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A simple remark, a facial expression, is sufficient to unmask a human being.

Bergman may not go down in history as an innovator but he will be known as an artist who has found in the film an ideal and receptive medium of expression. *Through a Glass Darkly* is without doubt a great picture and will rank among his best films; nevertheless I am convinced that he can go much further. He once wrote that the art of the film had only got as far as the beginning of a giddy voyage of discovery. Bergman's great merit is that he gives a strong impetus to that voyage. His contribution is just as important as those made by an Antonioni, a Resnais or a Kurosawa.

In the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians it is written: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." The words allude to one's meeting with God, when all barriers are to fall away. They refer to the moment of death and finality, when man is thought to become united with his God. In Bergman's film the words refer to Karin, the main character of the story. She abandons our reality for another reality, that of mental illness, where other laws prevail.

In a darkened room, with strange-looking wallpaper, she sits listening to secret voices. She is waiting for a miracle, a divine being. She is also waiting for love. Her ecstasy and her fear are both rooted in sexual desires. But when the god reveals himself, he turns out to be a revolting spider that wants to dominate and take possession of her. She screams in fright. She has met God and may be said to have died. Nevertheless she lives on, in a detached sort of reality.

Through a Glass Darkly is not a Christian film. It shows us human beings who in different ways are lonely, isolated from one another, hungry for tenderness. And yet the film presents a Christian conception of love. Perhaps it contains the same thought we find in St. Paul—that the odds and ends of human knowledge must be torn away before man can become whole. *Through a Glass Darkly* is a painful, almost unbearably heavy struggle with problems that are central to Bergman's art. Many perhaps wonder whether he can provide an answer, give comfort and convey a message. In his headstrong and frenetic attitude he resembles Strindberg; the latter, however, usually succeeded in showing that it was human beings and circumstances that were responsible for one's misfortunes. Bergman accuses no one, forgives no one. His characters are tragic victims of a black age.

The picture opens with a shot of reflections in the water. Four people are seen wading toward the shore

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Translated from DAGENS NYHETER, Stockholm

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IT HAS often been said that Ingmar Bergman does not speak in the language of the cinema, but that is a misconception. His new film *Såsom i en spegel* (*Through a Glass Darkly*) demonstrates his restraint in masterly fashion and in every detail. Its pauses and rhythm remind one of fine music. It has a purity and a power that could not be translated into any other art form. Like his previous pictures, it shows human beings undergoing a crisis in their lives, in the course of a day and a night. Nature becomes a threatening symbol of this crisis. Having seen this picture one will know much about the people in it—one will know how they live. Bergman abjures the use of flashbacks; he tells his story plainly and unmercifully, as in *The Virgin Spring*. He has learned how to let the present reflect the past. The present moment becomes history.

after having taken a swim. They are David, a successful writer (Gunnar Björnstrand); his son Fredrik, whose nickname is Minus and who is seventeen years old (Lars Passgård); his daughter Karin (Harriet Andersson); and his son-in-law Martin, a physician (Max von Sydow). David has just returned from a trip to Switzerland, where he has been working on his new novel. It is evening, and the homecoming is being celebrated at dinner. The atmosphere at the table becomes tense, and the father goes to his room. He is a lone figure, weeping and trembling. As though crucified he stands there, staring into nothingness, and is shown in a pitiless light. Later, the young people put on a play in his honor in which a poet declines to accompany a princess of Castile to Love and Death: he does not want to sacrifice himself for anyone.

And this is the way David has always been, willing to sacrifice his life only for writing. He has been successful, but he has never attained to real art. In the night he sits alone in his room correcting his manuscript. He is nauseated by his work, by the struggle with words. He writes in his diary about his daughter's incurable mental malady, how he observes her, takes advantage of her. This disgust David feels for art's enmity to life, which reminds one of Tolstoy, is also expressed throughout this ascetic picture. There is not one unnecessary gesture, not one unnecessary movement of the camera. Romantic and baroque ornamentation have been eliminated. Human beings are depicted but not judged. The power of this film lies in the striking contrast between dazzling light and dark, between silence and voices. The road that Bergman has taken is exclusively his own. Never before has his dialogue been as clear and realistic.

Whatever is meaningful in the film unfolds in the province of the soul; the plot is not important. Karin finds her father's diary. She, the most sensitive of the family, suffers the most from being isolated from human beings. Her husband, completely absorbed in his everyday pursuits, does not understand his wife, although he loves her. Her brother Minus is leaving adolescence with dread and fear; he is afraid of the leap into the world of adults. The father, who has always thought only of himself, is still the one closest to her. He can forgive her because he himself needs forgiveness. The story unfolds in scenes in which two persons appear at a time: the father and Martin, Karin and Minus. For herself Karin wants tranquillity, freedom, and escape.

She is one of the people in Bergman's films to whom death is terrifying and at the same time alluring. She is passing through a crisis that concerns them

all—the inability to love unselfishly, to surround fellow human beings with a feeling of care and concern. She chooses her reality, which is closely related to death, with a naïve seriousness, but not until she has sunk into filth and depravity, giving up all protective armor. This demanding role is portrayed by Harriet Andersson, who has the courage and the talent to make the most of the girl's simple devotion and her distorted ugliness. And she conveys an excruciating pain, a physical force that bears the weight of the entire picture. One seldom sees anything so well done on the screen. Hers is a defenseless face, youthful, yet with a great deal of experience.

Lars Passgård makes his motion picture debut as Minus and adapts himself to the intimate style of which Bergman is such a master. Gunnar Björnstrand made his first picture for Bergman in 1945, Max von Sydow in 1956. They are the ideal instruments on which Bergman orchestrates his faith and his doubt. No more need be said. That is very high praise indeed.

Bergman's camera is always turned toward the person who is speaking, very seldom toward the listener. He avoids extreme close-ups and only during a conversation between Karin and Minus does he move his camera around to any great extent. The method and style are Bergman's very own, ideally suited to his purpose, but the picture is somehow related to other trends found in the modern film. Bergman pays little attention to plot as such. Within the scope of one scene he seeks to deepen the images of the actors, as if placing a microscope inside them. His method is the exact opposite of Godard's in *Breathless*: Bergman depicts other realities. Still, for both directors it is a question of attempting to draw a portrait of man, not only his feelings and his actions.

Through a Glass Darkly demands that its audience, having been made emotionally and intellectually receptive, watch the action with sharpened senses. Like the other great Bergman films, it will stir debate because it is never unambiguous. This ability to pose questions without providing all the answers is Bergman's challenge. He wants to make us see.

Translated by ERIK J. FRIIS