

Document Citation

Title	The films of Carl Dreyer
Author(s)	Eileen Bowser
Source	<i>Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)</i>
Date	1964
Type	booklet
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	4
Subjects	Dreyer, Carl Theodor (1889-1968), Copenhagen, Denmark
Film Subjects	Ordet (The word), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1955 Blade af Satans bog (Leaves from Satan's book), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1920 Två människor (Two people), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1945 Der var engang (Once upon a time), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1922 Die gezeichneten (Love one another), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1922 Prästänkan (The fourth marriage of Dame Margaret), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1920 Du skal ære din hustru (Master of the house), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1925 La passion de Jeanne d'Arc (The passion of Joan of Arc), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1928 Vredens dag (Day of wrath), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1943

De nåede færgen (They caught the ferry), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1948

Mikaël (Chained), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1924

Storstrømsbroen (The Storstrom Bridge), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1950

Thorvaldsen, Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1949

Landsbykirken (The Danish village church), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1947

Mødrehjælpen (Good mothers), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1942

Præsidenten (The President), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1919

Glomdalsbruden (The bride of Glomdal), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1926

Vampyr - der traum des Allan Grey (The vampire), Dreyer, Carl Theodor, 1932

SP #31429

The Films of Carl Dreyer

Schedule:

- September 27-28: *THE PRESIDENT (1918-20)
September 29-30: LEAVES FROM SATAN'S BOOK (1920-21)
(one showing only at 3:00)
October 1-3: *THE PARSON'S WIDOW (1920)
October 4: *LOVE ONE ANOTHER (1921-22)
October 5: *ONCE UPON A TIME (1922) (fragment)
Documentaries:
GOOD MOTHERS (1942)
THORVALDSEN (1949)
VILLAGE CHURCH (1947)
October 6-7: *MIKAEL (1924)
October 8-10: MASTER OF THE HOUSE (1925)
October 11-14: *THE BRIDE OF GLOMDALE (1925-26)
October 15-17: JEANNE D'ARC (1928) (one showing
October 15 at 8:00 only)
October 18-21: THEY CAUGHT THE FERRY (1948)
*VAMPYR (1932)
October 22-24: STORSTROM BRIDGE (1949)
DAY OF WRATH (1943)
October 25-28: ORDET (1955) (One showing only at
3:00)
Film showings daily at 3:00 and 5:30,
and at 8:00 on Thursdays, except
where noted.
Music for the silent films arranged and
played by Arthur Kleiner.
Schedule subject to change without
notice.
*No English titles



COVER:
Scene from *Jeanne d'Arc*, 1928

BY EILEEN BOWSER THE FILM LIBRARY OF THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Carl Theodor Dreyer, born February 3, 1889, in Copenhagen, adopted as an infant, was trained to be a café pianist, but, unhappy at home, found work instead in an office that he hoped would take him far away. The office routine was hateful to him and he soon found wider scope in journalism, first writing drama reviews, then as an air sports reporter, at which time (circa 1910) Dreyer considered joining the pioneer field of aviation. But he decided to stay in the world of culture represented by his journalistic and theatrical connections. Just as a sideline at first, Dreyer began to write titles for Nordisk Films Kompagni. He was then not more than 23 years old. He graduated to writing scripts and editing films, which gave him a wide background of experience by the time he directed his first film in 1918. He had found his life work.

For Nordisk, Dreyer directed *The President* (1918-20), a melodrama, and *Leaves from Satan's Book* (1920-21), a four-story film inspired by a viewing of Griffith's *Intolerance*; for Svensk Filmindustri of Sweden he made *The Parson's Widow* (1920), a comedy filmed in Norway (produced later than *Leaves from Satan's Book*, it opened first). He went to Berlin to direct *Love One Another* (1921-22) for Primusfilm, a story of pre-revolutionary Russia, returning to Copenhagen to film the fairy story *Once Upon A Time* (1922) for Sophus Madsen, before directing his second German film, *Mikael*, based on the Herman Bang novel, for Decla Bioscop in 1924. Palladium Films of Copenhagen produced Dreyer's *Master of The House* (1925), a product of the women's rights movement, and Victoria-Film produced *The Bride of Glomdale* (1925-26), a pastoral which Dreyer filmed in a Norwegian summer. The Société Générale de Films of France, impressed by the success of *Master of The House* in France under the title *Le Maître du Logis*, gave Dreyer the contract which enabled him to make the famous *Jeanne d'Arc* (1928). Subsequent quarrels with the film industry led Dreyer to make his next film independently. This was the fantasy-horror film, *Vampyr* (1932), backed by Baron Nicolas de Gunzburg, who played a leading role.

For more than ten years, Dreyer made no more films. Unable to come

to terms with the film companies, or unable to get contracts which would give him freedom in his work, he was in England for a short time working with John Grierson and the documentary movement, and in Africa on an abortive film project, where he was abandoned by his producer. He finally returned to his old profession, journalism, writing a daily column on legal news in Copenhagen. The Danish government documentary film movement brought him back to film-making again when Mogens Skot-Hansen asked him to direct *Good Mothers* in 1942. This little film on the problems of unwed mothers led Palladium Films to offer Dreyer another contract, to make *Day of Wrath* (1943) during the dark days of the German occupation. This frightening tale of 17th century witch-burning let the world know Dreyer had returned to film-making. His next, *Two People* (1945), was made for Svensk Filmindustri in Sweden, but Dreyer was not given the actors he wanted for it, and it was a failure, not shown commercially after its initial 5-day run in Stockholm. Other than some documentaries made for the Danish government, Dreyer again waited nearly ten years to make another film. This was *Ordet* (1955), based on the play by Kaj Munk (the same play filmed in 1943 by the Swedish director Gustaf Molander, shown at the Museum in 1962). Dreyer shot this film about modern religious faith and miracles in the village where Kaj Munk, the Danish national hero, had his church. Palladium Films produced it, the same company which is producing the film Dreyer is currently working on, to be based on Hjalmar Soderberg's play, "Gertrud." Dreyer has not yet found backing for the film he has long wanted to make on the life of Christ.

Carl Theodor Dreyer's reputation as one of the greatest directors in the world is based, at least in the United States, on three films at most, *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Day of Wrath*, and *Ordet*. Although Dreyer has been directing films since 1918 and at the age of 75 has embarked on yet another, very few of his thirteen feature films have been seen here. *Jeanne d'Arc* is well-

known to the Museum's public through frequent showings here over the years and through the Film Library's circulation of it to colleges and film societies. The theatrical showing was limited to art theatres, partly because it arrived in this country after the sound film had become established (it opened at the Little Carnegie Playhouse on March 28, 1929). *Jeanne d'Arc*'s intensive use of the close-up, its unusual camera angles, and its slow pace have provoked as much critical and esthetic controversy as any silent film ever made. Dreyer's *Day of Wrath* (shown at the Little Carnegie in April, 1948, and revived many times) is the film that is best remembered by many filmgoers, and indeed its fearful images are unforgettable. *Ordet* received higher praise from the critics than either *Jeanne d'Arc* or *Day of Wrath* when it arrived at the Fifth Avenue Playhouse at the end of 1957, not, I suspect because of its intrinsic superiority but because the critical climate had changed so much at this time that Dreyer's seriousness and intensity could at least be appreciated if not always understood. As far as I can discover, *Vampyr* never had a regular theatrical release here, but it has led a protracted underground life in film societies among horror film enthusiasts and Dreyer admirers. Aside from these, few students of film even know the names of Dreyer's other films.

Thanks to the work of the Danish Film Museum, all of Dreyer's films have survived, and the present exhibition makes possible a new assessment of his reputation, including all the fiction films Dreyer has directed, with the exception of *Two People* (*Två Manniskor*) (1945), which still exists, but which Dreyer feels was a failure and prefers not to have shown at this time. *Once Upon A Time* (1922), long thought to be lost, has recently been discovered by the Danish Film Museum, though in fragmentary form and at present with flash titles only. The silent films lent by the Danish Film Museum do not have English titles, but the best of them present little difficulty for viewers who do not read Danish.

Dreyer, the dour Dane, has been admired for his seriousness and his

single-mindedness. Yet we see now that his career has embraced many different kinds of film. Dreyer's third film, *The Parson's Widow* (1920)¹, is a delightful comedy which may be as much of a surprise for the Museum's public as Stiller's *Erotikon* in the 1962 Swedish Films exhibition. *The Parson's Widow*, made in a Norwegian summer and inspired by the Swedish films of Sjöström, is full of robust peasant humor and the joy of living. It is memorable for one of the most remarkable performances Dreyer has ever succeeded in putting on film, that of Hildur Carlberg; as the elderly bride she is grotesque and comic, but when she dies in dignity she adds the touch of pathos which marks high comedy, in a moment comparable to that in which Mrs. Proudie meets her death in *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. In fact, this majestic old lady was actually dying at the time she made the film and never saw it completed.

Once we have seen *The Parson's Widow*, it is easier to find a comic element in even the most serious Dreyer films, stemming from Dreyer's humanism, his acceptance of man for what he is, with all his weaknesses and strengths. This sometimes appears in the films as no more than an expression on the face of some minor character, fleeting, but observed and retained by Dreyer as revealing a fundamental human trait. For example, in the melodramatic *The President*, at the banquet in honor of the president there are brief glimpses of two gluttonish old men, one deaf, who are more interested in getting a good meal than in anything around them. The deaf man, incidentally, is surely symbolic in Dreyer's work. He is to be found again among Joan's judges and

¹ *The Parson's Widow* had a brief and now forgotten showing in New York under the unfortunate title of *The Witch Woman*, at the same time that *Jeanne d'Arc* was first shown here, no doubt in an attempt to extend the discovery of Dreyer by the intellectuals. The Fifth Avenue Cinema, at that time specializing in importing foreign and avant-garde films, perhaps could not afford adequate titles, if any, for Mordaunt Hall's review in the *Times* (32:2, April 8, 1929) gives the plot with some misunderstandings.

The Film Library wishes to thank the following who helped make this exhibition possible:

Janus Barfoed, *Danish Film Museum*
William McCormick Blair, Jr., *U.S. Ambassador to Denmark*
Kaj Bruun, *Danish Information Office*
James Card, *The George Eastman House*
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Contemporary Films, Inc.
Just Lunning, *Georg Jensen, Inc.*
Ib Monty, *Danish Film Museum*
Tage Nielsen, *Palladium Films*
I. Achten Schmidt, *Statens Film-central*

©1964, The Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y.
10019

Library of Congress Catalogue No. 64-8096

by Mary Ahern

the U. S. A. by Plantin

.25
DREYER
MBRS. .25

among the priests who condemn the witch in *Day of Wrath*.

The President is Dreyer's first film as a director and shows him in full control of the language of film, even though he had to use a melodramatic story and fell prey to some overly-theatrical actors. These errors he usually managed to avoid in later films. But the banquet sequence—the excitement of the torchlight parade, the cold, tortured face of the man being honored, intercut with scenes of the preparations for the escape of his daughter—is the work of a director in control of his medium. And, already, Dreyer is taking the unheard-of steps of selecting the decor of the interiors to portray the character of the actor to be photographed there.

The early films of Dreyer show that he has not always insisted on the slow deliberate pace, the long drawn-out shots and smooth pans and trucking shots of the films made from 1928 to the present. On the contrary, Dreyer has used rapid cutting where he deems it appropriate. The last or “modern” story of the four-part *Leaves From Satan's Book* (a film previously seen here after the Film Library acquired it in 1947 and titled it in 1952) was actually shot first, and Neergaard² tells us that the company officials were much alarmed when they saw how many shots Dreyer was using. Dreyer was operating directly under the inspiration of his viewing of Griffith's *Intolerance*. Although the shots are much shorter than was usual in Danish films at this time, Dreyer in *Leaves from Satan's Book* does not approach the rapidity of Griffith's cutting, nor did he make any attempt to intercut the four stories, which is the main feature of Griffith's plan. Dreyer achieves a more convincing recreation

² Neergaard, Ebbe, *En filminstruktørs arbejde: Carl Th. Dreyer og hans ti Film*. Copenhagen, Atheneum Dansk forlag, 1940. Revised, and translated by Marianne Helweg, for the British Film Institute's New Index Series, No. 1, *Carl Dreyer: a film director's work*. Neergaard's work is invaluable for all students of Dreyer's films, and is the source of much of the factual information in this essay, though the opinions as well as any factual errors are my own.

of history, however, in this, as in all his period films, not alone due to his feeling for environment (for Griffith went to extraordinary lengths to insure accurate settings for *Intolerance*), but rather due to Dreyer's sensitivity to his actors' faces in relation to the setting. The faces and the body movements in a Griffith film are apt to betray themselves as too modern, for example Constance Talmadge as the Mountain Girl in *Babylon*.

The influence of Griffith's cutting stands out more clearly in the editing of the final sequence of *The Bride of Glomdale* (1925-26). The cross-cutting of the different phases of the action to create excitement is very much as Griffith might have done it. In the suspenseful episode, the hero nearly drowns, swept by a torrent through rapids and whirlpools, trying to get to his bride waiting on the other side of the river. How dull in comparison is the rescue from the river in Sjöström's *Karin Ingmarsdotter* (1919); this kind of scene was not the great Swede's forte. *The Bride of Glomdale* is of great significance, for it immediately precedes Dreyer's trip to France to embark on the largest task he ever undertook, the direction of *Jeanne d'Arc*. Neergaard gives us reason to think that Dreyer did not think of *The Bride of Glomdale* as more than an interlude before beginning the larger project. But Carl Dreyer has never made a film carelessly, or that was not beautifully composed in every frame. In *The Bride of Glomdale*, Dreyer's predilection for the use of environment to portray character, evident in his first film, *The President*, is now, on the eve of *Jeanne d'Arc*, fully developed. The *Bride of Glomdale* is a light-hearted summer idyll, filmed like *The Parson's Widow* in Norway, with the beautiful mountains and fields shining from the screen, and is a simple love story. The poor farm boy is seen against black, earthy landscapes, the rich farmer's daughter in sunlit scenes and amid waving grasses. Their lovemaking is out-of-doors, in the wheatfields. The rich relative is seen in an ornate interior, wreathed in cigar smoke. The poor farm couple, simple and honest, appear in a setting composed of the straight unpainted boards of the interior walls of their house. In *Jeanne*

d'Arc, Dreyer has carried this tendency to the extreme of abstraction, removing all irrelevant details until many frames contain all black or all white backgrounds for the gigantic faces, even destroying perspective. But some frames of this type may be seen in the earlier films.

There is much in Dreyer's better-known films that is akin to the German cinematic tradition, and it is not surprising to find that he made two films in Berlin for German production companies, *Love One Another* and *Mikael*.³ His determination to control all elements of design, setting, costume and makeup, leaving little room for the accidental, is in the tradition of the German studio-made films. There was this difference: Dreyer could achieve the same effect outside the studio, by finding locations that in an uncanny way reflect the exact environment he has in his mind's eye for the atmosphere of his film. He often built no sets for his films, not because he sought naturalism on location, but because of his unique ability to find settings which reflect a psychological truth about his characters. But in the case of *Mikael*, which depends on luxurious decor to depict the suffocating milieu in which the great artist lives his hothouse existence, the sets were specially built. *Love One Another* and *Mikael* look like German films and the latter is referred to in histories as a German film without qualification. *Love One Another* is a recreation of pre-revolutionary

³ *Mikael* has a curious history in this country. It was shown at the Fifth Avenue Playhouse the week of December 11, 1926, under the title *Chained* (the censors protested the title originally chosen, *The Inverts*), and Dreyer, unknown here, was not even credited in the program. Some of the daily reviewers mistakenly credited Benjamin Christensen as the director. Only Mordaunt Hall of the *Times* appears to have known about Carl Th. Dreyer. Stranger yet, in 1930 *Mikael* turned up at a Broadway grind house as *Chained: The Story of The Third Sex*, with a “scientific lecture,” a shoddy atmosphere, and no credit to Dreyer or anyone else. Paul Rotha in *The Film Till Now* refers to this film as *Heart's Desire*.

Russia and has particular interest as the film acting debut of Richard Bole-slavsky and for the use of Jews from the Berlin ghetto as well as refugees from the Russian revolution. *Mikael* stars a handsome and youthful Walter Slezak, and Benjamin Christensen, the Danish director famous for *Witchcraft Through The Ages*, at this time in the German phase of his career.

Once Upon A Time (1922), made between the two German films, survives in such a fragmentary state that it would not be fair to make any judgments about it. It has the same beauty as the two films Dreyer made in Norway, with the magic summer light that pervades Scandinavian films made out-of-doors. Dreyer is rare among directors in that he can use the out-of-doors for fantasy (more successfully, to my mind, than Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*), without having the reality of sun and wind destroy the make-believe. Even nature bends to his iron control. *Vampyr* is the fully-developed example of this: the characters do run out-of-doors, but the sun is veiled by means of gauze over the lens of the camera and the characters float noiselessly in a misty moonlight. They cannot move swiftly and do not put foot to solid earth, as in a dream.

The Master of The House (1925) is even less what we have been led to expect from Dreyer than *The Parson's Widow* or *The Bride of Glomdale*, though it was among the first of his films to gain him attention abroad. The theme is ordinary to have come from the same man who was to picture “the power in evil”⁴ with terrifying results in *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Vampyr*, and *Day of Wrath*. In our country, where the hen-pecked husband has long been a standard comic figure, it takes some reorientation to view a film in which the husband is the one who does the nagging. A product of the women's rights movement, *The Master of The House* is based on a play, and betrays its theatrical origins by a tendency to have more titles than usual in a Dreyer film. A large part of the film is taken up with the performance of the daily domestic chores, through which Dreyer has accurately recorded

⁴ “There is power in evil,” a line of dialogue in *Day of Wrath*.

the nerve-jangling irritations which can occur in households even where there is much love. In the downfall of this domestic tyrant there is generated considerable sympathy for his sufferings, in such sharply-observed details as that in which he passes the cobbler's shop with umbrella lowered to hide his face, as he has not the money to pick up his shoes left for repair. In this way we are prepared to accept his reconciliation with his wife even though his earlier behavior was intolerable.

Following *Vampyr* (1932), Dreyer was able to make no more films for over ten years, for reasons not altogether clear. It is said that his desire to be free of supervision, to make films exactly as he wanted them, hampered his negotiations with the companies. Neergaard says he spent those years “receiving humiliations and learning to be humble.” After a number of disappointments, he returned to journalism. Having lost what might have been the most productive years of his film-life in other occupations, when he first came back to film-making at the urging of Mogens Skot-Hansen, it was to help the Danish government documentary film movement, a position in which he does not seem to have been granted full artistic control. However it would probably be misleading to say this on the basis of *Good Mothers*, the first documentary that Dreyer made in 1942, which helped him to get the contract to make *Day of Wrath*, because the version of the documentary seen here has been updated for a 1947 release in the series “Social Denmark.” Probably the purpose of this film, or at least its emphasis, has been changed. On the whole the documentaries which Dreyer helped make for the Danish government are rather pedestrian, though here and there in the selection of facial types or in a camera movement one seems to recognize his touch—and *They Caught The Ferry* is the purest Dreyer.

Is it possible that the coming of sound had something to do with the long lapses between films? *Vampyr*, made several years after the arrival of sound, is primarily a silent film, its characters uttering an occasional monosyllable at most. No one had better command of the language of the

silent film than Dreyer. Did he find the transition to sound had a shattering effect on what he thought film was all about? When he did finally make *Day of Wrath*, so much later, he was perfectly at home with sound and dialogue. Or is it that some drastic change in Dreyer's life contributed to a paralysis of the creative will?

I have said very little about Dreyer's better-known films. *Jeanne d'Arc*, *Vampyr*, *Day of Wrath* and *Ordet* are all of one cloth, and as these are the films with which we have been familiar, they represent the face of Dreyer to us. His martyrs, his vampires, his witches and his holy madmen are different facets of the same theme: the powers of evil, the suffering of the innocent, the inevitability of fate, the certainty of death. It is quite possible to interpret the powers of evil in *Day of Wrath* to represent the Nazi occupation of Denmark going on at the time, but that does not separate it from the other films of Dreyer's second period. Dreyer has become known in this country as the intense and uncompromising explorer of the dark side of life. In the early films we may trace the growth of Dreyer's film techniques and find the seeds of the themes he was to develop. They contain elements of suffering, evil, horrors, and compassion. *Leaves from Satan's Book* might serve as a case-book for the later films. But there does seem to be a change from the time of *Jeanne d'Arc*, to a concentration on the supernatural and the supernatural.

How far off from these preoccupations seem the sunny *Parson's Widow* and *The Bride of Glomdale*, and the everyday life of *The Master of The House*. The present exhibition, by restoring the early films to the screen, shows us a richer, more versatile, and perhaps a happier Carl Dreyer.

Eileen Bowser

- 1918- PRAESIDENTEN (*The President*).
1920 Nordisk Films, written and directed by Dreyer from the novel by Karl Franço, photographed by Hans Vaago. With Halvard Hoff, Elith Pio, Olga Raphael-Linden, Betty Kirkeby, Carl Meyer, Jacoba Jessen.
synopsis: In a provincial town in the mid-19th century, the president is a respected public figure, the judge of a court system. In flashbacks we learn that the president, in his youth, had an illegitimate daughter whom he has not seen. Now grown, she is employed as a governess, and he learns that she is accused of committing a child murder. During her trial, her defense counsel recounts her moving story, but the judges find her guilty. Her father meets her in prison. Moved by compassion, he arranges her escape, at the same time that he is honored by a public banquet. Speeches are made about the president's honor and sense of justice at the same time that he is betraying them. When at last he has arranged the happiness of his daughter and seen her married, he commits suicide.
- 1920- BLADE AF SATANS BOG (*Leaves from Satan's Book*). Nordisk
1921 Films, written and directed by Dreyer from *The Sorrows of Satan* by Marie Corelli, photographed by George Schneevoigt. With Helge Nissen, Halvard Hoff, Clara Pontoppidan, Jacob Texiere, Hallander Hellemann, Carlo Wieth, Ebon Strandin, Tenna Kraft.
Four stories illustrating Satan's temptations to people to betray those whose trust they hold, through history: Judas' betrayal of Christ; the 16th century Spanish Inquisition; the French Revolution; Finland in 1918.
- 1920 PRÄSTÄNKAN (*The Parson's Widow; The Fourth Marriage of Dame Margaret; The Witch*). Svensk Filmindustri, written and directed by Dreyer from Kristofer Janson's short story, photographed by George Sch-

- neevoigt. With Hildur Carlberg, Einar Rod, Greta Almeroth.
synopsis: Three divinity students compete by delivering sermons for the vacant ministry in a small rural town of the 17th century. The hero easily wins this test, but is faced with a new hurdle. To get the job he must marry the parson's widow, a rich old crone who has already seen three husbands into the grave. The wealth of her house and too much drink convince him that he can pass this test also. He already has a young mistress, but this awkwardness he gets around by introducing her to the household as his sister. The young pair hope to outlive the old lady, and indeed to help her along to her grave. The widow accidentally discovers the truth and obliges by dying.
- 1921- DIE GEZEICHNETEN (*Elsker Hvandre; Love One Another*). Primusfilm, Berlin, written and directed by Dreyer from the novel by Aage Madelung, photographed by Friedrich Weinmann. With Countess Polina Piekowska, Wladimir Gajdarow, Torleif Reiss, Richard Boleslowsky.
synopsis: Hanna is a Jewish girl who grows up in a pre-revolutionary Russian village where there is anti-semitism, and when she falls in love with the doctor's son, Sascha, gossip forces her to follow Sascha to St. Petersburg. Hanna seeks help from her Christian brother, who is unhappily married and is cursed by his father. He helps Hanna to find a home with the scientist Lorov and his wife. There Hanna meets Sascha and joins him in the revolutionary movement, but a spy brings about their arrest. The brother gets Hanna free but both must return to their hometown. The informer comes to the village and instigates a pogrom, in which the brother is killed. But Hanna is rescued by Sascha, who has come to

- lead a general strike, the beginning of the revolution.
- 1922 DER VAR ENGANG (*Once Upon a Time*). Sophus Madsen, Copenhagen, written (with Palle Rosenkrantz) and directed by Dreyer from the play by Holger Drachmann, photographed by George Schneevoigt. With Clara Pontoppidan, Svend Methling, Peter Jerndorff.
Only a fragment survives of the original film, which is a simple fairy story.
- 1924 MIKAEL (*Chained; Heart's Desire; The Invert*). Decla Bioscop, Berlin, written and directed by Dreyer, based on Herman Bang's novel, photographed by Karl Freund. With Benjamin Christensen, Walter Slezak, Nora Gregor, Grete Mosheim, Robert Garrison.
synopsis: Presumed to be based on the life of Rodin, this is the story of a rich and successful artist who has fallen in love with his young male model and wills him everything as his adopted son. The young man is not very kind or grateful, and pursues his own love affairs with women. A critic who was a former love of the artist remains his only friend, standing by him at the end, as the artist dies, calling in vain for Mikael to come.
- 1925 DU SKAL AERE DIN HUSTRU (*Master of The House; Thou Shalt Honour Thy Wife; Fall of a Tyrant*). Palladium Films, Copenhagen, written (with Svend Rindom) and directed by Dreyer, based on Rindom's play *Tyrannens Fald*, photographed by George Schneevoigt. With Johannes Meyer, Astrid Holm, Karin Nellemose, Mathilde Nielsen.
The story of a domestic tyrant in a modest Danish home, and how he was reformed.
- 1925- GLOMDALSBRUDEN (*The Bride of Glomdale*). Victoria-Film,
1926 Oslo, directed by Dreyer from the novella by Jacob Breda Bull, photographed by Einar Olsen. With Stub Wiberg,

- Tove Tellback, Harald Stormoen, Einar Sissener.
synopsis: An uncomplicated story of a poor farmer's son in love with the rich farmer's daughter, forbidden to marry by the girl's parents, who are at last brought to agree to a happy ending.
- 1928 JEANNE D'ARC (*The Passion of Joan of Arc*). Société Générale de Films, written and directed by Dreyer, based in part on Joseph Delteil's novel, photographed by Rudolf Maté. With Marie Falconetti, Eugene Silvain, André Berley, Maurice Schutz, Antonin Artaud.
The subject matter of this film is the trial and death of Joan of Arc, her suffering and ecstasy, with little historical background or story.
- 1932 VAMPYR (*The Strange Adventures of David Gray; Castle of Doom*). Produced, written (with Christen Jul) and directed by Dreyer, based in part on Sheridan le Fanu's "In a Glass Darkly," photographed by Rudolf Maté. With Julian West (Baron Nicolas de Gunzburg), Sybille Schmitz, Henriette Gerard, Jan Hieronimko.
synopsis: The film is almost without dialogue. The viewer needs to know only the legend of the vampire who lives on after death by sucking blood from young victims and who can only be destroyed by driving iron through her heart. These matters are explained in the book on vampirism, the text of which is given in Danish inserts. There is no plot to be understood: this film is purest nightmare, to which the viewer should give himself up, helpless, as in sleep.
- 1943 VEDRENS TAG (*Day of Wrath; Dies Irae*). Palladium Films, written (with Mogens Skot-Hansen and Poul Knudsen) and directed by Dreyer, based on Wiers Jensen's play, *Anne Pedersdotter*, photographed by Carl Andersson. With Thor-kild Roose, Lisbeth Movin, Sigrid Neeiendam, Preben Ler-
- dorff, Anna Svierkier.
Set in 17th century Denmark, this is a relentless tale of religious persecution and witch-burning.
- 1945 TVÅ MANNISKOR (*Two People*). Svensk Filmindustri, written and directed by Dreyer, from W. O. Somin's play, *Attentat*, photographed by Gunnar Fischer. With Georg Rydeberg, Wanda Rothgardt.
A tragedy with only two actors, a wife ruins her husband's career and his honor, despite her love for him.
- 1955 ORDET (*The Word*). Palladium Films, written and directed by Dreyer from the play by Kaj Munk, photographed by Henning Bendtsen. With Henrik Malberg, Emil Hass Christiansen, Preben Lerdorff Rye, Cay Kristiansen.
The conflict between a fanatic and a life-affirming view of Christian beliefs, in a rural village, and the story of a faith that works miracles.
- The Danish Government Documentaries:
- 1942 MØDREHJÆLPEN (*Good Mothers*) (reissued with an English narration in 1947, #2, "Social Denmark" series). Directed by Dreyer. The care of unwed mothers by the state.
- 1947 *The Danish Village Church*. Directed by Dreyer and others, photographed by Preben Frank. An historical architectural survey, with tableaux.
- 1948 DE NÆDE FAERGEN (*They Caught The Ferry*). Written and directed by Dreyer, based on a story by Johannes V. Jensen. A vivid lesson on the dangers of speeding.
- 1949 THORVALDSEN. Directed by Dreyer and Preben Frank. The sculpture of the early 19th-century artist.
- 1949 STORSTRØMBROEN (*Storstrom Bridge*). Written and directed by Dreyer, photographed by Preben Frank. A cinematic poem on a bridge.