



Queer Bergman: Sexuality, Gender, and the European Art Cinema

Daniel Humphrey

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One of the twentieth century's most important filmmakers—indeed one of its most important and influential artists—Ingmar Bergman and his films have been examined from almost every possible perspective, including their remarkable portrayals of women and their searing dramatizations of gender dynamics. Curiously however, especially considering the Swedish filmmaker's numerous and intriguing comments on the subject, no study has focused on the undeniably queer characteristics present throughout this nominally straight auteur's body of work; indeed, they have barely been noted.

Queer Bergman makes a bold and convincing argument that Ingmar Bergman's work can best be thought of as profoundly queer in nature. Using persuasive historical evidence, including Bergman's own on-the-record (though stubbornly ignored) remarks alluding to his own homosexual identifications, as well as the discourse of queer theory, Daniel Humphrey brings into focus the director's radical denunciation of heteronormative values, his savage and darkly humorous deconstructions of gender roles, and his work's trenchant, if also deeply conflicted, attacks on homophobically constructed forms of patriarchal authority. Adding an important chapter to the current discourse on GLBT/queer historiography, Humphrey also explores the unaddressed historical connections between post-World War II American queer culture and a concurrently vibrant European art cinema, proving that particular interrelationship to be as profound as the better documented associations between gay men and Hollywood musicals, queer spectators and the horror film, lesbians and gothic fiction, and others.

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