hand, the developing narrativity at the *diegetic* and *thematic* levels also subjugates the extra-diegetic inconsistencies. As long as the spectators believe that the character they watch is Anna in nude scenes, and there are no significant *signs* to contradict this belief at the extra-diegetic level, they fail to see the difference between the actresses (iconic/indexical signs). In this sense, sometimes, preventing sign generation or curbing references is important for the *narrativity* in all three textual levels.

However, at any time, these iconic signs from the photographic level are also capable of engendering the indexical signs/references to the non-fictional, real-world actors and other real objects. For example, a particular actor may often invoke her/his extra-textually maintained traits in a film; their character

portrayals often submit to their culturally situated extra-filmic image (e.g. Carmen Miranda; Elvis Presley). But the narratorial mediation of the *train scene* does not allow the sustaining of these indexical and non-fictional *signifying instances* along the textual timeline. In other words, it does not overtly encourage the *indexical narrativity* or the constant generation of non-fictional, real-world references (in the sense of Jörgen Lindström, Gunnel Lindblom, Ingrid Thulin). Rather, the *train scene* systematically encourages *iconic* narrativity (e.g. human beings/furniture) and symbolic narrativity in the *diegetic* and *thematic* domains (characters/motifs), which mostly overrides the indexical references. Although the audience does not know the names of the characters yet, the *iconic* signs of the *extra-diegetic* level (representations of humans) continuously evolve into cohesive characters (*symbolic* signs) at the *diegetic* level. This diegetic progression poses suspenseful questions like: who are these people? What is the relationship and history of these people? What is the destination, and the purpose of their journey?

Furthermore, as discussed, the *train scene* also stimulates the ‘boy as the observer/audience’ metaphor in the *thematic* domain as discussed. This can be reasonably explained as a different/extended set of signifying instances (semiosis) that evolve into unique *symbolic* signs (semiotic objects). Peirce’s *infinite semiosis* elaborates this possibility through the *representamen/interpretant/object* model. In this case, the *iconic* signs (of Jörgen Lindström) and the child character (Johan as symbolic signs) both act as Peircean *interpretants* towards the Peircean *object* ‘boy as the observer/audience’¹⁰⁴. Once this *signifying instance* of the *thematic* tier gathers momentum, it may also spur perception of the other symbolic representations in relation to this metaphor. What is the thematic relevance of the two women and their pronounced contrast? What is the thematic relevance of the confined

¹⁰⁴ According to the Peircean system, any stage of *semiosis* (*sign*, *interpretant* and *objects*) can also be another *sign/interpretant* to different signifying instances towards a new *object*. The end of infinite semiosis is always pragmatic and contingent (See section 2.4).

space (berth), the strange city, war motifs (military officers and armoured cars), and boy's constant observation? All these questions contribute to narrativity in the thematic tier of *The Silence*. Furthermore, this context also shows that although the fictional act and metaphoric act both depend on the open use of references/signs, the two acts differ in terms of their referential functions: *substitution* and *comparison*; meanwhile, narrativity develops with generating *associations* or *metonymy* between references/signs¹⁰⁵ at any referential tier.



The extra-diegetic level of the train scene exemplifies another very significant aspect of cinema. In the opening sequence, when Ester bitterly shoves Anna away, the stubborn claustrophobic close-up composition heightens its drama because the action violently bleeds out of the frame. This sudden unexpected action interrupts the sustained sluggishness of the situation with a shock. Such unpredicted moments and the constant camera movements arouse a *kinaesthetic* disruption in audiences' perception. In particular, when the parade of armoured cars passes Johan, the passing effect engendered by the flickering light, Johan's repetitive head movement, fluctuating hollow sounds, jarring visuals, and quick edits may induce a flurry of motion sickness directly in some spectators¹⁰⁶. These images influence the spectatorial *body* at the *phenomenal* level without even any intellectual decipherment. In other words, at these moments, the cinematic experience can fuse with the whole spectatorial experience, and some spectators may even become intellectually paralysed. According to the Peircean framework, this experience can be explained as the

¹⁰⁵ Peter Brooks (2012, p. 24) applies Jacobson's notion of metaphor (paradigmatic) and metonymy (syntagmatic) to explain narrative "unpacking"; however, in his framework, metaphor is taken in the sense of continual substitution while metonymy is combination.

¹⁰⁶ This effect is heavily pronounced on the large screens and in the cinema theatres.

sustenance of monadic *firstness* in *semiosis*; only the latent iconicity is emerging, but it is not allowed to fully develop as *signs*. Barthes (1977, pp. 130–131) describes such moments as photographic *trauma* that are incapable of *connotation*, and for him “the trauma is a suspension of language, a blocking of meaning”. These instances show that cinematic mediation can calculatedly prolong the *firstness* or *cinematographic trauma*. At the same time, this is an aggregate (audio-visual-kinaesthetic) and disorientating effect unlike the phenomena, which Laura Marks (2000, pp. 162–163) identifies as “haptic visuality”. In her elaboration, haptic images encourage spectators to engage with the surface qualities of cinematic images and do not trigger kinaesthetic effects; besides, they “force the viewer to contemplate the image itself instead of being pulled into narrative” (p.163), and therefore, probably depend on lengthier sensuous images¹⁰⁷.



Furthermore, this particular ‘traumatic’ sequence in *The Silence* is not free from narrative significance. When the predominant sensorial experiences affect the spectators, they can still associate such instances with the *diegetic* and *thematic* meanings: this is Johan’s perspective and his experience; this is how he feels. As Kavin (1978, p. 7) delineates, even the appearance of a character in a shot does not downplay its ability to convey the subjective perspective of the same character. Audiences can believe that they and the character share the same experience of the diegetic space as observing subjects through empathy. In this sense, the aforementioned ‘traumatic’ moments contribute to

¹⁰⁷ I maintain that filmmakers can nevertheless employ ‘haptic images’ for narrative purposes; extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic division helps in revealing such instances: See Chapter 5.

cinematically ‘describe’, ‘show’, ‘narrate’, and ‘simulate’ how Johan feels at these moments in the diegetic terms mirroring the phenomenal experience of the audience. In other words, the narratological concept of *internal focalisation* (narration through character perspectives) becomes more sensorial/phenomenal in cinema. However, this interpretation does not refute the always-active extra-diegetic *external focalisation* in cinematic narratives at all. Even in any subjective point of view shot, the implied filmmaker’s perspective is available for the extra-diegetic analysis. A POV as a communicational choice, exploitation of the phenomenal experience, employed stylistics, and the mise-en-scene within the POV, etc. always implicate the authorial mediation at the extra-diegetic level.

Simultaneously, at the thematic level, Johan watching a sequence of *traumatic* images through the window again recalls his symmetry with the audience. It also highlights the metaphorical association between the ‘traumatic images’ and *The Silence* itself. The preceding sequence is particularly interesting in this regard. Immediately after the railway guard has left the compartment, the corridor suddenly turns into a darkened hall; perhaps, in the diegetic sense, the train travels into a tunnel, and the change is also marked with the audio track. Consequently, in several subsequent close-ups (around 6.00m), the child



appears as he is in a darkened film theatre. The flickering lights pass over the child’s face, and he revolves around as if he is disoriented. In this confusion, the camera/audience also swap its direction echoing child’s disorientation. After peeping into the military officers’ cabin, Johan settles down to watch through the train window. The exterior view through the window-frame appears as a projected film on the screen and the two-dimensionality of ‘moving’ images strongly reinforces this sense. When he places his hand on the glass, it can be

taken as a suggestion for the almost porous phenomenal boundaries between *seeing* and *feeling*. In this sense, this sequence particularly positions itself outside the film's diegesis as well as inside in several referential levels: the traumatic images directly affect the audience even without any narrative support (iconicity/extra-diegetic/phenomenological); it is Johan's experience at the diegetic level (symbolic/diegetic/narrative); in hindsight, it could also be seen as a premonition for the impending war-ridden city and the traumatic events in Johan's life (symbolic/metaphoric/ thematic); as a shared experience of the audience and Johan, it is also a metaphor for the film itself (extra-diegetic/thematic). The various extra-diegetic cues (mise-en-scene that reminds a cinema theatre and spectatorship) underpin this last sense as discussed.

Overall, in the train sequence, Bergman's interfering narratorial style and the cinematographic *trauma* (or Peircean firstness) work *towards* and *against* diegetic stability. But even the seemingly counter-diegetic, self-reflexive moments may manage to continuously enthrall most audiences. It is a result of several factors as discussed: the surreality of narrated events; highlighting the *unnatural* aspects of cinematic presentation; the intimate photographic depiction of real people; and the phenomenal sensations aroused by cinematic means. These moments in *The Silence* can also be discussed with Tom Gunning's 'Cinema of Attractions' framework:

One can unite them in a conception that sees cinema less as a way of telling stories than as a way of presenting a series of views to an audience, fascinating because of their illusory power... A cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator (Gunning, 2005, pp. 38–39)

However, as delineated, the above-discussed sequence cannot be simply reduced to a rupture of the *diegetic* tier (fictional world) although it has some resonances of Gunning's concept. First, it creates amplified cinematic simulations that elicit the spectators' involuntary phenomenal reactions; therefore, arguably, the *extra-diegetic* tier exploits a form of cinematic *mimesis*

that is independent of the diegesis. A diegetic analysis alone cannot explain this mode of *mimetic* simulation because it is not a *result* of the diegesis; nonetheless, it contributes to the diegesis with association. At one level, with or without any diegetic *ruptures*, the inherent affective power of the extra-diegetic tier is always lurking in fictional cinema. Furthermore, Gunning's survey also indicates that some represented actions like slapstick, comedy, and the ruptures of diegesis also create 'attractions'. Encapsulating all these elements, I argue that "presenting a series of views to an audience" is an inseparable dimension of the extra-diegetic (iconic/indexical) tier. Whether it serves the diegesis or not is determined by the cinematic mediation. Gunning (1994, pp. 42–43, 2004, pp. 78–91) later indicates that although 'cinema of attraction' was absorbed into the 'cinema of narrative integration' in various ways, they are two different systems. Attraction often astonishes audience by means of its affective, illusory, or alienating power that is *independent* of the narrative domain. Subsequently, Williams (2004, p. 172) attempts to expand the framework under the title of 'the new cinema of attraction'. She admits that in modern cinema "attractions themselves have been thematized and narrativized" (p.175), and they have become a part of narrative as simulations of the "diegetic world through cinematic mise-en-scene" (p.174). However, even in her argument, the perpetual irreconcilability between 'cinema of attractions' and narrative coherence is implicit; they appear incompatible 'modes'.

In this context, the notion of cinematic palimpsest between extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers helps to explain the oxymoron and harmony between cinematic *attraction* and *diegesis* in Bergman's cinema. The above-discussed instances of *The Silence* explain how Bergman manipulates the vertical (fictional/metaphoric) and horizontal (narrative/metonymic) referential relationships. When the *diegesis* is understood as another 'attraction' resulted from the extra-diegetic mediation, it is easy to perceive that both 'cinema of attraction' and 'cinema of narrative integration' can also progress in different cinematic tiers simultaneously, even without interrupting each other.

Furthermore, in the above discussed and many other subsequent sequences, Bergman develops an interactive narrativity between three tiers. Although 'attraction' may appear a discordant or excessive 'mode' against the diegesis in some cases, it can also be *interlaced* at the extra-diegetic and thematic levels. Exploiting all these aspects, *The Silence* resolutely sustains a flickering equilibrium between the narratorial command, sensorial affect, and the diegetic continuity throughout the film. In this sense, the extra-diegetic tier does not merely construct the diegetic tier of a fictional film; its own narrativity can also directly serve the themes and expressions as a part of cinematic communication.

4.3. The Hotel in the Strange City

The next segment (Duration: 5m) of the film establishes that the trio has temporarily lodged in a hotel in an unknown European city. The harsh light outside the hotel, the hectic streets, and the stuffy room indicate that it is a scorching summer. While the boy continues to watch the two women, their discussion indicates that they were on a homebound trip from some destination. They expect to leave the hotel the next day when Ester has revived. While Ester is resting, Anna indulges herself with a bath. Anna asks Johan to scrub her back while in the bath, and then both go to the bed together for a sleep, almost naked. Anna's treatment of the child may betray some nuances of an incestuous relationship. In Mann's words, "there are hints that the relationship between Anna and her son is incestuous, tenderly and sweetly shown, but with real physical consequences for the viewer" (as cited in Hedling, 2008, p. 24).

This episode continues to establish some aspects of *mimetic realism* at the diegetic level. Despite a few very subtle exceptions, characters increasingly behave like relatable humans: a child and his mother. Anna playfully wraps Johan's face with a window curtain, and Johan curiously watches Anna's walking feet while he is sitting on the floor. When Anna asks what he is looking at, he says, "your feet; they walk you around all the time; all by themselves". The

next conversation between Anna and Ester indicates the dormant tension between them but each tries to be courteous to the other. When Anna is getting ready for the bath, Johan becomes particularly watchful. While Anna is taking the bath inside the bathroom, he makes a sputtering sound as if to draw her attention; then Anna calls him inside to scrub her back. These gestures perhaps imply that Johan is awaiting this routine as a customary habit. However, it is important to note that the possible incestuous relationship is not established at the *diegetic* level. The audience cannot obtain the concrete *on-screen* proofs from the cinematographic (aural or visual) level but it is inferential.

Meanwhile, the *thematic* and *metaphoric* significance is enticing throughout the sequence. The transition from the train to the city is also thematically meaningful. The stasis of the train cubicle, which contrasts against the moving train across the barren landscape, is replaced with the tranquil hotel room and the hectic city streets outside. While the two women and the child occupy the hotel room, the streets are seemingly filled with men. The boy continues to be the relentless observer in parallel to the audience. Anna closes the window-blinds disturbing his view and act of looking. She also wraps his face with the semi-transparent curtain alluding to the mediation motif. Johan winds his wristwatch and listens to it while walking to ailing Ester's doorway. Although this act can extra-diegetically/thematically suggest the progression of time, consciousness, growth, as well as the disorientation, angst, and even death, at this point, its significance is not well-defined.

When Johan observes Anna through the bathroom door, the door acts as a screen, recalling Johan's and the audiences' shared spectatorship. His verbal comment on Anna's feet also invites reflection on the characters and events more analytically and abstractly. Do feet walk Anna or does Anna walk her feet? Are the appearances misleading? Do Anna, Ester, and Johan convey something beyond their facades? Blackwell (1997, p. 108) also recognises this occasion as a self-reflexive moment that denaturalizes cinema's fetishistic strategies of female body. If spectators follow this line of thinking, the thematic contrast

between Anna and Ester also gradually becomes intense. Anna seems a sensuous and nimble person who easily reacts to her surroundings whereas Ester appears numb and impervious. Do they represent the polarised aspects of some concept? This potential is often latent in the form of “direct reflections of ourselves”, “the eternal conflict of the spiritual and physical”, “body and soul” (Wood and Lippe, 2012, p. 158), senses and intellect (Mosley, 1981, p. 118), or as “a split self” as “body and mind”, “separated by a boy” (Gado, 1986, p. 296). In broad terms, this also evokes the contrast between irrationality and rationality in art and philosophy since Greek mythology, and even Friedrich Nietzsche (2012) famously explores their implications in the form of *Dionysian* and *Apollonian* archetypes.

The possible incestuous relationship between Anna and her son also has more weight at the thematic level. In the bath, after scrubbing Anna’s back for some time, Johan wearily leans over Anna’s body. Johan’s leaning over Anna



after scrubbing her back may also imply a symbolic orgasm as well as his aroused sexual desire. At this point, Anna says, “That will do. Go wait in the other room”. After a little while, she again proposes, “We are going to take a nap”. At this point, her face and eyes are erotically suggestive, and the cinematic mediation (lighting, composition, audio, and timing) is sexually connotative. The reflections of the water on Anna’s face, her knowing look, splashing sounds and the subsequent silence engender a series of *cinematic signs* to reinforce this sense. Johan then leaves the bathroom and flops onto the bed. While he is waiting for his mother, his play may also invoke relevant themes: he animates

his hands perhaps imitating two fighter jets (war motif) until one jet attacks and shoots down the other with an exhaling sound (orgasm motif).

After the bath, Anna asks him to remove his clothes and closes the curtain. Then she playfully kisses him several times and rubs him with eau-de-cologne. When he seems to be eagerly waiting on the bed for her, she enters the frame and lies on the bed evidently naked. Arguably at this point, Bergman's mise-en-scene also reinforces 'the boy as the audience' metaphor. The boy and the



spectators gaze at Anna from diametrically opposite views, when Anna removes the sheet across the screen; as she lies on the bed, Johan and the audience share the view of Anna's naked body (particularly breasts). If the preadolescent boy/son is considered a sexually inert or taboo object to Anna, Anna's sexual gestures relate more to the adult spectators embodied by Johan. Furthermore, this cinematically built ongoing sensual relationship between Anna and observer through the boy/son/Ester metaphor can heighten Anna's relevance as a sensual part of one's (spectator's) self. In this sense, the 'incest' between the divisions of one's own internal self is more substantial at the symbolic/thematic level rather than at the mimetic/diegetic level¹⁰⁸. The possibility of separate thematic and diegetic interpretations shows that in Bergman's subtle mediation, *incest* of the thematic tier does not clash with the *innocence* of mother/son relationship at the diegetic tier. As Blake (1975, p. 40) observes, diegetic Johan just "assumes the fetal position next to his naked mother, which would indicate that their relationship is purely instinctive and sensuous".

¹⁰⁸ Later, Bergman repeats this theme indicating a possible incestuous relationship between Anna and Ester.

When the audience has various interpretational goals and resources, they look for *signs* (references) and narrativity that facilitate goal-oriented signifying instances in texts. If the text provides the reasonable thematic/symbolic signs for respective directions, these attempts flourish. For example, Gado's (1986, p. 300) psychoanalytic perspective develops relevant cinematic signs of this sequence towards Freudian themes (Gado's predetermined 'story'). He considers the mother-child relationship within the Oedipus complex. According to Gado, Johan desires his mother and attempts to eradicate his symbolical father: "When his mother paces half-naked, in front of him, he winds his watch (as though to hasten his sexual maturation by hurrying time)". Here Gado generously fictionalises the available cinematic resources towards his interpretational goal. He compares Johan's playful imitation of a fighter jet and the subsequent attack to "punishing the phallic symbol by shooting it down. Later, "having symbolically destroyed the sexual threat to his relationship to his mother, Johan is allowed to sleep at Anna's side" (p.300).

Within this line of interpretation, Johan's expressed fear for authorities—military officers in the train cabin and the military tanks with erect (phallic) cannons—may represent Johan's competitive relationship with the masculine/sexual authority (Cohen, 1993, p. 212). Anna's erotic treatment towards Johan may seem to arouse his masculine sexuality but the absence of consummation may also frustrate his masculinity.

Furthermore, in Lacanian terms, the break with the unified imaginary image of mother/child may persist as a lack with cinematic subjects (Fink, 1997, pp. 44–46). It leads to the inevitable split between two orders (unconscious/conscious; imaginary/symbolic) of their adult 'self'. Felluga's (2015, pp. 245–246) summary on the Lacanian subject is particularly pertinent to the always hovering themes of *The Silence*:

According to Lacan, your body began to be fragmented into specific erogenous zones (mouth, anus, penis, vagina), aided by the fact that your mother tended to pay special attention to these body parts. This

“territorialization” of the body could already be seen as a falling off, an imposition of boundaries and, thus, the neo-natal beginning of socialization (a first step away from the Real). Indeed, this fragmentation was accompanied by identification with those things perceived as fulfilling your lack at this early stage: the mother’s breast, her voice, her gaze. Since these privileged external objects could not be perfectly assimilated and could not, therefore, ultimately fulfil your lack, you already began to establish the psychic dynamic (fantasy vs. lack) that would control the rest of your life.

With or without psychoanalytic insights, the stimulating thematic signs—breasts/child, mother/child unification, and unexpressed *incestuous* relationship—may easily invoke the ‘split subject’ motif throughout *The Silence*. Although it is difficult to assume that Bergman was familiar with Lacan’s emergent theory at the time, these themes were often latent in any psychoanalytical approach (Felluga, 2015, pp. 244–251). However, many Bergman films including *The Silence* and *Persona* remarkably develop a concept of split subject between body, imaginary whole, and social order (language) in their own cinematic terms. In *The Silence*, the boy/audience metaphor is also a key instrument of this discourse. In this light, it is important to reiterate that although Bergman seems to allow some implications of incestuous relationships in the film, he does not provide concrete cinematographic evidence for those allusions. Arguably, they seem to signify the emergence of a split subject at the thematic level, rather than actual incest at the diegetic level. For instance, the gestures of Anna can often be justifiable as motherly affection and familial intimacy within the boundaries of diegetic domain. Here, arguably, Bergman subtly exploits the *fictionality* in the sense of *open use of reference*. He keeps often activated, buoyant cinematic references that can be connected with several compatible diegetic and thematic meanings. Concrete evidence/reference on the cinematographic level (e.g. on-screen/verbal action of an obvious sexual relationship) would firmly establish the references to incest at the diegetic level. This in turn would weaken the possible metaphoric meanings and other communicational potentials at the extra-diegetic level.

The next episode follows Ester, while Anna and Johan are asleep. The earlier discussion between the sisters revealed that it is Ester's idea to stay in the city, while Anna is eager to leave. In diegetic terms, this scene establishes that Ester is trying different ways to gratify herself: reading, smoking, music, alcohol, communication, and masturbation. All these pursuits seem to fail other than the masturbation. Her hopelessness is evident when she changes the radio channels, wanders through rooms for some human connection, her chain smoking, and attempts to consume more alcohol than she can handle. She seems to enjoy her encounter with the jovial old butler who cannot communicate in a mutual language. However, they manage to communicate with sign language; she also learns a word from the strange language ('kasi' meaning hand). But the butler cannot stay with her; a call of a bell summons him. Eventually, she attempts to masturbate on the bed and apparently manages to achieve orgasm. If the 'kasi/hand' signifies some sense of connection or communication (perhaps a cryptic hint offered by the old butler), the only form of communication Ester can achieve seems to be internal (masturbation) at this



point. However, the external manifestation of this internal communication rather evokes a possessed evil spirit entrapped in a dungeon with her upside-down facial expressions and constricted body; the curtained window, bolstered bed with iron rails, and the camera/audience surround her from all sides.

Thematically, this sequence may continue to encourage conception of Ester as a representation of a metaphysical concept that transcends her humanity. When all her corporeal pursuits fail one by one, Ester as the personification of *soul*, *spirit*, or *mind* becomes a more thriving hypothesis. When Ester is active, reflective, and busy, her thematic counterpart Anna (physicality/body) is inactive and dormant. However, Ester's diegetic 'human-self' is also rounded and convincing. The intimate cinematographic representation, choreographed continuity, the sense of plausible misery emanated from the Thulin/Ester symbiosis do not easily allow for a flat symbolic reduction. Rather it develops into a convincing and relatable character as well as many different thematic threads as I elaborate next.



Concerning Ester, the 'character', her relentless pursuit of solace against the undefined emotional burdens also loudly asserts her mimetic humanity. When Ester reaches sleeping Anna and Johan perhaps for a moment of liaison with her kindred, she yearns to touch them with some evident warmth. But her decision to leave them in peace perhaps reflects her inner attachment to them more vividly. When she looks out of the window, the overburdened cart and the emaciated horse offer an irresistible and introspective symbol for her own pathetic status. This is possibly an interesting variant of what Kawin (1978, pp. 3–22) theorises as the 'mind screen': if two shots linked together by an eye-line match can depict what a character sees, some fittingly mediated shots can also figuratively imply what characters think or how they feel¹⁰⁹. The load full of

¹⁰⁹ Kawin argues that 'mind screens' is a form of first person (the self-conscious work) or third person narration, invoking linguistic categories; but, a 'mind screen' can also be a metaphoric/thematic form of cinematic narration that also reflects character's subjective or unconscious mind.

domestic items hauled by the slogging horse recalls travelling people who are deprived of any permanent settlement. This seems an apt evocation of her unstable mental and physical status. Wood (2012, p. 160) attempts to read Ester's mind at this point as follows: "Ester watches it and responds with pity that is also self-pity: she sees the horse as a reflection of herself and as an epitome of the miseries of the world".

In terms of the aural sphere, the break of the music track for the shots outside the room naturally emphasises the interior/exterior spatial break at the diegetic level. But this choice also indicates a specific continuity at the thematic level: the chaotic city and the horse cart as an apt reflection of Ester's internal sentiment. Presenting Ester and her counter point-of-view from an intermediate vantage point that is situated outside the room can arguably encourage this meaning. A conventional *visual* POV of Ester that could have been captured through the inner window-frame does not emphasise the exterior 'atmosphere' subjugating the interior 'atmosphere'. But Bergman's *narrative perspective* that boldly 'penetrates' the figurative audio-visual zone of the chaotic exterior city (a metaphor for characters' minds) appears to 'describe' and 'feel' Ester's 'mind screen' more emphatically. Although her outer-self seems to be in accordance with the classical music filled in the room, her inner-self seems to be more in line with the exterior chaos. Most probably, this reflective realisation could be what urges Ester to stop the music in the next moment.

However, the extra-diegetic mediation of this sequence calculat­ingly generates the most resounding force that sustains a surprising equilibrium between the diegetic and thematic domains. Throughout the scene, the composition is meticulously choreographed, and many shots continue for a markedly long duration. In these lengthy shots, extreme close-ups unpredictably evolve into medium shots and long shots through re-composition and mise-en-scene. In other words, the close-ups, medium shots, and long shots are woven together into a continuous textuality without predominantly relying on editing; within this system, flash pans and sudden tilts replace the function of editing. When there are rare cuts, they appear inevitable owing to the obvious breaks in the spatial continuums (doors/windows). These cuts just join lengthy shots and



different spaces together one after the other, unlike the standard master/coverage system, which captures static spaces from contrasting angles. This externally enforced interplay between the camera and its changing subjects arguably highlights the cohesive continuity of the extra-diegetic/narrational level rather than the diegetic cohesion. Such an extra-diegetic (cinematographic) continuity is not particularly important to build the space-time continuity of a story universe (diegetic level). In reflective art cinema, the diegetic cohesion is frequently achieved with unruffled, lengthy, and wide, deep-focus shots¹¹⁰. The

¹¹⁰ Andrei Tarkovsky's films provide quintessential instances of this strategy.

continuity editing system (including the eye-line match, 180° rule, master/coverage, and the action/audio continuity) can also easily serve the story-world continuity as Hollywood aesthetics has firmly established. Continuity editing often finds a *diegetic justification* for cuts, generating other signs to *downplay* the editing points (different angles; action continuity etc.). When the master/coverage and the continuity editing systems are in operation, the coherence of the story-universe (diegetic narrativity) appears to subjugate the narratorial mediation. But the rare and unpretentious cuts between the tightly choreographed dynamic shots in this sequence (and also many other scenes in *The Silence*) indicate that these cuts covertly attempt to maintain the continuity of the narratorial authority; in other words, they predominantly serve the *extra-diegetic narrativity*. If the immersive aesthetics of Hollywood dilute the sense of mediation and the extra-diegetic narratorial perspective, Bergman's strategies intensify them. His camera movements and close-compositions also show a remarkable foreknowledge ahead of the character; for example, when Ester's hand moves to the liquor glass, the tight close-up frame also quickly moves to the bedside table; but when she lifts the glass, the frame remains with the table as if it knows that Ester next moves to the radio on the table. However, this dynamic mise-en-scene with unfamiliar camera angles and conspicuous movements does not necessarily upset the diegetic coherence. Simply it *creates* the diegesis as well as the thematic forces through a strong extra-diegetic perspective rather than passively capturing an imaginary diegesis. It also indicates a cohesive narrator/implicit author who 'knows' in advance and 'guides' the spectator with an assertive command/voice.

Overall, this narratorial guidance weaves the enlarged minutiae of Ester's diegetic suffering and Ingrid Thulin's extra-diegetic performance into a larger multidimensional textual organism. The calculated cinematographic presentation of Ingrid Thulin's performance is an inextricable thread in the fictionality and narrativity of this sequence. The subtle trembles of her fingers, delicate twitches of her facial expressions, remarkable dexterity in handling of

props, and the mastery of timing alternately highlight her *natural* being and *artificial* performance. This alternation situates the cinematic signs engendered by Thulin between the authentic humanity and exaggerated symbolism. In other words, her performance continuously emanates *iconic*, *indexical*, and *symbolic* signs for familiar nuances of humanity and unfamiliar signs of abstract signification.

Furthermore, Thulin's ambiguous performance as Ester arguably disrupts her feminine gendered identity. Her costume, hairdo, and mannerisms distinctly emanate the signs of masculinity (Wood and Lippe, 2012, p. 173). Moreover, this scene emphatically underlines the specific regions of Ester's body (her hands, fingers, face, and hair), her cigarettes, book, pen, liquor bottle, glass, radio, her walk, particular mannerisms, and expressions; even when she looks out the window, the shadows of the window frame fall over her smoking mouth resembling an exaggerated moustache. These aspects further contrast Ester's character against Anna, who exposes her femininity with culturally established mannerisms, make-up, hairdos, having a husband and child, and her sexual obsession with males as revealed in future events. Therefore, the cinematic signs of Thulin/Ester symbiosis can be analysed into distinguishable and cohesive streams of signifying instances (parallel sets of references in different fictional levels). The audience can perceive specific cinematic signs of a female human being (iconic signs—>indexical signs); they recognise the humanity/femininity engendered by the cinematographic representation and performance of the known female actor, Ingrid Thulin. Her body, face, and voice bear some stereotypical biological traits generally associated with femininity. In turn, this recognition contributes to the female identity of Ester in the diegetic domain as a *woman*, possibly a sister and aunt, without further textual clarification (iconic signs—>indexical signs—>symbolic signs). However, a series of performative

signs of Thulin/Ester also indicate a culturally situated masculinist dimension¹¹¹ (with the dormant potential of referring to patriarchy) and some other metaphoric concepts, which need further textual clarification from the film. As a result, her iconicity and the constructed versions of symbolism (diegetic and thematic) variously align into multilevel metaphoric relations. This means that the Thulin/Ester symbiosis provides distinct and evolving fictional references for abstractions like humanity, femininity, masculinity, mind, soul, etc.; it starts from the destabilisation of the *indexicality* (non-fictionality) of Ingrid Thulin. This potential derives from the specific use of cinematic *fictionality* and *narrativity* in *The Silence*¹¹².

Bergman's cinematic mediation further destabilises the iconic and indexical references of many other represented elements of this sequence and directs narrativity on various other routes. When Ester rings the bell for an attendant, the old butler appears suddenly at the door for the first time; her pressing the button remarkably coincides with the butler's knocking the door. This coincidence downplays Ester's diegetic (story-world) act and highlights its thematic significance. The butler's constructed appearance along with his facial shape and spectacles, his walk, and particularly his teeth (specific iconic signs) may curiously resemble an old horse (Gado, 1986, p. 302); and it is more striking a few seconds after Ester contemplates the emaciated horse. Therefore, it can be argued that the butler/horse symbiosis also has a thematic significance as Ester's thought and an extra-diegetic significance in Bergman's cinematic expression, beyond their characters at the diegetic level. This motif develops throughout the film with the butler's repetitive appearance, the painting of centaur in the next sequence, the repeated appearance of the emaciated horse with the cart, and Ester and Johan's conversation about horses in a later scene.

¹¹¹ The spectators who have seen Bergman's *The Face* (1958), can further see intertextual signs of Thulin's presence (iconicity and indexicality). She acts a female character disguised as a male in *The Face*.

¹¹² This gender deconstruction develops into more possibilities in the later episodes: see *Ester and Anna* later in this chapter.

It further becomes relevant for the audience who are familiar with the Christian biblical canon. According to Revelation 6:7:8 of the New Testament (Wright, 2011, p. 548), the ‘pale horse’ (4th Seal of Seven Seals) carries the rider named *Death*¹¹³. In Blackwell’s (1997, p. 102) feminist interpretation, the horse motif embodies the “corrupt male culture that repeatedly impinges upon and infects female reality”. In this sense, it invades into Ester, Anna, and Johan’s world in many different forms throughout the film accompanied with the other threats of ‘male culture’: oppressive language; haughty officials; street fights; impersonal military tanks that represent large-scale war.



This thematic thread gains a noteworthy momentum when Bergman presents Ester and the butler’s initial communication through the mirror. By visually compositing the butler’s close-up with Ester’s wide shot (spatial narrativity) across a medium (mirror), this scene symbolically alludes to the language barrier and abstract mediated relationship between them (Butler/horse/death as Ester’s internal reflection) simultaneously. This unique extra-diegetic photographic representation also serves the spatial narrativity (the room through the mirror) at the diegetic level and the thematic narrativity (*mediation* as a theme) simultaneously. However, within the thematic tier, the butler and Ester’s curious relationship gains much potential. If he brings death, ironically, he often seems to bring comfort to Ester who seems to be at the edge of her life. Even the unknown drink he serves her, which some commentators recognise as “Brandy” (Mosley, 1981, p. 120; Cohen, 1993, p. 217) and some as

¹¹³ Johannine authorship of the Revelation 6 of New Testament may also refer to Johan (boy/Bergman). In the well-known Freudian case study of ‘Little Han’s Phobia’, Han (Johan) is scared of horses (phallic symbol). I will elaborate on these connections later, when its narrativity is ripe.

“local spirit” (Cowie, 1992, p. 211) at the diegetic level, becomes the *local spirit of evil* from the sinister city, at the thematic level. Ester’s initial contentment after drinking and the subsequent suffering collectively support this symbol.

In this context, what the audience experience in this episode is not simply a camera revealing the pro-filmic space and action of people through time (as in non-fictional surveillance footage). It also does not merely capture/deliver a performed series of events. Furthermore, it does not merely indicate a pre-discourse *story* in the sense of actual or fictional events. Rather, it progressively generates an extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic space-time (textual narrativity) with cinematic mediation. It also provides a greater leeway for goal-oriented interpretations. Accordingly, the possible thematic meanings are not merely a post-abstraction of mimetic story-world (diegesis). The cinematic ‘presentation’ or textuality itself progressively fabricates a synthesis with possible symbolism and themes that ultimately signifies a unique allegorical discourse.

4.4. Johan’s Explorations

As Ester falls asleep on her bed, the sound of a siren (or a warplane according to Johan’s sudden upward look) wakes up Johan. He picks up a toy pistol and playfully explores the hotel corridors while the others are asleep. The next few minutes unfold his ambiguous encounters with an electrician, the old butler, the painting of *Nessus and Deianira* (Rubens, 1630s), and a vaudeville troupe. Meanwhile, Anna wakes up and gets ready to go out. When she leaves the hotel suite, Ester becomes mentally and physically disconcerted. Again, she summons the old butler, and he manages to comfort her.

As Johan’s explorations do not lead to a significant progression of the *story*, the complex details of this sequence effortlessly compel symbolic and thematic interpretations. His explorations in the corridor and the smouldering conflict between Anna and Ester in the hotel suite evoke a thematic symmetry between the train compartment and hotel environment: “a study in

claustrophobia” (Mosley, 1981, p. 117). Unsurprisingly, many commentators attempt to demystify the possible symbolic signs that appear in this sequence and their relevance to the overall meaning. Despite their diverse interpretational goals, strategies, conclusions, and conflicts, the overlaps of these interpretations indicate some common themes and directions. These traits also affirm that spectators should look beyond the diegetic terms to pursue the possible meanings of *The Silence*. Nevertheless, it is also obvious that the interpretations that transcend the diegesis can never be logically definite. As the progression of the film reveals, this is not because of the obscurity of Bergman’s cinematic articulation but only because the *subject* of *The Silence* is manifold on several levels. As Young (1972, p. 214) puts it, the constitution of *The Silence* is logical “as in a poem, not as in a mathematical equation”.

First, Johan’s repetitive movements and activities in the vast corridor gradually lay out an intricate topography in the diegetic space and ambiguous conceptual relationships in the thematic space. No one can deny the narrative plausibility of the child’s escapades and the others’ playful or weird behaviour towards him at the diegetic level. The idea of *childhood* provides a vindication that allows irrationality and exceptions; this sense is even contagious to adults. The pistol, structure of the corridor, patterns of the floor, painting and its subject, dwarfs and their enigmatic activities, costume change, the episodes with the old butler, urinating in the corridor etc. all provide pregnant signs for parallel references in many domains—or within the scope of this study, several levels of fictionality. Concerning the thematic level, Young (1972, p. 214) believes that when the film presents an abstract idea like the mind-body dichotomy, fretting over a peripheral domain is superficial and irrelevant. This idea however is self-contradictory because the difference between *peripheral* and *central* depends on the specific thematic interpretation. In Gado’s (1986, pp. 300–303) psychoanalysis influenced investigation, this sequence implies the challenges of growing up, which is also relevant to an exploration of the mind-body conflict. For him, the circular dial with rosettes on the carpet at the intersection of the

corridor is a clock face or sundial that suggests the temporality of growing up in many directions. The adult male electrician and his ladder “suggests both a gnomon and the spread legs of the giant—i.e., the dual menace of time and



sexuality (phallic symbol). Johan [...] fires the pistol into the ladder’s crotch” (p.300) to defeat his foe. In this context, the sputtering sound Johan produces here—the same sound he made just before he was summoned to Anna’s bath—may indicate Johan’s repeated triumph. Johan’s first encounter with the butler is again across the door/screen, and when Johan hides behind the chair, his revealed eye over the chair strongly invokes the spectatorship, gaze, and mediation motifs.

In Gado’s view, the old butler signifies the lurking *death* with his funeral costume, and several times Johan attempts to flee away from him because the death is untimely yet. Later in the film, the old man himself refers to death by showing Johan a photograph of a funeral. It is also important to note that Bergman calculatedly reinforces the butler’s relation with the horse-motif in several ways. If the butler visually resembles a horse, Johan’s initial distrust of him becomes more meaningful with his first encounter with the painting *Nessus and Deianira*. When the old man attempts to approach Johan, he flees away from him and makes a detour to the base of a staircase, where the huge painting is at display. The large labyrinthine location that seemingly intersects with several passages highlights the primary subject of the painting: a captured woman is struggling to escape from a half-horse half-man (centaur). First, Johan’s attention stops particularly at the woman’s breasts and centaur’s eye line towards it—Bergman frames this exact area as Johan’s curious POV, alluding to the implicit sexuality shared by Johan, Nessus, and audiences’ gazes. The pistol

in Johan's hand (phallic motif) also provides relevant signs for this line of interpretation. At this point, Johan suddenly turns to see a genteel person with *dwarfism* passing the archway as if by clairvoyance. Johan happily greets him to get a respectful return from the polite man. With the next full shot of the painting, this small, well-costumed, innocuous figure in the relatively large



corridor suddenly gains more significance in extra-digetic terms: the corridor, which appears as a frame around the little genteel figure and its austere geometric composition act as a cinematic foil for the naked and distorted man-animal figure, the florid frame and the ill-defined backdrop of the painting and also for its labyrinthine location.

Furthermore, this event in this context can imply a relationship between the child's engagement with his own sexual and intellectual maturity. A person with dwarfism may physically resemble a child, although they are sexually matured adults. This particular long shot especially preserves the ambiguity between child-like small stature and the adulthood with his striking costume. Unlike with other adults, Johan treats him as if he is someone relatable and familiar, and in return, he gets the same treatment; ironically, the large mythical/sexual painting in front of him is curiously inviting, but also stubbornly resistant, impenetrable, and unresponsive. At this point, the genteel man also distracts Johan from his nascent attachment with the sexuality depicted in the painting.

If the audience is familiar with 'dwarfs' as a recurrent motif in European mythology, this moment is more significant. In his famous analysis on archetypes in Norse folklore and religious texts, Carl Jung (2014b, p. 158) recognises *child*

and *dwarf* as widespread metaphors for “hidden forces for nature”¹¹⁴. The ambiguity of their physical appearance (child/adult) makes them “threshold guardians of unconscious” (Cirlot, 2013, p. 91) in the Jungian perspective. Interestingly, in *Symbols of Transformation* (2014a, p. 124) Jung elaborates his notion of *symbol* using *dwarfs* as an apt instance. He explains that (in the context of fairy tales: e.g. Snow White) dwarfs and phallus should not be taken literally, because of their symbolic potential.

A symbol is an indefinite expression with many meanings, pointing to something not easily defined and therefore not fully known. [...] The symbol therefore has a large number of analogous variants, and the more of these variants it has at its disposal, the more complete and clear-cut will be the image it projects of its object. [...] Thus the creative dwarfs toil away in secret; the phallus, also working in darkness, begets a living thing; the key unlocks the mysterious forbidden door behind which some wonderful thing awaits discovery. (Jung, 2014a, p. 124)

Furthermore, in the context of traditional dream interpretation, people with dwarfism are recognised as an auspicious clairvoyance:

One of the greatest influences in anyone’s life is to have a contact with a dwarf, either by reading about them or better still meeting YOUR dwarf in visual mediation (Atkin, 2005, p. 31).

If the dwarf is well formed and pleasing in appearance, it omens you will never be dwarfed in mind or stature. Health and good constitution will admit of your engaging in many profitable pursuits both of mind and body. (Miller, 2001, p. 103)

¹¹⁴ Jungian analyses are very common with readings of Bergman’s films (Steene, 2005; Bassil-Morozow and Hockley, 2016, p. 111), and the Jungian influence on Bergman is also well known (Ketcham, 1986, p. 241; Gieser, 2016, p. 207).

However, somewhat ironically, after this ‘dwarf’ with ‘pleasing appearance’ passes Johan, Johan’s POV expands to the apparent subject of the painting: a woman captured by a horse-hoofed man. At this moment, (as Johan overlooks



the ‘dwarf’s’ mythical forewarning) the old butler seizes the boy from behind, startling him. Johan’s struggle to escape seems to re-enact the subject of the painting before itself, again reviving the intimidating horse motif ¹¹⁵. At the extra-diegetic level, this cinematic ‘simile’ is apparent because the harmony between the cinematographic composition and the dramatised action (Johan’s action, entangled hands etc.) betray a striking resemblance to the composition of the painting. If the butler embodies the perils of life or death, this time too, Johan manages to escape him with a sigh.



At the end of this scene, Bergman refers the audience to an extremely indispensable close-shot of Anna nakedly washing her breasts, again recalling the woman’s breasts in the painting. It also points to Anna’s next escapade, which again curiously relates to the apparent subject as well as the backstory of *Nessus and Deianira*. Furthermore, while Anna (also the symbol of body/physicality) is getting ready to leave Ester (i.e. mind/soul), Johan (i.e. observer/interpreter/author) casts an apprehensive *shadow* (another famous

¹¹⁵ Later in the film, the back-story of the painting *Nessus and Deianira* becomes more significant as if a prophecy; I will discuss this reference at the relevant stages.

Jungian motif) on the staircase wall, just before pondering the painting for another time. In this way, Bergman (the implied filmmaker) intricately interweaves *diegetic* and *thematic* levels together, generating various fictional (adaptable references) and narrative (textual progression) potentials with the cinematic text. From Jung's perspective quoted above, a *symbol* is referentially multiple and 'generates a large number of analogous variants'. When a text generates a cohesive set of multiple references from a symbol, 'the image it projects of its object' becomes more definable.

In this context, up to now, the painting of *Nessus and Deianira* relies on its *iconicity* and *symbolism* at the thematic and diegetic level. It portrays a culturally vulnerable image of a nude and 'plump' woman and a surreal hybrid between potently masculine and equine figures that alludes to power and menace. Johan's encounter with this painting further emphasises the possible perils of this contrast in the form of sexual vulnerability and power. From Humphrey's (2013, p. 127) queer perspective, this painting signifies the inherent perils of heterosexuality. Spectators can also connect these immediate senses with what is taking place at the diegetic level: a defenceless child's encounters with the old foreign man and the other unfamiliar inhabitants of the hotel. This may also connote the external perils, which were indicated intermittently: the drunken men outside the hotel bar; the war motifs in the city (e.g. armoured cars, military officers); the pale horse and the other equine motifs (e.g. old man, centaur) that biblically evokes the *fourth seal*—the death. As discussed, various interpretational approaches can also read this apparent contrast portrayed in the painting in relation to the *split subject* theme of the film: body and psyche, corporeality and spirituality, unconscious and ego, self and other, imaginary and symbolic, life and death etc. As a narratological metaphor, if Johan attempts to understand the underlying 'meanings' of the painting *Nessus and Deianira*, the ambiguity of *The Silence* encourages spectators to seek for an imaginary and evasive narrative 'wholeness'. In this sense, *The Silence* also *reinterprets* this painting in its own context, and therefore offers a unique multifaceted cinematic

ekphrasis. Moreover, this painting also joins with many other perplexing ‘screens’ Johan continuously gazes in the diegesis (windows, doors, mother, Ester, Dwarfs, the butler). It again alludes to Johan and audience’s shared fate: spectatorship and meaning-making.

However, I argue that *intertextuality* always evolves through non-fictional *indexicality*. It inevitably refers to something that exists in the real world; in other words, it refers to another *real* textual-work that is contextually authored and culturally interpreted. In this sense, the *iconicity* of painting in the film refers to an indexically referable real painting that is amply textualised, contextualised, and titled: Peter Paul Rubens’s *Nessus and Deianira* (Rubens, 1630s). This is what permits the painting to refer to the subject it represents: the Greek mythological story between Heracles, Deianira, and Nessus. Instead of including something originally made for the film, here Bergman brings a specific cultural discourse into the film. This painting potentially invokes more levels of meanings (more levels of thematic fictionality) than its apparent composition and content indicate. As I will elaborate, the diegetic, thematic, and extra-diegetic levels of the film can refer to its specific backstory in several ways, highlighting the *intertextuality* of this painting and its potential cinematic signs.

Deianira’s name translates as the “man-killer” or “husband-slayer” (Rowland, 2016, p. 1), and her story is mostly known after the play *Women of Trachis* by Sophocles, who is also the author of *Oedipus Rex*, which provides many metaphors for the psychoanalytic tradition¹¹⁶. Perhaps the given prominence of a painting of Greek mythology itself may signal some relationships between the story of *The Silence* and maturation of sexuality, psyche, and self. According to *Women of Trachis* (p.1-25), the centaur Nessus attempts to abduct Heracles’s wife Deianira. Heracles kills Nessus with an arrow poisoned with many-headed Hydra’s fatal venom, whom Heracles also killed

¹¹⁶ While Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (Ovid and Innes, 1955) provides several famous episodes related to Nessus, Hercules, Deianira, and other peripheral characters, *Women of Trachis* by Sophocles foregrounds Deianira’s character.

earlier. Dying Nessus convinces Deianira that his blood, now infused with Hydra's venom, will make Heracles faithful to her. Later, when Heracles is absent from home for a long time, Deianira sends her son Hyllus to look for Heracles. After realising that promiscuous Heracles has fallen for a younger woman, Iole, Deianira sends a venom-soaked robe with a servant to charm Heracles. Nessus's ploy works, and Heracles fatally perishes from his burns. When Hyllus blames Deianira for the attempt of murdering his father, realising her mistake, Deianira commits suicide. Hyllus realises Deianira's real intention later and conveys it to Heracles. However, the demigod Heracles builds his own funeral pyre and kills his human self, then rises to Olympus Mountain to become a complete god and marries the goddess of *youth* Hebe. Hyllus marries Iole obeying Heracles's request.

Interestingly, the intertextual evocations between *The Silence* and this mythological story become intense as the film evolves. The knowledge of the story of *Nessus and Deianira* and its unavoidable patriarchal undercurrents (Bushnell, 2008, pp. 156–157) lend more meanings to Johan's encounters with the painting *Nessus and Deianira*. It also adds more dimensions to the ongoing tensions between Anna and Ester. These intra-textual and intertextual relationships gain momentum in Anna's washing scene. It starts with an explicit close-up of Anna washing her breasts; immediately after Johan's encounters



with the painting, this shot easily evokes Deianira's breasts. While naked Anna wipes her face with a towel, the audience gets an intimate face-to-face view with her. At this point, her eyes connect with the *camera/audience*, and her expression suddenly changes as if she realises that someone is directly watching her. This apparent 'breaking of the fourth wall' unsettles the audience,

and it appears as if naked Anna, or the actor Lindblom, acknowledges the spectator's sexually charged gaze at the extra-diegetic level. At the diegetic level, Anna's direct look communicates that she is in front of the bathroom mirror, but her prolonged perturbed stare does not simplify it into this primary diegetic commitment. At this point, the frame/camera slowly tracks (to the left) to reveal Ester, confirming the presence of a voyeur hypothesis even at the diegetic level; she keeps observing Anna through the supposed mirror, from the far end of the bedroom. Although this explains Anna's concerned look at the diegetic level, it does not downplay its extra-diegetic impact. In Koskinen's (2011, p. 131) view, this complex shot aligns the audience with Ester's and Johan's imaginary/voyeuristic position. Naked Anna is subjected to the constant scrutiny of all of them. If Anna embodies the 'mother', 'breasts', 'body', and the imaginary 'wholeness', the ongoing gazes of Johan (child), Ester (mind/soul), and audience (subject) pursue this missing wholeness, in the psychoanalytic sense.

As elaborated, now it is evident that *naked* Anna and Ester's act of looking at the camera/audience engenders a series of important cinematic *signs* in several levels. First, the audience do not get to see a mirror in this scene; it is a complete construction of the audience's fictional act guided by the gazes of actors/characters. If interpreted *fictionally*, these gazes insist on the existence of a mirror at the diegetic level; it is an act of characters at the diegetic level. If interpreted non-fictionally, their gazes are directed at the camera; it is an act of the actors at the extra-diegetic level. If actors look at the camera, it appears as if the characters/actors are looking at the audience. For diegetically motivated audiences, this is an illusion, and perhaps initially also a diegetic disruption; for a rhetorical audience, this is another code or cinematic convention, and therefore, a communicative device. However, within this artful presentation and its order, Anna/Lindblom's look appears to acknowledge the presence of spectators at the diegetic level (Ester), herself (reflection), as well as the extra-diegetic level (audience). Furthermore, her nakedness at this point inevitably sexualises this acknowledged gaze at all levels. The particular composition of

capturing this nakedness (washing breasts) further complicates its textuality across diegetic, thematic, extra-diegetic, and even intertextual levels. It joins a 'gaze' with 'breasts' recalling the particular close-up of the painting *Nessus and Deianira* (as in Johan's gaze). Consequently, this braided narrativity across several cinematic tiers, highlights the potential relationship between *Nessus's* gaze at *Deianira's* breasts with Johan, Ester, and the spectator's (subject) gaze. In other words, in the context of the painting's backstory, its intertextual dimension invites audiences to reflect on the threatening aspects of the gaze and its inherent connections to the sexuality, patriarchal norms, and power. If this is the case, unlike *Deianira*, who is not aware of *Nessus's* gaze (her face/stare is away from *Nessus's* gaze), Anna/Lindblom's bold acknowledgement of Ester and the audience's gazes becomes defiant and rebellious. It challenges the passive continuity/stability/narrativity of the sexualised gaze. Anna/Lindblom's knowing look evidently disconcerts Ester as well as the audience.

Nevertheless, rather than a mere narrative disruption, this scene effectively encourages interlacing *narrativity* across several cinematic and fictional tiers. In this sense, the butler's attempt to distract Johan's repeated engagement with the heterosexual/patriarchal subject of the painting can also indicate a different dimension. In the manner of the genteel 'dwarf', is the 'kind and wise old man' also trying to salvage Johan from a harmful patriarchal obsession? Is Johan's intense urge to escape from him a sign of guilt? If the butler embodies death (or death drive), does he attempt to curb Johan's engagement with sexuality that propagates life? The butler's ambiguous appearance—considering his kind and mellow diegetic character and sinister thematic character—provides cinematic signs for both interpretations. Furthermore, Bergman's multifaceted narrative does not allow simplifying any 'gaze' into patriarchal 'male' gaze. Gaze is a common performative act available to children, women, men, audience, and even a centaur; but a gaze can be reflexive, revelatory, defiant, and emancipatory as well as oppressive according to the beholder and context. This

coherent cinematic discourse is a result of the innovative interplay between extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers in *The Silence*. This interaction also shows how narrativity and fictionality function in this process, and the consistency of the authorial/narrative mediation in the film. Therefore, fictional cinema can not only 'tell' and 'show' diegetic stories, it appears to question, propose, contemplate, and stimulate complex experiences.

4.5. Johan's adventures with the vaudeville troupe

After pondering over the painting for the second time, Johan happens to pass a room, which a group of people with dwarfism occupies. He enters this fascinating place, which is full of mysterious props and toys; one of these small men is sewing an elaborate dress and another one is repairing a miniature cart. When Johan playfully shoots them one by one with his pistol, unlike the electrician, they comply with his game by falling. One beckons him into the room and others put a bridal dress on him. In parallel to this scene, Anna also gets dressed for her jaunt outside, while bedridden Ester is watching her, perhaps enviously. Meanwhile, small men continue to entertain Johan. One with a gorilla mask bounces on the bed, until the solemn troupe leader who greeted Johan earlier suddenly interrupts them. He orders them to stop the frolic, removes Johan's dress, and respectfully ushers Johan out of the room. After peeing at a side of the corridor, Johan walks away. Meanwhile Anna deserts Ester, driving her into a hysterical breakdown.

As the above summary indicates, the thematic potential of Johan's encounters with the vaudeville troupe is resounding. At this point, the film does not explain who these men are, and why they are here; therefore, their symbolic potential is more prominent. While there may be numerous interpretations for this scene, the text seems to encourage the psychoanalytic and gender discourses variously. According to Gado (1986, p. 301), Johan's playful encounter with 'dwarfs' indicates the positive consequences of arresting his sexual development; in metaphoric terms, 'becoming a dwarf' or impeding

growth is a way to avoid the threats inherent to sexuality. But, when the troupe members attempt to assign the 'female' gender to him with the frock, this threat is again imminent. Blackwell (1997, p. 34) claims that this scene is mostly taken as a misfired attempt to impose "the same distorted and fragmented sexuality" that plagues the lives of Anna and Ester on Johan, by some critics. But in her view, this scene demonstrates Johan's playful liaison with pre-gender transvestism. Then, it may also epitomise the fluidity of Johan's sexual and gender identity, which is an ongoing theme in the film. Following this line of thought, the troupe members' playful act may also imply the pleasures of *agender* identity, which is free from the sexually/phallically-empowered authorities. Their noisy play with different animal masks—Lion and Gorilla—may also allude to the possibility of exchanging identities (Humphrey, 2013, p. 128) as well as gender roles.

However, considering the overall thematic threads, this scene seems to elaborate the drifting of Johan's immature sexuality towards masculinity, at least provisionally. Although Blackwell (1997, p. 35) claims that Johan "finds these men engaged in completely "normal" everyday activities", it does not warrant that the situation is 'normal' in its context. Rather this curious room with magical props and the group of small men without an explanation most likely appear different and enigmatic in Johan's and audiences' view; the fact that this 'different' group of men seem to be engaged in their work in an everyday manner, itself is not 'normal' to a stranger. Furthermore, they react to Johan 'differently' than other people he encountered. Initially Johan enters the room wielding his (phallic) pistol, and the 'dwarfs' or the 'threshold guardians of unconscious' surrender to its authority. Johan finally finds a company who takes him as an equal if not a superior. However, this submission seems to take a twist immediately. One of the vaudevillian beckons Johan into the room; the other vaudevillian's sudden silence, anticipation, and the ominous cinematic composition emanate an unmistakable sense of menace at this point. They all join to dress Johan with apparently a white bridal gown.

Interestingly, the group of seven ‘dwarfs’ in a room with many mysterious props (mythological cottage), and them dressing sexually immature Johan as a girl with a white frock undeniably invokes the fairy tale of *Snow White*. In particular, the Jungian view that fairy-tales and their archetypes as reflections of *collective unconscious* (Jung and Kerényi, 2002) may encourage this line of thought: are ‘male’ dwarfs looking for a ‘female’ Snow White to assert their gender status? Such a conferral of a gender role or sexuality may imply lurking dangers at several levels here. Firstly, in the overall context of the film, sexuality or any gender role itself has a perilous dimension. The parallel cut to loosely clad



Anna who is getting ready to go out for her ‘sex hunt’ may also highlight this sense. Secondly, it signifies the possible threat to juvenile Johan among the unknown group of sexually mature but ‘deprived’ men. However, at this developing and ambiguous point, the *gentlemanly* dressed, authoritative troupe leader suddenly enters the room. Restoring ‘order’, he removes Johan’s feminine dress to the discontent of other vaudevillians, and ushers Johan away. Its strong thematic significance in the gender-oriented context emerges when Johan pees as a male child in the corridor (in public) asserting his masculinity. After this arrogant act, Johan whistles and walks away as a ‘proper’ boy, keeping his hands in the pockets and kicking a tin along the corridor. This flaunted

identity starkly contrasts with the androgynous identity he was flirting with so far.

Although this corridor sequence appears very allegoric, it just cannot be taken as thematically motivated flat symbolism with its often-unnoticed subtle diegetic details. At the diegetic level, the benevolent vaudevillians just attempt to entertain the little boy with their facilities; this is a very plausible event. The troupe members may see the little boy as an ideal candidate to try their newly made female dress. Cross-dressing is also a familiar entertainment for little children. The troupe leader clearly shows that he is unhappy because his team is wasting time ignoring their approaching show. In the first few seconds, he does not even seem to realise that Johan is there. As the troupe leader, it is very natural for him to send Johan away from the room. Either he is aware of his colleagues' improper motives, if any, or he simply wants to restore the order.



However, even this simple diegetic outline becomes more thematically meaningful when this scene is contrasted against Johan's encounter with the electrician. The physical appearance of the people with Dwarfism entails an ambiguous cultural position between adulthood and childhood as noted earlier. Their mature intellect against their appearance, and some special talents and dexterity they acquire within their culturally given roles (mostly as entertainers), may also encourage portrayal of them as some inexplicable, mysterious, or unnatural beings (Lindow, 2002, pp. 99–101; Heider, Scherer and Edlund, 2013, p. 93). Children tend to take them as an attraction or one of their own; and people with Dwarfism may reciprocate or tolerate this attentiveness. When they comply with Johan's orders (shooting), unlike the grown electrician who acts in the

cultural and biological role of an adult, this is evident. Furthermore, the *electrician* is doing something physically demanding and challenging in his assumed role, and he is not in a position to obey Johan's order culturally and situationally. As a 'wiser' adult who knows that toy pistols do not kill, and who also might have rather pressing problems to deal with, he cannot participate in Johan's 'fictional' game spontaneously. This is reflected on both the diegetic and thematic levels as he is on a ladder—he cannot comply with Johan's playful order at least by faking a fall like vaudevillians. Yet, his prolonged baffled look and pitiable inertia explain the difficult predicament he is in.

In the vaudevillians' case, initially, they appear to be free from the social conventions, hierarchies, and gender roles like innocent children. But, the later developments in the film reveal that they are also part of general society with all its inherent problems. Even this seemingly simple scene of *The Silence* can implicate its own thematic and socio-cultural dimension. The authority (chivalrous troupe leader and the hierarchy in the troupe), social obligations (the approaching vaudeville show), and confirmed conventions (dress codes) etc. force even so-called 'mysterious dwarfs' to follow gender roles and established power relationships. In this sense, enacting 'fairy tales', changing identities and gender, or social disorder are ultimately not tolerated in their social sphere.

If these scenes are reduced to independent diegetic episodes, disregarding various extra-diegetic details and the overall thematic narrativity of the film, they may appear as mere innocent encounters of Johan. However, as discussed, all these diegetic events, which are not seemingly 'motivated' in terms of the diegetic *plot*, add colours/nuances to the film's ongoing thematic *plot*. In this sense, *The Silence* develops a complex 'multi-plot' discourse in several palimpsestic tiers. Therefore, a framework, which acknowledges the possibility of distinct and even contradictory diegetic and thematic narrativity, is essential to coherently reveal the manifold and 'ironic' cinematic mediation of Bergman. This also shows that 'reading' the different functions of the extra-

diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers of the same scene can shed light on seemingly superfluous or enigmatic aspects of some films.

4.6. Anna's Day Out in Timoka

In the next scene, seductively clothed Anna leaves the room, evidently disconcerting Ester. Ester desperately wishes to stop Anna as if she knows the true meaning of Anna's mission and intention. As her rants indicate, Ester seems to take Anna's behaviour as a deliberate insult. Although on one level, attractive and vivacious Anna might emphasise Ester's physical and emotional misery, the humiliation she betrays indicates something more deep-rooted, perhaps related to their past. Finally, Ester justifies herself that her agony is a result of drinking alcohol without eating and she rings the bell to summon help again. The old butler answers her call, comforts her caringly, and promises to fetch her food.

The initial close-up shot of this sequence is highly expressive. Anna's dexterous fingers composes emerging lipstick (phallus) from its case in her hand against the lace-handkerchief that easily alludes to female undergarments. Within the sequence, it inevitably sparks thematic connections with Johan's developments towards masculinity and Anna's impending heterosexual adventures. In particular, all the parallel cuts that juxtapose Anna's and Johan's



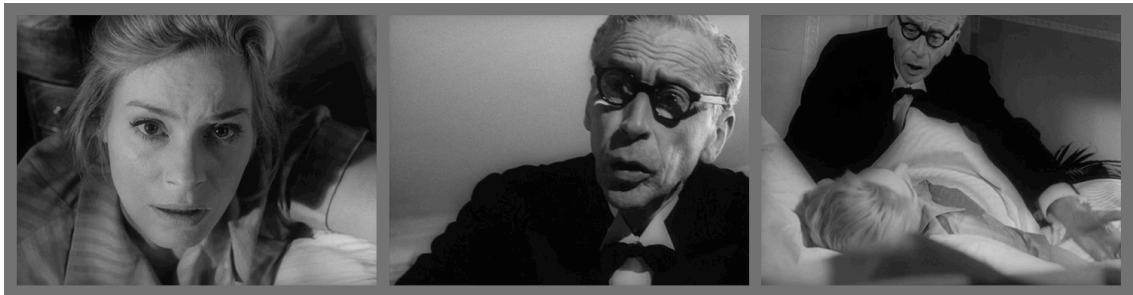
dressing scenes foreshadow the looming thematic turns in the film. This form of figurative narration with the extra-diegetic props and editing in the film deserves a special scrutiny. Bergman establishes that Anna takes a conscious effort to choose her wide-necked, seductive frock. Simultaneously the 'male' vaudevillians dress Johan with seemingly a bridal frock that conventionally signifies marriage, heterosexuality, gender, and patriarchy. Although Anna (the

woman) herself purposely selects and puts on her seductive dress, the relevant parameters of her frock are defined by the social, cultural, and, gender structures established by patriarchy and (hetero)sexuality. In this sense, 'a group of men' dressing Johan with a bridal dress and Anna's choice of bright dress that is targeted for male attraction suggest a striking metaphoric relation. Here, the calculated props (frocks), their similar tones, and the action of dressing in juxtaposed shots draw attention to the relevant thematic signs, their cultural associations, and potential signifying instances. They even raise some curious and suspenseful thematic questions: is Anna going to control and subvert these values? Or does she just perpetuate them?

When Anna is just about to leave, Ester attempts to draw her attention by commenting "you are quite tanned!"; next, she distracts Anna asking her to "wait", but without giving a reason deliberately. This act implies some repressed relationship between them, but Anna's resolute face, after a brief inquisitive look, ignores it. This evidently drives Ester to her deep despair, and her disease also seems to return with excruciating pain. The ambiguity of her spoken words (to herself and the audience) avoid establishing whether her pain is mental or physical: "This is humiliating, I won't stand for it... I am known as a level-headed person". Her appeal to God sounds as a demand rather than an earnest entreaty: "Dear God, please let me die at home!". However, she eventually convinces herself that her sickness is physical rather than mental: "My stomach is empty. How stupid of me to drink on an empty stomach!". When Ester is suffering from her breakdown, the dangling light holders and the messy bed in the foreground appear to reflect her confused 'mind screen'. The next tight top angle close-up reveals that Ester ponders an unintelligible murmur that drifts around her. At this time, Ester's gaze rises to confront the audience/camera face to face. This shot immediately unsettles the audience with its affective power, and also because it suddenly eliminates the relative distance maintained between the audience and Ester across the bed. This shot also allows audience to ponder the unintelligible foreign words that fill the abstract shared space between the diegetic and extra-

diegetic ambience. While Ester looks at the camera/audience to find meanings in the extra-diegetic space, the audience looks to find them in the diegesis.

Nevertheless, the next shot establishes that the murmur is in fact from the old 'equine' butler, and he is the subject of Ester's stare across the camera/audience. In other words, the old butler promptly supersedes audience and Ester's transient intimacy establishing his authority over Ester. Ester's alarming look also seems to acknowledge his thematic presence as *horse/death*; the emphasis given to Ester's wristwatch (counting time) in her shot can be taken



as a further sign that reinforces this sense. When the butler comforts Ester, he wipes Ester's face and gives her a mirror and a comb. Unlike Anna, however, Ester does not seem to be interested in watching herself in the mirror attentively. As the embodiment of 'mind', she is not attracted to the 'body'. At this point, the old butler (character) takes a noticeably extra care to tidy up the room and remove the old bedclothes. In parallel to this diegetic action, the *actor* (who represents the old butler) tidies up the visual composition for the audience at the extra-diegetic level, and also soothes the 'mind screen' of Ester, at the thematic level. In this sense, characters and their diegetic acts inevitably become extra-diegetic narratorial devices of implied authors/filmmakers. The possibility to interpret cinmetaic signs and their relationships (narrativity) at several coherent levels (fictionality/non-fictionality) allows audiences to appreciate the unique functions of each level.

The next celebrated sequence introduces a different pace to the film that keeps up with Anna's escapade. She is now in a bar, surrounded by men. The choreographed camera/composition acts like a diegetic stalker in the bar right behind Anna, moving to and fro and composing wide shots and close-ups. Anna

contacts a waiter who pays special attention to her, and she orders a drink or ice-cream, pointing to the unintelligible menu. When she pulls out a cigarette, waiter swiftly lights it. When she hands him a banknote—perhaps a big note—



the waiter evidently becomes more enthusiastic; although it is deemed that often men entice women with money in the patriarchal culture, this act playfully reverses the norm. Then Anna hastily skims through an unintelligible newspaper from Timoka only to dismiss it; the only intelligible words in the paper are J.S. Bach. Although Johan and Ester are absent to follow her here, again, Anna/Lindblom remarkably acknowledges the presence of the stalking spectator. She unfolds her pocket mirror directing a sparking flash at the camera and then makes an obvious eye contact with the camera/audience that is intimately close to her. This act revives the ongoing connection between the extra-diegetic and diegetic tiers in *The Silence*. Meanwhile, perhaps encouraged by her seductive glances, the waiter deliberately drops a coin and while he is picking that up, brushes his nose against her naked knee, without an objection. His bold expression shows that he has correctly guessed and confirmed her intention.

Although Anna and the waiter do not know each other's 'language' and 'minds', they seem to communicate through their *bodies*, *intuition* and *actions*, mobilising the immediate resources available at their reach. There are many relevant Peircean *interpretants* that propel this thematic narrativity (language vs intuition) in the scene: the waiter instinctively lighting Anna's cigarette (also an erotic symbol); Anna's derisive dismissal of the unreadable paper; the newspaper-vendor who repeatedly intrudes into the screen with his large unreadable poster that blocks and disturbs the view; the allusion to the abstract

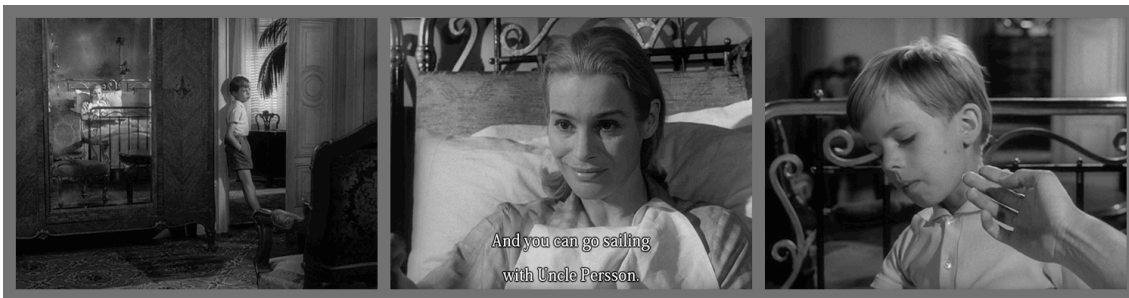
medium of music (J.S. Bach and Jazz music); Anna and the waiter ‘correctly’ appropriating the *common language* of ‘money’ in the context (the banknote and the coin).

The jazz music track heard in the background easily sounds diegetic with association (pub ambience and the possible juke-box in the background); but this music also unmistakably correlates with the upbeat pace and rhythm of the scene (mise-en-scene and editing): it reacts and changes sharply at the key points of the dramatic action and therefore, also sounds strikingly extra-diegetic too. Overall, the surprisingly prompt and timely reactions between the characters, the coordinated interactivity between the pro-filmic event and the camera, Anna/Lindblom’s acknowledgement of her secret audience, and the cross-narrativity between the three communicational tiers emanate a sense of all-encompassing and predetermined *omniscience* behind the scene. In other words, this scene strategically connects story, characters, actors, implied filmmakers, and audience together without the use of (or against) conventional ‘language’. The entire scene advances the motifs of cinema against language, and immediacy/intuition (Anna) against interpretation and deliberation (Ester). In this broad sense, the only readable phrase ‘J.S. Bach’ that ‘linguistically’ alludes to ‘music’ on the unreadable newspaper depicted within the ‘cinematographic frame’ appears a wittily cinematic trope.

Next, the scene changes to Ester’s room. Ester invites Johan to share her meal and they engage in a warm discussion about their future. In diegetic terms, the discussion reveals that Johan is supposed to spend several months at his grandmother’s place; he will go to school from there. His mother (Anna) and father will visit him, but both agree that his father is a very “busy man”. When Ester says he can watch horses, Johan interrupts to say that he is “pretty scared of horses”. Nevertheless, Ester attempts to portray a very pleasing picture of the forthcoming summer and presents a list of interesting things Johan can do including watching rabbits, sailing, and fishing. Their relationship seems to be developing and Johan promises to draw her a nice picture. When she accepts

his offer, he starts to draw a picture; he says, “don’t worry; mummy will be back soon; I’m here”. At this moment, the picture he draws turns out to be of something he does not expect: it depicts a monster perhaps insinuating his suppressed aversion to Ester (or to the world suggested for him) in diegetic terms. Otherwise, his drawing may be possessed by the menacing centaur’s image, and his mother is out in the city among many centaurs; aptly, the next scene adds more meanings to this image.

In terms of the extra-diegetic narration, Bergman occupies the master/camera and 180° conventions to cover this part of the scene. Consequently, the cinematic mediation mostly appears more passive and less intrusive. It improves the *mimetic* qualities of the scene and makes the content of Ester and Johan’s verbal discussion more prominent and natural. However, this simple scene also reinforces film’s complex thematic discourse in several



levels and betrays underlying contradiction between them. In the beginning of the scene, Johan takes long calculated strides towards Ester’s room as if his move towards her direction is an unintentional result of an imaginary hopscotch game; this act possibly externalises his internal ambivalence towards Ester. Moreover, he already seems to know that she is having her meal, and unlike with his mother, he may need to follow social etiquette before Ester. Ester appears to be completely composed in this scene, and her relaxed, combed hair and facial features appear remarkably feminine and also amiable.

Thulin’s performance in this scene manages to completely efface the masculine traits she reflected in the previous scenes. It may even imply that Ester has now shed her masculine role/mask and provisionally adapted the mother’s role/mask. Her act can also be interpreted as a thinly veiled patriarchal criticism

of Anna: Johan's actual mother is away, 'evading her maternal responsibilities'. Here, the empathy between Ester and Johan develops on the ground of their common anxiety: Anna's temporary absence from their reach and the disorder she might bring to the status quo. Bergman expresses this 'mediated' diegetic and thematic unity between Ester and Johan through another extra-diegetic mirror/real composition. Nevertheless, the fact that Johan's father is continuously away is taken as normality by both, because he is a seriously 'busy man'.

In this context, Ester observes that Johan is hungry and offers him food assuming the carer role. She attempts to console him by portraying a promising picture about his future within the status quo. All her suggestions to Johan are the hobbies that 'men' would normally follow. Nonetheless, Johan's fear for *horses* inevitably appears as an encrypted remark for his underlying anxiety towards both the patriarchal order and death¹¹⁷. When Ester refers to sailing, her alluring words, "The water is lovely and green, and so clear you can see the bottom" can thematically allude to Ester's promise of 'meanings' if Johan follows her prescriptions. The quest for meanings and clarity is also Johan and the audience's shared goal in the film. But when Johan eagerly enquires that if she will be there (who vouches for language and meanings), she evades his question. When Ester reaches to touch Johan's face affectionately, he turns his face away, evidently shattering Ester's provisional composure. This indicates that Johan and Ester's inner relationship is still aloof despite their verbal conciliation. Their momentarily relationship seems to merely hinge on the meal, and the 'barrier' of the tray securely keeps them apart. The shot-reverse shot technique used in the middle of this sequence situates the camera/audience in-between the two characters, reinforcing this conceptual barrier. As an apt climax to Johan and

¹¹⁷ I already discussed that the horse motif is connected to death in the film on several levels. The well-known Freudian case study 'Little Hans's Phobia' that also introduces the castration complex, discusses Hans's (Johan's) phobia for horses. According to Hans's backstory and Freud's analysis, horses remind Hans of penis, threat of castration, and his repressed fear for father, which Hans overcomes by emulating/identifying with his father (Erwin, 2002, pp. 326–328).

Ester's underlying coldness, Johan even fails to draw Ester a 'nice' picture but a monster, contrary to his promise.

In the next scene, Anna spontaneously enters a dark theatre, and the dwarf vaudevillians have already started their show. Instead of the variety act, Anna's attention goes to a couple in the almost empty audience. They passionately engage in a stormy sexual act totally ignoring Anna's presence. The sudden eruption of the sex scene evidently affects Anna. The unexpected staging of it in the context of the innocuous vaudeville show also ruffles the film audience. As their lovemaking turns into a fully-fledged wildness, stunned Anna escapes the theatre. Aroused by the outlandish experience, she wanders the streets and finally returns to the bar, seemingly looking for the waiter who served her. The waiter evidently recognises her invitation offered in the form of a suggestive eye contact, but *importantly*, the scene ends without disclosing their next moves.

Here also Bergman's narration flows through the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic levels in relatively distinctive ways. First, this exterior scene in the city thematically evolves from the residues of the previous interior scene between Johan and Ester. When the image of a monster emerges on Johan's paper, the exaggerated clock-ticking audio motif returns and imparts an

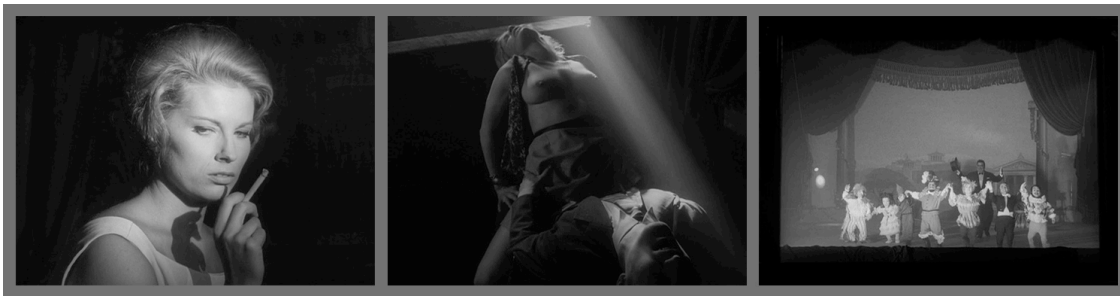


ominous tone to Anna's whole excursion in the city. It starts with wandering Anna's close-up. Her disguised face behind the dark sunglasses immediately advances the traces of Johan's monster (the shape of the glasses evokes the monster's ears). When Anna wanders around the theatre, women appear in the cityscape for the first time in the film. This makes the heterosexual couple in the theatre audience less symbolic, and the diegetic coherence more organic and natural. If the seven men with dwarfism in the film appeared merely symbolic so

far, here they justify their appearance in diegetic terms. Nevertheless, interestingly, there is no unmistakable confirmation that it is the same group. The long shot of the stage does not affirm this hypothesis. But it is a tantalising and ideologically driven hypothesis of the thematic/diegetic narrativity. The people with dwarfism reside in the hotel because the 'dwarf' vaudevillians perform in the city theatre. This also explains their bizarre props, various costumes, and playful behaviour.

However, thematically motivated spectators can appreciate the vaudeville show as a resounding allegory of Anna's perplexed mind, or what is taking place in the diegetic audience (Anna and the couple) at large. Anna removes her 'mask' (sunglasses) before entering the theatre hall, exposing her 'inner self'. The set of hanging masks (removed) on the exterior wall of the theatre is highly motivating towards this sense: the audience and Anna enter the theatre to seek 'truths'. She also passes another large mirror (confusing the audience with the support of a dexterous camera movement) to enter her 'mediated' variety theatre or inner-world, on another level of meaning. Hubner (2007, p. 4) encapsulates the "inherent paradox" of the mask in Bergman's cinema: "while valuable for projecting and illuminating 'truths', it also a 'dead' emblem of falsity and artifice". Anna's 'naked' and 'exposed' inner self without the 'dead emblem of the mask' (as a receptive audience) and the theatre with its masqueraded performers that represents the 'truth projecting mask' revive this paradox in *The Silence*. The elaborated show of the 'dwarfs' with explosive sounds and their collective imitation of a human centipede are irresistible *phallic motifs* for sexuality and the aspects of psyche. The intrusive juxtaposition of the sexual act in the diegetic audience (the couple) explicitly reinforces these motifs.

In extra-diegetic terms, this scene develops an interesting textual synergy between mise-en-scene (performance, lighting, composition), and editing. The intermittent sweeping lights over Anna's face and the couple in the dark (the reflections from the stage lights in diegetic terms) commandingly plot the important narrative signposts in tandem with other cinematic resources. These 'narratorial spotlights' appear to inform the film audience that the 'real show' is not on the stage but in the *diegetic audience* (Anna and the couple). Moreover, they invite spectators to interpret the *thematic* relationships between Anna's



gaze and the erotic spectacle (couple/lovmaking), 'illuminated' by the vaudeville show. Even Anna's smoking cigarette gradually *erects* as her voyeuristic eyes *ogle*, or delirious mind *projects* the evolving erotic drama, depending on the interpretation. Reinforcing Anna's 'focalised view', the man appears almost submissive and the woman appears more domineering in the sexual act. At the climax of it, the phallic cigarette falls off from stunned Anna's fingers, and she flees away from the torturous audience; but at the thematic level, she appears to snuff out her own repressed lewd thoughts and escape her own infernal mind. Overall, the narratorial manoeuvres in this scene highlight the irresistible *triadic* relationship between the vaudevillian show, the explicit heterosexual act, and the focalised view of them through Anna. Consequently, each of these counterparts engenders, borrows, and exchanges new impressions and meanings that are not inherent to each other. For instance, the cinematic synergy between these three counterparts does not allow spectators to simply indulge in voyeurism with the graphic sex scene without deliberating the bizarre dynamics of sexuality or its relevance to other counterparts. Also, it does not let spectators simply enjoy the vaudevillian show by 'dwarfs' as an

innocent entertainment (cinema of attraction) without considering its wider sociocultural context.

However, the already discussed diegetic/thematic relationship between the 'dwarfs' and Johan (unknown to Anna but known to the audience) instils another level of significance to their appearance in front of Anna. If they are a possible threat to unaccompanied Johan's safety at the diegetic level, or if 'dwarfs' signify the propagation of the phallic/heterosexual/patriarchal order at the thematic level, Anna is oblivious to them. Ironically, her heterosexual urge and the maniacal heterosexual act are what distracts her from the omens of 'dwarfs'. Moreover, the violent embrace between the heterosexual couple, the women's naked breasts, and the highlighted multiple gazes in the scene again evoke the painting of *Deianira and Nessus*. Accordingly, Anna's situation in between the vaudevillians (that brings Johan into the scene) and the heterosexual sex act thematically allude to many invisible strings attached to her. Any of these narrative threads however do not retract the immediate affective power of the scene. Even without any interpretation, the cinematographic encapsulation of this scene and its extra-diegetic, corporeal affect engulf the audience, agitating their raw sensorium. Nonetheless, this affective power then subliminally justifies Anna's apparent reaction (through empathy) in diegetic terms. This 'corporeal' content and Anna's sensuous susceptibility also reinforce the thematic link between Anna and 'body/physicality'. The meticulous development of fictionality (open referentiality) and narrativity (the emergence of related references from immediacy) across the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers is the wellspring of this vibrant cinematic representation.

Although Anna escapes from the theatre, it alone does not seem to dispel her preoccupations with men. The lengthy shots of her wandering seem as possible externalisations of her *mind screen* at this point. She crosses the road and resolutely walks away from the ‘dangerous’ side of the road. However after realising that the both sides of the road are inevitably filled with various ‘men’,



Anna gives in. She decides to cross the road again and return to the bar. Anna’s advances to the waiter in the next sequence also indicate that she is sexually aroused rather than discouraged from the weird experience in the theatre. She seems to communicate her furtive intent clearly to the waiter, but importantly, the cinematic mediation/narration does not unambiguously confirm their consummation at this point of the film. The scene concludes as they walk towards seemingly opposite directions. The waiter resolutely walks into the bar, while Anna drifts away from it.

This scene also seems a unique cinematic instance that presents a ‘female gaze’ as the dominant subject position but with its utmost underlying complexity. While the audience constantly follows Anna, the narrated view is often focalised through her subjective view, externalised visions, or wishes. At this point, Anna is seen as a “nymphomaniac” by Gervais (1999, p. 82) and for some commentators above scene betrays her unconquerable lust (Gado, 1986, p. 297; Cohen, 1993, p. 218). However, I showed that the intricate details of the scene encourage a more nuanced view across several levels. Johan and Ester’s relationship is not yet fulfilled, and Anna’s scene stands for some capacity to ‘interpret’ the possible perils surrounding her son’s developing fate. The complexities of Anna’s episode and her visions (masks, dwarfs, couple, men) unmistakably evolves from the burdens of the previous scene, and they provide

many interpretational resources to grasp many other cinematic nuances of the film. Furthermore, the scene constantly highlights Anna's double-edged ambivalence over her own conduct in diegetic terms, rather than her sheer sexual lust. The later scenes reinforce this line of narrativity with more evidence.

In the next scene, the old butler and Johan become friends. Johan observes the old man eating his meal in his room, from distance. The old man amuses Johan with funny acts using his food as props and offers him chocolates as an invitation into the room. Then he shows several old photographs of a funeral surrounded by a group of people. The old man's saddened expression explains that he is pointing to his family members, possibly his wife and son. Johan seems to be particularly moved by the dead body of the woman and the little boy standing next to the corpse. They come to an understanding and cuddle together while the old man seemingly travels deep down into his past.



The extra-diegetic and diegetic details of this scene again revive the theme of Johan's spectatorship and the other's space as screen; he observes the old butler's chamber and Anna's bathroom through the screen/doors, and in both events accept the invitation/lure to cross these dividing spaces. The photographs also act as screens to another level of meaning available to Johan as well as the audience. There are also many signs in this scene that invoke the old butler's symbolic association with 'horse', and 'death' against life-giving

sexuality. When the butler attracts Johan's attention, he chomps a large salad leaf recalling a grass-munching animal. Then he wraps a sausage in another curly salad leaf invoking a *penis* and *vagina* only to devour it in several bites. Johan's cheerful face turns into an alarmed one at this point, and the downward direction of his toy gun is particularly expressive in this sense. Gado (1986, p. 303) claims that this moment is a fearful experience for Johan that is comparable to the castration anxiety. Blackwell (1997, p. 103) also suggests that it is an gesture of castration, because the butler is a manifold embodiment of old age, death, impotent god substitute, and the bankruptcy of patriarchy. Indeed, the meticulous cinematic references (salad munching action, the sausage inside the salad leaf, toy gun, and its direction etc.) extra-diegetically underpins these thematic claims. Furthermore, the old man's photographs of the little boy and the dead body of a woman certainly remind Johan of death and separation from the mother. This fear is manifest when Johan eagerly runs towards his approaching mother to embrace her. The mother's return clearly reassures him that she has not deserted him; but her subsequent act of leaving him outside her room by closing the door, seems to renew his doubts. As an imaginary solution, Johan sweeps the funeral photographs under the carpet (literally), perhaps as an attempt to repress the spectres of death and separation. A semiosis that considers the potential references across proposed cinematic registers (extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic) can confidently appreciate the heterogeneous narrativity of *The Silence*.

4.7. Ester and Anna

Anna's return into the hotel foregrounds more repressed tensions between Anna and Ester. Ester seems now composed and busy with her typewriter. Perhaps she has started her translation work or puts on a deliberate show for Anna. Anna closes the door to Ester's apartment, casually removes her dress, and washes her underwear in the washbasin. Curious, Ester intrudes in offensively and inspects Anna's dress. She discovers some stain marks in the

back of the dress, which is supposedly a causal sign of a possible sexual encounter. After contemplating Ester's intrusion into her privacy, vengeful Anna confronts Ester. She insists that Ester should not spy on her and declares that she is no longer afraid of Ester. In the night, disconcerted Ester again spots the emaciated horse and the loaded cart through the window. Bach's music emanating from the radio seems to bring a fleeting truce between the two sisters, and also the old butler manages to recognise that it is Johann Sebastian Bach's music. However, Anna again lets Johan and Ester know that she intends to go out for another excursion. At this point, Ester asks Johan to go out and provokes Anna, questioning her moral conscience. In return, Anna provocatively and meanderingly reveals her sexual encounter with the waiter. She humiliates Ester, reminding Ester that she often wanted to pry on her past affairs. Their ensuing discussion and Ester's behaviour suggest that Ester has an incestuous affection towards Anna, and Anna repeatedly resented her excessive obsession. Moreover, Ester has invoked their father, and his rule to oppress Anna. After this heated conversation, apathetic Anna leaves Ester again to meet her casual lover, despite Ester imploring her to stay.



In the initial sequence of this episode, neatly dressed and composed Ester/Thulin again subtly radiates stereotypical masculine traits rupturing her typical feminine personality. Ester's stern facial expressions, slightly upward stare, assertive gait, and the erect pose unmistakably testify to this. Anyway, her distinctly feminine outfit, slender proportions, and resilient feminine allure indicate that her masculine features are adopted rather than natural; Thulin's established *indexical* (real-life) femininity and the public gender role (woman/wife/actress/star) further underpin this sense. Her formal attire and

boastful mannerisms possibly allude to her profession as a translator and her pretentious commitment to the intellectual occupation¹¹⁸. As a translator, she is a propagator of words who even helps to break “silencing barriers of language” (Mosley, 1981, p. 118). These factors along with celibate Ester’s stainless bright coloured dress emanate contrasting *signs* to Anna’s guilt-ridden face, clumsy walk, and the same colour but physically and ‘spiritually’ stained frock. Furthermore, Ester’s boldness to intrude into Anna’s private space, unashamed gaze, and emotional reticence emanate a predetermined authority. All these signifying instances that hover around Ester subtly interweave a thematic facade between intellect, language, masculinity, and patriarchy.

In Butler’s (2011, p. 34) famous words, “gender proves to be performance... [and] always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed”. In their seminal article ‘Doing Gender’ (1987, p. 126) West and Zimmerman argue that gender is “an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements, and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society”. Moreover, they add, “gender is a powerful ideological device, which produces, reproduces, and legitimates the choices and limits that are predicated on sex category” (p. 147).

Long before the illuminating words of these theorists, Bergman seems to indicate that gender roles, which exert power, authority, and social divisions, can even transcend sex categories. Female Ester clearly attempts to assume power and authority over Anna’s violation of chastity invoking the patriarchal order. Here, Ester’s masculine traits and behaviour appear to embody a ‘present’ emblem of Anna’s absent father, husband, nuclear family, and their hierarchical

¹¹⁸ The relationship between language and the patriarchal order is a well-established theme in many dimensions. According to Lacanian paradigm, the symbolic/linguistic/law order stems from the primary symbol *phallus* privileging patriarchal signifiers (Lewiecki-Wilson, 1994, pp. 40–42); furthermore, feminist theorists maintain that language as the main mediating tool in the patriarchal system inevitably embody its oppressive traits and make them natural (Tyson, 2014, pp. 90–100).

relationships. Although this aspect is mostly tacit in Ester's expressions, the undertones of the scene, and the narrative context, it becomes verbal when Anna accuses Ester recalling one of her past affairs with another man: "You interrogated me that time too; [you] said that you'd tell father if I didn't tell you everything". This scene provides some indefinite context to indicate that Ester has always desired Anna, but she has also striven to curb Anna's freedom. Rather than portraying this control as a natural effect of her sex, gender, or patriarchal order, Bergman's narration cinematically expounds that Ester's *need* motivates her to invoke, repeat, and perpetuate gender roles and patriarchy¹¹⁹. In this sense, Anna's repetitive excursions into the city and casual sexual relationships can also be seen as conscious or subconscious displays of defiance rather than her innate lust. If Ester wanted to trap Anna into the hotel room and her despotic love, perhaps using her malady as a pretext, Anna always seeks ways to break her fetters. Moreover, in this scene and the scene with Johan, Ester appears completely free of the symptoms of her illness, implying the significance of malady as a *thematic sign* of her inner contradictions. When Ester's other cultural and emotional batteries fail to tame Anna, her malady may return to her aid as a way of gaining sympathy and control.

In the extra-diegetic and communicational terms, *malady* provides a useful narrative, fictional, and metaphoric device that motivates the course of actions, causal connections, and a resource to exploit the sympathy of characters as well as the audience. Although the female sex itself has been associated with illness, blood, and suffering in art, or illness as an inevitable female inheritance (Herndl, 2000, pp. 1–16), the potential of illness as a sign in art ultimately relies on the ideological contexts. As Blackwell (1997, p. 113) points out, Bergman does not associate illness with femininity from an essentialist perspective; the later

¹¹⁹ Bergman's use of a same sex couple for this relationship is crucial for these nuanced meanings. He later claims that Ester and Anna could be a couple of men as well as women, answering his interviewer who asks if the contrasting aspects of sisters are Bergman's view of 'womanhood'. (Duncan and Wanselius, 2008, p. 308); although the narrative context might have been different, his claim suggests that Bergman's explorations go beyond gender roles and essences of sexes.

developments of the film confirms this. However, by this point of the film, Ester's undefined illness appears as a fictional/metaphoric reference to the eruptions of internal contradictions, or a possible means of oppression. As Booth (2010, pp. 271–309) elaborates, presenting a narrative from restricted point-of-views (focalisations) may increase the audiences' sympathy/identification while multiple points of views can bring inverse effects, wider picture, and more distanced view. Nevertheless, despite the techniques and their apparent positioning, both ways are important for a comprehensive narrative experience. These shifts in interpretations entice suspense, curiosity, and surprise that propel the narrativity forward. Although Ester's sickness may win sympathy for her character from Anna and the audience at the diegetic level, its fluctuations and the effects on others may also reveal other dimensions. Considering a cinematic narrative as a communication within an ideological context helps in the contemplation of different rhetorical purposes and power relationships of everyday aspects/behaviour, not only in art but also in real life (e.g. clothes; mannerisms; typing/writing; disease etc.).

Furthermore, Bergman's extra-diegetic decision to end the city scene with an ambiguous note becomes very important for the diegetic narrativity of this scene. The audience does not know how Anna's encounter with the waiter ended and it is a very potent suspenseful device at this point. Therefore, the audience also partake in Ester's activity of the discovering traces of Anna's sexual encounter. In this sense, Ester's character and actions work as a communicational means that gratify the audience's curiosity. Moreover, Blackwell (1997, pp. 120–121) argues that the camera position in between the ajar doors, situates the audience in a voyeuristic stance aligned with Ester. After a close inspection of Anna's frock, Ester leaves the room quietly with her disdainful gait and 'closes the door' indicating her contempt. Without any words, her frown, walk, and back view imply that Ester has confirmed her hypothesis along with the audience. Although the viewing position in this scene is shared

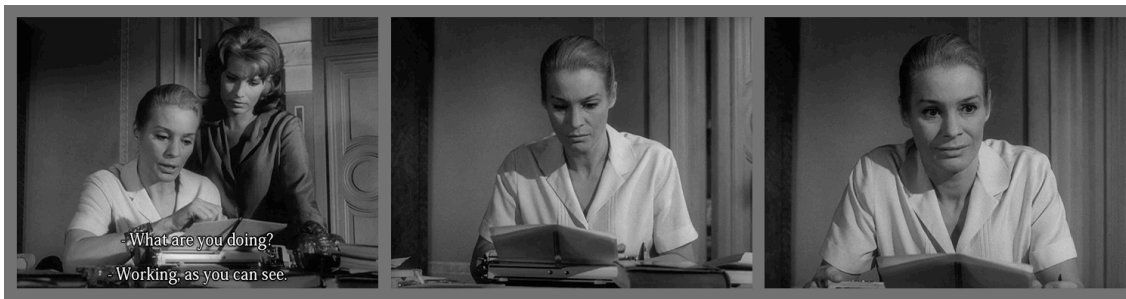
between Ester and the audience, at this point, the camera/audience decisively stays with Anna, witnessing her musings.



When Anna evaluates Ester's action, her repeated pacing against the visually indistinct background, the exaggerated sounds of her comb, another grotesque drawing on the table by Johan, and the resolute knocking with the comb provide a series of communicational devices for Anna's 'mind screen'. In other words, her continuous combing with exaggerated gritty noise does not imply that she wants to groom her hair but how she attempts to pull herself together. When she resolutely tosses the comb on to the table, it conveys a resounding "enough!" Her silent communication with herself is again distant from language and more related to her body. However, if the symbolic/metaphoric aspects of Anna advance the concept of 'body' or 'physicality' at the thematic level, her *mimetic* behaviour in this shot also shows that she can also 'think' as a human, at the diegetic level. Arguably, the choreographed close-up that continuously follows her *isolated* face/head underscores her *agency* rather than her unseen body in this shot. But her constant walking while thinking can still underscore her thematic association with 'body' and 'physicality'. Thus, the ability to assign relevant cinematic signs into separate referential tiers (fictionality) and threads (narrativity) helps resolving many perplexing and contradictory aspects of a cinematic narrative.

Later when Ester is provoked by self-possessed Anna's bitter words, Ester's mechanical typewriter becomes an inflated medium of expression in her hands. Instead of talking, she rapidly types a series of words, and the explosive action seems to help venting her anger. Here, although the typewriter noisily

pours words on the paper, Anna or the audience is not given a view to *read* or *grasp* the ‘meaning’ of these words. In the immediate diegetic sense, they are irrelevant. However, this act of loud typing and the resulted unseen words can still communicate Ester’s anger to Anna in diegetic terms. In thematic terms, although Ester is verbally silent, the ‘noise’ of her anger is still connected to *language* and its cultural ramifications through the typewriter, the act of typing, and translating. Unseen or unintelligible words can sometimes be more communicative than defined exact words because of their open and ambiguous fictional references. In this particular context, the *noise* of the typewriter thematically embodies and communicates Ester’s failure to exert the power of



words, patriarchal language, and control over Anna. The exaggerated sounds of the typewriter are ‘empty signifiers’ but they immediately acquire potent meanings at the diegetic and thematic levels according to the cinematic context. As Anna closes the door, Ester stops her violent typing, mentally entering her own private space with an emphatic silence. But the still potent fury gushes into her face distorting it into a series of violent twitches and sneers. This level of expression can even appear diegetically superfluous; in other words, Anna’s simple words “to think that I have been afraid of you” alone cannot explain Ester’s extreme reaction. At this moment, her face appears to swell large on the screen because the camera slowly but quiveringly dollies-in to isolate her face from the body. Arguably, similar to the typewriter, Ester/Thulin’s close-up here transcends its primary task of expressing internal human feelings in diegetic terms. With or without the discussed context and acquired meanings, her enlarged face becomes an abstract *sensorial* and *referential* field far removed

from her diegetic 'female' body. It rather appears as a *fresco*, or *mask* that cracks and collapses against its own internal pressures at the thematic level.

Such moments may often recall Gilles Deleuze's (2001, pp. 99–100) famous tribute to Bergman's artistic virtuosity with the facial close-up. Describing Bergman's competence to withdraw the *face* from *human body*, he claims, "the facial close-up is both the face and its effacement". He further explains that in *Persona*, Bergman "has pushed the nihilism of the face the furthest" and "consumes and extinguishes the face as certainly as Beckett". Nonetheless, within this lengthy shot in *The Silence*, Bergman uses Ester's gradually withdrawn face to determinedly *absorb* the 'meanings' from the context. The extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers continuously feed it with competitive meanings, and the *traces* of the absent sounds of her typewriter still resonate in the ambience to haunt them. However, at a particular point of the shot, this



abstract and thematic mask, which stands for something hideous (e.g. failed patriarchy, hierarchy, dominance, language) beyond Ester's character face, gradually withdraws returning her human face to the *diegetic* tier. This remarkable transition reveals Ester's downcast *human sorrow* accompanied by a submissive gulp and a gradual fade to black. In this sense, the facial close-up does not necessarily turn the "face into a phantom" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 100) or always *abstract*. It depends on the cinematic mediation, narrativity, fictionality, and the referential context.

The black screen that encompasses Ester's dejected humiliation segues into the night cityscape, which could be another restructured 'mind screen' of Ester after her recent distress. The high angle recalls Ester's earlier viewpoint from the hotel window, even before the next cut to her strained face that is trapped between the two curtains. Again, the pale horse and the cart with a



different load of furniture appear from the far corner, and the dark, dismal, and noisy night exacerbates its discussed thematic ramifications. A street fight or boys' play with guns follows the cart amid the loud church bells, juxtaposing several ironic motifs. Nevertheless, Ester leaves the window with an equanimity perhaps revived by the classical music being played in the room. She lights a cigarette and takes the radio with her. It is also noticeable that she has regained her subtle masculine mannerisms again. Bach's ostensibly soothing music track (Goldberg Variations: 25. a 2 Clav) continues to fill the room and Anna and Johan can be seen across Ester's door.

Anna is clothed in a similar open-neck frock to her previous one with some flashing jewellery, but this time, a dark one. Johan and Anna's discussion discloses that they are eager to leave the city and it is Ester's situation that delays it. They lovingly embrace each other, and Anna repeatedly kisses Johan showing their mutual affection. At this point, as an answer to Johan's question, Anna reveals that the name of the city is Timoka. The old butler fetches tea for contemplating Ester and she asks him what the music is; not only the word 'music' in Swedish is also 'music' in his foreign language, he utters Bach's full name, in a very reverent manner. At the diegetic level, this indicates Ester and the butler's shared interests, which also has many consequences in the discussed thematic context. On the other hand, it can also suggest the

transcendent nature of music beyond 'language'. When Anna borrows some cigarettes from Ester, and Ester asks them to leave the city that night without her, some emotional truce between them is evident. Anna even declares that they cannot leave Ester in this state in a considerate tone. When she thanks Johan for fetching cigarettes from Ester's table, she utters an elaborate "thank you very much" in a higher tone as if she is also thanking Ester. But this ambiguous but overplayed gesture still betrays her lurking revulsion. While these developments may suggest an optimistic reconciliation brought by Bach's music, Ester may also be concerned about Anna's transgressive conduct in the city that threatens the values to which Ester is committed; on the other hand, Ester's decision to stay in the wretched city alone may appear as a self-inflicted punishment. Even Bach's 25th Goldberg Variation is not consistent throughout. As Williams (2001, pp. 81–84) describes, it turns unpredictably acidic at times, confusing its apparent harmony.



At the extra-diegetic level, Ester's moves and placement gradually causes an extremely coordinated deep-focused composition that captures all three characters. This is a rare moment that visually encapsulates their triangular relationship. The barriers/doors between them are provisionally opened to each other. When Anna embraces Johan, the camera swiftly dollies into their private space to emphasise its effects on Ester's *mindscreen*; their embrace and Anna's excessive kissing swells up in Ester's consciousness. The immediate cut to the close-up of Ester's contemplation confirms this relation. The various dimensions of their triangular relationship/narrativity invite competitive fictional interpretations for her unmoved deadpan face: apathy; jealousy; contempt; sorrow; discrimination; humiliation. Anna and Johan's *Pietà* position further

flaunts some glaring thematic resonances (divinity, maternity, suffering, defiance), especially when excluded and 'damned' Ester at the foreground seems very conscious of their embrace.

This scene also predominantly restricts the viewing position (camera/audience) to a specific side of the event and composes the two apartments across the plane, *layering* the view. Although the intermediate long shot with its classical composition emanates a sense of long-awaited resolution, the dark and elaborate bed panel at the extreme foreground stands as a daunting barrier between the scene and the audience. These elements can again allude to the 'mediated view' that audience and Johan share. Although both see and hear the event, its meanings are encrypted or evasive. The see-through bed panel can also represent the 'barrier' between Anna and Ester that has become somewhat permeable in the scene. When Ester walks forward and composes her dominant mid shot, she leans onto this intrusive panel. At this point, the visual tension between the foreground and the far end becomes extremely vulnerable; however, the increased distance between the characters perhaps makes them more comfortable. Ester's move and the visual re-composition also partially slide the foreground barrier, perhaps promising access to the scene and its subtext. Curious, Johan also moves to the door, which separates Anna and Ester's rooms, in anticipation of a decisive moment. With this move, the viewing positions of Johan and the audience are again mirrored at different 'doorways' (the diegetic door and the extra-diegetic *screen*). With all these cinematic nuances, Bergman continues the smouldering undercurrents and the progressive themes of *The Silence* in this scene beneath Bach's music and the ostensible diegetic truce.

At this moment, Anna also curiously appears to be interested about the music being played, and asks Ester, what the music is. Although Ester repeats Bach's name again, she does not sound that enthusiastic with Anna. Even when Anna suddenly claims that "it is nice", Ester's subsequent downcast look perhaps betrays her unshakeable despair. She is perhaps not interested in the

music itself or its *soothing* sensual effects; what is important to her is the ‘meanings’ she imposes to this abstract and highbrow music. Any genre of music can also be an ideologically charged artefact and settle into various contextual power relationships. Bergman’s perceptive use of music seems to acknowledge this rather than endorsing the ‘universal’ value of music. Although Anna’s comment may sound as a flat compliment for the inescapable influence of Bach’s music, her next moves make her comment more of an ironic one rather than a sincere tribute. Ester is also perhaps ambivalent about Anna’s empathy, or alert to her possibly deceitful intentions. She knows that Anna already heard Ester and the Butler’s approving discussion on music and Bach.



At this point, Bergman cuts to a quick clairvoyant close-up of Anna. This mediating act is the first *consciousness* that prefigures the significance of Anna’s impending move. In this shot, Anna suddenly breaks the momentary peace in the room by stubbing out her cigarette and drastically changing her position. Then she puts on her metal bangles clattering them disturbingly against Bach’s music. In the immediate close-up, Ester turns off the radio, intuitively sensing a dismal change in their atmosphere. Her sudden change in position is diegetically inexplicable (it can even be recognised as a blunder), but thematically momentous and even astonishing. Extra-diegetically, this act also replaces the seemingly gentle music with a frightening silence. Again, this is an apt confluence of the diegetic and extra-diegetic music. Even dismayed Johan rises from his seated position at this moment giving an alarming signal to the audience. Anna announces that she is going out because she “can’t stand the *heat* in here”; and she asks Johan “why don’t you *read* to Ester?”. All these cues show that the ‘values’ and ‘meanings’ she assigns to Bach’s *soothing* music are

not common with Ester and the butler. The agitated camera pan reveals Ester's confrontational mood and she quickly paces to her working desk with the typewriter. The next shot presents Ester's back view; while fiddling with her *typewriter*, she simply declares that "Go, while your *conscience* lets you!". However thematically, it can be argued that what she refers to is the 'conscience' imposed by *language* and patriarchal order/culture. Coherently developed thematic narrativity between Ester's masculine mannerisms and values, her translator profession, the emphasis given to language and classical music, and her hurriedly established *touch* with the typewriter affirm that this association (cinematic metonymy) is not a far-fetched one.

Provoked Anna turns back and indicates her desire to challenge Ester by tossing her handbag noisily on to the chair. Then she takes the seat in a self-possessed posture anticipating a decisive confrontation with Ester. Ester asks Johan to leave until she talks to his mother, and Anna advises him knowingly, "don't go too far", as if she also addresses Johan's counterpart, the audience. Then she walks to the table lamp, turns it off, and moves towards the faint nightlight filtered through the window curtain. Accordingly, the subsequent



discussion between the sisters takes place under a drastically different lighting setup and mood to the previous scene. At the diegetic level, this act might convey that Anna is more comfortable to talk about the possible murky past between the sisters in the dark. However, at the extra-diegetic level, Bergman (the implied filmmaker) playfully exploits his actor to set the appropriate light and mood for the next shot. In other words, with this explicit diegetic trick, he forewarns the impending thematic twist and his extra-diegetic treatment of it. If Ester's sudden diegetic jump in position is justified by the thematic narrativity in

the previous scene, Bergman now justifies the sudden extra-diegetic jump between the two consecutive shots by the diegetic narrativity. This self-reflexive act again interlaces the *extra-diegetic*, *diegetic*, and *thematic* tiers and also foregrounds the omniscient and coordinated *agency* behind the cinematic mediation.

The next famous close-up presents Anna's unruffled face in profile, while the invisible Ester's voiceover breaks in "where have you been?" These words seemingly refer to Anna's earlier outing. With this question, Ester's frontal face directly emerges from the dark, right behind Anna's face. In this unique composition, Ester and the audience (camera) imprison Anna's face between two intimate interrogative gazes. When Anna responds straight on, she appears to answer both Ester and the audience. Although Johan is absent in the scene, this composition again re-enacts another triangular episode between Ester, Anna, and the audience (Johan's counterpart). Anna calmly answers that she



just went out for a walk and she did not want to come back soon. In the early part of the discussion, their question and answers sound like a playful tease. Behind this evasive wordplay, the audience is only allowed seeing Ester and Anna's faces in half. Anna's profile constantly conceals the right side of her face and continues to overlap the left half of Ester's face; even when Ester looks away, the chiaroscuro lighting keeps her left side in the dark. When Ester directly looks at Anna at decisive points, the halves of their faces appear as a torn-apart single face that strives to elude the unification. Koskinen (2011, p. 134) asserts that in the context of the metaphysical theme of the 'God trilogy', this "tandem shot" has the potential to "express an existential or religious idea—that wholeness is only momentary and provisional, and a moment of grace".

However, even in the immediate context, this composition feeds the thematic tier of the scene: Ester invades the frame with the hope of unification, but defiant Anna continuously rebuffs it. When Ester protests Anna's evasive answers with the words "you are lying!", this unstable tandem composition suddenly becomes strikingly meaningful.

At this point, Anna boldly asks, "Do you want to know all the details?"; it also sounds like a playful question directed at both the audience and Ester. Ester interrupts to demand, "just answer my questions", as if she wants to conceal what Anna wants to reveal in front of the audience. But Anna defiantly continues to unfold an event that have taken place ten years ago when they stayed with their father. According to Anna, even at that time, Ester had insisted Anna to describe all the details about her affair with a man. At this point, Anna walks away from the tandem composition, completely disavowing sisters' unlikely union. Next, Anna voluntarily recounts her escapade in Timoka. She claims that she went to a cinema and watched a couple making love in the audience; a man she met at the bar came to the cinema¹²⁰ and they had intercourse on the floor spontaneously; that is how her dress got dirty.

Anna deliberately elaborates some trivial details in this story as if she wants to provoke Ester, and Ester's fixed devouring eyes betray her trauma. This moment becomes deeply baffling for the audience as well because Anna blatantly distorts some details, already witnessed by the audience: Anna did not see the copulating couple in a cinema, and she did not surely have intercourse on the floor of the variety theatre. Aptly, Ester manages to word audiences' disbelief in a gradually widening close-up: "is that true?" And Anna enters the same frame to boldly answer, "why would I lie?" At this point, both face the audience/camera, and in this cunningly crafted dialogue, both characters

¹²⁰ Interestingly, the published film script and the subtitles in the film both translate this as cinema ('bio' in Swedish), while in the script, the variety theater and 'dwarf' show are completely absent. Instead, in the script, Anna actually watches a film and its content is very different to the 'dwarf show'.

indirectly get the audience involved as an active partner. The audience knows something that Ester does not know; nonetheless, as the enigmatic and disintegrated composition forewarned, the audience cannot assert the truth of Anna's story. They did not get to 'see' Anna's actual sexual encounter, but they did 'see' Anna and the couple in the variety theatre. In this sense, the audiences' knowledge is placed in between Anna and Ester's diegetic knowledge.

Next, Ester agrees that "yes, why would you?" But mischievous Anna revises her story saying, "it so happens that I was lying". These words again mockingly relate to the audience's knowledge. They can at least affirm Anna's new statement. Then she goes on to claim that after watching the couple's lovemaking, she went to the bar. Then the waiter and Anna walked into a lone church and had intercourse in a dark corner behind some pillars. At this point, the audience may empathise with Ester's words, "it doesn't matter". They cannot again assure whether Anna tells the truth or a lie because they did not witness this part of the story. Although the audience and Ester both 'see' that her dress was stained, the audience cannot affirm that the waiter and Anna met later and went to the church following Anna's words. In diegetic terms, Anna's lies, denials, and revisions are most likely planned to tease, torment, and humiliate Ester's authority. In extra-diegetic terms, she (and Bergman) also teases the audiences' gaze and authority. In thematic terms, having spontaneous, extramarital sex in a church that represents sanctity and authority is more insolent and humiliating. Overall, Anna's play with *language* against the 'bearer of language' at this point establishes a heavy irony. She completely disarms and conquers Ester in her own territory. When Anna claims "this time, I'll make sure that I get my clothes off first" her assault on Ester's voyeuristic behaviour (and also of the audience) reaches its climax. In this shot, Anna's head almost eclipses Ester's darkened and downcast face; she confirms Ester's emotional collapse with the words, "shouldn't you go to bed?"

Furthermore, with this scene, Bergman strategically highlights very important extra-diegetic themes in *The Silence*. Firstly, as examined, he

foregrounds the continuous tension between *language* and *cinema* in his film. Can the audience believe Anna's verbal story without seeing it? She already distorted what the audience witnessed; on the other hand, Anna's character is not committed to the integrity of language and order. Did she add the church episode (at least the location) to exacerbate the effects of her story? Who can really affirm what happened between Anna and the waiter or their location of the meeting? As the volatile compositions in this scene indicate, is the *wholeness* of story ever evasive? Can the extra-diegetic images, lighting, shapes, and compositions convey the complex thematic aspects that are generally communicated through language and dialogues? From the narratological perspective, Bergman withholds all the other narratorial means available to cinema, confining the flow of narration to Anna's words here. It also interestingly highlights the tension between the *story/discourse* dualism in narratology (see section 2.2.3). If *The Silence* is a fictional narrative, is there a 'true' version behind Anna's verbal narrative? Is there a 'real' story that determines Bergman's three-tier cinematic discourse, or is it the other way around? Bergman arguably interlaces the three cinematic tiers of his film to undermine the priority of such an essential predetermined *story* or *diegesis*. It is the act of cinematic representation what mediates the sensorial and referential fields, progressive discourses, and resultant stories in cinema. Moreover, as discussed, the thematic discourse of *The Silence* also seems to indicate that there are no essential values in gender, language, music, images, or authority. They are mutable, contextual, and interactive within power relationships. It also continuously acknowledges the author and audience as collaborative participants of the cinematic discourse. The presentation of the film is explicitly manipulated, and the mimetic behaviour of the characters and their agencies are subtly overridden by the extra-diegetic cinematic discourses. The audience must acknowledge the non-fictional mediating agency behind the three cinematic tiers of the film to stabilise the communication in its appropriate context. Therefore, it can be argued that *The Silence* also advances a self-

reflexive exploration of cinema and narratology in parallel to the other themes of the film.

In the next sequence, Ester walks to her bed and lies down. This act starts with an unadorned mid-shot of defeated Ester, but it gradually evolves into an elaborate wide shot. Ester slowly walks between her typewriter (meaningful language) and the radio (meaningful music) that emerge into the frame as two



guardians who surround her prison-like bed with ornate rails. The camera knowingly follows Ester to evoke these thematic relationships and their ironic implications in the new extra-diegetic context. Although these details of mise-en-scene are not paraphrasable within the diegesis, they enrich the thematic tier with the specific meanings acquired through cinematic narrativity.

The next shot captures lying Ester on the bed; persevering Ester implores Anna to sit beside her “just for a moment”. Her eyeline implies that Anna has already come closer to her bedside, although Anna’s motivation to go there is not clear. Next, the close-up frame rises with Ester to include Anna's chiaroscurist face, again composing another tandem shot. It also somewhat surprisingly reveals that Anna has made her mind to sit with her. Although this event needs Anna to follow the same path and the time that Ester took in diegetic terms, this mediation again compromises the diegetic continuity/causality for the thematic continuity/causality. These moments repeatedly affirm that the extra-diegetic strategies can also entail suspense, surprise, and attraction, and the primacy of mediation over diegesis.

At this point, Ester implores Anna not to meet her man: ‘not tonight; it is such torment’. In return, Anna asks, “Why is that?” and this appears as a genuine

question. Ester admits that it humiliates her. She also adds, “You mustn’t think I’m jealous” and then she starts to kiss Anna. The erotic undertones of her gesture may indicate the traces of a past incestuous relationship between them that surpasses their sisterly affection. Understandably, this is an admissible interpretation of their tense relationship. Such a hypothesis also helps to justify Ester’s obsessive interest in Anna’s sexual affairs. Nevertheless, Anna does not revive, encourage, or refer to such a relationship and dismissively walks away from Ester. Even in this case, an incestuous relationship is not the only possible explanation. If there was an incestuous past between them, Anna should have known the reason for Ester’s obsession with her and her constant scrutiny. But when she recalls their past and accuses Ester of her oppressive conduct, she only highlights Ester’s behaviour as an attempt to control her private affairs using father’s authority.

Ester’s words, “you mustn’t think I’m jealous” just before she kisses Anna also sounds contradictory to a consummated incestuous relationship. In that case, either Ester cannot sincerely deny jealousy, or she would have admitted her jealousy as an indication of her erotic love to manipulate Anna. Therefore, the reference to ‘jealousy’ may rather allude to Ester’s invalid status and her inability to make any sexual relationships like Anna. From a different perspective, however, this spontaneous act of kissing can also suggest Ester’s involuntary exploitation of their sisterly intimacy in the context of her earnest imploration. She perhaps stakes everything in between them (their past, childhood, affection) as her last resort to influence Anna. This gesture can also be associated with the pursuit of figurative unification between two characters (mind and body) in *The Silence*, which often resisted by Anna (body). Ester’s kissing elevates her relentless pursuit of ‘unity’ into the physical level after failing all the other subtle means available to her. The highlighted multiple dimensions of their relationship between the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic levels emphasise that these ‘characters’ are a result of a culturally mediated cinematic discourse rather than a faithful reflection of predetermined ‘story’.

4.8. Anna's Revenge

In the next sequence, in diegetic terms, Anna meets the waiter in the corridor—who she met at the bar—and with him enters another room in the hotel while Johan is secretly watching them. Johan and Ester's relationship becomes more intimate in the absence of Anna and he reveals to Ester that Anna is in a room with a stranger. Ester visits them and Anna torments her by berating her 'meaningful' principles and values. Ester retreats saying Anna has misunderstood her. After leaving the room, Ester falls unconscious in the corridor.

The first shot of this sequence captures Anna in the corridor and the camera stalks her from behind like an invisible voyeur. After walking some distance, she turns back and shows a key to someone who is outside the frame. Next, the waiter enters the frame and takes the key from her hand. Audacious Anna starts to kiss the waiter, and then both embrace each other passionately.



This act probably confirms that they have met after their seeming separation in the previous scene and decided to meet again in the hotel. However, this possibility does not completely attest Anna's story of the church. Anna's ostentatious act of passing the key to the waiter can be taken as a symbolic gesture to signify Anna granting him access to her body, if not for the first time, at least with the complete freedom. After several hasty attempts with the key, the waiter manages to open the door and they enter the room. Anna seems to constantly anticipate a possible observer in this scene (perhaps Ester), but she fails to notice Johan behind her. Johan and the audience both participate in this scene secretly, but the diegetic door of Anna's room leaves Johan outside while his counterpart, the extra-diegetic audience/camera get access to the room. At

this point, Anna hurriedly insists the waiter switch off the light as if to acknowledge an invisible voyeur even inside the room. Nevertheless, Johan also manages to peep into the room through the keyhole and takes a glimpse of Anna's naked breasts. He leaves the door at this moment obviously contemplating the implications and meanings of the event he just witnessed. As usual, this sequence continues to manage the balance between Johan's thematic position as the counterpart of the audience and his diegetic character. The audience/camera and Johan invisibly follow and cover Anna's adventure from competitive perspectives but as a diegetic character his access is restricted by the mimetic principles and means.

Furthermore, this entire event subtly invokes Johan's relationship with the painting *Nessus and Deianira* again. The embrace between the virile waiter and Anna and Anna's naked breasts before Johan allude to the subject of the painting. In other words, Bergman unfolds the static composition of the painting



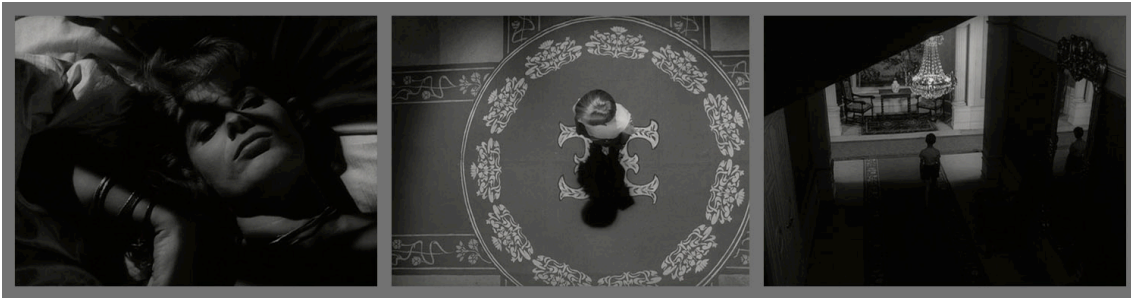
along the cinematic timeline with two different shots that are exposed to Johan. The stealthy camera, Anna's constant anticipation of an invisible voyeur in the scene, and Johan's act of 'peeping through the keyhole' emphasise the 'gaze' motif in the sequence. But interestingly, unlike in the mirror scene, Anna fails to notice or confront the camera/audience or Johan here. Moreover, unlike Deianira, Anna is the one who dominantly initiates the embrace and sexual act in this scene. The subject of the painting is enacted again before Johan, but characters are seemingly reversed. The audience who contemplates Johan's situation can infer this scene in several levels: from the simple diegetic perspective, Johan realises that he is no longer the sole object of Anna's love and cuddle. He may also sense Anna's infidelity, which may force him to

empathise with his absent father. From the psychoanalytic perspective, his unification with mother (body) is challenged. At the same time, regarding Johan's situation, the 'name of the father' or 'the order of patriarchy' is violated with Anna's betrayal. Johan might now wish to replace Anna's heterosexual love object (the waiter/Nessus) by attacking his competitor or identifying with—or imitating—masculine/patriarchal ideals personified by the brawny waiter.

Intertextually, Anna has now become Deianira in the sense of “husband-slayer” in Johan's (Hyllus the Heracles's son) eye. At the same time, he is now also in Heracles's position who witnesses Nessus's abduction of Deianira at first-hand. This double position justifies his metaphoric rivalry with the waiter and Anna, as well as his identification with the father (Heracles). At this point, Johan with his toy pistol in front of the painting *Nessus and Deianira* seems to foretell this event. In an article titled ‘Bergman and Visual Art’, Törnqvist (2012) passingly suggests that Johan's toy pistol is a metaphor for Heracles's bow before the painting. This line of thought evokes the intertextual possibility of Nessus (the waiter), Deianira (Anna), and Heracles's (Johan) relationship in *The Silence*. Törnqvist also observes that in Rubens's interpretation, Deianira appears to be seduced rather than abducted¹²¹. Ironically, in *The Silence*, Anna appears to seduce the waiter, tormenting Johan (Hyllus) more. If Anna just wanted to avenge Ester and her oppressive dominance with her defiant act, it now contributes to distance Johan from her decisively. When she removes her metal bangles on the bed, the conspicuous, cold, metallic clatter—that also resembles the violent clock ticking—it seems to foreshadow this ominous twist in Johan's universe and its repercussions.

¹²¹ Bergman's depiction of the painting conceals (shadows) the already pierced arrow on Nessus's body, increasing the ambiguity of Deianira's expression and the other senses of the painting.

This thematic twist is further manifest when Johan slowly paces to the junction of the corridors amid the depressing foghorn—a signal of hazard that indicates the lack of visibility—and contemplates his options in the middle of the dial. Then he hesitantly changes the direction and walks through the dark passage. He fails to see him in the large ‘reflective’ mirror on the wall, and his next turn is seemingly towards their suite where Ester is resting. This event may



understandably mark a significant coming of age moment in Johan’s puberty. However, from the viewpoint of the psychoanalytically motivated audience, the effects of the unconventional events that take place in *The Silence* arguably complicates Johan’s puberty between the narratives of Oedipal and Electra complexes¹²². Accordingly, his relationship with patriarchy and his mother appear always split and ambivalent. This may further reinforce Johan’s sustained sexual ambivalence throughout the film. Despite the credibility of psychoanalytic narratives, the resonance between *The Silence* and these Greek mythical stories are tantalising and thought-provoking. They provide familiar cultural metaphors to sustain an underlying *intertextual narrativity* beyond its apparent diegetic ‘story’. The weak causal relations between the events of *The Silence* in mere diegetic terms become rather stronger with these thematic and intertextual relations.

¹²² According to the Greek mythology of Electra, Electra conspires with her brother to kill her mother to avenge her father’s murder. Jung borrows this story to explain the psychosexual dynamics of female children. In this view, the young female child aspires to replace her mother as her father’s love object due to penis envy or castration anxiety. Instead of killing her mother, she starts to emulate mother and therefore, acquires the female identify. Nevertheless, Jung sees this as a complex and ambivalent process torn between the two sexes (Mehta, 2002, pp. 174–175).

In the next sequence, Johan is in their room and he attempts to read a book with reading glasses. After a while, he enters Ester's room and discovers that Ester is seriously suffering from her breathing difficulties. At this point, the glassware on the table rattles and Johan observes a large battle tank appear outside the room. Ester asks Johan to read to her, but Johan wants her to see his Punch and Judy puppet show. In his show, Punch violently attacks Judy, and next, Johan runs to Ester's arms seemingly ending his aloofness towards her.

Overall, this sequence appears to mark Johan's emotional departure from Anna and his increasing inclination towards Ester. In diegetic terms, Anna's new relationship evidently wounds Johan's pride, and unsettled Johan cannot concentrate on reading. The signs of outside dangers, which intrude into the room with rumbles and rattles obviously escalate his insecurities. In thematic



terms, his attempt of reading with reading glasses (mediation) may indicate his—and also of the audience—struggle with the meanings of what he/they just witnessed. With evident frustration, his last resort seems to be Ester's room, but the curious game of imaginary Hopscotch again betrays his relentless ambivalence towards her. Nevertheless, the game brings him to Ester's door, perhaps with the subliminal hope of consolation at the diegetic level and more 'meanings' at the thematic level. At this desolate moment, Ester and Johan both seek some connection to get on with their life after failed attempts of unification with Anna/body/wholeness. Johan stares at Ester's longing hand against her pathetic groan for a long time and perhaps contemplates the possible outcome of this available relationship. Ironically, rather than offering reassurance and care, this hand also desperately yearns for help and revival. Exactly at this point,

the rattles of the glassware convey the menacing threats that appear outside in the form of a war tank to Johan. At the diegetic level, all these signs help to justify Johan's insecurity and his subsequent bond with Ester because she is the only adult in his reach who can console him.

At the extra-diegetic level, however, this event is more complex. When Johan enters Ester's room, the camera/audience—as the allegorical counterpart of Johan—starts to follow Johan's gaze in a close-up frame and develops an interesting narrativity between his eyeline and the objects of his view. First, his eyeline/gaze respectively connects with Ester's face and hand, rattling decanter, and the window in an evolving flow. Next, Johan observes a war tank through the window/screen. As in the cart scenes earlier, the spectatorial position is located outside the window. Therefore, this sight too can be taken as an expression of Johan's 'mind screen' as well as his visual point of view. At the



thematic level, the war tank with the huge 'phallic' gun is an indisputable—and even pretentious—symbol of sexuality as well as the patriarchal supremacy. In the sense of sexuality, it can refer to Anna's sexual encounter with the virile waiter, which is possibly taking place at this exact moment in a different room. Perhaps Johan's subliminal mind is preoccupied with it. In the latter sense, the tank can cinematically 'define' Ester and Johan's approaching relationship. The edits with eyeline match and the continuous camera movements along Johan's

eyeline indicate an uninterrupted relationship between Ester's longing hand, rattling decanter, war tank, reading/language, and even the puppet show. The rattle of glasses generated by its impact also thematically connects with the cold, ill-omened sounds of the metallic bangles, and the violent clock ticking. They collectively paint Ester and Johan's potential diegetic relationship in dark thematic tones perhaps also suggesting the patriarchal spectres lurking beneath it. When Ester asks Johan to 'read' for her, the language motif also returns to reinforce this theme. However, refusing Ester's suggestion, Johan opts for his more physical form of communication, the Punch and Judy show. Johan's emphatic claim at this point, 'you look strange!' even appears as a reflexive acknowledgement of Ester's thematic associations beyond her diegetic self.

Interestingly, Charles Dickens writes against an attempt of making the Victorian Punch and Judy show less violent and morally instructive:

It is possible, I think, that one secret source of pleasure very generally derived from this performance is the satisfaction the spectator feels in the circumstances that likenesses of men and women can be so knocked about without any pain or suffering. (Dickens, 2012, p. 204)

In this context, Johan's puppet show too can be taken as an expression of harmless vengeance towards his mother. In his show, he most likely vents his anger by making Punch kill Judy (female/mother). Furthermore, Johan's extensive empathy with Punch may indicate his recent identification with the patriarchal order and values, which were subtly associated with Ester. The stationed war tank (phallic symbol) also underpins this sense. At the end of Johan's show, Ester is only curious to know Punch's side of the story. She also seems unruffled or even complacent about Judy's death. Taking Ester's lead, Johan confesses that Punch "is scared, so he speaks in a funny language": if Punch substitutes Johan, the puppet show is Johan's 'funny language'. Punch cannot sing because "he is still angry".

At this point, he starts to cry and when he wipes his eyes with the puppeteer gloves, the tiny dangling bells jingle again evoking the glass rattle and bangle clinks. All these interesting details in this scene engender significant references that coherently connect with the overall cinematic discourse of *The Silence* at the diegetic, thematic, and even intertextual levels. With the interpretational acts of fictionality and narrativity, cinematic semiosis distributes



these references along the active signifying instances. In terms of the extra-diegetic level, the foregrounded relationship between Johan and the puppet show also contributes to the ongoing themes of language, communication, story/discourse, and mediation. If the Punch and Judy show is a contextual means of communication between Johan and Ester (author/audience), Johan, Ester, and the film itself are also means of communication within the larger discourse. Although Johan opts for the puppet show instead of reading, his show fails to escape Ester's insistence of 'language'. Ironically, having to do extra verbal explanations exacerbates his misery forcing him to submission. Scenes like these in *The Silence* often develop a precarious but purposefully delicate tension between the diegetic and extra-diegetic levels/discourses.

When Johan suddenly runs to Ester acknowledging her as his only saviour, the accomplished union seems reassuring to both in the diegetic sense. At this moment, the war tank stationed outside starts to move away from their hotel, reminding that it was silently there during the puppet show. Although Johan does not see its departure, the tank easily corresponds with his new-found consolation in thematic terms. Does this departure of the tank indicate the culmination of Ester's pursuit? Does the winning of the child's trust assure that the values Ester embodied will be propagated? Alternatively, if the departure of

the tank indicates the emancipation from the 'phallic' associations that Ester and Johan flirt with, it brings a twist to the film: does the cathartic 'pleasure' of symbolic killing (of Judy/Anna) quench Johan and Ester's pursuit of 'wholeness/meaningfulness' in Dickens's sense? Does the new-found empathy between Punch, Johan, and Ester dilute their insecure urge to engage in power relationships? At this moment, both these thematic directions are tantalising hypotheses.

However, at the extra-diegetic level, this blatant appearance of the war tank and the excessive importance given to it by the cinematic mediation can also be seen as a *satirised* cinematic allusion to the conventions of interpretation. Although the appearance of the tank could be a sheer accident in the 'possible world' of *The Silence*, its diegetic irrelevance itself forcefully insists on thematic readings. It also invokes the authorial intentions, cinematic mediation, and the process of communication. Usually, such visual symbols or metaphors are presented as subordinate elements without disrupting the diegetic flow. If they are not a harmonious part of the mise-en-scene, they are explicitly coded as dream sequences, subjective projections, or parallel cuts/montages¹²³. But in this scene, Bergman completely removes the visual codes of cinematic metaphors. The absurd tank appears completely 'real' in the diegetic sense and contiguous with the other actions and characters' action. In this sense, if the battle tank is a visual metaphor, Bergman's use of it appears as a playful narratorial invasion of the film's diegetic domain by a thematic/visual symbol. The motif of the *tank* is also relevant in this sense of 'invasion'. It also affirms the authority of mediation over the other representational domains¹²⁴.

¹²³ *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), *The Silence of Lambs* (1991), and *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and *The Godfather* (1972) include quintessential examples of such cinematic metaphors.

¹²⁴ In *Wild Strawberries* (1957), Bergman clearly marks dreams and thoughts with the cinematic codes (dissolves/voice overs/dreaming faces etc.). However, the diegetic protagonist visually invades these domains in his present state and interacts with the characters in the past. But in *The Seventh Seal* (1957) the thematic concepts like death blatantly invade the diegesis that are otherwise 'realistic'. Even in such instances, Bergman is playful and reflexive. When Death wins the toss to play black set in the chess game, the knight announces, 'you got black!'; Death itself asks, 'that's appropriate. Isn't it?'

The next brief but strikingly insightful scene returns to Anna. She contemplates a group of people clad in white uniforms through the glass roof of a building at the lower level; this may be the kitchen in the hotel. Anna appears to be naked and this episode is understandably after the waiter and Anna's lovemaking in the hotel room. Although Anna seems to have achieved what she was after, the extra-diegetic presentation portrays this scene in a stark negative light. While the war tank disappears into the darkness in the previous scene, the same darkness and dismay segue into this episode in a different form. The waning roar of the tank transmutes into the violent clock ticking, and the scarce night light redefines Anna's graceful facial profile in dismal notes. In this bleak context, her mood appears disheartened rather than triumphant.

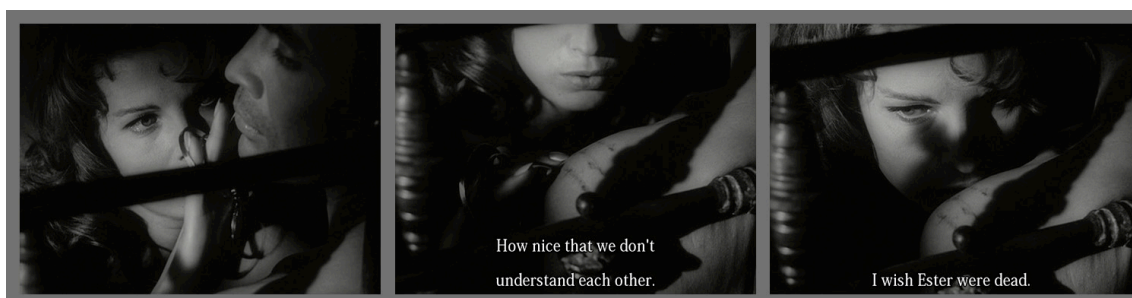
The white-clad people seen through the window mindlessly move evoking a bizarre animated pattern, or even a clockwork apparatus in the context of the clock ticking sound. Then, Anna glances at the tall towers above her that are perhaps the chimneys of the hotel kitchen. The murky buildings and the open bland sky do not seem to offer a promising picture that revives Anna's mood. Extra-diegetically, her upward look retains her gaping mouth under the light and places her eyes under the shadows. Possibly this gaping mouth and the concealed eyes respectively suggest the lack of pleasurable sensations and intelligible meanings. Overall, this collective cinematic mediation effectively paints her cumulative anxiety and sombre 'mind screen' before the audience. If Anna's point-of-view is unpromising, the audience is also invited to participate in her miserable sentiment. The framed glass panel, the dull sky surrounded by buildings, and Anna's yearning gaze rekindle the extra-diegetic theme of the screen/audience motif. Furthermore, the pulsating clock sound over the dynamic cell-like figures in constant motion, naked Anna's gaped mouth, and eclipsed eyes also allude to the irrepressible theme associated with Anna: *body over mind*.

Meanwhile, on the bed, Anna's weary lover meditates on her metal bangles. With this shot, the dismal metallic clatter replaces the clock ticking sound as the waiter clinks bangles against each other. Anna takes them from his hand, and with the bangles between her fingers she fumbles around his face. While the cold clattering sounds intermittently intrude the depressing silence, the extra-diegetic composition again cuts off Anna's eyes from the frame entirely emphasising her talking mouth: "How nice that we don't understand each other".



Although the literal meaning of this verbal comment appears as a positive statement, the overall mediation in this sequence arguably revokes its positivity. First, Anna's expressions and demeanour betray her deep discontent. The extra-diegetic treatment of her audio-visual ambience (the low-key images with animated shadows, clock ticking, and metallic clatters) further externalise her internal anxiety. Moreover, Anna's *verbalised thought* appears cryptic or ironic in many instances at the thematic level—as discussed, she thematically embodies *body* rather than *mind*. Especially, this is the case when the extra-diegetic rhetorical treatment supports this irony as in the previous scene, in which she commented on Bach's music. Accordingly, it can be said that Anna's cut off eyes/head (agency) and the isolated mouth significantly discredit the verbal 'meanings' of her words in this shot. Interestingly, in the next moment, Anna's entire face returns into the frame. She rubs and kisses a scratch (perhaps

a remnant of their feral sexual encounter) on the man's shoulder. This act can also allude to her fetish for unknown, meaninglessness, and corporeality. Next, the shadows over her face cunningly conceal her mouth, and the eyes settle under the light emphasising her *agency/mind* instead of the *body*. At this point she verbalises perhaps her ulterior desire in figurative/thematic sense: "I wish Ester were dead". Although Anna attempts to embrace meaningless chaos, and corporeality, the mind, agency, and order often haunt her in the form of Ester; they are inseparable sisters. Possibly, the moral authority embodied by Ester is what denies Anna her complete satisfaction.



The extra-diegetic mediation in this scene often encourages these subtle nuances in cinematic experience through phenomenal experience, fictionality, and narrativity beyond its apparent diegesis and dialogues. This scene is also an apt instance to affirm that even a close-up can work as a complex *dramatic stage*¹²⁵ for the film's thematic discourse. It deconstructs the human face with the extra-diegetic matrix and merges facial parts with the aspects of light, movement, composition, words and sounds to generate more subtle cinematic narrativity (metonym) and fictionality (metaphor) on micro level. In other words, transcending the generic, mimetic, and conventional macro subjects, Bergman devises a contextual scheme of cinematic rhetorics for a more integrated cinematic discourse across different cinematic tiers.

The next scene further explores Johan and Ester's relationship, and in it their discussion about language and translation continues. Answering one of his

¹²⁵ For instance, Carroll (2008, p. 35) assumes that a cinematic close-up 'deletes' the [theatrical] stage, directing the audience's attention to the framed subject. This seems a diegetically motivated assessment. But here, the close-up becomes a larger stage for its constituent micro elements as if an abstract painting.

questions, Ester says that she has become a translator so that Johan can read books written in foreign languages. At the diegetic level, she attempts to win Johan's heart, trust, and admiration; at the thematic level, she is the bearer of language and meaning for the future generations. At Johan's request, Ester agrees to write down the meanings of several words in the mysterious language



of Timoka. The first deep-focus shot of this scene resumes the extra-diegetic theme of different spaces divided by doors/screens again. When Johan is in the bathroom, Ester can be seen across the bathroom door and the door of her room. When Johan leaves the bathroom, reacting to his moves, the camera/audience (Johan's counterpart) glides forward and enters Johan's room crossing the bathroom door. Later, as Ester enters Johan's space, the initially established spatial divisions between the audience, Johan, and Ester collapse one by one. Interestingly, Johan and Ester develop a better amicability and empathy when they are spatially distant but accessible to each other through *language* across their personal spaces. When Ester gets into more intimate topics related to their bodies, emotions, and love, despite their growing spatial proximity, Johan becomes more aloof and reticent towards Ester again. This latter aspect is evident after Johan reveals that he saw Anna going into a hotel room with a strange man after kissing each other. With this change of subject, curious and agitated Ester enters Johan's space, and with this act, the initially indicated accessible spatial divisions merge into a single space. Unlike with Anna, this enforced intimacy with Ester seems to be intimidating to Johan. The subsequent close-up treatment and the content of their conversation reinforce this emotional incongruity instead of attenuating it. Although Ester moves closer to Johan spatially, she appears to have stifled her true feelings, and her language

turns more cryptic and coded to Johan at the diegetic level. However, despite the diegetically obscure conversation between characters, many other levels of their exchange are still available to the audience with the extra-diegetic discourse.

Although Johan went to bed almost naked with Anna, he is now clad in striped manly pyjamas that resembles Ester's pyjamas in an early scene; such details indicate Ester's influence on him, which has important thematic consequences. However, their relationship increasingly appears somewhat tense and Johan also displays strong signs of growing independence in this scene. When Johan washes his mouth (bodily activities) in the first shot, Ester is distant (also away from two spatial rooms/layers) from him and unconcerned.



Therefore, when Ester later asks him, “Have you washed properly?”, this question appears insincere and a forced act to be intimate with him. Furthermore, she evades his counter question “No, do I have to?”

At this point, for the first time, going beyond his mere spectator status, Johan discloses crucial details to Ester that change the direction of the events in the diegesis. With this act, Johan aligns himself against Anna, and also attempts to provoke Ester. Moreover, he continuously resists taking sides with Ester. When Ester implies that their trip is ruined by the unexpected events, Johan readily claims that he ‘had great fun’ on the trip. When Ester attempts to physically touch him, he again dodges her hand. Ester interprets it in a form of rhetorical question, “mummy is the only one who may touch you, isn’t she?” When Ester claims that ‘we love mummy, you and I’, he nods to agree with her.

Thematically, Johan and Ester both pursue the insatiable ‘meanings’ in enigmatic Anna/body/corporeality, and therefore, this is a moment of agreement. However, diegetically, these responses may hurt Ester because Johan places Anna against Ester in terms of his love. In this context, the collapse of spaces does not bring a positive outcome to Ester and Johan. Their relationship can only thrive with a certain distance mostly with the help of language and meanings. They fail to develop corporal intimacy or emotional harmony that are generally brought by spatial proximity. At the thematic level, these aspects again highlight Ester’s association with mind, meanings, and language rather her corporeal capacity.

As elaborated, Johan’s first active involvement in the events appears undeniably a cynical one, and interestingly this has strong resonances with the novel he reads in this scene: *A Hero of Our Time* (Lermontov, 2009)¹²⁶. When Johan starts revealing Anna’s secret to Ester, the cover of this novel, another intertextual ‘window/screen’, conspicuously invades the screen. Like Rubens’s painting, this window too offers another level of fictionality and narrativity (referential threads) to interpret the scene. In particular, this extra-diegetic cinematic act can encourage audiences to contemplate the resemblances between Johan and the enigmatic protagonist of the book: Pechorin¹²⁷. Lermontov’s Pechorin is the “most fully developed... Byronic hero”; “intelligent, talented, and strong, he is frustrated at the impossibility of finding an outlet for his strivings” (Lantz, 2004, p. 233). Moreover, Byronic hero is often associated with Lord Macaulay’s (1866, p. 412) famous words: “a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection”.

This intertextual association between Johan and Pechorin, as well as the ironic title of the novel *A Hero of Our Time* can further hint that Johan is not any

¹²⁶ He reads a Swedish translation of the Russian novel by Lermontov.

¹²⁷ Cohen (1993, p. 222) observes that Pechorin’s traits can be relevant to Johan, Ester, and Bergman’s biological character.

more just an observer but a subtle intervener of the diegetic events and cinematic plot. Furthermore, like Pechorin, he is ambivalent, confused, and a product of the unpromising epoch he lives in. However, from a different perspective, this obvious and even pompous intertextual reference that is not directly relevant to the diegesis can be taken as a reflective critique of the interpretational process itself. This is particularly relevant to the continuously persisting reflexivity of *The Silence*. The cinematic audience, like Johan, who is motivated by the ravenous appetite of meanings, interprets anything that is available to them. In this sense, the implied filmmaker Bergman himself is the Hero of Our Time who entices his audience to voraciously interpret his text by making the diegesis diffused and extra-diegetic signs abundant. Ester finally seems to sense Johan's coldness and moves away from him at the end of the scene. She also changes the subject to 'language', and Johan evidently becomes enthusiastic again. She teaches him a few words she learnt from the old butler—hand and face. But ironically, these chosen 'words' are evocative of relationships and communication beyond words and language.



Meanwhile, as the next parallel cut reveals, boredom rules in Anna's room. Anna attempts to find words through a prolonged yawn while her lover deeply contemplates his shoes. Anna's soliloquy implies that she has been continuously berating Ester's dominance over her, although the man cannot understand any of her words. When characters communicate with each other verbally in fiction, the communication between the characters and audience is subliminal, and the mediation attempts to further repress it. But the waiter and Anna's underscored disconnection through language at the diegetic level emphasises the connection between Anna's words and the cinema audience at the extra-diegetic level.

According to her fragmented speech, Ester manipulates Anna with her disease. Furthermore, against Ester's recommendations, Anna loves food and she is a good driver even in Ester's opinion. At one level of meaning, these confessions overdetermine Anna's association with corporeality and Ester's affirmation of it. Anna's rude and unrestrainedly slack posture further reinforces this sense. From another perspective, despite Anna's condemnation of Ester, Anna still has to use Ester's 'opinion' to prove her point. This again makes Anna's 'thought' contradictory.

At this point, Anna feels that Ester has come to her door and is lurking outside. She can also hear Ester's words 'are you in there?' From the extra-diegetic perspective, the thematic subject that was already haunting Anna's words (Ester's opinions) now transmutes into a diegetic event in the form of Ester's physical arrival. Anna deliberates a moment, turns off the table lamp, and when she opens the door, she has already organised a calculated scene to horrify Ester. When Ester enquires, "where are you?", Anna turns on the table lamp for Ester to see that she is kissing her lover in his embrace. This 'tableau vivant show' can again evoke another version of the painting of *Nessus and Deianira* to the audience. In this version, Anna/Deianira's gaze is aimed at the diegetic audience/Ester. Appalled, Ester staggers to the window looking for some 'intelligible view' or 'mind-screen' but the windows are covered with curtains in this room. Although she fiddles with a curtain for a moment, she dare not open them. As intended, she gathers that Anna wants to deliberately hurt her, and accordingly, her first question erupts: "What have I done to deserve this?"

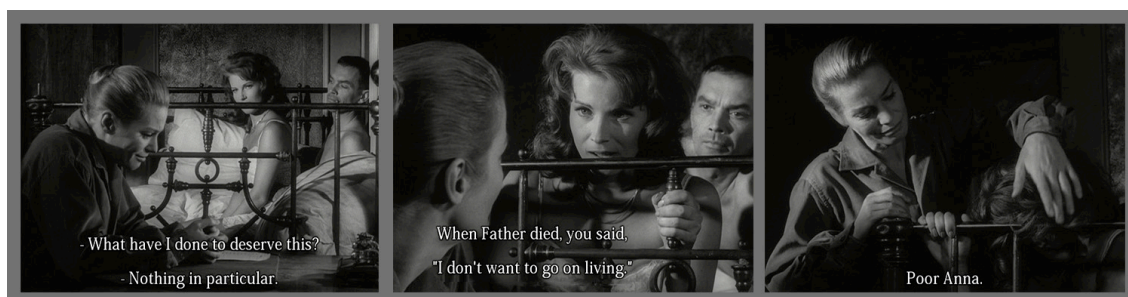
The subsequent discussion between the two sisters appears as an acrimonious exchange between a provoked prisoner and a guard, or a caged animal and a keeper. The visual composition highlights this sense by capturing seated Ester against the rails of Anna's bed. Pyjama-clad Ester with her tight

hairdo and lingerie-clad Anna with loose-hair again seem to signify their typical roles (oppressor, victim and mind, body) also with associated gender overtones (masculinity/femininity). Anna accuses Ester that she always ‘harped on her



principles’ and ‘droned on about how important everything is’. This is because Ester is an egomaniac. Ester always emphasised that ‘everything has to be desperately important and meaningful’. Anna further discloses her opinion that Ester has always hated and feared her. Vehemently refusing Ester’s counter-objections, she challenges Ester: “with all your education, and all the fancy books you’ve translated can you answer me one thing? When father died, you said, I don’t want to go on living... So why are you still around?”

At both diegetic and thematic levels, this verbal reproach seems to cement Ester and Anna’s polarised characters/themes but also elaborately unfolds the underlying contradictions and repressed tension between them. Anna implies that Ester associates her way of life and ideals with ‘father’, and exploits father’s name to persecute Anna. Unsurprisingly these recurrent allusions appeal to the



thematic narrativity developed in the film. While the audience can reasonably associate ‘father’ with the patriarchal order and language, Ester’s diegetically and extra-diegetically manifest characteristics/signs in many scenes also underpin her patriarchal associations. According to Anna’s implications, now Ester lives only for these ideals and their propagation. They always insist work,

significance, and pursuit of meaning. Ester does not know any other way to live and asks, 'how else are we to live?' However, the ongoing tension between Ester's femininity (indexical/character) and symbolically performed masculinity tend to decentre the audiences' ideological interpretations of her gender. Although Anna continuously criticises Ester for her ego, hatred, and pursuit of meaning, Anna's reproachful words also become increasingly ironic with the context. She egoistically rages at Ester with profound hatred and verbally and physically emphasises the *importance* of her questions and claims. Now she also needs significant *answers* and *meanings*. Anna moreover reveals that she admired Ester and even wanted to follow her. In this sense, now she has assumed Ester's interrogative role. She interprets Ester's obsessive attention as a hatred of "me, and everything that's mine".

Thematically, Ester's pursuit of order and meaning is what leads to her hatred of unconquerable chaos embodied by Anna: Anna does not follow her socially assigned roles and values. Ironically, now Anna's hatred also seems to be motivated by the same conviction: Ester does not follow her given female role and values by engaging with language, meanings, and power. While Anna implies that Ester has a 'father' and his ways behind her oppressive tactics, Anna also exploits a 'man' to contest Ester. At this precise point, she is caged with this unknown man in her bed, and behind Anna, his naked upper-body intrudes the frame as a loyal guard dog who is ready to protect its master.

Although Ester seems to be genuinely shocked and confused, she again haughtily claims that 'I'm sure you've got it all wrong'. Although Ester repeatedly insists that she loves Anna, Ester's conceited words 'poor Anna' evidently provokes her sister and also emanate a paradoxical sense, considering Ester's equally pathetic situation. Anna's vehement objection against Ester's use of a self-important 'tone', seems to imply that Ester has customarily exploited it to belittle Anna, although its 'content' is empty. Anna hysterically yells at Ester and orders her to leave immediately.

As usual, the dialogues in this scene appear to be smoothly coded at the diegetic level. But, the different referential layers of them only unfold at the extra-diegetic level with the active threads of thematic narrativity. Many extra-diegetic devices also strive to deconstruct the verbalised meanings, and therefore, the dialogues not only stress the typical traits of the characters but also highlights their internal contradictions. Although dialogues and language mostly seem to dominate this scene, here Bergman's mediation cinematically examines *language* and verbal meanings beyond their literal meanings and mimetic/diegetic significance. It is also significant that Anna (body/chaos) actively taking the architect's role in consciously critiquing (and subliminally deconstructing) language.

The manifest diegetic conflict between two sisters in this scene is also rooted in the subtle details related to their irrepressible humanity. Their sexuality, identity, insecurity, as well as the struggle for power and freedom often draw them towards and against their mutual affection. Highlighting these diegetic complexities, Bergman also diffuses the continuously active thematic essentialism. Like Anna, who chooses to experiment with language (by distorting verbal account of events and devising a scathing verbal assault on Ester), Ester too finally chooses to *physically* intrude Anna's corporeal space/room defying their predicted thematic traits. Although the two characters are often indicative of many thematic binaries (oppressor/victim, masculinity/femininity, mind/body), the indexical (female actors) and diegetic (characters/sisters) *femininity* behind them always alleviates their polarity. With these inversions, both characters transgress their thematically implied boundaries, without completely denying their thematic possibilities and significance. These intricacies ultimately help to erode the perennial thematic categories between *Apollonian* (mind/rationality/order) and *Dionysian* (body/irrationality/chaos) archetypes brought into *The Silence*. It also seems to indicate that the intricately mediated

tension between the diegetic and thematic levels in *The Silence* helps to reveal the limitations of ideological reduction¹²⁸ (mimesis) in art and representation.

The extra-diegetic mediation and the content of this sequence (hyperbolic mise-en-scene including dynamic lighting/shadows and the tableau-vivant show) also highlight the underlying theme of 'gaze and screen'. Instead of frames, the *light* acts the role of 'screen/region of view' in this scene. The light often appears to 'reveal' tantalising *visions*, *meanings*, or *insights* to the audience as well as to Ester and the darkness indicates potential secrets. Like in the previous scenes, Anna controls the table lamp several times by turning it off and on and also kicking the lamp at the end of the scene. Although Ester is the chaser of meanings at this moment, Anna has the power of her epistemic field. Appalled by Anna's show, Ester repeatedly walks away from the screen/light and walks into the screen/light. These devices aptly highlight the tension and reversal between the extra-diegetic and diegetic levels: instead of diegesis being narrated by the extra-diegetic mediation, the diegetic acts *appear* to mediate the extra-diegetic level. This sequence also teasingly sways between the plausible realism and caricatured expressionism foregrounding the narratological tension between diegetic and extra-diegetic discourses of *The Silence*.

As Ester leaves the room walking through the complete darkness, Anna laughs hysterically. If light indicates 'meanings', 'visions', and 'insights', the complete dark passages become thematically evocative of 'ignorance' and momentary detachment between 'mind' and 'body'. At this point, the waiter charges Anna and forcefully attempts to kiss and rape her, without any compassion for her agony. She struggles hard to escape from him (and accidentally kicks the table lamp), but in the next moment, despite her wails, he appears to penetrate Anna from behind. Although she does not explicitly resist

¹²⁸ Bergman famously declared that his God trilogy deals with reduction and *The Silence* is "the negative imprint" of certainty. Later he claims that the three films as a trilogy is an "idea found at the bottom of a glass of alcohol" but "not always holding up when examined in the sober light of the day" (Bergman, 2011, p. 245).

here, rather than a pleasurable sexual act or positive outcome, this event appears as an unexpected disaster in thematic terms. The bed rails confine her freedom like prison bars, and the high angle shot and the chiaroscuro/noir lighting amplify its dismal dimension.



Although, Anna appeared to control the man and the direction of actions so far, at this point he unexpectedly overpowers her and the course of events. This climax—with its visual composition as another tableau-vivant—can also evoke the possible intertextual relationship with the painting of ‘Nessus and Deianira’ and its mythical backstory. When the audience, as Johan’s counterpart, witnesses this dismal event, Johan’s obsession with the painting appears as a clairvoyant affair. As Deianira and Nessus’s (the centaur) encounter ultimately leads into Deianira and her son Hyllus’s conflict, Anna and the virile waiter’s alliance also leads to Anna and Johan’s estrangement. While their husbands have seemingly abandoned them, both Anna and Deianira devise their strategies against the patriarchy using the same heteronormative conventions, and consequently, they impel their sons to the same direction. The audiences can synthesise both the externally focalised direct narration (Johan’s interaction with the painting/Anna and waiter’s encounters) and the internally focalised narration (Johan’s view of the painting and its later subjective reappearances to Johan) to construct such comparative meanings. However, the allegorical association between the audience and Johan (as the diegetic counterpart of the extra-diegetic audience) in *The Silence* lends the *synthesis of focalisations* a special thematic significance.

Many sequences of *The Silence* appropriate the celebrated motifs of *film noir* and also teasingly encourage the intertextual associations/narrativity with *noir* metaphors. Cityscapes, complex hotel suits, beds, elaborated corridors, crowded pubs and streets, night scenes, table lamps, makeup, flashy jewellerys, 'phallic' guns and smoking cigarettes, seductive women, high contrast chiaroscuro islands, conspicuous shadows over light patches, dramatised compositions, shots captured through mirrors etc. are often prevalent in noir films (Mayer and McDonnell, 2007, pp. 70–83). These motifs thematically stress the constant tension between 'revealed' and 'hidden', which is also a dominant and omnipresent theme in *The Silence* and more generally in cinema. In this sense, the use of high contrast black and white is also a frequent thematic device in *noir* films, and Bergman exploits it inventively to play between spaces on screen even at micro levels, as discussed.

In terms of the plot and characters, Ester and Anna are also playfully evocative of the *private eye* and fugitive *femme fatale* motifs typical to *noir* genre. This line of narrativity reaches its stylistic and formal apex when Ester enters Anna's secret hideaway. According to Doane (2013, pp. 1–4), even the concept of *femme fatale* is remarkably compatible with the epistemological drive of *narrative* itself. With this archetype, sexuality and the "threat of woman" often become a site of the unknown, which needs to be exposed in the cinematic plot. "This imbrication of knowledge and sexuality of epistemophilia and scopophilia", which "has crucial implications of representations of sexual difference" (p.1) is also clearly manifest in *The Silence*, between its multidimensional character/theme relationships.

In this sense, Anna tantalisingly resembles a *femme fatale* mostly because she is the dominant site of "epistemophilia and scopophilia" to Ester, Johan, as well as the audience. She also challenges the male cultural ideals implied in Ester and Johan's conducts, and her highlighted associations with body and sexuality further flirt with the archetype. In Doane's words, "femme fatal is represented as the antithesis of maternal—sterile or barren, she produces nothing in a society

which fetishizes production” (p.2). Although Ester appears to immediately resemble the archetype in this sense, her commitment to culturally approved conventions and patriarchy weakens the archetype. She is also not the object for sexually fetishized gaze but the subject. However, Anna’s gradual estrangement with Johan, Ester’s subtly implied criticisms of Anna’s maternal conduct, and Anna’s refusal of culturally endorsed role compellingly encourage this line of ideological narrativity/master-plot. In this context, the climax that embarrasses Anna also implies a somewhat typical noir-like fiasco of the *femme fatale*. Nevertheless, rather than the archetypal demise of the *femme fatale*, this humiliating diegetic act, which Wood (Wood and Lippe, 2012, p. 174) describes as “buggery” and “sodomy”, can be considered as a playful pastiche in the thematic dimension.

Instead of a masculine protagonist, Anna’s character allures and misleads female Ester who chases her with patriarchal burdens and despotic gaze. Stylistically, although Anna is portrayed under the typical *noir* lighting, at many striking points, these lights appear to be blatantly controlled by herself within the diegesis by turning table lamps on and off¹²⁹. She also confronts and subverts ‘gaze of other’ repeatedly and disappoints herself at the end when she fails to do so. Furthermore, when the ‘fatal woman’ Anna interrogates and exposes the female ‘detective’ Ester, and also when Anna kicks and smashes the table lamp, which embodies the control, insights, meanings, and *noir* convention itself, *The Silence* seems to playfully overturn the *noir* motifs and associated ideology.

Although some analysts (Gado, 1986, p. 298) tend to observe the fall of the lamp as a simple visual symbol that attempts to express Anna’s internal ordeal, its implications have more intertextual depth in this continuously developed ‘noir’ context. Furthermore, Bergman includes the ‘epistemophilic and scopophilic’ audience into the diegesis of *The Silence* in the form of a curious

¹²⁹ For instance, this diegetic engagement with table lamps is a notable feature in the famous noir film Howard Hawk’s *The Big Sleep* (Hawks, 1946).

boy between two main characters. According to Hanson and O’Rawe (2010, p. 7 emphasis in original), the task of “‘finding’... the fatal woman” and “‘saving’ her from the ‘scandal’ of her misrepresentation” is a challenging critical endeavour. In this sense, first, Bergman’s cinematic discourse self-reflexively highlights the characters and themes (and also the tension between *known* and *unknown*) of *noir* and *cinema* itself in *The Silence*. Secondly, it deconstructs the *femme fatal*, *detective* and *the audience* archetypes and *noir* genre within the same film. In this broad sense, the use of noir devices, cryptic dialogues, painting, battle tank, Punch and Judy show, Lermontov’s book, etc. serve a unique post-modernist function without being relegated to the pretentious symbolism that ‘explain’ the diegetic relationships.

Saddened, Ester is now in the corridor outside Anna’s room. Ester can still hear the muffled wails of Anna. This sequence starts with a close-up of Ester, and it slowly recomposes the corridor to focus on the returning vaudevillian troupe. While Anna’s moan dips into their rising murmur, this mise-en-scene produces the effect that vaudevillians are emerging out from Ester’s head. Although Ester has not seen the vaudevillians before according to the diegesis, the audience is familiar with them and they can logically justify their return after the vaudevillian show in diegetic terms. However, considering the thematic importance of the corridor and ‘dwarfs’ in the film, and the mise-en-scene of this scene, the emergence of vaudevillians can also be taken as a thematic *mind screen* or *vision* of Ester. As the parade emerges against Anna’s audible moans and Ester’s preoccupations with Anna, it seems to be ‘about’ Anna. As discussed, the earlier scenes also made several thematic associations between ‘dwarf’s’ bridal dress and Anna. In Ester’s focalised perspective, the ‘dwarf’ parade that surrounds a ‘bride’ may appear as a farcical allegory that refers to Anna’s pathetic situation. In this allegory/metaphor, Anna appears to be the ‘absurd’ bride surrounded by ‘various’ unknown characters. But according to the external focalisation, the bride is also a disguised man, and ‘she’ is surrounded by the other disguised men, despite the portrayed gender

differences. As discussed earlier, if the 'male' dwarfs were looking for a 'female bride' or 'Snow White' to assert their gender status, now they seem to be happily celebrating their success. But ironically, this bride is from their own male group and it is also a part of role-playing. The narrativity developed on this 'vision' perhaps helps to metaphorically stress that Anna's rage has trapped her in the very 'patriarchal' system and heteronormative strategies, which she attempts to escape from.

From another perspective, however, the vaudevillian characters seem to have come to terms with their assigned roles even outside the stage. They casually salute to Ester and even seem to enjoy and celebrate their play with drinks and chatters. Despite their different roles, there seems to be some common thread which unite them: perhaps their self-awareness of role-playing itself. Notwithstanding the diverse roles they play, the 'wise dwarfs' appear to know what they do and the consequences of their actions. But Anna or Ester's social or gender roles do not seem to offer them any satisfaction, and both refuse to acknowledge that they are trapped in a system of role-playing and their consequences. Their competition against each other reinforce the predicaments that incessantly torment them. Gado (1986, p. 304) even highlights *Cyrano*, the big nosed, intellectual protagonist from the Victorian play *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Rostand, 2004) and *death* as the leading and trailing characters in the parade. If his references are tenable, these characters can be also considered as a thematic mockery aimed at Ester. *Cyrano* is a master of *language* but fails to marry his lover and perishes due to his excessive adherence to principles. Although audiences can metaphorically associate this 'visionary parade' and its consequences with Ester, the 'dwarf' vaudevillians' relationships with Johan and Anna are not available to Ester 'within' the diegesis. But the extra-diegetic insights, diegetic relationships, and the intertextual references are available to the audience, and they can integrate all these resources crossing the diegetic and extra-diegetic boundaries. In fact, the lack of a meaningful diegetic

relationship between vaudevillians and Ester encourages audiences to read this visionary parade on the thematic level.

Furthermore, these potential fictional allegories represented by 'dwarfs' in *The Silence* are an interesting interplay between multi-dimensional cinematic representations. First and foremost, they are people with dwarfism (iconic/indexical 'male dwarfs'). It is important to recognise this non-fictional reference to understand the culturally associated significance of 'dwarfs'. Then these real 'dwarf'-actors act the characters of *vaudevillians* in the film (iconicity/symbol). In the diegesis, they also act two set of roles as off-stage performers (dwarf vaudevillians) and performed characters (the bride, Cyrano, death, clown, and other on-stage characters). Furthermore, their potential thematic significance (dwarfs as children/Johan, dwarfs as threshold guardians, dwarfs as dwarfs from Snow White, Cyrano as Ester, Bride as Ester etc.) offer several other contextual/intertextual referential levels (symbols) and progressive signifying instances (narrativity). In the theatre scene, they all collectively perform a human centipede on stage that act as a *phallic motif* in the context. All these referential levels also develop various significant narrative threads (semiosis) with other characters and events throughout the film. Therefore, these interesting episodes with vaudevillians in *The Silence* help to unravel the cinematic semiosis between iconicity, indexicality, and symbol. The potentials of such non-fictional/fictional signs are crucial in developing the interplay between narrativity and fictionality in cinema.

The corridor scene dips into the darkness as Ester's melancholic eyes follow this visionary parade of 'dwarfs', and contrastingly, the next shot unfolds as Anna ponders over her own image in the mirror in her room. This act again highlights the irony of Anna's words that claimed Ester as an egomaniac. Throughout the film, somewhat narcissistically, Anna attempts to examine her own image on mirrors, but Ester is not enamoured of her own image but others'. While Anna's companion is in the deep sleep, she gets ready to leave and lethargically meditates for a while against the distant chimes of church bells.

These monotonous chimes have now replaced the extra-diegetic clock ticking. Then she fiddles with her metallic bangles for some time and decides to wear them notwithstanding their irritating clatters. According to these diegetic and extra-diegetic details, it is difficult to assume that there have been any significant



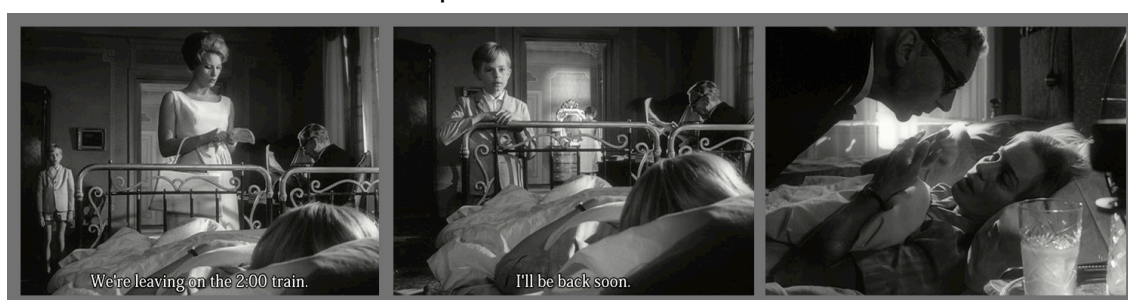
changes in her outlook. At the end of the scene, she discovers that Ester has fainted at the corridor against her door. When Anna agitatedly shouts ‘Ester!’ holding her sister, the gush of sisterly compassion in her voice and demeanour vehemently insists the audience’s attention to their diegetic relationship. Such irresistible referential alterations between different cinematic tiers often highlight the intricacies and multiplicities of characters and representations in *The Silence*.

4.9. Johan Between Ester and Anna

In the penultimate act of *The Silence*, the old butler cares for ailing Ester. Anna informs Ester that she is leaving Timoka on the two o’clock train with Johan, and they both go out for a quick meal before their journey. Ester, now alone with the butler, asks for her writing pad and attempts to write some foreign words for Johan. As Anna and Johan are late, Ester grows nervous. She gives an incoherent speech to the caring butler although he cannot understand her words but the demeanour. Later, she appears to suffer intensely with emotional and physical pain. She indicates that she is on her deathbed by covering her own face with the white sheet. After a while, Johan revisits Ester and removes the white sheet. Ester opens her eyes and asserts that she is not going to die. She declares that she has written him an important letter. Johan eagerly collects it and embraces Ester with affection. When Anna calls Johan, he reluctantly

leaves with her. As Anna takes Johan away, the butler also sadly leaves the room, leaving Ester alone.

By this point, the extra-diegetic functions and the formal symmetry between the ostensibly frail old butler and the brawny waiter become salient. Although they serve Ester and Anna with their contrasting roles in diegetic terms, extra-diegetically, they offer apt formal devices to the thematic contrast and communicational needs of the sisters/characters. First, both the butler and waiter are men, and Bergman referentially/allegorically associates their characters with the centaur depicted in the 'Nessus and Deianira' as discussed



earlier in detail. In this sense, they provide contrasting facades to the underlying theme of patriarchy in the film, which both female characters flirt with in different forms. Their gradual associations with *horses*, *gaze*, *sexuality*, and *death* motifs further investigate different cultural themes related to the patriarchy and its potential dangers. When Ester is the propagator of 'father's rule', and when she flirts with death, the old butler seemingly assumes the 'kind' face of patriarchy in the form of the carer role and even the surrogate father. The extra effort he makes in caring for Ester and Johan, and his apparent distance towards Anna reinforce the relevant theme. This bleak thematic dimension however does not necessarily prevent audience's ethical appreciation towards him when he loyally and sympathetically cares for the suffering and ailing woman in diegetic terms; Cohen (1993, p. 226) even calls him "the angelic old porter". In fact, this thematic and diegetic contradiction often contributes to stress the irony of the themes 'known' and 'unknown' and 'appearance' and 'reality' prevalent in *The Silence*. In contrast, the waiter from the bar appears to be a cold opportunist and a literal personification of virile Nessus. He treats Anna the same way Anna treats him:

as a means to each other's needs. Nevertheless, this waiter also substitutes Johan's absent 'father' by assuming the role of an oedipal competitor for his mother's love. This move assumedly shapes Johan's sense of sexuality and impels Johan towards a heteronormative adulthood.

Secondly, both sisters talk to their servants although they cannot understand each other's language, thereby providing a diegetic placeholder for sisters/characters to indirectly address the cinematic audience. The foregrounded communicational barrier between diegetic characters nevertheless brings the 'repressed' function of diegetic conversations in cinematic communication to the fore, reflexively. These tantalisingly equivocal soliloquies also highlight the expressionistic propensities in Anna and Ester's characters, whereas Johan's character—in his interactions with the adults, old butler, and vaudevillians—complies more closely with the realistic conventions—at least in the immediate impression. For example, Johan does not talk to the foreigners with the realisation that they cannot understand his language. His dialogues with Ester and Anna are more literal, mimetic, and less coded/abstract.

This volatile tension between expressionism and realism in *The Silence* often strains the observed boundaries of representational conventions and conditioned expectations. Not only it highlights the theme of dynamic communication against the sense of cinema as an object of gaze, it may also help to defamiliarise the *representations* of gender, language, space, and temporality on screen. Furthermore, Anna and Ester's oblique addresses to the audience over their male companions who are inaccessible through a mutual language may also signal a possible chasm between gender experiences. For example, Blackwell asserts that the "fluid subjective style that incorporates interior monologue sequences can be seen as privileging a feminist experience" (1997, p. 118) of Bergman's texts.

Even in this, Ester's last scene, her preoccupations seem to alternate between language, sexuality, patriarchy, death, and propagation. Although the old butler appears extremely kind and caring in the diegetic sense, this very fact and his assimilated thematic associations remarkably interfere with many aspects of this scene. When Ester attempts to write 'foreign words' in her pad for Johan, the extra-diegetic clock ticking motif slowly returns, and with its upsurge, Ester evidently loses interest in her writing. It also coincides with the old butler's attempt of winding his pocket watch. This action that is not



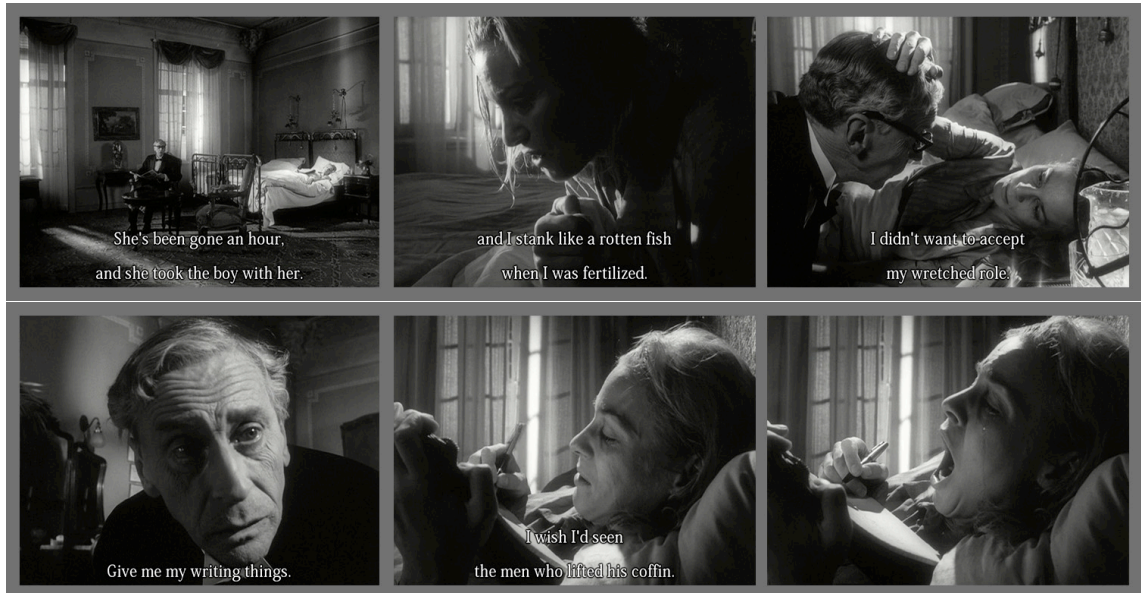
significant at the diegetic level becomes a strong thematic allusion with the familiar and repetitive extra-diegetic sound effect and the employed mise-en-scene. Audiences can relate it with the threats inherent to Ester's flirtation with writing/language or her impending death because the old butler is also thematically associated with *patriarchy* and *death*. Because this action is captured in Ester's visual perspective, and the clock sound effect can also be taken as a subjective externalisation, audiences can also infer it as a despairing 'vision' of Ester. Ester's fretful rolling eyes against the clock-ticking sound, stark lighting over her face, and the usual oblique angle through which corpses are seen, impart an unmistakable morbid dimension to Ester's next close-ups.

All these cinematic signs associate death with clock-ticking, and perhaps the old butler—or death—is the one who sets this moribund clock: according to the butler's expressive gestures, the time left is short for Ester. When Ester suddenly claims that Anna 'has been gone an hour and she took the boy with her', the clock ticking sound relates to Ester's growing anxiety as well as its most familiar function, the inevitable time passing. Her anxious slaps on the bed also appear as an attempt to stop time, and at least they suddenly interrupt the clock-

ticking sound, evidently disconcerting the old butler/death. This cinematic experience and its potential meanings meticulously rely on both the metaphoric and fictional associations and the non-fictional factual relationships—mise-en-scene, editing, acting etc.—developed in the film in the form of narrativity. They do not allow audiences to immerse in the fictional/diegetic domain or ‘possible worlds’, by gradually conditioning audiences to subjugate the extra-diegetic mediation. Furthermore, the transgressive narrativity and fictionality of this scene expose/deconstruct the conceptual and ideological boundaries between diegetic, extra-diegetic, and thematic tiers that are generally repressed by realistic cinematic/narrative conventions. However, despite these collapsed boundaries, the narrativity and fictionality in *The Silence* still act as the fundamental rhetorical resources of its coherently mediated communicational discourse.

The cinematic mediation of the next sequence further extends its scrutiny into other related thematic aspects beyond death. The fragmented verbal statements of Ester, seemingly directed at the melancholic butler gradually become cryptic and impenetrable in the diegetic sense. Despite the difficulty of finding cohesive meanings in her deliveries, which can also be taken as a reflexive criticism of language itself, there are some threads that evoke familiar themes developed in the film. First, she seems to denounce all forms of sexuality with the words ‘it’s all a matter of erections and secretions... semen smells nasty to me... I stank like a rotten fish when I was fertilised... it’s optional’. Her extremely pathetic demeanour makes this disclosure a sincere ‘confession before extreme unction’ as she claims. Now, for the first time in the film, despite the bedside fan, she seems to feel the heat around her and wipes the sweat from her armpits with the bed sheet. Not only this act arouses phenomenal sense of her words ‘secretions, semen, and nasty smells’ but also indicates her internal transmutations in related to her earlier physical immunity. Then she holds her hand over the old butler’s head as if she swears by it. Her next words sound as a confession of failure before someone who assigned her a task (more aptly a

father figure): 'I didn't want to accept my wretched role... we try out attitudes and find them all worthless... the forces are too strong'. When she talks about her dreadful loneliness, the old butler's extreme close-up face provides an expressive visual field to her emotional words.



After her confession, she appears to be somewhat relieved, declares so, and resumes her writing; however, her reminiscences about the 'father' who is 'so kind' and 'weighed 440 pounds' again distract her from her task. According to Ester, she shares the 'condition of euphoria' with him, and he used to 'laugh and joke'. These equivocal and ironic words in the current despondent context most likely invite audiences to grasp the metaphysical significance of her statements instead of the *diegetic* 'facts' about her past; also, the sarcasm lurking behind her words is palpable. Euphoria, laugh, and jokes all appear as suppressive devices against the decisive misery and graveness associated with the 'father'. When she recalls her father's subsequent words 'now it's eternity, Ester', the 'eternity' also seems to impishly refer to her imminent death as well as the father's death; when she mockingly refers to the 'men' who lifted his extremely heavy coffin, the audience can interpret her words as an allusion to the subjects who carry the 'coffin' of patriarchy, including Ester. Perhaps, this weight is the major 'force' she is constantly crushed with; or contrarily, she may

have realised that the ceremonial and superficial role-playing cannot withstand the brute ‘forces’ against it.

Next, ‘euphoric’ Ester starts to yawn, whine, and convulse as if she is in her death throes. She groans, ‘No, I don’t want to die like this... Now I’m frightened... Must I die alone?’. Despite her strongly conveyed physical and emotional agony, her preceding esoteric words and erratic hysteria arguably create an emotional coldness between Ester and the audience on the diegetic level. Further, the dramatic character/camera relationship, demonic lighting, and



the subsequent extra-diegetic foghorn underscore the thematic significance of her words: although she accepted and carried her father’s burdensome inheritance after his death, she is going to die alone without an heir. This anxiety of solitude and Ester’s urge to pass the ‘foreign words’ to Johan ironically contrasts with her condemnation of sexuality and propagation, a few seconds ago. Previously, a foghorn, which is a hazard signal for lack of visibility, sounded when Johan was walking towards Ester’s suite after he was disillusioned with Anna. Amid the same sound of a foghorn (more amplified), now Ester suddenly calls for her *mother* to save her from her ordeal, seemingly disillusioned with her cumbersome father: ‘Mother, come and help me! I’m so frightened! I don’t want to die’¹³⁰. This surprising last-resort appeal to mother may also reveal her repressed regard for maternity against her ideological attachment to ‘father’. Finally, Ester herself covers her face with the white bedsheet indicating her

¹³⁰ It is baffling when Blackwell (1997, p. 110) claims that “tellingly, the sister’s mother is never mentioned in *The Silence*; she is effectively erased”. In fact, Ester’s earnest appeal to mother is present in the script (Bergman, 1967, p. 141) as well as the film, and considering its implications could have given a further thrust to her broad argument about the representation of femininity and motherhood in *The Silence*.

probable death. With this diegetic act, the extra-diegetic foghorn dies out again highlighting the rhetorical correlation between diegetic and extra-diegetic tiers.

At this point, Johan enters the room, solemnly walks towards Ester's body, and resolutely removes the bed sheet. Ester appears to be resurrected from her ostensible death and opens her eyes. Unlike in the first train sequence, Johan is clothed in a full coat in this scene conceivably indicating his inner maturity and budding adulthood. It may also imply his inclination towards the masculine social



conventions endorsed by Ester. This coat with its shade and shape clearly resembles what Ester was wearing in the first train sequence. Further, Johan now clearly shows a strong empathy and keen concern towards Ester. When he leaves the room at first, he emphasises that “I’ll be back soon” and he keeps his promise earnestly. When he hears about the ‘important’ letter, he intently takes it from the old butler who also eagerly assists Ester’s cause.

However, Anna is evidently not keen to see Ester again; if the end of the earlier scene at Anna’s door indicated a possible sympathy from Anna, this scene shows that it was transitory. Anna has resolutely made up her mind to leave Ester in Timoka, and she also acts as it is important to remove Johan from Ester’s influence, notwithstanding his apparent reluctance. She complains of the ‘awful’ heat in the room in her first visit, and when Ester indicates that Anna’s leaving Timoka with Johan is a wise decision later, she claims that “I didn’t ask for your opinion’. Her lack of sympathy shows that her attitude towards Ester is remorseless. It easily allows audiences to empathise with Johan’s inclination for Ester. After Anna and Johan leave, the old butler also deliberates a moment and leaves the room, leaving Ester alone. At this moment, the old butler/death also

seems to disown her; in other words, it may indicate that Ester is not on the verge of death anymore. Thematically, this may support the notion that Ester's letter contains something, which 'propagates' her goal. Although she seems to denounce the biological propagation (body), she succeeds in propagating through language (symbol).

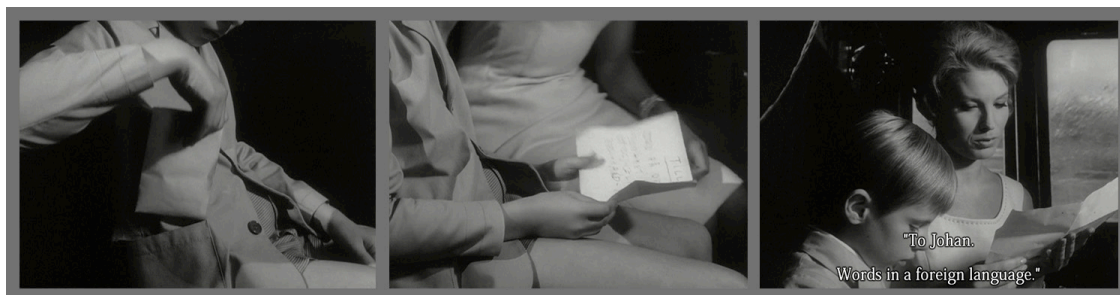


When Anna commands Johan to leave, Johan makes a sudden move and disappears behind the bed. At this point, the prolonged close-up shot suddenly mirrors his move/disappearance/absence with a rapid tilt and a subsequent track out, reflexively reminding us of the presence of the camera/audience. This uninterrupted wide shot respectively follows Johan, Anna, and the old butler's withdrawals and finally tracks into forlorn Ester's face. Although she is completely motionless, her miserable groan and eerily penetrating eyes indicate that she is alive. Her eyes resolutely hold on to the camera/audience, and the audience, as Johan's counterpart, allegorically connect Ester with Johan. The immediate cut to the next close-up of Johan, who is travelling in the train, is further significant in this sense.

4.10. Back on the Train

In the last act of *The Silence*, Anna, and Johan travel together in their homebound train. The first close-up composition is a lengthy choreographed shot. Starting with Johan, the camera follows his moving eyeline to reframe a visibly tense Anna on the opposite seat and returns to him. Then, as Johan's eyeline lowers, the camera follows his look again to show that he takes Ester's letter out from his pocket and unfolds it carefully. This same shot also allows

audiences to see that a concerned Anna moves to Johan's seat. At this point, Johan cautiously folds the letter again. Inquisitive, Anna takes it and after reading the first line— 'To Johan. Words in a foreign language', returns it with the mocking remark, 'Nice of her'. In the same shot, Johan starts reading the letter.



The motivated camera from Johan's *gaze* and *eyeline* in this lengthy shot (that is also inevitably connected to the audiences' *gaze* and *eyeline*) gradually refines a specific thread of extra-diegetic narrativity. Its significance derives from the last shot of the previous scene, in which Ester's resolute look connects with the camera/audience. This established link between Ester's look and the audiences' eyeline metonymically connects with Johan's eyeline in the next scene. It continues until Johan starts to read Ester's letter and aptly terminates in Johan's extreme close-up. Although Anna joins in the shot in the middle (in Johan's view), the camera does not follow her eyeline. When she looks down, the frame returns to Johan along his eyeline. First, this extra-diegetic narrativity reinforces the sense that the camera/audience is the intermedial agency/medium between Ester and Johan across the two different shots/scenes (against space and time). Secondly, it reinforces the significance of the letter as Ester's legacy to Johan. The letter is also the ultimate 'message' to the audience as Johan's allegorical counterpart outside the diegesis. In other words, these two meticulously choreographed shots build a bridge between the two scenes, and also a narrative strand that interweaves Ester's intent/look, the audience, Johan and the letter.

The tantalising 'message' of Ester, which is laden with many allegorical meanings throughout the film, is significant to the audience as well as Johan because it seems to carry the 'key' to film's evasive overall meaning. The film's

hunt of meanings starts with Johan's first dialogue as he points to the notice displayed on the train cabin: 'what does that mean?'. Ester, the translator, fails to translate this notice written in an unknown language, and since then she presumably attempts to learn this foreign language from her immediate contact, the old butler, and possibly from her books; she also promises to share foreign words with curious Johan. If this 'foreignness' represents 'unknown', the allegorical journey into the unknown starts with the train journey itself, by which the main characters of *The Silence* enter *Timoka* the foreign/unknown city. Although the purpose of the journey is not apparent in diegetic terms, the very absence of it highlights its thematic significance. However, Ester, Johan, and



Anna's interaction with this foreignness or unknown takes clearly distinct forms and means. Although Ester desires to explore the 'unknown', she is trapped in the old, labyrinthine, and conventional hotel/fortress, and she only liaises with her close and immediate circle. Anna, in contrast, invades the foreignness/unknown physically (streets, bar, theatre, and also the church if her verbal account is true) despite the consequences, and also brings it into their private territory—in the form of the waiter and rain in this last scene, when she opens the window. She also questions and challenges the authenticity of mediated means, particularly of language¹³¹. Johan is the one who explores it both ways from the beginning, following both adults. He seemed to enjoy physical encounters (corridors, rooms, the butler, painting, electrician, vaudevillians etc.) as well as the means of mediated means (painting, reading,

¹³¹ These are just dominant traits associated with these two characters; the various aspects of the film diffuse such thematic essentialisms by complicating their characters as discussed.

windows, key holes, puppet play etc.). But at the same time, he is often interrupted from his exploration and repetitively removed from spaces (the rail cabin, Anna's bathroom, painting, vaudevillians' room, Ester and Ann's conversation, Anna's secret room, and Ester's deathbed). He perseveres against difficulties, but his entrance into language and mediated means become prominent towards the end of the film, with more and more prohibitions.

The inflated importance given to Ester's letter by all the characters indicates that the significance of the letter is not just about its content in diegetic terms. Nevertheless, Anna's curiosity still shows the diegetic significance of the letter because she is the only person who is completely unaware of its possible content. Anna seems to have expected something more relatable in the letter. In her view, perhaps it could be Ester's verdict of Anna. But ironically, when she realises that the letter is just the 'words' in foreign language, she is no longer concerned about its content or consequences. Her mocking remark and the air of nonchalance betray that she has completely lost her faith with Ester's *means* of knowledge including *letters*, *language*, and underlying *meanings*; but still she seems to be concerned about Johan's new-found confidence on Ester, and his obsession with language and meanings. She opens the window and raises her face to the rain; and the deafening sound of the ambience, the storm that assault the cabin, and Anna's erratic behaviour evidently distract Johan's concentration. But to her horror, he seems to be adamant in learning the unknown foreign words despite the challenges of physical resistance brought by Anna. In audiences' omniscient view, this letter is the legacy bequeathed by Ester who represents abstract mind, soul, or language. Therefore, the resistance to Johan's endeavour brought by the real, physical, chaotic world *revealed* and also *represented* by Anna is coherent in the context.

The final shot of the film delves into Johan's *face* while he is trying to understand the words against all the obstacles. As the shot grows tighter, Johan's face gradually becomes an exaggerated visual field that highlights its abstract details instead of the narrative 'meanings'. Similarly, the audience, as

Johan's extra-diegetic counterpart, struggles to imagine the unseen words, their possible meanings, and their potential significance against the ambiguous 'story' of *The Silence*. The film does not present the specific foreign words in concrete terms to the audience, and therefore, the meanings of the possible words (and also the meaning of the film) become entirely free of references. But the ending of the film fiercely insists on the stability of their unseen meanings within the context. Ironically, the audience is also aware that the foreign 'words' themselves cannot offer conclusive meanings or the expected answers to the questions posed by the film beyond what is available to be experienced on screen. The climactic close-up of Johan's face and his struggle with the indecipherable letter in his hands are more alluring for meanings, and in turn, it may also recall the only translated 'foreign' words by Ester in a previous scene: *face* and *hand*. Plausibly, Ester's illegible message in the context of Bergman's mediation emphasises the means of *seeing*, *touching*, and *being* in the world immanently, instead of merely relying on treacherous words and corrupt language¹³². However, rather than unreflecting immersion (Anna/ body/ sensuousness) or the extreme alienation from reality (Ester/mind/language), Bergman's cinematic discourse seems to suggest a reflective synthesis. If *The Silence* also scrutinises cinema as a theme, cinema itself is a complex synthesis on this reality/language scale. As discussed, cinematic semiosis is a progression that interweaves iconicity (firstness), indexicality (secondness), and also symbolism (thirdness) in the Peircean sense. Considering this multifarious exploration of language, Sontag's (1967, p. 191) assessment on the theme of language in *The Silence* seems clearly inadequate: "Bergman does not take the theme beyond the fairly banal range of the "failure of communication" of the soul isolated in pain, and the "silence" of abandonment and death"¹³³.

¹³² Such a conclusion is also consistent with Bergman's preoccupation and ambivalence towards language at the time of film's production as Koskinen (2011, pp. 67–83) elaborates at length.

¹³³ Nevertheless, with this comment, Sontag intends to suggest that Bergman goes beyond these limits in *Persona*.

5. *Persona* and Its Nested Dolls

In this chapter, I highlight how the prologue of *Persona* extends some of the formal and thematic aspects that Bergman developed in *The Silence*. This chapter also focuses on how the prologue of *Persona* helps to reinforce the notion of *auteur* by highlighting the mediating agency and the intertextuality across Bergman's oeuvre.

5.1. *Persona* and its Story

Susan Sontag's (2000) seminal essay 'Bergman's *Persona*' (1967) testifies to the fact that Bergman's film had elicited some post-classical narratological concerns even before classical narratological tenets and vocabulary were firmly established. She asserts that *Persona* cannot be reduced to a cohesive *diegesis*, which she variously calls 'anecdote', 'plot', or 'story'. In an often-quoted line, she claims that "even the most skilful attempt to arrange a single, plausible anecdote out of the film must leave out or contradict some of its key sections, images, and procedures" (p.64). However, Sontag clarifies that, "this doesn't mean that the narration has forfeited "sense". But it does mean that sense isn't necessarily tied to a determinate plot" (p.70, emphasis in original). Strikingly, she even suggests the possibility of thematic narrative threads independent of the story, which depend on unique formal devices.

Other kinds of narration are possible besides those based on a story, in which the fundamental problem is the treatment of the plot line and the construction of characters. For instance, the material can be treated as a *thematic resource*, one from which different (and perhaps concurrent) narrative structures are derived as variations. But inevitably, the formal mandates of such a construction must differ from those of a story (or even a set of parallel stories). (P.72, emphasis in original)

Sontag's account even seems to suggest a narratological approach that examines the extra-diegetic (phenomenal/formal), diegetic (story/mimetic), and

thematic (aboutness/intentionality) tiers. Furthermore, Sontag realises that the form of *Persona* poses unique challenges to the interplay involving the spectatorial and textual dynamics of narrative—or in the context of this study, *narrativity*.

In contrast, the development of a theme-and-variation narrative is much less linear. The linear movement can't be altogether suppressed, since the experience of the work remains an event in time (the time of viewing or reading). But this forward movement can be sharply qualified by a competing retrograde principle, which could take the form, say, of continual backward—and cross—references. Such a work would invite reexperiencing, multiple viewing. It would ask the spectator or reader ideally to position himself simultaneously at several different points in the narrative (p.73).

As Sontag assumes, the senses, stories, or even the theses presented by *Persona* may inspire multiple hypotheses, and a narrative semiosis may encourage continuous mutations (based on multiple viewings) of those hypotheses. According to such a post-analysis of the formal devices, *Persona* can even be described as a compilation of several discrete segments. The central diegesis or 'story world' of *Persona* involves a series of events between its two female protagonists named as Elisabet (a veteran film and stage actress, wife, and a mother) and Alma (an unmarried novice nurse); their universe is encompassed by a montage-driven prologue and epilogue and divided by an interlude. Although the prologue is generally accepted as a single montage sequence in relation to the diegesis, it can also be divided into different segments¹³⁴ based on their content, function, and formal construction: the projector sequence; morgue sequence; and the title sequence. The central story/diegesis is divided into two episodes by the interlude, but the individual events of this diegesis are mostly accessible and unadorned. However, some later scenes of the first episode and most scenes of the second episode appear

¹³⁴ Persson (1996, p. 23) sees four parts, but I will later give my reasons for dividing it into three parts.

oneiric or hallucinatory in relation to the 'reality' of the story-world. These events can be loosely paraphrased as a narrative, which cinematically presents how the various identities/traits of Alma and Elisabet's characters emerge, overlap, merge, and conflict in their developing relationship. While their mutual femininity, physical resemblance, and the common experiences in life seem to evoke a parallel between the characters, the differences of their classes, professional status, maturity, and the star/fan dichotomy gradually interfere with a complete harmony. The possible veiled relations between the central diegesis and its montage sequences further complicate the interpretations of *Persona*. While these montage episodes can be considered playful satires on interpretation itself, to enjoy the satire, audiences need to partake in the activity of interpretation passionately.

5.2. *Persona* as a Riddle

From the perspective of this study, the prime importance of the montage sequences of *Persona* is their impressive ability to alternate audiences' experience between different representational tiers of cinema. Therefore, they also provide a resourceful instance to study the interplay between cinematic narrativity and fictionality. Although the montage sequences appear as playful compilations of eclectic shots, some successions of them form a sense of fleeting diegeses with their own coherent time and space. On the other hand, the phenomenal quality of rapid editing that resists the everyday experience of time and space sustains the sense of extra-diegetic tier throughout the montage sequences. Many comparable images, representations, and graphical compositions recur, also emanating a sense of visual assonance. The erratic fluctuations of light and sound, and the transience of diegetic narrativity may discourage the potential diegetic and thematic narrativity on the first viewing, but they do not completely wither the *hope* of meaning. For example, even the recurrent disruption of emerging order in the prologue can be associated with perhaps the most celebrated theme of *Persona*: the mutations of identities and

self. Furthermore, a certain rhythmic and poetic order that stems from the audio-visual symbiosis seems to promise a solvable cinematic riddle, the answers to which are hidden in the oncoming film.

However, rather than methodical decrypting, *Persona* interweaves more tantalising elements into this riddle with its progression. After spinning its ambiguous narrative, the film also revisits its cryptic prologue with its epilogue. But throughout its central narrative, the film captivates audiences with its apparent simplicity and the sense of a positive dénouement. Overall, the alluring promise of artistically coded meaning rather than the denial of meaning is perhaps the main appeal of *Persona*. In popular film critic Roger Ebert's (2002, p. 359) words, "*Persona* is a film we return to over the years for the beauty of its images and because we hope to understand its mysteries." At first, these inviting but slippery meanings and the sophisticated artistry together seem to reinforce the sense that the *author* is the final authority who has the key to decode the film. However, in the discussed noir terminology (section 4.8), *Persona* also ironically makes Bergman the 'criminal' who conceals the 'meanings'—rather than the source or *auteur*—and the audience the 'detective', reflexively externalising the communication. Alan Barr (1987, p. 127) also reminds that "*Persona* systematically thwarts the desire to know, that hallowed pursuit of plot-followers". In this sense, *Persona* becomes one of the most quintessential as well as ironic epitomes in the history of auteurism, mainly owing to its own deliberately intricate form and the distressing theme of *auteur*. As Staiger (2008, pp. 89–106) explains, if Bergman's authorship heavily depends on the strategies of *self-fashioning* (through filmography, autobiography, paratexts, interviews, previous films, critical discourse, etc.), *Persona* becomes a seminal event in the project. As Rugg (2014, pp. 1–33) contends, if some audiences¹³⁵ willingly and cooperatively construct the author's *projection of self* through films and paratexts, *Persona* inspires an interesting discourse at the hands of such

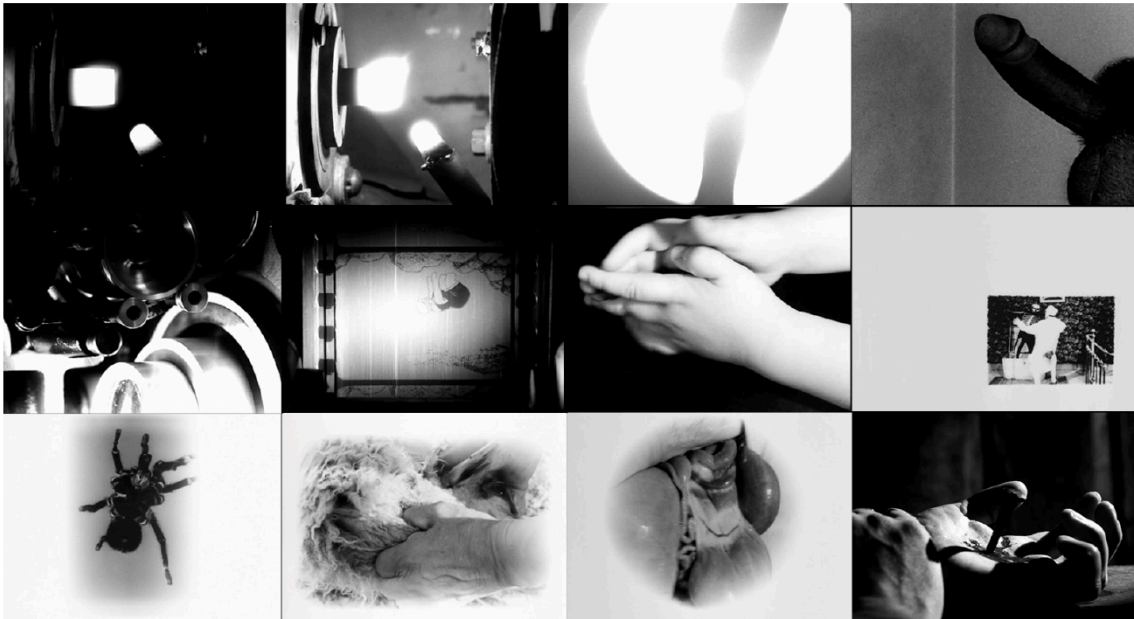
¹³⁵ the ideal *authorial audience* in Phelan and Rabinowitz's sense (Herman *et al.*, 2012, p. 6)

audiences. Staiger (2008, p. 93) asserts that while some authors do not imply that their biography is relevant for the interpretations of their work, Bergman zealously does. In this context, intertextuality, paratexts, and its unique extra-diegetic tier are imperative dimensions of *Persona*'s text and critical interpretations.

5.3. Prologue: The First Episode

Persona starts with a silent darkness (a deliberate black screen) that possibly embodies the cinematic *nothingness* considering the subsequent eerie sound effect and emerging light patches (something). These light patches gradually develop into a pair of burning carbon rods inside a cinema projector (embryonic meanings), and a dazzling spark between them seemingly generates a visual cacophony of light, intensified by the audio track. While this initial sequence is a montage of different shots, the potential narrativity between them is also tantalising. The carbon arcs, flickering light, intermittent darkness, rotating wheels, moving sprocket holes, the film leader with a countdown, and the coherent sound track first appear to 'tell' the diegetic *story* inside the cinema projector. At this initial stage, the most important function of the music track is its ability to act as a signpost of fictionality. In other words, it impels audiences to interpret the visual sequence along different referential levels (diegetic, extra-diegetic, metaphoric, thematic, poetic) rather than just a non-fictional record. The distinct tones, punctuations, and rhythms of the music track (often reacting to the visual punctuations) further elicit different emotional reactions and also highlight various interpretational potentials at relevant points. With this drive, these visuals also seem to reflexively remind audiences of the beginning of the film/cinema and allude to the apparatus or artificiality of cinema, as countless commentators have noted. The word 'start' in the film-counter becomes a reiteration of this sense. Moreover, in the context of the central narrative between Alma and Elisabet, the burning rods of the projector also seem a proleptic cinematic metaphor for the *emergence/mergence* theme: if the light in

the projector is a result of emergence and mergence of sparks, *self* and *other* are also emergent subjects of the interaction between individuals (dialectics).



Sequence 1 Prologue: The First Episode

At this point, Bergman's return to monochrome with *Persona*, after his first colour film *All These Women/ För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor* (1964)¹³⁶, also acquires a considerable significance. First, simply, the cinematic mediation with black and white itself can be considered a revival/continuation of the *noir* theme (unknown/known) that he developed in *The Silence*. But, in the context of the projector and the firing carbon arcs, the contrast between light and shade is also the fundamental form of cinema. In this sense, the emergence of light over darkness (in black and white) is an apt allusion to the emergence of the cinematic *image*, and as Törnqvist (1995, p. 144) reminds us, *Divine Creation*. The gap between the two carbon rods can also invoke the famous extended hand gesture in Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* (1552) and its connotations: anticipation, divine spark, separation, a moment of creation and destruction, etc. This calculated authorial choice of Bergman (implied author) in the opening of

¹³⁶ *All These Women* (1964), made between *The Silence* (1963) and *Persona* (1966), now appears as an anomaly among Bergman's cinematic journey at the time. Despite being a light-hearted comedy, and Bergman and critics' consensual dismissal of its significance (Bergman, 1989, p. 194; 2011, p. 44), this film also advances many Bergman motifs and his preoccupation about the medium at the time.

Persona can also be taken as a playful allegory for the relationship between creation/genesis of a film and its auteur: “The darkness was over the face of the abyss [empty screen]. God [Bergman] said, ‘Let there be light!’ And there was light” (Genesis, 1: 1-2:3).

Meanwhile, the extremely brief, full-screen shot of an erect penis that substitutes the number six of the countdown disrupts the coherence of the latent story (of the projection) also visually dislocating the position of the countdown and its flow of numbers. First, this image also functions as a signpost for fictionality and authorial mediation: it upsets the non-fictional record of the film count-down indicating that the implied meaning of the sequence is more complex and multi-referential. The diagonal angle and the shape of the erect penis also refresh the waning traces of the burning carbon rods (visual assonance). Therefore, the photographed erect penis with its accompanying droll sound effect appears a calculated *intrusion* into the developing diegetic narrativity rather than just a frivolous or pretentious appearance. This ‘real’, indexical image may shock some audiences¹³⁷, first, because of its apparent irrelevance within the emergent diegesis and the profanity associated with the realistic representations of male sex organs—conceivably due to the social idealisation of the *phallus* and established patriarchal/male gaze. Its replacement of number *six* is also significant because ‘six’ resembles the sound of ‘sex’ in many European languages and also spelled as ‘sex’ in Swedish (Ženko, 2014, p. 232). This intrusion may also encourage audiences to contemplate potential thematic threads that weave the cinema with an erect penis: penis envy/castration anxiety, phallic language, seductive/sexual power of cinema, the authority of patriarchy/male director, or the inherent eroticism behind filmmaking. Later, in a different context, Bergman himself comments:

Film work is a powerfully erotic business; the proximity of actors is without reservations, the mutual exposure is total... The strain, the easing of

¹³⁷ This shot was censored from the original US release, but later added again (Steene, 2005, p. 271).

tension, the mutual drawing of breath, the moment of triumph, followed by anticlimax: the atmosphere is irresistibly charged with sexuality (Bergman, 1989, pp. 169–170)

After a few more chaotic shots, the order fleetingly returns to the projector sequence with a heavily-scratched, up-side down, primitive cartoon reel. The action of the cartoon (seemingly an old female in a bathing suit dipping her *hands* into water) suddenly pauses indicating a jam in the projector—the audio effects and music also reinforce this sense—but revives in a moment. This break again calls attention to the extra-diegetic aspects (apparatus, representation, mediation) disturbing the mini diegesis of the cartoon (the action of the woman); however, ironically, this break is still a continuous part of the framing *diegesis/story* inside the projector. Like the intrusive penis, this break is also a phenomenal demonstration for the agony of charged stasis in the context of motion and the relief of the revival, especially in relation to the death vs. life motif, which becomes more prominent later in the prologue. In this sense, the act of intrusion with cinematic mediation—editing (of the penis) and mise-en-scene (internal break in the reel)—and their conventional context (cultural associations with phallus and disruption) both contribute to develop a coherent stream of meanings (a thematic semiosis).

After two more different shots of film spinning (visual assonance/dynamic life), a full-frame cinematographic shot of actual hands terminates the visual dimension of the projector's story/diegesis; but the *sound* of the projector continues undergirding the narrative of cinematic projection. The two related but different representations (cartoon vs actual, wide vs close, old vs young hands, upside-down vs the right way up) of these shots manage to evoke many thematic associations and contrasts, especially in light of *Persona's identity* theme. If the cartoon reel with sprockets and its malfunction highlights the crude artificiality and the apparatus/mechanism of moving image, the full-frame close-up of actual hands can highlight the photographic realism—and the technological development of the cinematic mimesis. The abstract play between

two hands may also allude to the interaction between binaries (carbon arcs, Elisabet and Alma, etc.). The use of childlike hands and their bare gesture may stress the idea of 'play' rather than a purposeful function. Interestingly, many meticulous commentators have also deduced that both the cartoon and the shot of actual hands—or at least one of them—show handwashing actions (Simon, 1974, p. 230; Vierling, 1974, p. 49; Kawin, 1978, p. 108; Blackwell, 1997, p. 136; Hart, 2009, p. 114; Wood and Lippe, 2012, p. 202).

However, a close examination of the cartoon sequence shows that the woman does not wash her hands. She first splashes water onto her body and secondly washes her face; after the pause, she just touches her bosom several times¹³⁸. In the latter shot, the action of bare hands takes place without water, and therefore, it is also not actually a hand-washing event. The moving hands of the woman in the preceding cartoon and her association with the water (Peircean interpretants) motivate audiences to think that the play of the hands depicts a hand washing action. This sense (another interpretant), in turn cause the thought that the woman in the up-side down cartoon (therefore defamiliarised) washes her hands. It is the metonymic *narrativity* between the two shots that motivate some audiences to recognise these actions as hand-washing actions. This also demonstrates that the thematic narrativity (aboutness) can even determine the perceived actions and the formative details of the diegesis. From another perspective, the cinematographic shot of hands emphasises that how a close-up shot isolates a particular aspect out of a larger context and also defines meanings for a rather larger event (cartoon sequence). Furthermore, a representational/fictional act is free from its actual function (actual washing in this case), and as Rugg (2008, p. 113) notes, the absence of water in this shot can indicate the absence of actual function in the fictional representation. Considering all these possibilities, Bergman's use of these initial shots and their calculated formal arrangement also appear to extra-diegetically 'comment

¹³⁸ Due to the digital facilities, repetitive viewings and more levels of empirical detail are available for the analysts today.

about' some important aspects of the fictional narrative (Alma and Elisabet) of *Persona*: the fallibility of meaning and possible illusionism surrounding the representations and identities of *self* and *other*. The recurrence/assonance of represented content (numbers, hands, and the parts of the projector) also contributes to the theme of *identity* and *representation*, independent to their diegetic level. Therefore, from a broad perspective, the prologue of *Persona* seems to initiate an assorted thematic discourse 'about' authorship, representation, and spectatorship, of which its fictional central narrative is also an integral part.

The close-up shot of brightly lit moving hands also immediately draws attention to the dominant whiteness; the next cut to the full white frame and its prolonged duration with music track further reinforce this phenomenal sense and possible referentiality of the whiteness (as a symbolic sign). Whiteness may easily resemble the empty screen or blank page in the context of artistic expression and authorship. On the other hand, according to the established meanings in the film, if the absence of light on the screen is cinematic 'nothingness', whiteness is the cinematic 'everything'. Blackwell (1997, p. 135) reckons that the white screens in *Persona* represent "the mergence of spectator and spectacle". But in this context, the onscreen 'everything' accompanied by the monotonous sound of the projector appear unstimulating and physically daunting especially in the darkened cinema. It irritatingly illuminates the audience, blinding their eyes and even depriving them of their privacy and emotional retreat; put differently, an extreme mergence between the spectator and spectacle seems to interrupt their ideal relationship. In this sense, the sensory experiences of cinematic moments can also nuance meanings and contest interpretations.

At this point, breaking the interpretational quandary with a magical sound effect, a consolatory patch of cinematic image (of a farce) appears on the left-lower corner. The activities inside this dynamic frame again revives the hunt for meaning in the field of *grayscale known/unknown*. With this local cinematic

patch, the rest of the frame (the enclosing white area) also gains significance. As Törnqvist (1995, p. 138) describes, the play between image-filled and non-image frames in the prologue can also signify the psychological dichotomy *face-mask*, which is a prominent theme in the central narrative, or as he calls it, “the film proper”. In this sense, the field of grayscale or medians—when highlighted against its polarities, whiteness and blackness—becomes more important because it is the materiality or medium that meaningfully expresses any dichotomy in *Persona*. Later, ‘the film proper’ also emerges in the medium of reassuring grey scale (with the hospital door) withdrawing from the complete whiteness. As in *The Silence*, *Persona* also scrutinises polarities and binaries, but their interplay becomes more interesting with clashes, overlaps, mergence, fusions and the *grayscale*.

The five-second long mini-narrative (farce) in the local frame seems also a complex reflexive demonstration of the multidimensional cinematic representation/signs. First, as a framed square on the white-frame, it is a literal *mise-en-abyme* as well as a framed-narrative within the prologue—which is also a part of the framing narrative of *Persona*. The persistence of the white-frame around it helps to sustain the sense of extra-diegetic tier of cinema and the authorial mediation (telling/narrating); in other words, the white frame acts as a set of cinematic quotation marks *visually* cradling the farce sequence in the framing narrative. Secondly, in non-fictional terms, this sequence is a pantomime/farce acted by three actors with some obvious props, costumes, and dramatically and cinematically exaggerated performance: these elements create an easily discernible gap between the indexical actors and their symbolic characters. Although it depicts a simple pantomime, this sequence exploits several important features that contrast the conventional stage—or the proscenium arch—against cinema. The increased speed of action evokes the humorous effect of early cinema footage (with low frame-rate shooting), and the main actor’s movements (blocking) effectively disclose the optical effects of camera (the long shot, medium shot, close-up, and cropping). While the main

actor's back and forth moments along the depth axis emphasises the interior and exterior spaces (off-screen) of the cinematic frame, the editing between its three shots also illustrates the cinematic space/time constructed with continuity editing. The appearance of the main character (make-up and the costume) also recalls the protagonist (Rufus Firefly acted by Groucho Marx) of *Duck Soup*¹³⁹ (McCarey, 1933), and the sudden appearance of a character in the middle of the room is also evocative of Georges Méliès's special-effects. All these traits may help to reinforce the initial theme of the prologue, 'emergence of cinema' from another dimension, especially contrasting cinema against the theatre¹⁴⁰. Meanwhile, if audiences attend to the fictional diegesis of the farce, it is a matter of associating cultural stereotypes and themes with the characters. A man clad in a Victorian night dress respectively confronts the personified Death and Devil; after a futile attempt to escape, he retreats to his bed and finally covers himself with the bedsheet. Despite this diegetic narrativity, the non-realistic content, expressionistic style, and the extra-diegetic sound effects always highlight the thematic tier of the sequence. Its moral is also obvious if audiences unravel the thematic narrativity in the Victorian context: one cannot escape from his or her *death* and *sins*.

However, arguably, the most important intertextual aspects of this farce are available for the analysts who are familiar with Bergman's oeuvre (ideal authorial audience). As discussed earlier, the fragility of diegetic narrativity also raises the sense of author intervention/mediation and inspires audiences to interpret the film in relation to the paratexts and authorial universe¹⁴¹. In this context, this farce is a memorable excerpt from Bergman's earlier film *Prison/Fängelse* (Bergman, 1962), which is also the first film he directed from his

¹³⁹ Bergman also used an Italian vaudevillian trio named The Brothers Bragazzi (Bergman, 2011, pp. 152–153) for this sequence (Like the Marx brothers).

¹⁴⁰ The central narrative later scrutinises this contrast (cinema/theatre) for more thematic possibilities.

¹⁴¹ Even before the production of the film, Bergman publicly announced *Persona*'s relationship with his own biography, and continuously gave different accounts of its origin and possible meanings (Cowie, 1992, pp. 227–228; Steene, 2005, p. 270)

own screenplay—and therefore, what made Bergman a legitimate auteur, according to the norm. Interestingly, *Prison* (aka *Devil's Wanton*) is also a film 'about' filmmaking and the ironic parallels between life and cinema. It presents an uncanny collection of almost all the Bergman-motifs (i.e. author, cinema, artist/audience, childhood, nuclear bomb, death, death of god, devil, spider, suicide, abortion, estranged child and mother) that were later elaborated through his canonical films¹⁴².

In *Prison*, Bergman uses the original longer version of the farce as an allegory 'narrated' within the main diegesis; it is also presented as a projected film sequence. The protagonist Thomas projects it on a wall for his lover Birgitta-Carolina. Throughout the projection, the sound of the hand-operated projector and the vocal reactions from Tomas and Birgitta-Carolina can be heard. Therefore, the process of projection, the person who projects the film for making a point (Thomas), and the unified audience (Thomas and Birgitta-Carolina), all are parts of a single fictional universe (diegesis). Thomas wants to show the similarity between his life and cinematic projection rather than the content/story (diegesis) of the farce. Nevertheless, the content of the farce (*mise-en-abyme*) still binds the other thematic motifs of the film(s)—and some comparative aspects between cinema and stage as discussed. In *Persona*'s re-edit, these aspects become more prominent and further significant. If audiences follow the intertextual narrativity between the two films, this farce sequence can be taken as a reawakening (Peircean interpretant) that connects Bergman's discourse on the cinematic medium in *Prison* with *Persona*. Interestingly, Bergman imports this farce sequence into the projector sequence of *Persona*, while the projection sound is still present. Interestingly, the sudden appearance of the farce sequence terminates the *projector's sound* in *Persona* with its corresponding extra-diegetic soundtrack, but the surrounding white-frame (visual) introduced

¹⁴² Like in *Persona*, *Prison* also includes Bergman's own voiceover narration, and ambiguous fantasy/dream sequences. The Victorian nightdress with cap that appear in the farce may also recall a memorable scene (in which the dress is an important part of the drama) in Bergman's *Smiles of a Summer Night/Sommarnattens leende* (1955).

in the projector sequence and the *intertextual* sound of the projector (aural)—that is present in *Prison* but absent in *Persona*—still sustains its connection to the projector sequence.

After the farce, a few more seemingly irrelevant shots appear on this uninterrupted *white-frame*: a large crawling spider and several shots of animal slaughtering and entrails. As discussed, the farce sequence from *Prison* helps to reiterate the theme of *cinema* (medium) and also revives many other Bergmanesque motifs (death, sin, religious predicament, existential angst, etc.) in *Persona*. The encasing white frame (quotation marks) warrants informed audiences to interpret the subsequent shots (of the spider and the animal slaughtering) in the context of these invoked themes. As countless commentators have admitted, the image of the crawling spider is reminiscent of the ‘spider god’ in Bergman’s *Through a Glass Darkly* and *Winter Light*, as well as *Prison*. This association is clearly motivated by the religious motifs, Bergmanesque intertextuality, and the theme of cinema itself. While this thread of intertextuality is active (especially with the white frame), the sequence of the slaughtered lamb may invoke the hymn sung in the opening scene of *Winter Light* on the sacramental ‘Lamb of God’—a title given for Jesus in Gospels (John 1:29; 1:36). It can also be considered a prefiguration of the mysterious animal cruelty in Bergman’s *Passion of Anna/En passion* (1969). Along this thematic line, the blood stream and the animal entrails can allude to the Last Supper in gospels and Jesus’s (Lamb of God) association of his blood with sacrifice—for remission of sins (Matthew 26:26–28):

26: While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.”

27: Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.”

28: This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Then, the next close-up to the wide-open dead eye of the animal seems to highlight the sacrifice of an innocent and the recurring motif of death; it may also recall the similar motif in Bergman's *Wild Strawberries/Smultronstället* (1957)¹⁴³. All these signs are highly polysemic (multi-referential) within the context, and their cinematic arrangement/metonymy serves the narrativity of many relevant themes.

The end of these shots—of the spider and the animal slaughter—again leaves the plain white screen for five seconds (most likely for added emphasis) with its tensive extra-diegetic music track. This music reaches its climactic end with a sudden bang of a hammer and a low-key close-up shot of a human palm being nailed; if the extensive white shot inflates audiences' pupils, the sudden break of this dark and traumatic sequence (of the semi-clenched, *spider-like* hand) offers an ironic comfort. The three close-up shots of this sequence continue to depict the same event from two different angles. This edit contributes to build up its mini-diegesis as well as the visual assonance, a quality intrinsic to the prologue. Concerning the preceding shots, the mediation behind these three shots appear arguably more formative and multivalent. First, the audiences motivated by the ongoing intertextual narrativity cannot help interpreting these shots in the context of the activated Bergmanesque themes. Many commentators associate them with the memorable scenes that relate to Crucifixion (icons/statues/events) in Bergman's films: e.g. *The Virgin Spring/Jungfrukällan* (1960), *Winter Light*, *Seventh Seal/Det sjunde inseglet* (1957), and *Fanny and Alexander/Fanny och Alexander* (1982). Justifiably, crucifixion is a pronounced motif in Bergman's oeuvre and a potent symbol for other customary themes like suffering, torture, and death. Furthermore, in relation to the ongoing religious theme/story (Creation—>spider god—>lamb of god/Jesus—>last supper/blood of Christ), crucifixion is the logical climax. The climactic *end* of the effects/music track with the white frame and the diegetic silence highlighted by

¹⁴³ Also, it can allude to the famous scenes of the surrealist film Buñuel and Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou* (1922) and Hitchcock's *Spellbound* (1945).

three bangs (reiteration) clearly mark this moment as a conclusion of an episode. Then, all these cinematic reifications of abstract religious concepts develop a cohesive thematic narrativity, while representing Bergman's specific films, their recurrent motifs, and reflexive cinematic signs—by standing for *themselves* as well as *something else*. Furthermore, the nailing the hand sequence firmly establishes the *human hand* as a momentous sign in the prologue through recurrence. The cartoon strip, moving hands, animal slaughtering, and hand nailing, all feature activities related to and performed by human hands. While human hands themselves are another prominent motif in Bergman's films, the prologue prefigures their significance in *Persona*. Later, in *Persona*—as already suggested in *The Silence*¹⁴⁴—human hands and *touch* become an effective medium for expression and communication, where *words* are abstruse (*The Silence*), inadequate, or entirely absent (*Persona*). In this sense, nailing a human hand also embodies restraining expression and communication, seemingly an inherent theme in the Crucifixion.

Abstracting depictions from their definite contexts by minimalist mise-en-scene is instrumental for *Persona*'s fictionality, symbolism, and the polyphony of cinematic signs: for example, the shots of the moving hands, spider, and slaughter appear free from their concrete contexts (and diegesis); the hand-nailing sequence *alludes* to the Crucifixion, but it is not a complete depiction of a diegetic crucifixion. As often discussed, if role-playing or shift of identities is a prominent theme of *Persona*, not only do all the images play multiple 'roles' in the prologue, but also these roles diverge, converge, and merge with each other on different referential/fictional levels. The cinematic narrativity (textual progression/relationships) on each level engenders a sense of fixed identity (cohesion/whole), but the possibility of many meaningful and competitive referential levels incessantly complicates it: the recognition of iconicity (denotation and the general connotations of images themselves), indexicality

¹⁴⁴ See Chapter 4: Conclusion

(non-fictional, photographic reference and intertextual reference), and symbolism (religious and cultural motifs, cinematic motifs, intertextual significance). Nevertheless, these many referential levels altogether develop another unique sense of poetic identity (coherence/whole) with the rhythm of edits, internal dynamics of visuals, overlapping themes, and the command of cinematic mediation: the 'prologue of *Persona*'.

While the nailing the palm sequence acts as an apt climax to the previous segment, its independence from them is also significant. If the white-frame and the music track function as a metaphoric bracket (framing device) that enfolds preceding shots into the projector sequence, these three shots fall outside this envelope. Its full-frame coverage, low-key lighting, and the strictly diegetic soundtrack further separate it from the previous sequence indicating an independent and cohesive mini-diegesis¹⁴⁵. Unlike the first two brief shots that are edited to the beat of the bangs, the last shot stays for a longer period. The change of visual tempo, the emphasised silence after the loud bangs, and the slowly extending fingers (perhaps indicating the death), emanate a sense of conclusion to its own diegesis. This calculated mediation prepares audiences for a cinematic experience that is distinct from the foregoing audio-visual treatment. The next sequence (morgue) further prolong/augment the immersive diegetic experience that stem from this sequence, although they are predominantly compiled as a separate montage segment. Overall, 'death' and the 'emergence of a diegesis' act as the thematic narrativity that binds the two sequences together, despite their distinct contents and diegeses.

¹⁴⁵ However, these three cuts are from two different but almost adjacent angles, and therefore, still complicate the time and space of a possible diegesis also evoking the sense of cinematic mediation.

5.4. Prologue: The Second Episode



Sequence 2 Prologue: The Second Episode

The morgue sequence starts with a series of deep bell sounds (religious/funereal motifs) and a full-screen image of a bland brick wall (dead end). This impassable wall/screen that blocks the entire frame can also be inferred as a symbolic/thematic extension of the previous hand-nailing sequence, which represents an end, conclusion, impasse, and thwarted communication. Although the sound-sphere and visual characteristics mark a beginning of a new episode with this shot, the undergirding thematic narrativity across the prologue is still active here. This image dissolves into an image of a winter scene with an array of bare trees (more deathly motifs); during the shot, another sequence of sharp bell sounds discordantly joins the former sequence, possibly alluding to death knells. The sole dissolve within the montage sequence at this point helps to decelerate the visual rhythm and overlap brick pattern with the tree barks. The next two visually/diegetically related exterior shots—a jagged steel fence and a dreary brick-building behind the same fence—continue to develop a bleak diegetic universe out of abstraction. For Kawin (1978, p. 110), this means to indicate that the grammar of the film techniques and sophistication gradually mature within the prologue. Each shot in this sequence carries some common cinematic element/sign or attribute forward from the previous shots

(e.g. bell sounds, brick wall, snow, steel fence, geometric shapes, forlornness) to encourage coherent space-time and themes. In diegetic terms, the two overlapping bell sequences may indicate a call/hour for communion/funeral service, perhaps from two churches in the surrounding area. Then, despite the slow pace and diminished phenomenal violence on screen, the macabre/religious themes of the prologue now advance in a different form.

The next cut shows a dark abstract shape against a plain white background; it resembles a partial profile of an old woman's face, especially when the next close-up reveals a more detailed shot of the woman (narrativity of iconicity) from an oblique angle. The continuation of the muffled bell sounds indicates that these images are possibly from the interior space of the brick-building shown before. In other words, the diegetic narrativity of the audio-sphere works to bind the exterior and the interior into a whole. Consequently, the bleak winter scenes and the brick-building continues to influence the mood of the interior, and the interior (with dead bodies) makes the exterior images relevant and expressive. The following full-shot shows a boy lying on a bed, half covered with a white sheet that recalls the snow mounds in preceding exterior shots. In the context, he also appears to diegetically represent a cadaver at first, but the moving profile and the twitching eyes of the boy reveal that he is breathing, and therefore in sleep. The next close-ups that depict different faces, hands, and feet of lying bodies on stretchers (perfectly still) suggest that the setting is most likely a morgue. However, the random angles and the montage assembly of this sequence still remind the space-time inconsistency and signs of mediation. It is also difficult to conclusively determine whether the ensuing sounds of water drops, sibilant noise, footsteps, door clanks, and the telephone rings are extra-diegetic, diegetic, or a subjective representation of someone; nevertheless, all these exaggerated sounds are expressive of the gruesome silence associated with morgues. The consecutive up-side-down shots of the old woman (one with closed eyes and the other with open eyes) further complicate the diegetic realism disconcerting the narrative audience. With the

lack of stable diegetic explanation, the cut between these two shots are rather effective as an extra-diegetic reaction/commentary to the rising telephone rings: 'it is a call that even resurrect the dead'. Therefore, up to this point, this sequence cinematically equivocates without being firmly committed to a naturalistic diegesis or expressionistic montage.

However, in the next shot, the boy also appears to be awoken by another even louder ring of the telephone. Following this last ring, the boy tries to sleep again drawing the sheet over his head, which is not long enough to cover his entire body. After several unsuccessful attempts, he decides to sit down on the bed. This shot continues for a relatively extended time, and with its austere composition, the uncomfortable action of the boy gradually holds the audience's firm attention. This moment again shifts the flow, style, and rhythm of the sequence marking another more developed step of diegetic construction in *Persona* (after the hand nailing event). Between this instant and the title sequence, the film presents a single continuous (space-time) event and a relatively comprehensive human character for the first time in the film. The immersive diegetic narrativity of this event suggests more competitive interpretational avenues for the entire prologue.

First, beyond simply presenting a compilation of shots that shows dead bodies (non-fictional), or actors just expressively/dramatically acting dead bodies (extra-diegetic/communicative), this sequence allows audiences to infer a somewhat weird fictional/diegetic event: a little boy sleeping in a morgue. This diegetic engagement is important because it releases the cinematic signs from definite references (non-fictionality); beyond reporting, acting, and communicating (extra-diegetic), this fictional event signifies a kind of parallel 'reality'. The ability to sense the boy's experience through empathy, focalisation, and subjective identification may also encourage more interpretational potentials: loneliness, anguish, suspense, etc. These aspects of emotional awareness (interpretants) can be assimilated into the ongoing thematic discourse.

Secondly, if this sequence initiates a realistic diegesis (or cohesive fictional universe) at this point, the boy emerges as a solitary live character who seemingly sleeps in a morgue. The next few shots further corroborate his solitude. However, for most audiences, a child calmly sleeping in a morgue with cadavers seems as an unnatural event; without a further exposition, their non-fictional (real-life) experience¹⁴⁶ will find such an event extremely peculiar. However, according to artistic conventions, literary and cinematic depictions of dreams, reveries, and fantasies can be ‘realistically’ incoherent, when bracketed/framed within a natural/realistic diegesis. In this sense, when the boy wakes up and continues as a character for the next few shots (taking audiences from the extra-diegetic level to the diegetic level), and when this event emerges as a cohesive diegetic space/time, the preceding incohesive imageries of the morgue (exterior/interior) can be inferred as a dream/trance of the sleeping boy. According to this hypothesis, the morgue sequence seems to present a boy (perhaps in an ill or unstable state) dreaming on an ad-hoc bed at a provisional location like a hospital—rather than an actual morgue: it is in the boy’s dream/trance that he is abandoned among the dead or nearing his death at a desolate location like a morgue; the tormenting climax of the dream (the opening of the dead eyes) or the rising phone ring (‘real’ and external to the dream) awaken the boy from his dream.

Like Kawin’s notion of ‘mind screen’, Eberwein (2014, pp. 9–50) adapts Lewin’s (1946) psychoanalytic concept of ‘dream screen’ to explore the cinema screen as a potential site for repressed childhood desires/drives. He argues that manifest dreams (diegetic dreams) in cinema can become a merger between the spectator and a character’s dream screens (p.90), in which both attempt to decipher the relevance and meaning of a dream to their own realities. In this sense, the morgue sequence in *Persona* can also be inferred as an ontological

¹⁴⁶ As I discuss in Chapter 3, the *principal of minimal departure* suggests that audiences construe the details of a fictional world (diegesis) taking their own reality (actual world) as the point of departure.

merge or *overlap* between several different subjective experiences across extra-diegetic and diegetic tiers.

First, the complex narrativity across the various referential levels of the prologue already impels audiences to pursue evasive but promising unity/coherence through interpretation. In Lewin's terms, this might be an indication that the prologue functions as a 'dream screen' for the audience's repressed desires/drives and evasive sense of identity; rather than the meanings inferred from a constructed diegesis, the extra-diegetic level of the prologue itself (figuratively, an 'incoherent' dream) thrusts audiences into this hunt of meaning, identity, or wholeness. Secondly, as discussed above, the morgue sequence seems to depict the merger between the boy's subjective/internal 'dream screen' and his objective/external reality. In other words, any of these shots can be of the boy's dream/trance as well as of the diegesis he lives in. The meaning of the sound track of this episode—bell sounds with its doubling, water drops with echoes, telephone rings with rising intensity—become a part of this nebulous, trance-like experience, which can be oneiric as well as real, even according to the 'story' of the film. Overall, this is an intricate employment of cinematic fictionality and narrativity to deliver a fuzzy subjective experience through polysemic cinematic meanings.

The specific mediation (including the order of the shots) of the morgue sequence at this point is vital for this interpretation. By mingling the shots of the boy (diegetic reality) with the possible shots of his subjective view (dream/trance), Bergman seems to draw a parallel between the audience's inchoate experience with the boy's subjective experience. The moment of the boy's awakening (dream to reality) also mirrors the audiences' gradual shift from the extra-diegetic (montage) level to the diegetic level (story). Therefore, the audience's inability to clearly distinguish between the ontological levels of the story (subjective/objective; montage/story; extra-diegetic/diegetic) can be seen as an intended phenomenal experience that imitates the boy's ongoing

disorientation¹⁴⁷. If this sequence does not strictly maintain the subjective and objective representation, the entire prologue can also be interpreted as the different phases of the same dream, which is shared by the boy and the audience. Although ambiguous, the default/dominant mode of *Persona* is arguably a diegetic narration; consequently, the montage-driven prologue can be justified as a subjective depiction or a dream of a diegetic character or an extra-diegetic/agency of the film. The violence unleashed by the style and the content of the prologue, recurring motifs, and its constant mutation into different moods, rhythms, meanings, etc. also resemble a dream rather than a story/reality driven by causality in diegetic terms. In this context, invoking the train sequence in *The Silence*, these dimensions can also suggest a figurative overlap between the unknown boy (dreamer/character) and the audience of *Persona* (viewer/interpreter). This also evinces that Bergman repeatedly mediates the phenomenal experience of cinema to generate derivative meanings and draw metaphorical parallels.

If this is a manifest dream screen, then, as the first character who wakes up into a coherent diegesis, the boy is the immediate candidate for the dreamer/subject/author of the prologue. But, if this sequence was started with a shot of the sleeping (dreaming) boy, the point of his dream is framed and the meanings (narrativity/fictionality/interpretational possibilities) become restricted and more specific. Moreover, as elaborated earlier, the little boy's dream defensibly relates to the cinema, Bergman's oeuvre, and Bergmanesque themes. If audiences are familiar with Bergman's self-fashioned authorship through his notebooks, interviews, articles, and biographies, they can recognise further allusions to the prologue in these resources. Bergman always reflects on his childhood obsession with the apparatus of cinema, hand drawn cartoon strips, religious motifs and rituals, death etc. (Bergman, 2011, pp. 44–65). During his tenure as the head of the Dramaten (Royal Dramatic theatre, Stockholm),

¹⁴⁷ Similarly, in several other instances of the central narrative, *Persona* blurs the border between subjective and objective domains of its characters.

Bergman was hospitalised for pneumonia and bouts of dizziness; it was also a turbulent time in his personal, artistic, and professional life. In his autobiography, he describes how the warden playfully trapped him inside the morgue at the same hospital, when he was ten years old (Bergman, 1989, pp. 202–204). Furthermore, in a famous interview, he directly connects his own confusion of identity as a filmmaker at the time with the boy who appears in *Persona*.

I reflected on what was important and began with the projector and my desire to set it in motion. But when the projector was running, nothing came out of it but old ideas, the spider, God's lamb, all that dull old stuff. My life just then consisted of dead people, brick walls, and a few dismal trees out in the park.

In hospital, one has a strong sense of corpses floating up through the bedstead. Besides which I had a view of the morgue, people marching in and out with little coffins, in and out.

So I made believe I was a little boy who'd died, yet who wasn't allowed to be really dead, because he kept on being woken up by telephone calls from the Royal Dramatic Theatre. (Bjorkman, Manns and Sima, 1993, p. 199)

Audiences who interpret *Persona* in the light of these intermedial materials (multimedial intertextuality across Bergman's oeuvre) can recognise the little boy in *Persona* as Bergman's alter ego or an allegorical representation. In this way, textually intertwined narrativity between the dream (prologue) and dreamer (the little boy), further extends to the biographical/cultural text surrounding Bergman—the sum of the implied authors/oeuvre author (Schmid)/career author (Booth). When the critical commentators (Kawin, 1978, p. 107; Steene, 2005, p. 149; Hubner, 2007, p. 85) warrant this possibility on various theoretical grounds, such interpretations/texts further reinforce the intertextual feedback loop between the meanings of *Persona* and Bergman's authorship. This incessant critical discourse is an important means of Bergman's reputation as an auteur. Bergman himself assiduously strives to manage his texts (cinema and biography) concerning this feedback loop providing calculated resources. Furthermore, the diegetic complexities of his films and the poetic/cinematic virtuosity are also

unique formal devices that draw interpretational focus onto the layered complexity of authorship/artist/art.

In the next long-take composed as a close-up, the boy slowly turns across the film frame to pick a pair of glasses. He wears them carefully, takes Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* and turns to a specific page marked with the dust jacket of the book; but instead of reading, he appears to vacantly stare at the obstructed page. Although this episode seems to be a convincing diegesis (or the boy's external reality), several details may agitate the diegetically-oriented (narrative) audience. The bed seemed empty and isolated in the previous long shot, but the boy picks the glasses and the book from his immediate vicinity—or out of the frame. In a way, this might indicate the continuance of the dream; in narratological terms, he seems to be occupying the *liminal* space between the diegetic (real) and extra-diegetic (or metaphorically, oneiric) tiers. For instance, seemingly an extra-diegetic (conventionally) music track emerges at this point, and it evidently disturbs the boy as if it is a diegetic sound. He responds to it by taking his eyes away from the book, and as the sound fades away, he turns towards the audience/camera. Since the boy's diegesis is not conventionally and coherently established, this moment becomes highly potent in its non-fictional, pro-filmic sense: an actor acting out some actions for a camera. Then, in an iconic moment in *Persona*, the boy appears to grope the screen, and the next shot reveals that he is inspecting a huge white screen with some indistinct grey shades, again converting the whole event into a closed diegesis. On this screen, a female face emerges, and it seems to vacillate between at least two indistinct faces, while an ascending sound effect (similar to the one at the beginning of *Persona*) intensifies the audience's phenomenal response.

While this sequence can also be construed as 'a dream' or 'vision' in diegetic (mimetic) terms, it is very difficult to integrate its parts (the irrationalism of the scene, boy's act, and the mysterious screen) into a diegesis/story subduing its discourse and the medium. Not only does this event erode the self-sufficiency and causality of the embryonic diegesis as discussed, but it also

invokes more inevitable references to the audience/cinema symbiosis. First, the parallelism/overlap between the boy and audience becomes multidimensional in this event, generating more fictional levels. As discussed, first, the audience's wavering experience between the diegetic and extra-diegetic levels continues to imitate the boy's confounded experience: this is Bergman's exploitation of the phenomenal level of cinema as a rhetorical *metaphor*. Then, the boy's sudden turn towards the audience/camera and groping also have important consequences; his object of investigation is not revealed at first, and therefore, the audience tends to construe that his act is directed at them. Rather than a convergence, this opens a chasm (otherness) between the boy and the audience; his act (groping and scrutiny) may appear to violate the audience's sense of privacy, momentarily transmuting the boy into a form of threat.

The next shot, however, eases this tension and allows the audience to join with the boy in his investigation; in other words, it helps disturbed audiences to easily assume the stance of the narrative audience. Nevertheless, this second shot generates another sense to the first shot: if the audience felt that the boy was groping them through the screen in the first shot, the second shot shows how the audience is represented 'in' the film: the fluctuating images of the two women are a sign/representation/specimen of the audience/society. This double attitude towards the audience can be, in turn, construed to reinforce the double references of the unidentified boy—as the dreamer/author (other) and proxy for the audience (self/society). Although the boy's act momentarily appears as just a direct address or 'breaking the fourth wall', the diegetic interpretation implicates that he scrutinises an intra-diegetic screen. Therefore, rather than a disruption of the diegesis, Bergman's mediation here cinematically 'poses' or 'constructs' a fuzzy border between the diegetic and extra-diegetic tiers, generating a transcendent/transgressive 'story'. In other words, the audience becomes a part/character of the 'story', while the character (the boy/author) becomes a part of the audience.

Furthermore, the indexicality of the boy (the same actor who appears in *The Silence*) and the embryonic character wearing glasses before reading Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time* appear to indicate that the boy is another instance/episode/extension of Johan from *The Silence*¹⁴⁸; in which case, Johan in *Persona* perhaps attempts to continue reading from the specific page he may have marked in *The Silence*. The purpose of this intertextuality can again be construed in relation to Bergman's authorship: Bergman and his loyal audience resume their joint cinematic exploration with *Persona* that is temporarily paused in *The Silence*. This is a relevant cinematic 'comment' after Bergman's thematically and stylistically deviated film *All These Women/För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor* (1964) produced in between *Persona* and *The Silence*. The boy's direct interaction with the cinema screen that presents two indistinct women further reinforce this line of narrativity. On the diegetic screen, the images appear to be in the liminal space between the Peircean iconicity (human faces) and indexicality (specific women), but their symbolism (characters/values) is still indeterminate. The two main female characters of *Persona* (Alma and Elisabet) are not yet introduced/defined, and therefore, the two elusive female faces on the screen can more justifiably represent Anna and Ester in relation to Johan, at this point of the film. The boy's act of groping faces also revives the motifs, 'hand' and 'face' along with their related discourse from *The Silence*—these are the only two foreign words, which Ester successfully managed to teach Johan¹⁴⁹. Furthermore, many other elements of this sequence can invoke the contextual thematic signs associated with Johan (Peircean symbolism) advanced in the two films: wearing glasses, reading, watching, and groping may indicate the pursuit of meanings, whereas the obstructed page of the book and the vacillating images on the screen may indicate the evasiveness of meanings. This episode aptly ends with a closed-eyed female face (again referring to the

¹⁴⁸ Furthermore, the protagonist (an artist who succumbs to insanity) of Bergman's next film *Hour of the Wolf/Vargtimmen* (1967) is also Johan (his wife is Alma).

¹⁴⁹ See Chapter 4: Conclusion

two states of eyes: life/death, spectatorship, the denial of straightforward meaning) giving way to the tempestuous title sequence of the film along the climactic music track.

5.5. Prologue: The Third Episode



Sequence 3 Prologue: The Third Episode

The title sequence presents a bricolage of images that repeatedly highlights three close-up faces of the boy and two other women. The electrifying music track maximises the affective power of images and their rhythmic synthesis achieved by editing. These faces that are interspersed with the white title cards leave transient visual traces on the screen after their brief appearances, generating a unique phenomenal effect that can be alluded to evanescent identities (a major theme in *Persona*). When, the montage assembly repeats the boy's face against the two other female faces, the audience can infer them to be the faces that appeared on the screen in the previous sequence—a backward reference or extra-diegetic analepsis. Although the previous sequence suggests an ontological separation between the boy and the women (the boy as the audience and the women as the mise-en-abyme screen/story/text), the title sequence brings three of them to the same ontological level in audiences' view. Later, when the central narrative advances after the titles, the audience can

recognise that the two female faces are of the main characters in *Persona* (Alma and Elisabet)—in this sense, their images on the screen also act as a forward reference or extra-diegetic prolepsis. Even in the later diegesis (film-proper), the actor Elisabet and fan Alma meet each other on the same space-time continuum. According to their initial arrangement, the nurse Alma is assigned to watch the mute patient Elisabet. Metaphorically, Alma is the audience/interpreter of Elisabet who is also the performer (actor), text (cinema), and 'story'. The development of their relationship gradually eliminates some conceived differences of identities but reveals others; with the progression of the film, Elisabeth becomes the audience/interpreter and Alma becomes the performer/text/story. Although the boy gains more referential possibilities (Elisabet's abandoned child, Alma's aborted child), his ontological certainty in the main diegesis becomes more evasive with the narrative progression.

Thematically motivated audiences can also unfold the potential narrativity behind the other eclectic images in the context of the film. In relation to the human faces, the shot of the isolated vertical lips embodies the notion of extreme close-up (zooming), abstraction, and disintegration of the wholeness/identity (the face). In relation to the penis in the prologue, the mirrored lips are evocative of the vulva (by its iconicity), and both in tandem may embody the heterogeneous identities, which is a prominent thematic aspect in *Persona* (symbolism). Many images (the boy, two female faces, bare trees in winter, and farce) directly relate to the prologue (dream). Some other images at this point appear arbitrary, but later, the cinematic progression reveals that they relate to the various aspects of the central narrative (landscape of the island and immolation). Nevertheless, juxtaposed with human faces and lips, and in the context of the connoted sexual air, many of them may emanate the impression of enlarged human fragments (skin, genitals, crotch, bones, etc.). In this way, the referential loop between the first two episodes of the prologue, the title sequence, and the central narrative indicate a fuzzy relationship between the different parts and the three most important characters of *Persona*. As this

relationship is not concretely affirmed in the diegetic level, the extra-diegetic and thematic levels are crucial to chart the narrativity of the film. In this sense, the textual narrativity engenders causality, chronology, and coherence, but not the other way around. When the characters and narratives in the story explore their own mutating identities, ontological boundaries, and disintegration, this concept seems especially instructive.

The black titles over white title beds in *Persona* is an inversion of the title sequences of many other previous Bergman films; in the frenzy of representations and interpretations, this also can be ascribed with meanings. As discussed, although *Persona* emerges from nothing—or blackness, the light of the carbon rods erupts completely concealing the image with whiteness; the detail inside the projector is only perceivable during the progression of light, and cinematography is effectively managing the light between its polarities. Therefore, as suggested before, in the context of cinematography, the complete whiteness is also the mask that conceals detail and meanings. This inextricable metaphor (whiteness/mask) variously materialises in *Persona* not only as the title-screens but also as snow, bed sheets, veils, fog etc. When the initial frame of the central diegesis (a white door on a white wall) emerges from the white bed of the title sequence, it appears like a mitigation or a removal of the extra whiteness (mask). Inversely, the disintegrating identities of characters, emotional masks, contesting hierarchies, and moral dilemmas in the film can also be considered apt metaphors for the dynamics of cinematography. This perhaps explains why Bergman initially wanted to name the film *Cinematography*. He later conceded to the less esoteric and more polysemic title *Persona* (mask/role/guise/exterior) under the pressure of the studio executives (Cowie, 1992, p. 228).

6. Bergman's Nested Dolls: Contextualization and Conclusion

As I outlined in the introduction, my research stems from a specific question related to the cinematic medium: how the cinematic image evolves from a seemingly 'authorless' phenomenal experience to an intersubjective and interpretational medium that even engenders an 'image' of an extra-textual author. In this quest, first, I argued that the diverse potentials of fictional cinema extend across many irreducible dimensions. These disparate dimensions necessarily involve non-fictional as well as fictional engagements. Secondly, evaluating the consequences of this view, I developed a rhetorical approach that explores cinematic narrative as a dynamic communicational event. In this framework, cinematic narrativity and fictionality are communicational acts and resources. Thirdly, I employed an analytic model, which consists of three interdependent tiers (extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic) to explore multivalent cinematic narrative.

Following this framework, Chapter 4 and 5 of my research scrutinised how narrativity and fictionality function as rhetorical resources of Bergman's selected films. My analyses demonstrated that Bergman's cinema weaves diverse signifying instances across extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic levels. I also argued that this process integrates the immediate cinematic experience, cinematic materiality, cinematic style, diegetic relationships, thematic threads, Bergman's other works, stories about his life, and history of cinema. As I elaborated at length, cinematic narrativity, fictionality, and non-fictionality also contribute to developing the intertextual and intermedial possibilities of Bergman's cinema.

My research and methodology also provide some noteworthy insights into Bergman's authorial identity, scruples about cinema, and his renowned and enduring thematic discourse on illusion and reality. In the first part of this final chapter, I discuss the impact of my research on these topics with reference to

relevant scholarship. The second half of this chapter highlights the key features of my research and methodology, and thereby serves as the conclusion to my study.

6.1. Bergman's Nested Dolls

6.1.1. Bergman and Cinematic Authorship

If authorship is a textually and socially constructed phenomena as post-structuralist critique has found, ironically, Bergman seems the foremost champion of the idea that 'Bergman is the sole author of his films'. However, as I admitted that cinema is a collaborative art in empirical terms, it is important to unpack this claim in the light of my research. At the same time, it is an apt opportunity to explain how narrativity and fictionality become significant for the cinematic communication and authorship.

Gaut (2010, p. 100) classifies various claims presented in defence of the cinematic authorship into three sets: *existential*, *hermeneutic*, and *evaluative*. In terms of the existential claims on authorship, paratexts (titles/advertising), production stills, documentaries, and production archives always provide *non-fictional* references/signs. These details are important to establish the notion of single authorship thesis (against or within the collaborative authorship). Bergman has been extraordinarily assiduous in positing these claims and related evidence throughout his life. His comprehensive archives of minutely detailed documents, impulsive notes, various developmental stages of his scripts, production notes, diaries, an astonishing amounts of production photographs, documentaries on film productions, innumerable interviews, several autobiographies, his own reflections, criticisms, and interpretations of his intermedial works are now a part of expansive public discourse¹⁵⁰. They always provoke an ongoing dialogue

¹⁵⁰ Koskinen (2008, pp. 1–2) describes how Bergman had meticulously contemplated his options in preserving his legacy. His intermedial archives eventually inspired The Ingmar Bergman Foundation in 2002, The Ingmar Bergman Symposium organized by Stockholm University, and a comprehensive website www.ingmarbergman.se. Bergman's archives (with

related to his themes, style, motives, contexts, and authorship itself¹⁵¹. Staiger (2008, pp. 89–95) demonstrates how Bergman strives to establish his authorship with a series of claims on the origins, key moments, and essence of his works in his memoirs and autobiographies. Furthermore, she closely investigates Bergman's two interviews that share the common 'plot' of building the 'biographical legend' with the interviewers' unwitting cooperation (pp.97-106).

If sufficient control is a viable criterion for *single authorship* as Livingston (1997, 2005, 2009, 2011) argues, the existential claims for Bergman's predominance over his productions are also well documented¹⁵². As a scriptwriter cum director and also a prudent entrepreneur, Bergman seems to have eventually managed to establish his authority over almost every aspect of his productions as many accounts confirm. However, it is also evident that the zealous critical discourse and growing international reputation around his multimedial oeuvre made this control sustainable¹⁵³.

While these facts and arguments for Bergman's authorship are now ubiquitous, it is important to explore how they influence audience engagement with his fictional cinema. First, I maintain that various documentaries and reports¹⁵⁴ on his film productions often provide empirical evidence of his methods, his control, and his authoritative leadership. In other words, they offset the so-called absence (death) of the author with the *non-fictional* presence of

The Ingmar Bergman Foundation) is now on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register (2007), which certifies the archives considered valuable to humanity. *Ingmar Bergman Archives* (Duncan and Wanselius, 2008) systematically presents many of these materials. The website confirms that The Bergman Centenary (2018) as the largest global celebration of a single filmmaker in the history of cinema.

¹⁵¹ For example, various discussions of cinematic authorship often involves Bergman as a special case (Livingston, 1997, pp. 143–145; Sellors, 2007, p. 267; Gaut, 2010, pp. 118–132; Sinnerbrink, 2011, p. 56).

¹⁵² Ulla Ryghe (2008, pp. 77–78), Bergman's frequent female editor in 1960s, cinematographer Nykvist and the other frequent actors variously testify to his authority (Duncan and Wanselius, 2008).

¹⁵³ Koskinen (2011, pp. 31–34) delineates how Bergman's remarkable business acumen and reputation as an auteur boosted his survival chance, leverage over production decisions and budgets. These are perhaps essential qualities required to become an auteur within the capitalist system.

¹⁵⁴ e.g. *Ingmar Bergman Makes a Movie* (Sjöman, 1963); *The Making of Autumn Sonata* (Bergman, 1978); *The Making of Fanny and Alexander* (Bergman, 1984).

the 'author image'. This indexicality is a unique possibility of cinematic authorship over the symbolically interpreted literary authorship.

Furthermore, these making of films also present very important *hermeneutic* claims for Bergman's fictional films. As Rugg (2014, pp. 15–18) meticulously surveys, in these films, Bergman appears to 'possess' his actors, giving instructions from his own deep personal (autobiographical) repository. Although his crew and cast seem highly conscientious with their own contributions, the entire team appears to be submissive to Bergman's 'personal vision'. Since the technical details and instructions are almost non-existent in his scripts, Bergman's act on sets appears as if he is 'conjuring' his authorial decisions; therefore, his crew and cast seem clueless. Arguably, this seems another strategical device to assure the single authorship and control on the set. Bergman even develops 'real life' personal and intimate relationships with his ensemble cast, perhaps a method of 'possessing' and controlling them¹⁵⁵. Similarly, the camera positions and angles appear to be determined by his own preferred viewpoints/projections; the camera movements, compositions, and lighting appear to reflect his mood and narratorial command.

These various non-fictional texts are indispensable intertextual resources and supplements to interpret Bergman's films. The interpretations (semiosis) of the extra-diegetic matrix of Bergman's fiction films can borrow signs (interpretants) from these textualised resources to engender narrativity for authorship image: for instance, with the knowledge of above documentaries and reports, it seems tempting to claim that the characters and events of Bergman's fiction films are his surrogates or authorial projections. The cinematic screen/camera appears to offer audiences a shared view to his authorial agency (author/audience intersubjectivity) and embodied phenomenal experience. When the extra-diegetic matrix is in focus, the compositions, lighting, and edits

¹⁵⁵ Bradshaw (2018) asks of Bergman: "Could this famously manipulative genius have survived in the #MeToo era?".

seem to punctuate his narratorial flow rather than the diegetic flow. These extra-diegetic signs also provide undeniable existential (indexical/non-fictional/ontological) claims for cinematic artificiality and authorship. I also demonstrated how the discussed episode of Bergman's films reinforces these assumptions thorough their extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic matrixes. Then, Bergman effectively employs these non-fictional intertextual resources to integrate the possible collective authorship behind his films into an appealing, enduring, and hermeneutically useful autobiographic *myth*: 'Bergman is the sole author of his films'. In other words, his autobiography (a self-constructed account of his life) is fictionalised as well as factualised (with non-fictionality) in various guises, forms, and levels in his films and other works. He employs the open references of fictionality, fixed references of non-fictionality, and progressive references of narrativity across his works for this task. Therefore, Bergman's life itself seems an enduring endeavour to *unite* the scattered 'implied author' images made possible by his scripts, books, theatre, films, crew, actors, stories, characters, and audiences. In this sense, the 'image' of Bergman's cinematic authorship is also a metaphor of one's *persona*: non-fictional and fictional/mythical construct by person and others. This ambivalent consciousness between the 'self' and 'mask/persona' was an ongoing theme in Bergman's oeuvre¹⁵⁶. Again, this context shows that Bergman's use of narrativity and fictionality effectively entwine the extra-diegetic matrix of his films, their fictional stories, and his life together.

6.1.2. The Extra-Diegetic Tier and Cinematic Communication

Throughout this study I have maintained that macro structures like mimetic events, plot, syuzhet, fabula, story, characters, or stylistic presentation (story-oriented discourse) cannot adequately explain the significance of Bergman's

¹⁵⁶ Hubner (2007, pp. 13–29; 70–91) explores different aspects of this relationship manifest in Bergman's *Summer Interlude* and *Persona*.

cinema. Firstly, within a *story/presentation* framework, many sequences of Bergman's discussed films may appear causally deviant, pompous, or unduly melodramatic. For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, the 'stylistic presentation' of *The Silence*'s 'story' seems unreasonably baroque. Otherwise, in a different vocabulary, the florid 'expressionism' of *The Silence* may appear unwarranted by the austerity of its 'plot'. Furthermore, as numerous analysts have reiterated, regarding *Persona*'s mimetic relationships and story proper, its montage sequences, repetitions, and stylistic treatment may seem extraneous, excessive, or intentionally obscure. However, such conclusions cannot simply explain the undiminished allure, cultural impact, and the canonical endurance of these films. My investigations in Chapter 4 and 5 delineated how an extra-diegetic investigation and rhetorical framework can offset the limitations of macro approaches to Bergman's cinema.

Secondly, conventional approaches to narrative often overlook how the phenomenal experience of cinema (cinematic immediacy) influence cinematic narrativity and fictionality. However, my extra-diegetic investigation has recognised that the phenomenal experience of cinema provides various resources for cinematic mediation as well as the mimetic tier of cinema. If audiences pay critical attention to the extra-diegetic tier of Bergman's cinema, the gradual control of the authorial mediacy over its cinematic immediacy is palpable. Although cinematic immediacy generally appears to be free from the cinematic mediation, my study of *The Silence* showed that the cinematic mediation can purposively control the audiences' phenomenal experience. Also, as in the prologue of *Persona*, it can completely shatter the 'naturalness' of cinematic immediacy still transfixing the audiences. In this sense, the phenomenal experience of films can also act as a form of rhetorical resource, which ultimately reinforces or attenuates the intersubjectivity between the implied authors and audience. As I have discussed in section 3.2.2, phenomenologists tend to define cinematic intersubjectivity resorting to the universal mimetic terms like invisible 'body', 'eye', 'skin', or 'agency' of the film.

However, my study showed that the dynamics between implied author, text, and audience offers a more contextually, extra-textually, and intertextually grounded discourse to explain a specific cinematic communication.

Thirdly, the internally coherent structures like plot, syuzhet, fabula, story, or story-oriented stylistic presentation are not equipped to explicate intermediality and intertextuality. However, the indexical, non-fictional references of the extra-diegetic matrix are vital to elaborate the intertextual narrativity between Bergman's other works, stories about his life, and cinema. As I have discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, the known and repeated actors, established music (Bach), paintings (Ruben), mythical subjects (Nessus and Deianira), and books (*A Hero of Our Time*) bring culturally active and loaded discourses into *The Silence*. In return, these discourses generate narrativity and redefine various extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic relationships in Bergman's films that cannot otherwise be explained with mere diegetic terms. At the same time, the textual resources of *The Silence* also blend with and enrich the prevailing aesthetic, authorial, and cultural discourses through intertextuality. This can also be considered a Bergman's strategy of canonising his films within his own oeuvre and other authoritative cultural discourses.

Finally, from the rhetorical perspective, Bergman's extra-diegetic mediation often manifests a dominance and prescience over diegetic relationships and characters. In *The Silence*, I have repeatedly noted characters' responsiveness towards the cinematic mediation and the aesthetically striking harmony between characters and visual compositions. Moreover, the sudden diegetic deviations and the polysemic dialogues often help sustain the extra-diegetic matrix of films that invokes the underlying authorial discourse. Furthermore, the indexical narrativity of the real-world actors helps bring the aspects (signs) associated with their other characters and their socially established personas into films. For example, Jörgen Lindström provides an indexical connection across his characters Johan (*The Silence*) and the little boy (*Persona*). As I have elaborated, Bergman often keeps the 'split' between actor

and character open; this is a permeable channel for thematic narrativity to interlink the fictionality with non-fictionality. For example, I elaborated how Ingrid Thulin's indexical femininity productively conflicts with the masculine signs generated by her performance as Ester. Actors' iconicity, idiosyncrasies, mannerisms, and even voices generate continuous signs that maintain alternative narrativity and cohesion for their otherwise erratic and seemingly inconsistent 'characters'. Similarly, such a cinematic discourse can also *deconstruct* actors' inherent mimetic humanity for abstract thematic meanings with calculated performances. In many instances (with Ester's face in the typewriter scene, in tandem shots between Anna and Ester, Anna's close-up in the lover's room) I have showed that Bergman extra-diegetically deconstructs human faces and bodies into abstract signifying instances. Therefore, with Bergman's mediation, genre (e.g. fictional vs. non-fictional), gender (e.g. masculinity, femininity, nascent sexuality), stereotypes (vamp, virgin; hero, villain) and entrenched ideological and mimetic boundaries in art (e.g. individuals, actors, characters; diegesis/extra-diegesis; text, context, etc.) often reorganise into provisional cinematic variables and new signifying systems. Without analysing the extra-diegetic matrix as a unique communicational domain that serve thematic discourses, such cinematic complexities appear merely stylistic or excessive in mimetic terms.

6.1.3. Illusion and Reality: The Curious Problem of Bergman's Diegesis

When the diegetic tier is considered as the whole narrative, a cinematic narrative may appear as an 'authorless' audience-construction as many theorists have proposed (see section 3.2.1). Consequently, Metz's well-known psychoanalytic thesis aims to show how 'history/story' dominates 'discourse' in Hollywood institutional narrative. With the same implicit assumptions, the

political modernist project¹⁵⁷ prescribes to counteract the illusory ‘story’ of narrative cinema with the foregrounded presentation (syuzhet, style, discourse). In these views, the cinematic presentation that produces a cohesive fictional story is immoral since it helps fabricate a false subject¹⁵⁸. The illusionistic apparatus of cinema (and its immediacy) provides a best possible ‘medium’ to construct an ideologically fallacious cohesive ‘story’ and a misleading subject who assumes to be in control of the ‘story’¹⁵⁹. From this perspective, narrative cinema, in its strict sense, has always been criticised for refining cinematic strategies for effective mimetic realism. Robert Kolker (2009, p. 4) identifies such strategies as: “patterns of composing and cutting images to create chronologically continuous, spatially coherent, suspenseful but finally resolved series of events”. In this context, political modernists insist on the deconstruction of subject positions inherent to narrative cinema¹⁶⁰. They instead advocate fragmentary, fluid, mobile, or disruptive subject positions inherent to counter-cinema. If the dualism between ‘story’ and its cinematic presentation is valid, the best way to challenge the lurking narrative ideology seems to disrupt the coherence of presentation. The disruption of the presentation thwarts the illusory coherence of the cinematic diegesis/story. Likewise, the lessened narrativity and fictionality disintegrate the subject positions sutured into the illusory diegesis and characters.

From this perspective, the subject positions of Bergman’s cinema appear more ambiguous or elusive. Firstly, my discussion of *The Silence* showed that

¹⁵⁷ Rodowick (1995, pp. vii–xxxi) characterises ‘political modernism’ in cinema as a post-1968 critical camp (unacknowledged) against ‘illusionistic’, linear, and coherent narrative strategies. Ruston (Ruston, 2013, p. 9) asserts that “the logic of political modernism is based on a fundamental distinction between *illusion* and *reality* in the cinema”. Simply, political modernists insist films should expose the ‘reality of illusion’ rather than promoting the ‘illusion of reality’ (p.26).

¹⁵⁸ For instance, Heath’s (1981, pp. 1–18) seminal article ‘On Screen, in Frame’: Film and Ideology’ theorises this position.

¹⁵⁹ Baudry’s (1974) ‘Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus’ is well-known for this thesis.

¹⁶⁰ Ruston (2013, pp. 22–30) and Ben-Shaul (2007, p. 92) survey different arguments presented by ‘theories of the subjects’: for some theories, the incoherent subject positions faithfully re-present modernist subjects, while for others, cinematic incoherencies are a way to thwart the illusory subject formations.

the diegetically motivated audience can almost succeed in their goal with some jolts and jerks. Although I only examined the prologue of *Persona* in detail, the film's apparent diegesis (as critics call it, the narrative-proper) is considerably dominant. As many analysts assume, the challenging second half of the film would be more 'realistic' or mimetic as a stream of consciousness, thought experiments, or a dream sequence of Alma. These traits often encourage commentators (Rafferty, 2004, para. 4; Due, 2013, p. 33; Sommerlad, 2018) to associate Bergman's films with 'psychological realism'¹⁶¹. In these treatments, the montage sequences (prologue, interlude, and epilogue) of *Persona* may also seem metaphoric embellishments or framing devices that 'decorate' its narrative.

With these features, Bergman's cinema does not simply fall into the political modernist project. In the political modernist vocabulary, traits like relatable characters, apparent 'sensationalism', and aesthetic lyricism distance *The Silence* from the political modernist tenets¹⁶². Concerning *Persona*, the melodramatic scenes, 'psychological realism', and alluring sexual tension bewitch audiences problematising the purpose of its 'modernist' traits¹⁶³. These films sometimes entwine the audiences' viewpoint with the character viewpoints, thereby locating the audiences within the 'illusory diegesis' (spectator/character identification). Based on these very aspects, Kolker (2009, pp. 6–7) even denies Bergman's significance as a leading figure who changed the course of contemporary cinema, by portraying Bergman's strategies as a methodological foil for Godard's modernist cinema. In his view, Bergman's discussed films "incorporate various modernist devices, but cannot quite come

¹⁶¹ Discussing several uses of psychological realism in the cinematic context, Stevens (2015, pp. 15–18) argues for a makeshift definition: the audiovisual styles that replicate plausible internal mental status, feeling, and desires.

¹⁶² However, John Orr (2014, p. 95) recognises *The Silence* as one of the "greatest modernist film"; but his notion of modernism is broad and multifaceted rather than a variant of political modernism.

¹⁶³ Christopher Orr (2000, pp. 123–136) also defines the melodramatic aspects of *Persona* as subversive melodrama.

to terms with them”, and “Bergman’s modernism belongs to the obscurantist wing of the movement” (p.120).

Kolker’s criticism offers an opportunity to discuss the limitations of macro level dualist thinking and how Bergman’s cinematically nuanced micro level discourse transcends them. Kolker, like many political modernists¹⁶⁴, follows Brecht’s famous aphorism: “Reality changes; in order to represent it, modes of representation must change” (p.89). At the beginning of his book *Altering Eye*, he identifies *plot* and *story* as the intrinsic structures in narrative cinema. In this framework, the formal presentation is what brings monotony or difference to narratives: “It is, in fact, plot of sorts for a historical narrative, which, when fleshed out with detail and analysis, provides the basic story of film. But the telling has itself become something of a genre, with the same figures and the same configurations recurring” (p.16).

Later, Kolker complains that Bergman’s “construction of the narrative itself is full of ellipses (more accurately, empty with ellipses)”, and therefore ultimately “creates mysteries rather than solve them” (p.120). He believes that a narrative should not have empty ellipses that create mysteries. A cinematic presentation should be able to ultimately convey a soluble and complete ‘story/fabula’ that faithfully ‘represents’ reality. Accordingly, he prescribes a modernist cinematic presentation with an estranged perspective (modernist consciousness) towards the mimetic story (realistic content). Kolker’s praise of Godard’s jump cuts in *Breathless* (1960) is a case in point: for him, these jump cuts provide an innovative and self-reflexive twist to the presentation (p.129); but a complete diegesis flows underneath, and the ‘plot’ indicates a cohesive story. In Kolker’s framework, Bergman’s ‘story’ is incomplete and therefore mystifies its narrative. Moreover, the emotional psychology and melodrama counteract the effects of

¹⁶⁴ Although the political modernist agenda is not explicit in Kolker’s book, its tenets are discernible.

his modernist devices and therefore, “they are an effective gambit, but only a gambit” (p.120).

My research has already established that plot/story and syuzhet/fabula dualisms are inadequate models to analyse Bergman’s cinema¹⁶⁵. Bergman’s discussed films entwine the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic tiers. They effectively blur generally assumed boundaries between the medium, plot, story, characters, and style. I have shown that Bergman’s actors and characters are not *only* mimetic human figures. They also become micro-level signifying systems and abstract signs that are reconfigured with their surroundings. Alan Barr (1987, p. 124 emphasis in original) also claims that in *Persona*, “Bergman establishes an elaborate system of doubles that discredits any facile distinction between the two women, one “her” and the other “her””. All these cinematic resources simultaneously interact with each other propagating new signifying threads and affective forces. Bergman’s frames, compositions, and camera movements do not simply reveal or fabricate a macro-level diegesis but weave various micro-level communicational channels. In such transient stages, characters, actors, dialogues, music, props, light and shade, shapes, movements, edits, etc. discard their conventional identities and become unique cinematic signs and images.

However, this is not simply Bergman’s aptitude in innovating new cinematic forms. Bergman’s quintessential films betray a very incisive philosophical insight that is already spelled out in Laura Hubner’s (2007, p. 1) study. She argues that in Bergman’s oeuvre, “there is a gradual shift from concentrating on dichotomies between falsity and truth to looking at life and film as a set of constructs”. In this light, it is reasonable to assume that Bergman does not see *representations* of fiction or reality as distinct, complete, or hermetic phenomena. Furthermore, he does not privilege non-fictional

¹⁶⁵ However, I do not deny their capacity to discuss the chronological *orders* of the diegesis. For instance, they are useful terms to discuss the inverted diegesis like Christopher Nolan’s *Memento* (2000).

communication (reflexivity, disruptions, materiality) over fictional communication (events, story, characters).

According to my thesis, both non-fictional and fictional engagements are rhetorical resources that exploit the different types and levels of cinematic signs. Both communicational modes are mediated, and therefore, not free of ideology or subject positions. Furthermore, the 'real life' perception of 'reality' is also mediated by language, culture, as well as sensorial and intellectual faculties. The 'real' images and representations are also useful and sometimes treacherous constructs that make our natural and cultural life possible. The 'real-world' subject positions are also not complete or given but always interact with their exterior or other. In this sense, disrupting narrativity or fictionality does not necessarily reveal a privileged portal to 'reality'. Rather, cinematic narrativity, fictionality, and non-fictionality are cinematic resources that explore the realities of illusions, images, and representations.

6.1.4. Bergman, Modernism, and Reflexivity

David Rodowick (1995, p. 208) rightly indicates that political modernist suppositions are too formalist with regard to the cinematic subjects: "to the extent that the destiny of the subject is decided "in the text" it can be none other than a formal problem". Warren Buckland (2013, p. 115) further clarifies the political modernists' general oversight: "[t]he text, whether main-stream or avant-garde, is conceived as the sole factor in the determination of the film spectator's consciousness". These observations indicate that the idea of disrupting the text-internal cinematic 'presentation', and thereby thwarting the cinematic 'story', stems from formalist and dualist thought. However, Bergman's authorial paratexts and intertextuality across his oeuvre and life always indicate that a text is always a part of a larger context.

I already have argued how *The Silence* and *Persona* (prologue) complicate the subject positions operating across fictional, non-fictional, and thematic levels. If these traits are taken as reflexive strategies or cinematic (narrative)

excess, they do not merely remind audiences that a fiction is illusory, or a cinematic presentation is a construction. Rather they indicate that the cinematic art necessarily functions within a nested framework that interlaces the real-world and fictional representations. They exploit all the cinematic matrixes to build a communicative discourse between authors, text, and audience. The term cinematic 'medium' only becomes meaningful when there is a 'text' in between authors and audiences that exploits multifarious cinematic resources for communication and epistemic illumination. Therefore, a medium cannot merely be defined by the abstracted a-priori formal features. In this sense, cinematic narrativity and fictionality are also the communicational acts that engender cinematic medium. The affective forces and non-fictionality are also vital modes operate within, beyond, and alongside these primary acts and texts.

John Orr (emphasis in original 1993, p. 1) asserts that "modern artworks are never exclusively 'modern' but also a multitude of other things". For Orr, the term 'modern' (or now) becomes paradoxical when designated to passing processes or a historical epoch; it can sustain its sensible meaning only because the echoes of the past ceaselessly come into being (or presence) in modernity, and the recurring past cannot be subsumed into it. Therefore, with modernity, 'post-modern' is impossible. Orr further elaborates: "[t]he reflexive nature of modern films, its capacity for irony, for pastiche, for constant self-reflection, and for putting everything in quotation marks, are not 'postmodern' at all, but on the contrarily, have been an essential feature of the cinema's continuing encounter with modernity" (p.2).

Orr's observation indicates that *constantly* bringing the *passing phenomena* into presence with reflection is 'modernist' than reflexive interruption as well as letting something pass without reflection. As Kolker's thought on Godard's *Breathless* discloses, the textual interruptions of a diegesis or fiction itself do not cease projections (semiosis) of a diegesis. Then, despite Kolker's political modernist criticism, Bergman's relationship with the diegesis is 'modernist' in many respects. Bergman always places the mimetic matrix (or

diegesis) of cinema that is considered dangerously analogous to 'reality' (illusory) within a constantly evolving interpretational framework or, as Orr claims, quotation *marks*. Bergman is also not shy of exploiting the potential affective potentials of a diegesis (melodrama) to its highest. His scheme seems to sustain a reflexivity that is ceaselessly 'modern', as well as 'ironic'. It is also, as John Simon (1974, p. 215) famously observes of *Persona*, "modernism becoming classical before our very eyes". Bergman also does not imply the completeness of a story or the real-world; he also does not thwart access to the fictional reality privileging the 'reality of presentation' or 'artificiality of art'. Even the semiosis of real-world, self, author, reader, text, and context are dynamic domains, which attains a transient stability in specific contexts with affective, fictional, and non-fictional acts. Fictionality (with non-fictionality) and narrativity are essential dimensions of this process that disconcert, mobilise, as well as stabilise representations. With such cinematic instincts, Bergman invites his audiences to reflect on how a diegesis (immediate phenomena, fiction, illusion, mask) grapples with cinematic mediation to become a transient reality. On the other hand, an authentic cinematic mediation is possible only if it ceaselessly grapples with the inherent immediacy of cinema and emerging fiction/mask. In this sense, Bergman's cinema seems a more rigorous modernist project that faithfully scrutinises our own mediation with the real-world immediacy and fictionality.

6.2. Conclusion

I started my introduction (Chapter 1.1) highlighting several complementary and competitive possibilities of cinematic images: the phenomenal experience of cinema, mimetic potential in the form of story-world, mimetic potential in non-fictional referentiality, thematic relationships, ruptures of and resistance to these possibilities. These experiential and referential possibilities of cinematic images open disparate theoretical portals into cinema. Accordingly, they are studied with diverse and sometimes discordant approaches: phenomenology, formalism, narratology, auteur theory, semiotics, critical theory, etc. However, as I have argued throughout this thesis, most discussed-theories prioritise a chosen dimension of cinema according to their ideologies, conventions, and theoretical goals. In this context, the first half of my research was dedicated to developing a nested theoretical framework to study cinematic narrative.

6.2.1. Narrative Dualisms and Mimetic Narrativity

My literature reviews in the Introduction 1.2.2, sections 2.2, and 3.2 have examined several theoretical approaches to narrative structure: Aristotle's poetics, Russian Formalism, classical narratology, post-classical narrative theory, neo-formalism. If narrative is a unique category against the other text types, the discussed narrative theories tacitly maintain that *mimetic story* as the differential and prototype content. In my reviews, I have argued that all these approaches depend on projecting a coherent whole that can lend meanings to the individual components and their interrelationships. Accordingly, structural narrative theories often distinguish two relative structural levels as the 'given' narrative presentation (signifier) and narrative outcome (signified): events/plot, syuzhet/fabula, discourse/story.

However, evaluating these approaches, I showed that narrative theorists often define the given components or level of narrative (events, motifs, syuzhet, discourse) according to their projected mimetic forms (plot, fabula, story). In this sense, only some elements of a narrative text that contribute towards a mimetic

story are counted as narrative components and presentation. As I have reviewed in section 3.5.2, the theorists who study cinematic fictionality also prioritise a specific goal-oriented dimension of cinema subsuming or disregarding others. They also deem fiction as an alternative mimetic ‘world’ that more or less imitates the real-world. Therefore, I have contended that the criteria like make-believe, pretence, imagined seeing, invention, and non-assertion only consider the mimetic dimension of cinema. Consequently, many ‘irrelevant’ or ‘excessive’ aspects to the mimetic dimension do not fall into the purview of respective narrative or fiction theories. In this sense, the discussed theories often remove the dynamics of semiotic mediums, stylistics, authorial context, intertextuality, etc. from their theoretical models.

According to my reviews in section 2.3, post classical narrative theories challenge the generic narrative and coherent mimetic models. Instead, they come to propose the concept of *narrativity*. In these approaches, narrativity is a variable quality of any text. However, with examples I argued that this approach has not toppled the mimetic-oriented narratological paradigm completely. Even in these theories, narrativity is understood as the structural force that is generated by mimetic representations and the immanent transitivity of the represented ‘content’. In this sense, post-classical theories increasingly pay attention to the anti-mimetic, anti-structural, and post-modernist narratives that violate the mimetic conventions and mimetic narrativity. However, I have maintained that these new theories still pay less attention to the non-mimetic and non-structural aspects of any narrative. When cinema is understood with all its multivalent possibilities and traits, I argued that cinematic narrativity and fictionality must be explored with pluralistic theories that can transcend the mimetic dimension of cinema.

6.2.2. A Rhetorical Approach to Cinematic Narrative

In this context, I proposed that communicational and rhetorical perspectives provide helpful insights to explore how the diverse dimensions of

texts correlate with each other to engender narrativity. In cinema, the discussed cinematic dimensions may appear to be in irreconcilable conflict when scrutinised separately. Nevertheless, according to the rhetorical perspective, users of cinema (filmmakers, audiences, critics, analysts) exploit all these cinematic traits for larger contextual goals. In this process, the harmonies, coexistences, and contradictions between the discussed cinematic dimensions can also become resources that advance unique experiences and meanings. They can also inspire cinematic interpretations within certain possibilities and restrictions. Therefore, I have maintained that a rhetorical approach to cinema must necessarily deal with the heterogeneity of cinema; any trait or potential of cinema can become a resource or hindrance within cinematic communication.

There are diverse approaches that expose certain instabilities and multiplicities of narrative texts. However, I highlighted that a communicational context can provide specific parameters and discourses to stabilise the textual dynamics of a narrative. Although cinematic narrative has often been studied as an interpretational component within films, from the rhetorical perspective, a cinematic narrative is an extra-textual communicational act and event that involves the phenomenal, semiotic, and rhetorical dimensions of cinema. This approach helped me to develop a versatile framework to study narrativity and fictionality based on audiences' cinematic experiences and referential activities. In this context, following the Peircean insights, I described narrativity as the textual progression of representations (see section 2.7). Also, considering the manifold referentiality of cinema, I described cinematic fictionality as the flexible use (act) of referentiality that does not firmly fix referents in the real world; in this sense, non-fictionality is locating (act) references in the text-external actual world (see section 3.5.5).

6.2.3. A Rhetorical Approach to Authorship

My research has established that many dominant theories on narrative and cinema attempt to discount the authorial contexts on various grounds (see

sections 2.2.3, 3.3.1, 3.7). Formalists analyse and evaluate the cinematic presentation (style, *syuzhet*) exclusively in relation to the fabula/story, diegesis, or 'textual reality'. Classical narratologists attempt to evaluate the narrative discourse in relation to its determinant story. Structuralists locate meanings in closed structures while post-structuralists explore the plurality of structures, meanings, and values. While author, intention, and the extra-textual context are extraneous for formalists, classical narratology also situates its communicational framework (and narrators) inside the text. Meanwhile, some phenomenologists theorise the cinema (films) itself as a 'invisible body', with 'eye', 'skin', and 'agency' that directly encounters the spectator; they aim to ground the 'intersubjectivity' between the film and the audience (section 3.2.2). However, I maintained that all these theories often casually exploit the authorial and communicational contexts (as *filmmakers/craftsmen*), although their putative theoretical frameworks do not have a stable place for author-audience communication. Even the immediacy of the cinematic image still covertly draws on the extra-textually mediated materials; therefore, the phenomenology per se risks taking the dynamic referential relationships (semiosis), narrative, and the cinematic authorship for granted.

Nevertheless, according to the rhetorical perspective, a cinematic text is always a node of its extra-textual narrative context. Following this perspective, my research in Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrated that the pragmatic assumptions of authorship enable myriads of additional resources for Bergman's cinematic meanings: intertextuality, intermediality, intersubjectivity, authorial conventions, historical contexts, and themes. Narrativity and fictionality (including non-fictionality) are also the key rhetorical resources that forge the notion of 'single cinematic authorship'. They also are the key rhetorical resources that disrupt and obliterate the effects of authorship. While some texts foreground the image of authorship, others may suppress it to various extents, according to the communicational goals.

6.2.4. Bergman's Nested Dolls: Contribution to Knowledge

Following the employed rhetorical framework, the second half of my research undertook to show how Bergman's cinematic mediation integrates the extra-diegetic, diegetic, and thematic matrixes within his cinematic discourse. Instead of relying on the predetermined *macro-structures* like syuzhet, story, or fabula of Bergman's films, my study engaged with the *micro-relations* that act as the thrust behind narrativity and fictionality (and non-fictionality) across employed analytical tiers. My investigation has shown that cinematic narrativity emerges from the dynamics between cinematic immediacy and phenomenal experience. Subsequently, it evolves across fictional and non-fictional references that are determined by textual dynamics and various interpretational goals. I demonstrated that Bergman's cinema advances cinematic experiences and their references temporally with synergistic narrativity. Moreover, it also stratifies them across various levels with cinematic fictionality. In this sense, cinematic narrativity is not a mere result of the diegetic tier or story; the extra-diegetic and thematic levels also contribute to narrativity. If there is a whole that offers meanings to cinematic events and narrative acts, this whole is not internal to a text or a-priori structure. Such a whole necessarily involves the context, other texts, other arts, history, and the dynamic horizons of a culture. Such a whole is also not complete and closed, but the textual and narrative acts incessantly and dynamically change its frontiers. In this process, I demonstrated that narrativity, fictionality, and non-fictionality are referential dynamics as well as communicational resources. These resources integrate immediate cinematic experience as well as interpretive engagement for communicational goals. With these potentials, cinema is an inevitable narrative activity of making things (or cinematic materiality) stand for *something else* (signs, fiction, mediacy, author, context) and *itself* (immediacy, phenomenal experience).

Bergman's use of fictionality and narrativity also reveals the shortcomings of the static distinction between text-internal 'fictional story' and 'cinematic presentation' that is variously presented as text/plot, syuzhet/fabula, or

discourse/story. Such assumptions always propose a dualistic logic between two story versions: told story vs untold story. As I have demonstrated in section 2.2, often the ideological assumptions on the 'untold story' (plot, fabula, story) are what define the structural narratologies of the so-called 'told story' (text, syuzhet, discourse). However, in various instances I have argued that, text, medium, presentation, plot, fabula, discourse, story, characters, themes, and the implied authorship are various versions or stories developed on cinematic materiality by filmmakers, audiences, and analysts. Therefore, cinema (or cinematic narrative) is not represented events, but the events of presentations with cinematic images. In this sense, Bergman's cinema presents a heterogeneous collection of experiences and stories across various dimensions of cinema and life, and his cinematic/narrative presentation is an incessant and active cultural event. This presentational activity takes place not *inside* Bergman's texts but *with* his texts and his audience.

6.2.5. Limitations and Possibilities

My study relied on the thesis that diverse potentials of fictional cinema and narrative acts have many irreducible dimensions that involve fictional and non-fictional engagements. In this sense, my research question could not escape from the ambitious task of dealing with multiple disciplines and theoretical domains. Although these disparate dimensions indicate an unwieldy scope, I have followed cinematic narrativity and fictionality as my research thread in order to selectively weave the relevant aspects of these different disciplines together. I maintained that the heterogeneity of cinema necessitates such an interdisciplinary approach. At the same time, this necessity itself might have led to some inescapable blind spots as well as new directions. I have already recognised that the interplay between rhetorical explorations and the phenomenology of cinema requires more comprehensive research and case-studies because presently they appear to be contradictory approaches. However, I consider that recognising blind spots is also a constructive goal of

this study and addressing limitations and new directions will set the path for my future research.

Secondly, one of the implicit concerns of my research has been how the experiential and interpretational possibilities of cinema are different from the purely linguistic/symbolic medium. Moreover, I argued that the linguistic and mimetic paradigm still inspires many theories on narrative and cinema despite various theorists' declared ambitions. On the other hand, the linguistic medium seems necessarily mimetic because the goal of languages is to 'cut the world' into intelligible, intersubjective, and 'human level' concepts. However, I maintained that cinema can become a medium that transcends the mimetic paradigm and I have attempted to elaborate this possibility in my research at best. Nevertheless, inevitably, I have also experienced the barriers imposed by language (language itself and English as a foreign language) in delivering my thesis, and perhaps I have used unusual amounts of parentheses, lists of ideas, and long sentences in this study. Again, on a positive note, I believe that dealing with language is also an inherent task of research and cinema, and Bergman has always shown how cinema can overcome the limits of language.

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