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The style of Ingmar Bergman's films

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ABSTRACT

This analysis of the style of Ingmar Bergman's films uses methods of treating film style that were first proposed and put into practice over 40 years ago by the author. Since then they have been applied to a very large number and range of films, and the results of these investigations published in books and in the *New Review of Film and Television Studies*. The basic technique of analysis used is drawing on the terms and categories used by film-makers in creating the films. It also gives weight to the film-maker's ideas about what they are doing and why. The local and international context of the work of the film-maker also contributes to the analysis. After a brief summary of Ingmar Bergman's film-making career and his films, his individual films are analysed in terms of the characteristics of the shots in them, such as length, closeness of camera, camera movement, POV, and so on. A simple statistical consideration of all these quantities enables a new separation of Bergman's career into three phases from this perspective, with the film *Persona* being one of the turning points. Using a new technique of digital frame analysis, other points emerge regarding the development of his handling of actor movement and camera movement in his staging of love scenes, which gives rise to what could be called the Bergman signature shot. Another discovery is that Bergman's two best known films, *Det sjunde inseglet* and *Smultronstället* are stylistically anomalous in his work.

KEYWORDS Ingmar Bergman; career; film style; statistical analysis; signature shot

The films of Ingmar Bergman form the largest body of totally personal cinema produced in the Twentieth Century. Once he had established himself as a writer-director who could make films that made their money back, Bergman became free to deal only with the subjects that concerned him. His work can be seen to fall into a series of fairly obvious phases based on consideration of the content of his films, and also their production circumstances. Bergman's own view of his films, including their genesis and what they are about, can be found in his book *Images* (Bergman 1995) and other places. Bergman's own writings and interviews largely render ordinary critical interpretation of his films unnecessary, but the technical and stylistic side of his work presents a special problem. At first viewing, the films he made up to the

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beginning of the 'sixties seem to have no special distinguishing features stylistically, so analysing them is a challenge.

The methods I use to study all aspects of film, including style, were first outlined in 1974 in an article in *Sight & Sound* (Salt 1974), and put into practice shortly after. A fuller exposition of what I call 'Practical Film Theory' can be found in my *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (Salt 2009b). The essence of my analytical methods is the reversal of the way films are put together by their makers, and using the concepts that they use. I establish norms for the contexts of individual films, and the differences of the variables of a particular film from the relevant norms are what indicate the variable's special significance.

In the case of Ingmar Bergman, a major difficulty is that very few Swedish films made by other directors during the early part of his career are available, but I have included in this investigation the relevant ones that I could obtain.

Ingmar Bergman was launched in the cinema with his original script for *Hets* (1944), directed by Alf Sjöberg, and made by Svensk Filmindustri (SF), for whom Bergman was already working as a script editor. Sjöberg allowed Bergman to also work as a script clerk on the film. The success of *Hets* meant that SF allowed Bergman to direct *Kris* (1946), which was based on a pre-existing Danish play. This film had a somewhat troubled production process and was not a success. Bergman then went to work for the producer Lorens Marmstedt, who produced films through smaller Swedish film companies such as Sveriges Folkbiografer. Bergman wrote the scripts and directed *Det regnar på vår kärlek* (1946) and *Skepp till Indialand* (1947) from literary properties owned by Marmstedt. Bergman was still employed by SF, and they now gave him another opportunity to direct, with *Hamnstad* (1948), which he wrote in collaboration with Olle Länsberg, the author of the stories on which it was based.

Marmstedt then allowed Bergman to direct for the first time one of his own original scripts with *Fängelse* (1949), though on a very restricted budget and shooting schedule.

Back at Svensk Filmindustri, Bergman then made *Törst* (1949) from stories by Birgit Tengroth, followed by *Till glädje* (1950) from his own original script. From this point, Bergman had properly established himself at SF. His apprenticeship as a film director was over, with *Sommarlek* of the following year being the first film he thought was truly his own.

The next major event in Bergman's career was the prize from the Cannes film festival for *Sommarnattens leende* (1955), which really put him on the international stage. After this, Bergman was in an even stronger position to get his scripts made by Svensk Filmindustri, and this immediately led to the production of *Det sjunde inseglet* (1957) and *Smultronstället* (1957).

Bergman's standing as a major international film-maker was now fully established; he took more notice of his competitors in the international art

film arena, and his work became even more artistically ambitious. The first result of this was *Jungfrukällan*, which was intended to be a tribute to the films of Akira Kurosawa. But stylistically it has very little resemblance to the Japanese master's work. In particular, it doesn't have the use of a long lens to follow the action in some situations. Nevertheless, Bergman went on to innovate in other ways, with major changes in the content of his films. He now dealt more openly with the major themes that had always underlain his films, most importantly the existence of evil and of God. This is particularly true of the so-called 'faith' trilogy of films – *Såsom i en spegel* (1961), *Nattvardsgästerna* (1963) and *Tystnaden* (1963).

After this, the major evils flourishing in the world outside Sweden began to figure more prominently in Bergman's films, though not altogether directly, and also the ambiguity in his stories increased. It may be presumed that this was in response to the stylistic innovations around the beginning of the 'sixties pushing the boundaries of the international art film made by various directors like Jean-Luc Godard, Alain Resnais, and Michelangelo Antonioni. He set up his own company, Cinematograph AB, to produce his films, starting with *Skammen* (1968). This phase could be called his 'High Art' period, and ends with *Viskningar och rop* (1972).

From this point onwards television productions became important in Bergman's output, and I am not going to deal with every production in this last phase of his career. However, I am including *Scener ur ett äktenskap* (1972) in the theatrical film version cut down from the original TV series, and similarly the shortened theatrical release of *Fanny och Alexander* (1982). The first of these dealt solely with the interaction of couples, and deeper concerns do not surface. On the other hand, *Fanny och Alexander* contains the final appearance of the personification of evil in Bergman's world, the 'Vergéus' character, this time in a simulacrum of Bergman's father, and then fantasy sets in with the novel 'magic Jew' figure, who enables the happy ending. Bergman's last major theatrical film, *The Serpent's Egg*, when he moved to Germany after his tax problems, is also a fantasy, though pretending to be otherwise. A narration at the very beginning states that: 'The scene is Berlin, Saturday November the 3rd, 1923'. This means that important parts of the narrative that follows, including a storm trooper raid on a night club, and Jews being made to scrub the pavements, are impossible, as at that date the Nazi party only had about 500 members in the city, and the police were still in complete control of it. The film then moves over into completely obvious fantasy in its latter stages, with a Nazi scientist conducting fatal experiments on humans. The final two films I consider are *Höstsonaten* and *Saraband*. The first of these was made as a true film, and the second was shot on digital video in a Swedish television studio. *Saraband* fuses the central musical parent-musical daughter situation from *Höstsonaten* with the principal characters from *Scener ur ett äktenskap*.

Here is a list of the films I am working with in this article (Table 1):

Table 1. List of Swedish films treated in this essay.

Film	Year	Title Literally Translated	English Language Distribution Titles
Hets	1944	Torment	Frenzy
Kris	1946	Crisis	
Det regnar på vår kärlek	1946	It Rains on Our Love	
Skepp till Indien	1947	A Ship to India	The Land of Desire, Frustration
Musik i mörker	1948	Music in Darkness	Night is My Future
Hamnstad	1948	Harbour City	Port of Call
Eva	1948	Eva	
Fängelse	1949	Prison	The Devil's Wanton
Törst	1949	Thirst	Three Strange Loves
Till glädje	1950	To Joy	
Sommarlek	1951	Summer Play	Summer Interlude, Illicit Interlude
Hon dansade en sommar	1951	She Danced One Summer	One Summer of Happiness
Kvinnors vantan	1952	Women's Waiting	Secrets of Women
Sommaren med Monika	1953	A Summer with Monika	Monika
Gycklarnas afton	1953	Twilight of a Buffoon	Twilight of a Clown, Sawdust and Tinsel, The Naked Night
En lektion i kärlek	1954	A Lesson In Love	A Lesson in Love
Kvinnodröm	1955	Woman's Dream	Journey into Autumn, Dreams
Sommarnattens leende	1955	Smiles of a Summer Night	Smiles of a Summer Night
Nattens ljus	1957	Night's Light	Night Lights
Det sjunde inseglet	1957	The Seventh Seal	The Seventh Seal
Smultronstället	1957	The Wild Strawberry Patch	Wild Strawberries
Nära livet	1958	Near Life	So Close To Life, Brink of Life
Ansiktet	1958	The Face	The Magician
Jungfrukällan	1960	The Virgin Spring	The Virgin Spring
Djävulens öga	1960	The Devil's Eye	The Devil's Eye
Såsom i en spegel	1961	As in a Mirror	Through a Glass Darkly
Natvardsgästerna	1963	Communicants	Winter Light
Tystnaden	1963	The Silence	The Silence
För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor	1964	Not to Speak About All These Women	Now About These Women, All these Women
Persona	1966	Persona	Persona
Vargtimmen	1968	The Hour of the Wolf	Hour of the Wolf
Skammen	1968	The Shame	Shame
En passion	1969	A Passion	The Passion of Anna
Viskningar och rop	1972	Whispers and Cries	Cries and Whispers
Scener ur ett äktenskap	1972	Scenes from a Marriage	
The Serpent's Egg	1976		
Höstsonaten	1977	The Autumn Sonata	Autumn Sonata
Fanny och Alexander	1981	Fanny and Alexander	
Saraband	2003	Saraband	

So the films I am going to include are firstly those that Bergman wrote and/or directed between 1944 and 1972, with the exception of *Medan staden sover* (1950), *Sånt händer inte här* (1950), *Sista paret ut* (1956), and *The Touch* (1970), which are not easily available. Then, follow the later films I have just indicated. After that, I am omitting the Bergman dramas that were shown on TV, though I am including the cut-down versions that were shown in cinemas in other countries. As already mentioned, *Hets* was directed by Alf Sjöberg from Ingmar Bergman's script. *Eva* is another Bergman script directed by Gustav Molander for Svensk Filmindustri, and *Hon dansade en sommar* was directed by Arne Mattsson for Nordisk Tonefilm from a non-

Bergman script. *Nattens ljus* as was written and directed by Lars-Erik Kjellgren, though it is said that there was some contribution by Ingmar Bergmann to its script. As well as the Swedish films listed, I am also using a number of American films for comparative purposes. Because some of Bergman's films have many different English language distribution titles, I shall refer to all of these films by their original Swedish titles.

Finally, I note that the set of films I am considering here is quite similar to those films that Bergman thought worth discussing in his book, *Images* (Bergman 1995).

Investigation

My methods of stylistic analysis are laid out and demonstrated in my book *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (Salt 2009b), and also in various other places, including this journal. Basically, I collect quantitative data on the various variables that are used to describe a film during the production process and then analyse them statistically. This is done by noting all the variables describing each shot in succession through the film, while viewing it in a non-linear editing programme on a computer.

Scale of shot

It is a consideration of the Scale of Shot variable that most strongly shows up the changes in style over Bergman's career as a film director.

Scale of Shot is measured by the size of the human figure relative to the height of the frame. The scales I use are as follows: Big Close Up (BCU) shows head only, or even less than that, Close Up (CU) shows head and shoulders, Medium Close Up (MCU) includes body from the waist up, Medium Shot (MS) includes from just below the hip to above the head of upright actors, Medium Long Shot (MLS) shows the body from the knee upwards, Long Shot (LS) shows at least the full height of the body, and Very Long Shot (VLS) shows the actor small in the frame. As usual, the figures quoted are the number of each scale per 500 shots in the film concerned. An illustration of these scales can be found on the front cover of *Moving Into Pictures* (Salt 2006) and on the Cinemetrics website, at: <http://www.cinemetrics.lv/salt.php>.

As already noted, the contextual examples include *Hets*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Eva*, *Hon dansade en sommar*, and *Nattens ljus*. *Mildred Pierce* (Michael Curtiz 1945) is included because Bergman has said in *Bergman on Bergman*: 'I remember how Lars Kjellgren and I – we'd started together at SF and were close friends – saw Curtiz's films over and over again, evening after evening, to find out how he did it' (Bergman et al. 1973, 29). The complicated flashback structure of Michael

Curtiz's *Passage to Marseille* (1944) may also have encouraged Bergman's subsequent fondness for flashback structures. *Eva* is included to show how Gustaf Molander, a veteran director from the silent period, shot Bergman's script, and *Hon dansade en sommar* was directed by Arne Mattsson for Nordisk Tonefilm. Mattson was a close contemporary of Bergman but came up as director for smaller Swedish companies. The plot of *Hon dansade* has a certain basic resemblance to Bergman's earlier *Sommarlek*, made the previous year, though with the sexes of the leading characters switched round (Figure 1).

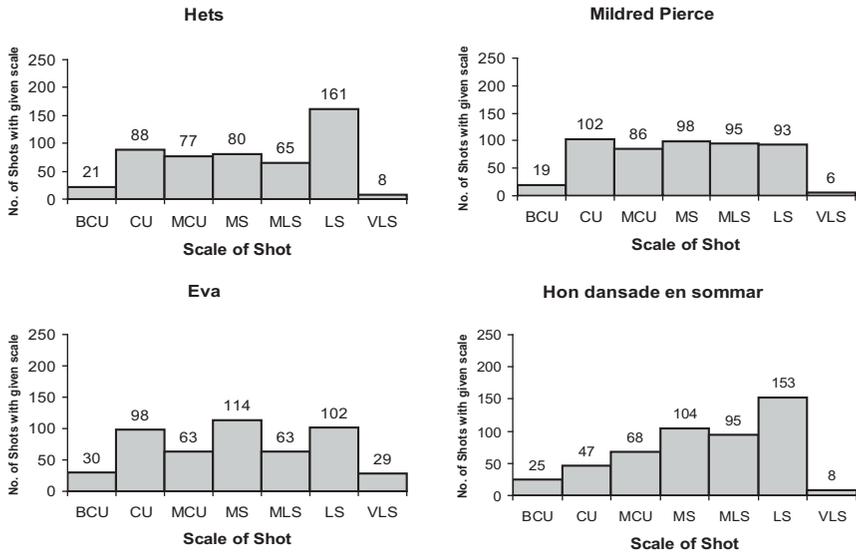


Figure 1. Scale of shot frequencies (per 500 shots): contextual examples.

As can be seen from the graphs above, *Hets* has an excessive emphasis on Long Shot, but the most noticeable feature of its cinematography is not picked up by the shot variables I am using. This is that many of its shots are taken with the camera down near floor level, and tilted up a bit. These shots are also mostly taken with a fairly wide-angle lens of about 25 mm focal length. It seems obvious to me that this is the influence of *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles 1941), though the depth of field achieved in *Hets* is some way short of the 'deep focus' of *Citizen Kane*. This is partly because the most extreme wide-angle lenses of 20 mm focal length would not fit on the Debrie sound cameras used by Svensk Filmindustri at this time. This stylistic aspect of *Hets* was *not* taken over by Ingmar Bergman for his films. *Mildred Pierce* has a very typical Scale of Shot distribution for a 'forties American film, as can be seen from the average Scale of Shot distributions from bracketing 20 film samples of American films from 1939 and 1959 taken from

(Salt 2013) and (Salt 2009a). Over those twenty years American films show only a small swing towards closer shooting; a swing that was to increase in subsequent decades. The *Mildred Pierce* Scale of Shot falls halfway between the 1939 and 1959 averages (Figure 2).

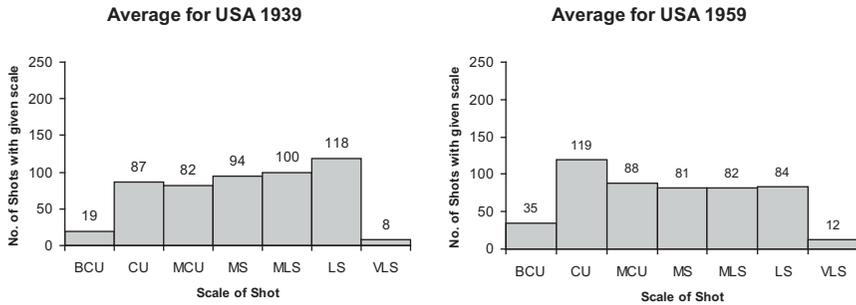


Figure 2. Scale of Shot frequencies: 1939 vs. 1959 US averages.

Eva also has a fair resemblance to the American norm of the time, but *Hon dansade en sommar* has far more emphasis on the more distant shot scales. But if we look at Ingmar Bergman's first 21 films, we find something more complex. Like most film directors, Bergman's basic aesthetic of scene dissection was conservative, and remained so, with emphasis on the expression of the dramatic content of the narrative with existing standard filmic means. An indication of this can be found on page 209 of *Bergman on Bergman* (Bergman et al. 1973), where he says, amongst other relevant things:

'The more excited, the more raw, horrible, brutal, or elaborate a scene is, the better it is to keep the camera an objective mediant. If the camera gets all excited and begins skipping about all over the bloody place, you lose a lot. It's you, the "audience", who must feel it, whom it's got to strike. If the camera forces its way between and begins talking about its own emotions, usually it will just get in the way, and prevent you from experiencing anything.'

Actually, the most basic formula for cinematic expression can be summed up as 'Who is the camera on, and how close is it?' So here are the Scale of Shot graphs for his first 21 films (Figure 3):

The Scale of Shot profile for *Kris* is similar to the USA average, but too much weight should not be put on this resemblance, as Bergman was struggling to get the film shot in the production time allowed, and so fell back on longer takes and more distant camera, which is the standard response from almost any film director to this problem. Bergman himself described this universal strategy on page 146 of *Images*. *Det regnar* on the other hand is shot closer in, and fairly close to the American 1959 norm. However, Bergman was not ahead of the Americans in shooting closer, as the average profile for 1959 conceals some

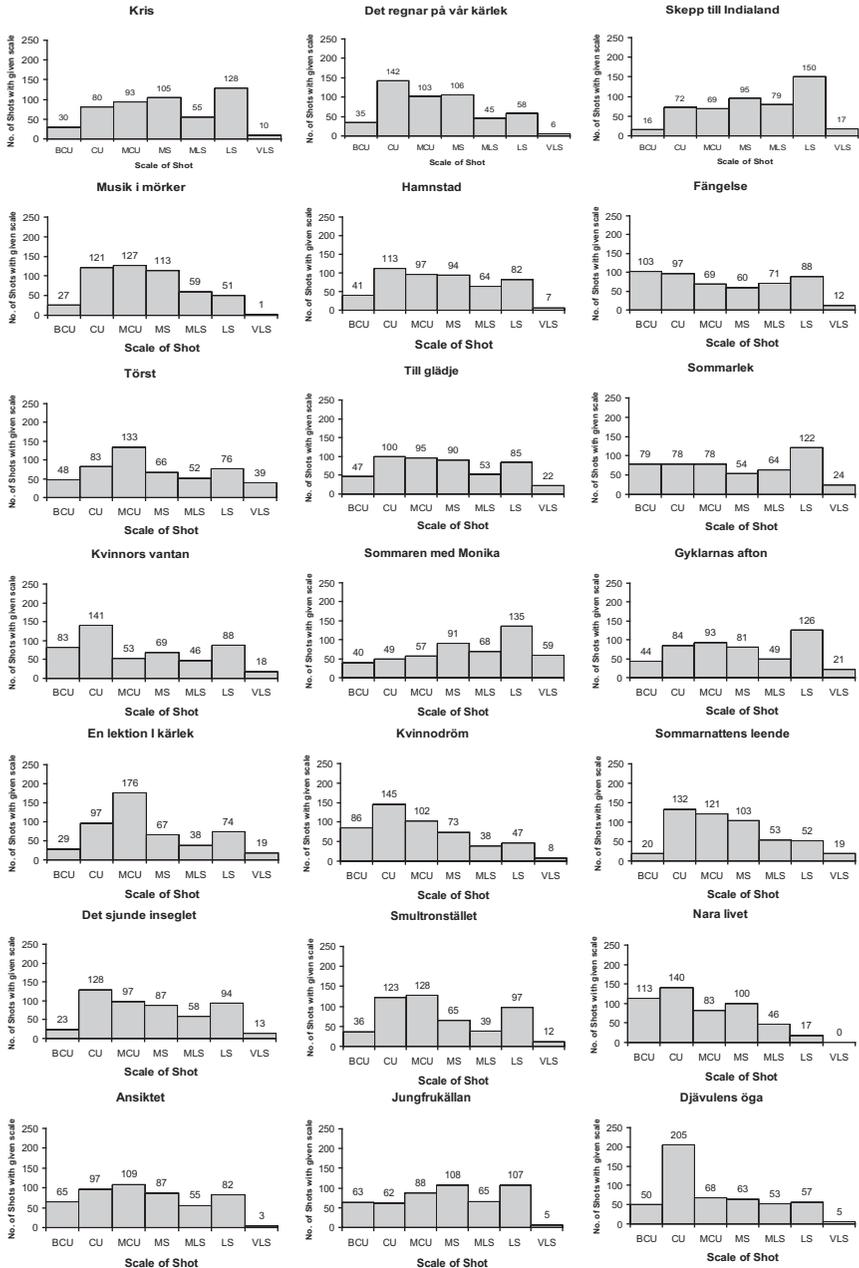


Figure 3. Scale of shot frequencies: Bergman's first 21 films.

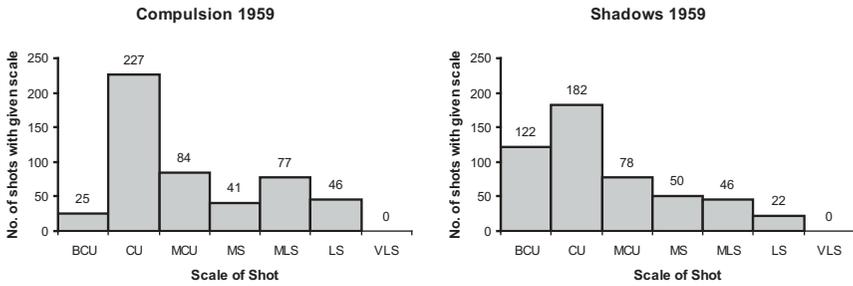


Figure 4. Prevalence of close shots: *Compulsion* and *Shadows*.

American films such as *Compulsion* and *Shadows* which are shot even closer in (see my ‘The Shape of 1959’ (Salt 2009a)) [Figure 4](#).

Skepp till Indialand reverts to much more distant shooting like *Kris*, but in this case, Bergman has not reported any difficulties in the production. However, there is a substantial amount of exterior shooting in this film, as required by the plot, but Bergman’s next film, *Musik i mörker*, reverts fairly exactly to the profile of *Det regnar*. This is an extremely studio-bound film, with many night scenes obviously shot on studio sets. Nevertheless, it was reasonably successful, and this probably had something to do with Svensk Filmindustri giving Bergman another chance to direct with *Hamnstad*. This film has many real exteriors, but the Scale of Shot profile only goes a bit further back from the period norm. The next year, Lorens Marmstedt gave Bergman his reward for making films from Marmstedt’s literary properties, and let him make an original script written by Bergman himself. This was *Fängelse*, and it expressed Bergman’s philosophical beliefs completely openly for the first time. However, it had to be made very cheaply and quickly, with a shooting schedule of 16–17 days (Bergman et al. 1973, 42). *Fängelse* used a stylized film within a film structure to illustrate the basic idea of the hellish and evil nature of life on earth, which is explicitly stated in the framing film.

Bergman said that he was ‘staggering about’ in this apprenticeship period, where he said with reference to *Hamnstad*, ‘Well, I hadn’t any (style) of my own. Each time I went to the cinema I thought “this is what I must do, this is how it’s got to be”. I felt every camera angle was a reproach to my own. I was staggering about, quite lost, and clutching at anything I could’ (Bergman et al. 1973, 32). It is my opinion that he was exaggerating, at any rate as far as basic film technique was concerned. There are a few slightly awkward cuts in *Det regnar*, where a different choice of angle on the adjoining shot would have made the cut smoother, but these are only visible if one looks quite hard. There are also one or two examples of this in the next few films, but from that point onwards, Bergman’s scene dissection is always very sound. It is clear that already he was not shooting coverage of his scenes, that is, he was

not shooting them from different closenesses and angles, and then selecting and putting bits together in the editing.

After *Fängelse*, Bergman returned to Svensk Filmindustri to film *Törst*, written by himself from short stories by Birgit Tengroth. This film develops much more fully than in any of the previous films the theme of couples tearing at each other emotionally and includes plenty of humiliations. The theme of humiliation continued to be a major component of Bergman's films, though with some variation in emphasis.

An example of the variation in Scale of Shot in Bergman's films is *Sommaren med Monika*. In the graphs above, it is evident that this film has a much greater emphasis on distant shots than the surrounding films. A closer analysis shows that most of these occur in the central location-shot section of the film. This section takes up about a third of the film, and contains 40 Long Shots, as against 64 for the whole film. In other words, this one-third of the film contains two-thirds of the Long Shots. So an exceptionally large amount of open-air story in the film leads to much more distant shots. It also leads to other exceptional values in other variables I use, as will become evident later, in the Camera Movement section. But as far as Scale of Shot is concerned, the same effect can be seen in the figures for *Gycklarnas afton*, *Sommarlek* and *Jungfrukällan*. And the reverse effect, where the whole film is shot in confined interiors, is very visible in *Nära livet*. This film was shot on small hospital room sets in the very small Sveriges Folkbiografer studio in Stockholm, making it very difficult to get Long Shots most of the time. In compensation for this, the film has a noticeably higher amount of MS than nearly all other Bergman films. And, of course, the restriction to closer shots goes well with the story and dramatics of the film.

So the major variation in the shot scale profiles of Bergman's films is a gradual, though intermittent, increase in the proportion of close shots. This can be more clearly illustrated with a graph of the number of close shots in

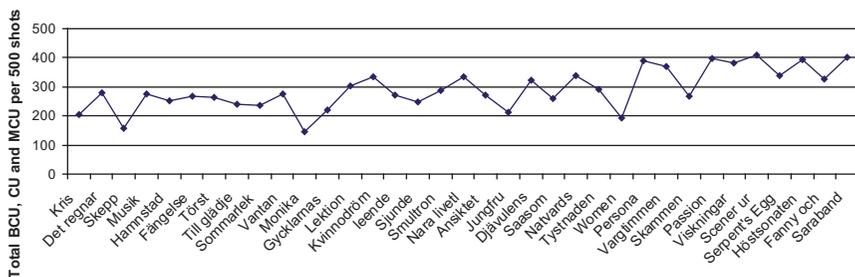


Figure 5. Increasing prevalence of close shots across Bergman's career.

each film per 500 shots. Here close shots are defined as BCU, CU, and MCU (Figure 5).

Although there are oscillations of around plus or minus 50 shots along the way, the trend is from around 200 to 400 of these close shots per film – a very substantial increase from 1946 to 1972. Incidentally, the change from Gunnar Fischer to Sven Nykvist as cinematographer after *Ansiktet* has no immediately detectable influence on the shot scales of Bergman's films.

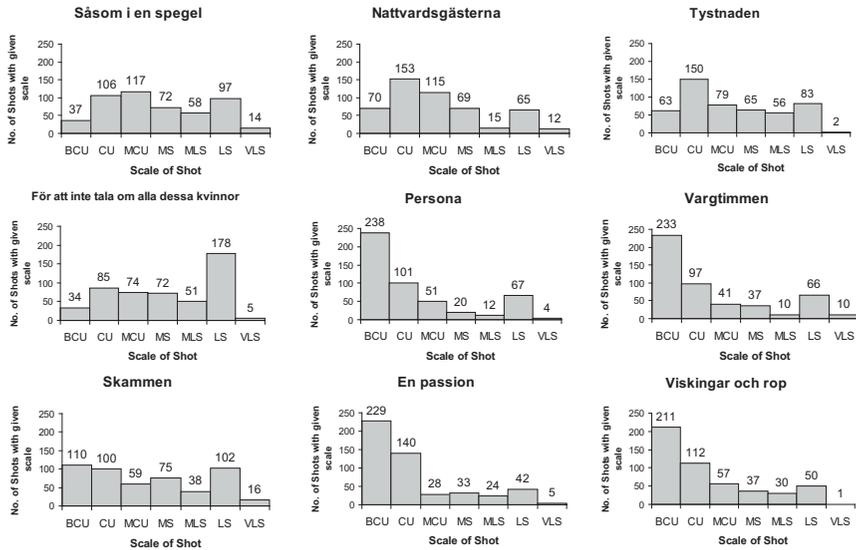


Figure 6. Scale of shot frequencies, Bergman 1961–1972.

Proceeding to the next group of films, their shot profiles look like this (Figure 6):

Ignoring *För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor* as an isolated comedy among dramas, and an unsuccessful one at that, as Bergman readily admitted, one can see a very close similarity between *Nattvardsgästerna* and *Tystnaden*, and also between *Persona*, *Vargtimmen*, *En passion* and *Viskingar och rop*. But *Skammen* is very different in profile. This is because as a war story it is different in its nature to all of Bergman's other films. The scale of its production is bigger, with a large number of extras, and also military action, with explosions and so on. It is unique in his work in being largely shot with a hand-held camera, which would have been necessary to speed up shooting and keep the costs manageable for Bergman's production company, Cinematograph AB, not to mention increasing the believability of the proceedings. This approach also tends to push the shot scale back, although the close shot balance is still as large as that of any of his films made before 1966.

Returning to the so-called ‘faith’ trilogy, a test of the resemblance between these films and their predecessors is to calculate the correlation between the average of their Scale of Shot profiles and the average Scale of Shot of their eight immediate predecessors, starting with *Kvinnodröm*. This value is 0.975 which indicates a very close resemblance. So there is no real stylistic distinction as far as Scale of Shot is concerned.

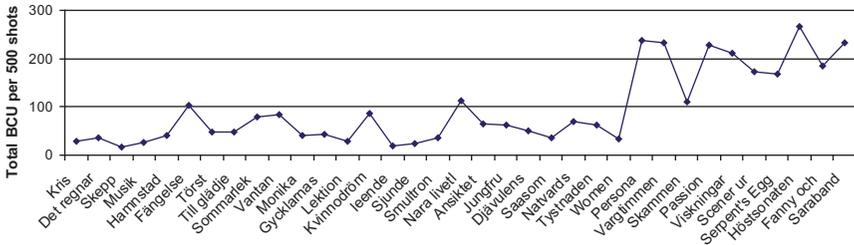


Figure 7. Frequency of big close ups across Bergman's career.

However, the next group of Bergman films I am dealing with is a very different matter. If I plot the number of BCUs alone for each of Bergman's films, I get the following (Figure 7):

This sudden very big increase in the number of BCUs used from *Persona* onwards clearly marks out the films up to the end of Bergman's career as stylistically distinct. They are also fairly clearly marked out from the preceding films by their narrative substance. The ‘faith’ trilogy, like the preceding films, are in the standard film realist mode as far as their stories are concerned, but the first five of these later films have a large degree of ambiguity about the reality status of the scenes in them, right from the beginning of *Persona* up to the resurrection of the dead woman in *Viskingar och rop*. And they use distancing devices of various kinds, such as the semi-abstract prelude to *Persona*, interviews straight to the camera in that film, and also in *En passion* and *Vargtimmen*. *Skammen*, the odd one out in this last group, is much closer to the standard film realist mode, as it existed in the ‘sixties, but even it has a major, and intentional, ambiguity about where and when the story is happening. The characters do not discuss the political details of the war, and the many army vehicles appearing in it have no national markings on them, as would always be the case in the real world. This major aspect of *Skammen* also connects it to a minor aspect of the earlier *Tystnaden*. The sole deviation from realism in that earlier film is that there is no one in a big hotel in a foreign country able to communicate with a well-educated Swedish woman. For complete incomprehensibility to a Western European, Hungarian is a good possibility, not to mention menacing tanks on the city streets several years before 1963. Still, there is undoubtedly a small fantasy element in *Tystnaden*, which

anticipates that in the later group of Bergman 'High Art' films from *Persona* to *Viskningar och rop*.

Persona was clearly intended to be something quite different from Bergman's previous films. His original title for it was *Kinematography*, but this was vetoed by the studio management. Its opening semi-abstract sequence is easily interpreted as an illustration of what cinematography can do, and hence of the concept 'cinematography'. However, the thematic content of the body of the film deals with the exchange of personalities, which is an entirely different idea. One could take it that the film as a whole is a demonstration of the transfer of personalities being illustrated by cinematography, and indeed purely cinematic special effects are used to do this. This climaxes in the well-publicized union of the two women's faces by optical printing, but this process starts earlier than this. The first scene of uncertain reality status beginning at about 62 minutes that unites the two women and one husband in a wild wood, uses background projection extensively to bring the characters together in a series of artificial composite images.

All I can think about the quadrupling of the number of BCUs in *Persona* is that it is meant to aid the illustration of the personality transfer process in the film. And that Bergman so liked the technique that he used it forever afterwards. The Scale of Shot graphs for the late period Bergman films is illustrated below, as well as a graph showing the average Scale of Shot for all Bergman's films. The close similarity of the Scale of Shot profiles of these late period films shows up very clearly and indicates that Bergman was no longer trying for stylistic novelty. The graph of the average Scales of Shot for Bergman's total production of films illustrates in another way how sharply the late films have deviated in shot scale from the much larger mass of his films before them (Figure 8 & 9).

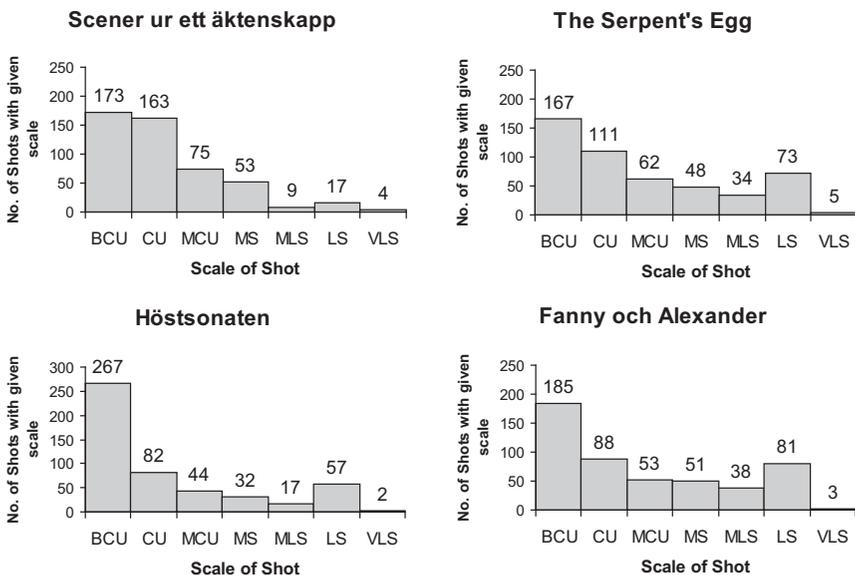


Figure 8. Scale of shot frequencies in Bergman's late films.

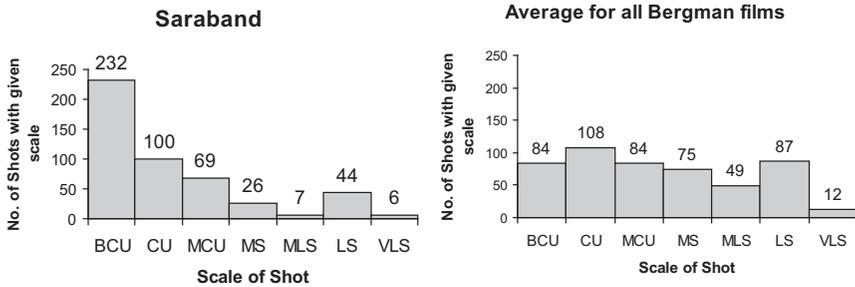


Figure 9. Scale of shot frequencies in Bergman's late films.

Camera movement

The figures for camera movement quoted below (Table 2) do not in general indicate any strong distinctions among Bergman's films, nor do they distinguish them with respect to the contextual films I also include. Exceptions to this generalization include the very high number of tracking shots in *Mildred Pierce* compared to all the other films in my sample, and the exceptionally low amount of total camera movement in *Det sjunde inseglet*, *Smultronstället*, *Persona* and the highly stylized comedies *Djävulens öga* and *För att inte tala om dessa kvinnor* compared to Bergman's other films. *Det sjunde inseglet* and *Smultronstället*, his two biggest commercial successes are also different in another major way which I will come back to in the next section.

I think the relative lack of camera movement in *Djävulens öga* and *För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor* is connected with their artificial and theatrical nature. Bergman accepted an extended discussion of these films in these terms (Bergman et al. 1973, 153–157). Farce and silent film slapstick are repeatedly mentioned in this discussion, and such films were shot from much further back than ordinary dramas, and mostly used fixed frames. Bergman's other films in general have a high amount of total camera movement of all kinds, and the peak is reached with *Sommaren med Monika*. In the middle section shot on location, panning and tilting do nearly all the work to cover the action, as one would expect with the proceedings taking place on the very uneven and rocky surfaces of the islands, but the team did have some sort of simple dolly and tracks out there which were used for two or three shots.

Although the particular category of 'Pan with Tilt' listed above does not seem to make any useful distinctions between the films considered, if one digs a little deeper into individual shot characteristics, and considers the Scale of Shot associated with shots that use both panning and tilting, something interesting emerges. To analyse this, I add at the beginning of the list a couple more

Table 2. Camera movement in Bergman's films and contextual examples.

Film	Year	Pan	Tilt	Pan w Tilt	Track	Track w P&T	Crane	Zoom	Zoom w P&T	Total
Hets	1944	56	15	47	18	67	2	0	0	205
Mildred Pierce	1945	36	1	9	71	60	2	0	0	179
Kris	1946	30	3	13	43	70	0	0	0	159
Det regnar på vår kärlek	1946	35	10	20	28	35	4	0	0	132
Skepp till Indialand	1947	40	1	16	6	13	3	0	0	79
Musik i mörker	1948	34	4	19	34	34	2	0	0	127
Hamnstad	1948	54	15	44	19	61	1	0	0	194
Eva	1948	56	9	37	6	48	0	0	0	156
Fängelse	1949	32	8	16	24	83	0	0	0	163
Törst	1949	41	7	35	28	92	0	0	0	203
Till glädje	1950	34	7	26	22	74	16	0	0	179
Sommarlek	1951	47	3	45	13	38	4	0	0	150
Hon dansade en sommar	1951	33	3	17	27	69	0	0	0	149
Kvinnors vant	1952	36	6	55	13	30	2	0	0	142
Sommaren med Monika	1953	49	17	82	25	72	0	0	0	245
Gycklarnas afton	1953	46	13	34	34	44	0	0	0	171
En lektion i kärlek	1954	67	8	46	32	40	0	2	0	193
Kvinnodröm	1955	48	6	20	9	28	0	0	2	111
Sommarnattens leende	1955	58	2	16	26	35	0	1	0	138
Nattens ljus	1957	22	9	20	33	37	9	2	0	132
Det sjunde inseglet	1957	17	6	23	15	13	2	0	0	76
Smultronstället	1957	26	3	22	30	17	0	0	0	98
Nara livet	1958	45	7	18	24	25	0	0	0	119
Ansiktet	1958	31	4	23	36	30	0	0	0	124
Jungfrukällan	1960	31	11	38	30	23	0	0	0	133
Djävulens öga	1960	31	4	10	21	22	3	0	0	91
Såsom i en spegel	1961	55	6	31	19	12	0	0	0	123
Natvardsgästerna	1963	29	5	31	15	14	0	0	0	94
Tystnaden	1963	61	12	58	12	42	0	0	0	185
För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor	1964	35	5	9	18	9	0	2	0	76
Persona	1966	27	7	28	14	9	2	0	0	87
Vargtimmen	1968	29	10	68	49	31	0	0	0	187
Skammen	1968	71	8	39	11	21	0	0	0	150
En passion	1969	33	13	45	17	6	0	0	1	115
Viskingar och rop	1972	43	15	34	13	28	0	9	10	152
Scener ur ett äktenskap	1973	19	3	29	7	26	0	2	12	98
The Serpent's Egg	1977	32	7	41	16	50	10	14	22	192
Höstsonaten	1978	25	8	45	2	13	2	3	12	110
Fanny och Alexander	1982	47	11	46	17	53	1	5	3	183
Saraband	2003	12	4	10	12	19	0	16	5	78

contextual films for which I have this particular data, namely *The Prisoner of Zenda* (Richard Thorpe 1952) and *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock 1960). Next, I limit the shots with panning and tilting to those which are also close shots, that is,

those that are either BCUs, CUs, or MCUs. Then, I make the further limitation that the shots should be also longer than one minute in length, that is, that they are long takes. This gives the following table (Table 3):

Table 3. Pan and tilt with close up: Bergman's films and contextual examples.

Film	Year	P&T with close shot per 500	P&T with close shot and long take
The Prisoner of Zenda	1952	3	0
Psycho	1960	10	0
Hets	1944	11	0
Mildred Pierce	1945	3	0
Kris	1946	3	0
Det regnar på vår kärlek	1946	10	1
Skepp till Indialand	1947	3	0
Musik i mörker	1948	9	0
Hamnstad	1948	22	0
Eva	1948	13	0
Fängelse	1949	10	0
Törst	1949	17	0
Till glädje	1950	19	0
Sommarlek	1951	17	4
Hon dansade en sommar	1951	3	0
Kvinnors vantan	1952	35	4
Sommaren med Monika	1953	30	4
Gycklarnas afton	1953	12	2
En lektion i kärlek	1954	29	2
Kvinnodröm	1955	11	0
Sommarnattens leende	1955	6	1
Nattens ljus	1957	20	0
Det sjunde inseglet	1957	9	1
Smultronstället	1957	9	0
Nara livet	1958	12	1
Ansiktet	1958	9	0
Jungfrukällan	1960	18	1
Djävulens öga	1960	5	0
Såsom i en spegel	1961	11	0
Natvardsgästerna	1963	19	2
Tystnaden	1963	33	5
För att inte tala om dessa kvinnor	1964	2	0
Persona	1966	28	1
Vargtimmen	1968	47	4
Skammen	1968	22	1
En passion	1969	42	1
Viskingar och rop	1972	31	2
Scener ur ett äktenskap	1973	29	3
The Serpent's Egg	1977	41	1
Höstsonaten	1978	45	4
Fanny och Alexander	1982	46	2
Saraband	2003	10	2

Out of these various numbers of close shots that include panning and tilting, the last column shows that these include a small number of long take shots with length greater than one minute, whereas the contextual films contain none at all. This feature connects with the subjective impression I had on watching Bergman's films, and the figures validate it. These long take close shots with panning and tilting are the locus for an important aspect of Bergman's staging of intimate scenes between a couple. In these shots, the lovers move and change position with respect to each other, and the camera moves to accommodate the new positions of the upper part of their bodies. To give an example from *Sommarlek* about 40 minutes in (see online clip), the CU starts on the dog, pans left to pick up the lovers' heads as they roll down onto the floor in an embrace, then after a bit of kissing they hear a noise outside, and sit up, as the camera does a diagonal pan with tilt to keep them framed, and after listening to the interruption, they lie down again, with the camera following them, and as they resume kissing, the camera pans right to pick up the dog again, and there is a very conventional dissolve to the next scene eliding the sex that takes place. There are a number of other variations on this sort of staging elsewhere in this film, and of course in Bergman's other films. His mastery of this directorial feature needs to be studied in the films themselves to appreciate his true brilliance with this technique. The scene just discussed can be compared to a love scene with a similar sexual destination in *Eva*, directed by Gustaf Molander from a Bergman script. This is shot from a lot further back (see online clip), and a mathematical comparison of the amount of movement inside the frame, using the technique originated by James Cutting (Cutting 2011), which I modified and demonstrated in my article 'The Exact Remake' in this journal (Salt 2016), shows that there is three times as much movement inside the frame in the Bergman version. In passing, I should mention that the application of this feature of Bergman's stagings is quite different to, and has no connection with, the Steven Spielberg signature shot, which is a shot containing pans and tilts picking out adjacent related objects, not people. With Bergman, his signature shots are at the core of his explorations of the feelings of his characters, and the dramatic results of this. With Spielberg, his signature shots are just that, and nothing more. Although *Det regnar på vår kärlek* contains a tentative and not fully developed version of this feature, the idea only sets in properly in Bergman's work in *Sommarlek*, which incidentally contains a further three shots that are longer than 40 seconds and close in with this sort of situation and actor movement. This validates the marking out of his earlier films as apprentice works. However, in these earlier works, Bergman and his crew were already working hard on covering the dramatic action in long takes using just tracking and panning, and doing this very well.

Other stylistic variables

The most basic stylistic variables for my sample of films are listed below, with the number of Insert shots, POV shots, and reverse-angle (RA) shots given as percentages (Table 4):

Table 4. Basic stylistic variables: Bergman's films and contextual examples.

Film	Year	ASL	INS	POV	RA
Hets	1944	18.1	3	2	36
Mildred Pierce	1945	10.2	5	2	27
Kris	1945	27.2	9	1	17
Det regnar på vår kärlek	1946	16.3	8	2	39
Skepp till Indienland	1947	16.1	11	3	32
Musik i mörker	1947	12.1	5	0	32
Hamnstad	1948	16.6	7	1	25
Eva	1948	15.5	11	4	30
Fängelse	1949	18.9	13	2	20
Törst	1949	21.5	21	2	25
Till glädje	1949	20.1	7	1	25
Sommarlek	1950	15.8	11	3	26
Hon dansade en sommar	1951	19.8	8	3	29
Kvinnors vant	1952	14.9	20	5	25
Sommaren med Monika	1952	23.9	28	0	3
Gycklarnas afton	1953	16.0	12	2	24
En lektion i kärlek	1954	23.7	13	3	28
Kvinnodröm	1955	16.1	23	10	48
Sommarnattens leende	1955	16.0	8	3	40
Det sjunde inseglet	1956	10.0	5	3	45
Nattens ljus	1957	7.4	10	9	45
Smultronstället	1957	9.3	12	7	49
Nara livet	1957	14.4	4	5	44
Ansiktet	1958	11.6	4	2	59
Jungfrukällan	1959	13.3	4	4	42
Djävulens öga	1960	13.2	4	2	52
Såsom i en spegel	1961	16.4	4	2	54
Natvardsgästerna	1962	16.5	7	2	54
Tystnaden	1963	19.8	9	10	34
För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor	1964	16.0	9	4	18
Persona	1966	17.3	25	7	16
Vargtimmen	1966	21.1	7	6	30
Skammen	1967	14.8	12	4	23
En passion	1969	10.7	14	3	38
Viskingar och rop	1972	16.1	13	3	41
Scener ur ett äktenskap	1973	18.7	7	0	51
The Serpent's Egg	1977	13.7	13	7	41
Höstsonaten	1978	18.2	4	3	48
Fanny och Alexander	1982	15.1	10	5	38
Saraband	2003	15.7	5	3	61

In Bergman's early period his cutting rates (and also his use of Inserts, POV shots, and RA's), are typical of Swedish film-making of the period, and for that matter European film-making in general. The Average Shot Length for a sample of 26 French and German films made between 1945 and 1960 is 13.5 seconds. The above list indicates that Bergman seems to naturally fall back into an ASL of about 16 seconds, which goes with the use of many long takes, and the reasons for some of his deviations from this are obvious. As already noted, he had problems getting his first film, *Kris*, shot in the allotted time, as described in his book *Images*. The only other noticeable deviation from the 16 seconds ASL norm up to 1949 is *Musik i mörker*. This film has 54 scenes in 81 minutes, 47 seconds (Average = 90 sec), whereas *Skepp till Indialand* has 40 scenes in 89 minutes (Average = 134 sec.) and *Hamnstad* has 45 scenes in 91 minutes (Average = 121 sec.), or in other words, its scenes are shorter. This can be considered to be a pressure acting against long takes. Another way of expressing this difference is that there are 19 shots longer than a minute in *Fängelset* and 5 shots longer than a minute in *Musik i mörker*. But the duration of scenes is merely a pressure on ASL, and I believe Bergman could have gotten more long takes into his scene dissection in this case if he really wanted to. *Fängelset* was also made under severe production pressure, with a 16–17 day schedule (Bergman 1973, 42), and in this case, he again managed it using many more long takes. The use of more long takes continues through *Törst* and *Till glädje*, which represent the real beginning of Bergman's detailed exploration of couples tearing at each other emotionally, a major theme fuelled by his personal life that continued for the rest of his career. The only other point I want to make about cutting rates at the moment is to note that Bergman's two biggest successes commercially, *Det sjunde inseglet* and *Smultronstället*, have the fastest cutting of any of his films, at about 10 seconds ASL. There may be something causal about this, but on the other hand an ASL of 10.7 didn't make *En passion* a big commercial success several years later. Things like the box-office success of films are undoubtedly multi-causal.

By the 'sixties, the local context was changing, as new directors came into the business, and were influenced by the speeding up of cutting in American films that began in the 'fifties (see page 378 of *Film Style and Technology* (Salt 2009b)). Film-makers in the rest of the world followed along behind the Americans in this trend, and by the beginning of the 'seventies, one can easily find Swedish films made by people like Jan Troell with ASLs of six or seven seconds. Bergman did not change his style in this respect (and in others), so eventually, his films became isolated in the long take, slow cutting tail of the ASL distribution.

The amount of insert shots in Bergman's films is in general not much larger than that in other films, except for four of them made from 1949 to 1955, namely *Törst*, *Kvinnors vantan*, *Sommaren med Monika* and *Kvinmodröm*. This is largely due to the way Bergman used strings of atmospheric inserts to introduce scenes in these films. Atmospheric inserts are general shots showing

the location where the action is taking place that do not include any of the actors featured in the plot of the film. The practice of having one atmospheric insert, or very rarely two, to introduce a scene has been common from the early days of film. For instance, *Mildred Pierce* is quite typical in having five scenes that are introduced with single atmospheric insert shots, and one in which there are two introductory atmospheric inserts, but no more. Of the Swedish contextual films in my sample, *Hon dansade en sommar* has no introductory atmospheric inserts to any of its scenes, and *Eva* has single shot atmospheric inserts before three of its scenes. *Hets* has two atmospheric inserts before its first scene, and four subsequent scenes open with a single atmospheric insert.

But in Bergman's *Hamnstad* there are a couple of sets of three and four sequential atmospheric inserts introducing scenes, and next *Törst* has four sequences of atmospheric inserts introducing scenes, and these contain three or more shots in them. Indeed one of these sets of atmospheric inserts has four shots in it. This notion continues through the subsequent three films, up to *Sommaren med Monika*. After that, this was no longer a real stylistic feature in Bergman's films. The many insert shots in *Persona* are nearly all in the semi-abstract introductory sequence. However, near the end of Bergman's career, he returned to using strings of three or four atmospheric inserts around scene transitions in *Fanny and Alexander*.

The amount of POV shots in Bergman's films is comparatively small, but he does have an idiosyncrasy in their use. An appreciable proportion of them are 'revealed' POV shots, in which an insert appears after which the next shot shows someone looking, and the viewer of the film then realises that the previous shot was taken from the character's point of view. This form of the POV shot is in general very rare, for obvious reasons, and POV shots are usually preceded by a shot of someone looking in a fixed direction, and often followed by another shot of the person still looking in the same direction. In multi-camera filming, as in ordinary television studio shooting, it is more or less impossible to get in POV shots, and this may account for their complete absence in *Scener ur ett äktenskap*, but Bergman's other TV productions have an ordinary amount of POV shots, and in those cases it seems he used single camera filming, as it is used in standard film production.

Bergman's use of reverse angle cutting is within the normal region, but in the early part of his career it was towards the lower side, and then with *Kvinnoödröm* it jumped to 48%, and nearly always stayed up there afterwards, with a final peak of 61% in *Saraband*. Although this is high, a glance at comparative figures in *Film Style and Technology* will show that this quantity can go even higher than that in American films.

But from the 'sixties onwards, younger Swedish film directors began to speed up their cutting, as did other Europeans, following the trend in American films towards faster cutting rates that took place from the 'fifties

onwards. Like all other commercial cinema, the Swedes followed along behind this trend, and by the beginning of the 'seventies, one can easily find Swedish films made by people like Jan Troell with ASLs of 6 or 7 seconds.

Scene dissection

Ingmar Bergman initially followed the standard American model of script construction as taught to him by Stina Bergman (Bergman 1995, 118). A major feature of this model is that scenes should alternate in mood, and in particular alternate between scenes with more dramatic tension, and those with a more relaxed mood. Ingmar Bergman tended to break the scene down into mostly long takes covered with camera movement for the more relaxed ones, while for the more dramatic scenes he tended to start with longer takes, and then move to sequences of alternating CUs, usually as reverse angles, as the dramatic tension built. This pattern broke down a lot in his 'High Art' period, when the tension tends to be fairly continuous. In his TV period, these patterns of type of shot choice became more rigid, starting with *Scener ur ett äktenskapp*, and the strings of alternating shots of the two participants in exactly the same CU or BCU framing became longer and longer, till by *Saraband* the central bulk of nearly every scene is covered by twenty plus unchanging CU or BCU framings of the two participants. Together with the marked decrease in camera movement *Saraband*, this indicates a degree of stylistic sclerosis at the end of Bergman's career.

Sound

The basic organization of the film sound track is simply and completely described with terms used by film-makers. Sound is either synchronized with the events in the image track ('sync. sound'), or not synchronized with any visible sound-emitting source ('non-sync. sound'). Dialogue and sound effects can fall into either the sync. or non-sync. categories. Likewise, music. Within the sync. sound category is music that is apparently coming from a source shown in the film scene, which could be musical instruments, a singer, a radio, or something else. This is called 'source music' by film-makers. The other category of film music has no apparent source, but is there purely to add mood, or a dramatic boost to the scene. This is called 'underscore' by film-makers, but is often just referred to as 'the score'. The occurrence of both sorts of music is usually intermittent down the length of a film, and each section of it is called a 'cue'.

American films of the 'forties and 'fifties usually have around 30% to 50% of the duration of the film covered by underscore, and about 10% covered by

source music, and around thirty odd cues. Swedish films of the same period mostly have a bit less, as can be seen from the table of examples below, though *Hon dansade en sommar* has even more than the two American examples quoted (Table 5).

Table 5. Source music and underscore: contextual examples.

Film	Year	Source Music	Underscore
Mildred Pierce	1945	10.8%	41.6%
Prisoner of Zenda	1952	9%	44.7%
Hets	1944	6.8%	20.3%
Eva	1948	7.9%	29.3%
Hon dansade en sommar	1951	16.2%	48.2%
Nattens ljus	1957	11.6%	20.7%

In Ingmar Bergman's apprentice period as a film director, he inevitably followed the norms for Swedish films in this respect at first, but he soon reduced the amount of underscore in his films, starting with *Hamnstad* (1948). This was no doubt helped by the fact that *Hamnstad* was influenced by Italian neo-realist films. In this film underscore is down to 8.9%, which is less than the amount of source music in it (10.8%). The quantity of music used by Bergman over his career is most compactly illustrated by a historical graph of these quantities in his films (Figure 10).

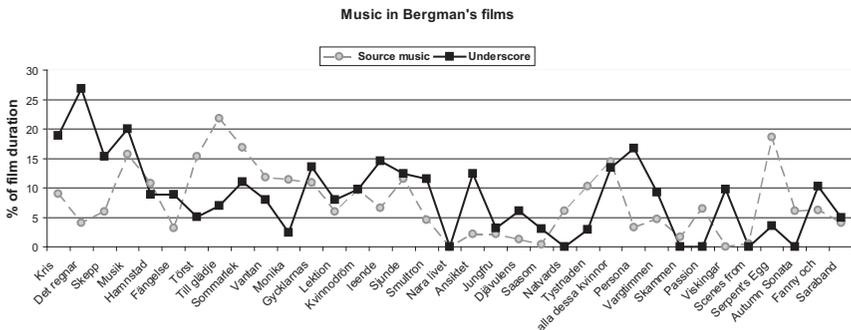


Figure 10. Source music and underscore across Bergman's career.

The 16.7% in *Persona* was the largest the amount of underscore Bergman used after *Hamnstad*, while in his other subsequent films it was mostly less than 10%. Eventually, Bergman tried using no underscore at all, and indeed no source music also, in *Nara livet* (1958). After that, he did without underscore in several more films, as can be seen in the graph above. In the films

after *En passion* the underscore is nearly all from existing classical music, rather than being specially composed for the film. Underscore that runs under dialogue in a scene is usually mixed in at a lower level in everybody's films, but in Swedish films it tends to be even lower in the mix than in American films. And in Bergman's later films it can be very low indeed.

There is also a small trend towards less source music as well in Bergman's films, which sets in also after *Nara livet*. The notable exceptions to this are *För att inte tala om alla dessa kvinnor* and *The Serpent's Egg*. The first of these is a frantic farce involving musicians, which needed all the jolly along that it could get, and the second was a very expensive Dino De Laurentiis production, where it is quite likely that the producer wanted a more conventional sound track. If so, he didn't altogether get it, for most of the source music is popular period jazzy music, which leaks from the scenes in which it originates into the subsequent scenes at a very low level, so low that it is barely audible.

A noticeable minor peculiarity of the sound track in Swedish films is the use of very low-level church bell sounds to fill out the non-sync. atmosphere parts of the track.

Summary

My methods have detected, and established objectively for the first time, the major stylistic phases of Ingmar Bergman's films. Initially, he was working with the standard features present in film construction in Swedish cinema, and indeed common in most cinema. After this apprenticeship period he developed idiosyncratic touches that I have noted above, particularly his handling of love scenes through a combination of close shooting and panning and tilting. This feature makes a stylistic distinction between Bergman's early phase of less personal work and the later films. Over these two periods his films show a slow and irregular drift towards closer shooting, up until *Persona* in 1966. With this film, he shifted sharply towards scripts that deal with big issues of society and philosophy in a non-realistic way, and to go with this subject matter he approximately quadrupled the number of Big Close Ups he used, to a level exceptional for the time. With *Persona*, he also began to prominently use obvious distancing devices. Then he dropped these after four films but continued with the use of large numbers of Big Close Ups for the remaining three decades of his career. But at this same time, the film-making world was moving towards faster and faster cutting, so that Bergman was now stylistically isolated, along with a quite small number of other film-makers working in the 'art film' area who persisted with long takes.

A further curious point that emerges is that Bergman's two most renowned films, *Det sjunde inseglet* and *Smultronstället*, are stylistically anomalous in his work because they are cut a lot faster than his other films.

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