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PUISSANCE DU FAUX: FALSE MEMORY AND DEATH IN INGMAR BERGMAN'S *A PASSION*

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> *I shall remember this hour of peace, these strawberries, this bowl of milk. Your faces in the dusk. Mikael asleep, Jof with his lyre. I'll try to remember what we spoke of. And I'll hold this memory between my hands as carefully as a bowl brimming with fresh milk. And it will be a sign for me, and a source of great content.*
>
> —Antonius Block in *The Seventh Seal* (*Det sjunde inseglet*, 1957)

This speech, delivered in the final moments of Antonius's life, eloquently conveys both the fragility of memory and its powerful capacity for signification. I will return to the metaphor of a bowl of milk, but for now Antonius's words serve as an entry point to the primary subject of this article: the intersection of *memory* and *death* in Ingmar Bergman's film, *A Passion* (*En passion*, 1969).[1] The latter of these themes is apparent in Bergman's description of the film's origins: "As early as February 1967, there are notes that show me laboring with the idea of Fårö [Island] as the setting for the *Kingdom of Death*."[2] While his vision for the film's narrative would transform a good deal throughout the production process, the thematization of death remained fixed and is depicted through a number of means, including slaughtered livestock, a fatal automobile crash, suicide, and allusions to war, among others. In this article, I build on Gilles Deleuze's concept of the *puissance du faux* (power of the false), presented in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, to develop a reading of *A Passion* in which death no longer operates in a traditional sense—as the definitive terminus of its antithesis, life—but is considered as a function of memory. In this revised conception, death is transformed so that it represents not the point at which life ceases to be but rather a continual process of *becoming-death*.[3] I suggest that most characters of Bergman's film participate in this becoming-death by continually fabricating false memories that assert a singular narrative and thereby collapse the multiplicity

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of the *puissance du faux*, in which there is a "simultaneity of incompossible presents, or the coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts."[4] *A Passion* offers more than an image of death, however: it also provides a line of flight from the Kingdom of Death through the *disavowal* of false memory, which I explore in the final section of this article. Though not the most acclaimed of Bergman's films, *A Passion* presents a thickly textured perspective on death and memory that ripples out to include subjects as diverse as identity, temporality, and epistemology.

Puissance du Faux

Few have done more to establish a philosophy of cinema than Gilles Deleuze. In the second of his bipartite treatise on the philosophy of film, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, Deleuze develops a series of concepts for interpreting postwar cinematic trends, which he considers distinct in both motivation and philosophical underpinning from much prewar cinema. The two *Cinema* volumes have generated a tremendous quantity of secondary literature, including a great many books and edited volumes that attempt to elucidate Deleuze's compact and at times opaque philosophical project, in addition to countless analyses of individual films that draw on his work.[5] In this article, I rely especially on three concepts that Deleuze presents in *Cinema 2*: incompossible presents, not-necessarily true pasts, and the *puissance du faux*.

Deleuze begins his discussion of these concepts with the point-blank assertion that "[i]f we take the history of thought, we see that time has always put the notion of truth into crisis."[6] Explanation for this claim is provided by building on Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's theory of causality, which offers a unique resolution to the philosophical problem of *contingent futures*. This problem, first introduced by Aristotle in his *On Interpretation*, is famously articulated by the following premise:

> A sea-fight must either take place to-morrow or not, but it is not necessary that it should take place to-morrow, neither is it necessary that it should not take place, yet it is necessary that it either should or should not take place to-morrow.[7]

Deleuze describes the paradox that seemingly inheres to this statement:

> Either the impossible proceeds from the possible (since, if the battle takes place, it is no longer possible that it may *not*

> take place), or the past is not *necessarily* true (since the battle could *not* have taken place).[8]

In an eloquent circumvention of the problem, Leibniz proposes that the naval battle both *does* and *does not* take place but that these possibilities occur in two *separate* worlds. Referencing Jorge Luis Borges's short story "The Garden of Forking Paths," Deleuze describes this phenomenon as a forking of time that creates "incompossible" worlds: worlds that are incompatible and yet remain theoretically possible. This conceptualization retains the conventional "straight line as force of time," while folding time back upon itself to create a "labyrinth of time . . . which forks and keeps on forking, passing through *incompossible presents*, returning to *not-necessarily true pasts*."[9] A consequence of this conception of temporality and causality is that narrative can no longer assume the same degree of objectivity: "[N]arration ceases to be truthful, that is, to claim to be true, and becomes fundamentally falsifying. [. . .] It is a *power of the false* which replaces and supersedes the form of the true."[10] The *puissance du faux* is therefore the means by which narration multiplies and becomes untethered from a single plane of space and time in favor of what Deleuze calls "disconnected places and de-chronologized moments."[11] In my interpretation of *A Passion*—a film in which formal disjuncture and character destabilization are paramount—this conception of a falsified narrative is essential.

It should be noted before turning to Bergman's film that Deleuze considers the *puissance du faux* to be an affirmative force by which the criterion of objectivity is eschewed and multiple lines of flight are opened. In my reading of *A Passion*, this affirmative power is restricted by modes of discourse that limit the multiplication of narrative.[12] For two characters, Anna Fromm (Liv Ullmann) and Andreas Winkelman (Max von Sydow), a fixation on one particular version of their past traumas causes them to be imprisoned by memories that impinge continuously on their present. For Anna, this stems from a dogmatic adherence to a single narrative about her past that is ultimately founded in denial; by contrast, Andreas's conception of his past is based on real events, but he finds these so deeply humiliating that they fully circumscribe his lived present. Another character, Elis Vergérus (Erland Josephson), is completely indifferent to the suffering of himself and others, resulting in a petrification of both narrative and memory. Only one character, Eva Vergérus (Bibi Andersson), remains open to the plurality of the *puissance du faux* and thereby avoids becoming ensnared in a process of becoming-death.

A Passion

A small ensemble of cast members and an intent focus on the fraught psychological dynamics of human relationships are well-known features of much of Bergman's mature work, leading the director himself to refer to many of the films following *Through a Glass Darkly* (*Såsom i en spegel*, 1961) as "chamber plays."[13] As I will show, many of Bergman's formal devices in *A Passion*, such as flashbacks, dream sequences, and, most jarringly, the insertion of interviews with the actors, work to shift the focus away from plot development and onto the characters' complex psychological states. Film scholar Marc Gervais, in his analysis of *Cries and Whispers* (*Viskningar och rop*, 1972), recognizes a similar tendency in Bergman's films from this period:

> A free-flowing structure embodies a plot *while removing its chronology and the usual other demands and obliterating the lines between "reality" and imagination, past and present*. Now Bergman can spend more time, for example, looking at and listening to clocks rather than explaining story, time and again breaking the diegetical context with totally, consciously artificial invasions into inner psyche and time disruptions, and so on.[14]

Deleuze's *puissance du faux*, which releases narrative from the constraints of truthfulness and linear temporality, is particularly well suited to a context such as this. I organize the following discussion around two characteristics of the *puissance du faux* that are central to *A Passion*: the proliferation of identity through the presentation of incompossible presents and the falsification of narrative through the assertion of not-necessarily true pasts. However, I also show how the film's characters in most cases constrain the potentially affirming qualities of these characteristics by limiting them to restrictive discourses, resulting in their becoming-death. In order to understand how these concepts are at work in *A Passion*, a brief plot overview will be useful.

Most simply, *A Passion* focuses on the developing relationships of four characters: Andreas Winkelman, Anna Fromm, Eva Vergérus, and her husband, Elis Vergérus. Like many of Bergman's films from this period, *A Passion* is set on the remote Fårö Island against a backdrop of social or political conflict: in this case, a series of mysterious animal slaughters. Although these slaughters function primarily as a catalyst for

exploring the various relationships of the main characters, one minor character, Johan Andersson (Erik Hell), is wrongfully accused of the crimes and driven to suicide by the shame that this brings to him. Meanwhile, Andreas, who has been separated from his wife "for some time now," enters into amorous relationships with first Eva and then Anna—the latter of whom is grieving the loss of her son and husband (also named Andreas) in a car crash for which she was responsible. We also learn, through Andreas's voyeuristic reading of a letter retrieved from Anna's purse, that Anna's husband had tried to break things off with her before his death, saying that their marriage "[would] run into new complications, which in turn [would] trigger terrible emotional agitation, physical and psychological violence." Although the relationship between Andreas and Anna begins so unremarkably that it occurs completely off-screen, their unresolved pasts prove too difficult to overcome and their mental states gradually deteriorate until they are completely alienated from one another.

Proliferation of Identity and the Double-Andreas

In an interview with Gervais in 1970, Bergman shared his perspective on the nature of the relationships among the four main characters of *A Passion*:

> I think the human condition is not a very happy one—or at least the conditions we human beings live by. But you have to reach out. There are so many things, so many relations with human beings . . .
>
> Yes, take *The Passion of Anna*. Winkelman is not the whole film. There are four characters, four voices within me, if you wish. It's the totality you must see.[15]

Bergman's assertion here, that the four characters represent four facets of his own person, is in many ways the central preoccupation of *A Passion*.[16] A simplistic synopsis of the film might be this: "*A Passion* traces a gradual process of integration and then alienation of Andreas Winkelman from the other three characters." But this is the reading that Bergman chafes against in the above quotation, assuming as it does that each character represents an isolated and coherent identity. Contrary to this, Bergman's emphasis on the "totality" suggests that each character

represents but a partial image of a larger assemblage. Deleuze predicts that such a proliferation of identity might occur as narrative begins to wrest itself free from the constraint of truth:

> Contrary to the form of the true which is unifying and tends to the identification of a character (his discovery or simply his coherence), the power of the false cannot be separated from an irreducible multiplicity. "I is another" ["*Je est un autre*"] has replaced Ego = Ego.[17]

That Bergman himself acts as narrator throughout *A Passion*—thereby occupying a position outside of chronological time and having a degree of omniscience (though not necessarily truthfulness) with regard to the four characters—further corroborates a reading in which straightforward ego/character correlations are eschewed in favor of a proliferation of Bergman's own self throughout multiple individuals.[18]

The proliferation of identity is also central to the development Andreas Winkelman, who is often regarded as the film's protagonist.[19] Several elements support this interpretation: the opening and closing scenes present him in isolation, Max von Sydow's interview is the first to be interpolated into the film, and the narrative arc is loosely structured around his evolving relationships with the other three characters. What I propose here, however, is that Andreas represents not a single, stable identity but an articulation of two incompossible presents: a double-Andreas. The first Andreas is the one commonly taken to be the protagonist of the film—a troubled but basically kind man who, in the words of film scholar Peter Harcourt, "strives to bring [delicacy] to others in his relationship with them."[20] This is the Andreas who dominates the first third of the film. His identity begins to be destabilized, however, with the introduction of Anna, a woman who is so fervently committed to a false memory of her past in which she lived happily with her husband, Andreas Fromm, that the identity of her deceased husband begins to impinge on Andreas Winkelman. Most analyses of the film describe this process simply as the mental collapse of a single individual, but this overlooks many striking parallels between the lives of the two men as well as the clear process of "forking time" by which Andreas Winkelman begins to articulate a double-Andreas.

The precise moment at which Andreas multiplies to become a double-Andreas merits close consideration. Following a dinner party at which Anna strongly asserts her conviction that she and Andreas Fromm had "lived in harmony due to being truthful toward each other," a rainstorm

compels Andreas Winkelman to accept an invitation to spend the night in the house where Elis, Eva, and Anna live together. That night, Andreas is startled awake by the sound of Anna shouting "Andreas!," seemingly caught in a nightmare reenactment of the car crash in which she lost control of her vehicle and became responsible for the deaths of her husband and son. The confusion of hearing his name being shouted briefly registers on Andreas's face before he comprehends the situation and lies back down to fall back to sleep.

This scene recalls Marcel Proust's account of the disorienting moment immediately after waking in which one is unsure about who or where one is:

> One is no longer a person. How then, searching for one's thoughts, one's personality, as one searches for a lost object, does one recover one's own self rather than any other? Why, when one begins again to think, is it not a personality other than the previous one that becomes incarnate in one? One fails to see what dictates the choice, or why, among the millions of human beings one might be, it is on the being one was the day before that unerringly one lays one's hand.[21]

Indeed, the next day it is as if Andreas has awakened to find that his is no longer a singular identity but one that also includes his namesake: the Andreas summoned by Anna from her nightmarish dream. In a scene of drunken hysteria, the now double-Andreas stumbles home through a frigid woods, alternately shouting his own name and urging himself to "listen": "Andreas . . . Aren't you listening to what I'm saying? . . . Goddamn crap . . . *Andreas!* . . . Listen, Winkelman. Winkelman, Winkelman. *Andreas!* . . . *Listen! Listen!* . . . Do you hear what I'm saying? . . . Damn it. Damn it. . . . *Andreas!*" From this point forward, Andreas is torn between two worlds: a world in which he is alive and struggling to reconcile with a past in which his wife has left him, and a world in which he is dead and has attempted to end things with his wife. His doubling therefore is more than a proliferation of identity—it is an embodiment of both life and death: a becoming-death.

This progression is prefigured in *A Passion*'s first scene. The film opens on Andreas repairing his roof when, looking toward the sunset, he witnesses an optical illusion in which the sun is surrounded by a halo and two "false suns" (fig. 1a), in the words of Bergman.[22] Andreas is transfixed by the sight and appears downcast when a passing cloud completely shrouds the image from his view. In my interpretation, the sun

Figure 1a. "False suns" optical illusion in the opening scene of A Passion.

Figure 1b. Dissolution of Andreas Winkelman's image in the final scene of A Passion.

and its multiplications represent the eventual multiplication of Andreas. Likewise, the destruction of the illusion anticipates the dissolution of Andreas's image that will occur at the end of the film (fig. 1b).[23]

In the moments leading to this final scene, Anna is driving Andreas home from the latest in the island's series of mysterious crimes: an arson

and horse-slaughter. A violent fight earlier in the day leads Andreas to try to end things with Anna—"I want to be free. I want my solitude back"—but he quickly grows offensive and accuses Anna of claiming to "live in truth" while constantly lying to herself and others about the happiness of her past marriage. Andreas reveals that he has read the letter from her deceased husband, Anna accelerates down the rainy, flooded road, and Andreas asks sarcastically, "Are you going to kill me like you did—" just before Anna swerves off the road. Andreas manages to stop the vehicle, regains his composure, and asks Anna why she came to pick him up at the arson scene. "I came to ask for forgiveness," she replies. Andreas gets out and begins pacing back and forth on the road while Anna drives away. As the camera gradually zooms in on Andreas and the image becomes increasingly fragmented, the narrator says, revealingly, "This time he was called Andreas *Winkelman*." Clearly, this equivocation is meant to highlight the similarity between this scene and the one in Anna's past that featured a *different* Andreas, her husband. Now, as Anna reenacts her earlier trauma with this double-Andreas—the incarnation of her lovers past and present—the distinction between the two has broken down to such a degree that Anna feels she can ask forgiveness of Andreas Winkelman for harm done to her deceased husband. As double-Andreas paces back and forth along the road, it becomes clear that becoming-death has so fully permeated his character as to cause the literal destruction of his pictorial representation.

But the destruction of an image may also constitute a line of flight, as Deleuze explains in "The Exhausted," an essay on the plays of Samuel Beckett. According to Deleuze, there are certain situations—characterized by "an obscure spiritual tension"[24]—in which an image "frees itself from its object in order to become a process itself."[25] When this occurs, the image is no longer "a representation of an object but a movement in the world of mind. [. . .] One can exhaust the joys, the movements, and the acrobatics of the life of the mind *only if the body remains immobile, curled up, seated, somber, itself exhausted*."[26] Because this type of image is inseparable from the exhaustion of the process that brings it about, it necessarily entails its own dissolution: "the movement through which it dissipates itself."[27] Andreas's dissolution thus constitutes a line of flight, though one that is restricted by the violence and humiliation of his unreconciled past. He is ultimately liberated from being an object in the world—from the deceitfulness of his relationship with Anna and from his doubled identities—but only because he is completely obliterated by turning his own violence and humiliation against himself (the process of extreme magnification). In other words, he

becomes what Deleuze elsewhere describes as "an impersonal yet singular atom that no longer has a Self by which it might distinguish itself from or merge with others."[28] In *A Passion*, complete escape from becoming-death does not result from such reflexive self-destruction, but only by embracing the creative and multiplicative potential of the *puissance du faux*.

Falsification of Narrative

The second means by which the *puissance du faux* is conveyed in *A Passion* is the falsification of narrative through the assertion of not-necessarily true pasts. Deleuze calls the agents by which falsification occurs "forgers":

> The forger could previously exist in a determinate form, liar or traitor, but he now assumes an unlimited figure which permeates the whole film. He is simultaneously the man of pure descriptions and the maker of the crystal-image, the indiscernibility of the real and the imaginary; he passes into the crystal, and makes the direct time-image visible; he provokes inexplicable differences between the true and the false, and thereby imposes a power of the false as adequate to time, in contrast to any form of the true which would control time.[29]

We have already seen how Anna's fixation on living in a way that is "truthful" ultimately leads her to falsify the narrative of her past. However, as Liv Ullmann explains in an interview that is interpolated into the film, this falsification is ultimately grounded in denial: by "tak[ing] refuge in lies and imagination," Anna suppresses the multiplication of narratives resulting from the *puissance du faux*.

Many of the other characters also participate in similarly corrupted falsifications of narrative. Elis, in a revealing scene with Andreas in his photography studio, draws attention to how the photographs of people's faces that he collects are capable of presenting completely false images of the past:

> I don't presume to reach people's souls with my photography. Definitely not. I can only register the interaction of thousands of large and small forces. Then you look at the image and let the imagination take over. It's all nonsense. Plays, poems. You can't read another human being with any sort of certainty. Even horrendous physical pain will not always register.

Figure 2. Elis Vergérus displays a misleading picture of Eva Vergérus.

Elis then displays a picture of Eva in which she is seemingly cheerful (fig. 2) but explains that in the moment captured by the photograph she had just been inflicted by a recurring migraine. In Erland Josephson's interpolated interview, he describes Elis as having "decided that human suffering won't keep him up at night. He feels he's completely indifferent in both his own and others' eyes." The falsifications that Elis contributes are thus constrained by his apathy toward all possible narratives and his indifference to other people. In the same interaction, Andreas shares that he has spent time in prison for check fraud, making him a forger in a quite literal sense.

Although Anna, Andreas, and Elis are united in their assertion of false narratives, their methods for doing so are quite distinct.[30] Elis relies on frozen *images* that, although seemingly objective snapshots of past moments, are actually highly mediated and therefore cannot avoid ambiguity and falsification.[31] Andreas, by contrast, experiences a number of *flashbacks* throughout the film—some of which may have actually occurred, though there is very little to recommend that this is always the case. His memories are mobile but contingent on his ability and desire to accurately reconstruct his past. Anna's memories take the form of *dreams*: in addition to the previously mentioned nightmare, one of Anna's dreams is portrayed in an extended scene that Bergman has described as beginning "where the reality of *Shame* ends."[32] In this dream, Anna pleads, unsuccessfully, for forgiveness from a woman who is presumably the mother of her late husband and then rushes onto the scene of her accident, where she finds

the bodies of her son and husband (her own body is not present at the accident). A clock ominously ticks while she silently screams in horror, unable to escape from her traumatic past. Anna's memories are terrifyingly realistic, but they are largely suppressed by her waking self. In one scene, however, Anna and Andreas's memories coincide and conflict so violently that they catalyze in one of *A Passion*'s clearest images of becoming-death.

The scene begins with the narrator informing us that Andreas and Anna have been living "in relative harmony for a year." The tone quickly shifts, however, when a headache causes Andreas to have a flashback to a sensual and impressionistic encounter with his ex-wife, the intimacy of which is contradicted by her accusatory voice-over: "Your soul is cancerous. You'll need surgery, radiation therapy and medicine. You have tumors everywhere. You'll die a terrible death." Anna notices that Andreas seems somewhat distraught and asks what he is doing, to which he replies, falsely, "I'm looking at a photograph"—an allusion to his previous conversation with Elis and an invitation to question the veracity of his flashback. Andreas then confesses that he is thinking about cancer and asks Anna what she is thinking about, to which she replies, "I'm not thinking anything. I'm thinking of the lies." Andreas asks, "What lies?" and, without response, Anna retrieves a bowl of milk from their refrigerator, brings it into view, and drops it, shattering, to the floor (fig. 3). The imagery of this scene so clearly recalls that of the epigraph of this paper, in which Antonius compares his cherished memory to a carefully held bowl of milk, that a similar metaphorical interpretation may be productive.[33] As the double-Andreas struggles to reconcile conflicting recollections of his ex-wife's tenderness and antagonism, Anna's memories, long suppressed, are brought to the surface by the realization that her relationship with Andreas Winkleman is following the same process of alienation that she experienced with her deceased husband. Her carefully constructed idea of a happy marriage that ended in tragedy is thus challenged and the truth about her past becomes unavoidable; so she drops a bowl of milk and unleashes her repressed memories into their shared home.

The two are suddenly transported to a dark, silent room, and Andreas embarks on what is essentially a monologue in which he describes his present psychological state, punctuated by urgent requests for empathy from Anna ("You understand, don't you?") and her sincere responses ("I understand.").[34] It is simultaneously the most genuine moment of communication between the two characters and the moment of greatest desperation in the film. It is also the point at which the thematic elements of *A Passion* most completely coalesce in a single, distilled image of becoming-death and therefore merits being quoted at length:

Figure 3. Anna Fromm drops a bowl of milk.

Anna: Andreas, we should travel somewhere. We should get away from here. I know it would be good for us both.

Andreas: When you speak of traveling, I really want to say yes . . . But at the same time a wall appears. I can't speak. I can't show that I'm happy. I can see your face, I know you're you, but I can't reach you . . . I'm on the outside of this wall. I put myself on the outside. I fled and now I'm so far away . . . I want to be warm, tender, and alive. *I want to break free.* You understand, don't you?

Anna: It's like a dream. You want to move, you know what to do, but you can't. [. . .]

Andreas: I'm terrified of being humiliated. It's constant misery. I've

> accepted the humiliation and let it become part of me . . . I'm dead, Anna. No, no. I'm not dead. No, that's wrong. Too melodramatic. I'm not dead at all. But I live without self-respect . . . Can you be sick from humiliation? Is it a disease we're all infected by and we have to live with? We talk so much about freedom, Anna. Isn't freedom a terrible poison for the humiliated? or is the word "freedom" only a drug the humiliated use in order to endure? I can't live with this. I've given up. Sometimes it's almost unbearable . . . The light which rises and sinks heavily. The cold approaches. Darkness. The heat. The smell. And everyone is silent. [Flashback to Johan] We can never leave this place. *I don't believe in escape*. It's too late. Everything's too late.

The conversation begins with Anna's hopeful suggestion that they could simply leave the island and in so doing leave behind the memories that keep death in such close proximity to them. But, as we will soon see, only Eva can do this successfully—and only because she is able to forget, as much as possible, her very self. For Andreas and Anna, whose memories have "been transformed into [their] own prison," as Max von Sydow says in his interpolated interview, escape from becoming-death is no longer an option. Rather, humiliated and cut off from one another, they establish narratives from their memories that are livable, if basically false. In the context of *A Passion*, the affirmative power of the *puissance du faux* is so severely limited that it comes to function as a means of oppression by miring characters in the narratives that they have fabricated.

A Line of Flight

The Kingdom of Death is an efficient prison, immobilizing its characters by weaving their attempts to misremember past traumas or inhabit false versions of themselves into a suffocating web of lies. These efforts, unified in their aim, constrain both past and present within the bounds of a single, immutable narrative. The affirmative power of the *puissance du faux*, by contrast, lies in its embrace of not-necessarily true pasts and incompossible presences, and in its openness to a multitude of future possibilities that always already existed in the past and the present moments. A line of flight opens when one recognizes this possibility and disavows any effort to falsify one's own memories or to impose a narrative of inevitability on the present—and it is in Eva's character that we find such a disavowal.

In the early part of the film, we see Eva struggling to feel connected to the other characters, especially her husband, Elis. As her relationship with Andreas develops, she reveals to him that a long-term affliction with insomnia led her, years prior, to seek medical treatment. She was pregnant at the time and the treatment not only proved unsuccessful at remedying her insomnia but also caused the death of her unborn child. Unlike Anna's dreams, Andreas's flashbacks, or Elis's photographs, no part of this memory is made visible or actualized on-screen: Eva shares her traumatic experience with Andreas while lying in bed and the camera stays focused on her face the entire time. Her ongoing battle with insomnia represents a further preclusion from false memory, as she is not only kept from putting her memories on display, but the character herself is also prevented from encountering her past in dreams (on-screen or otherwise). Thus, although Eva's miscarriage involved an intimate encounter with death, she never attempts to suppress this memory by asserting a falsified past.

In Bibi Andersson's interpolated interview, it is made clear that Eva similarly disavows any misguided efforts to establish her own identity on a fixed and stable basis. Although her inability to "have an identity of her own" is initially a source of anxiety and leads Eva to an unsuccessful suicide attempt, it ultimately becomes the means by which she escapes the becoming-death that ensnares the other characters:

> Suicide is not really a solution, it's just another selfish act, and I hope they manage to save her [from dying]. *I hope that when she awakens, she'll have been through something that*

> *liberates her from herself.* That she can look upon her old self with tenderness, warmth, and without any regret . . . I think she'll experience liberation . . . and mercy.

In other words, it is by simultaneously disavowing any attempt to falsify her memories or her identity that Eva finds liberation from herself and becomes open to the multiplicative possibilities of the *puissance du faux*. Notably, she compares this process to falling asleep—an experience that has been largely withheld from her by insomnia. We have seen that when Andreas woke at night to the sound of Anna shouting his name it resulted in his proliferation, his doubling; in Eva's case, sleep leads to her own negation—a process that allows her to forget herself and overcome the need to constrain experience by relating it to a false sense of identity. Bergman comments on the significance of this moment in an interview:

> *Bergman:* Remember the part played by Bibi Andersson. Bibi steps out of the part and tells us that the character she plays will probably attempt suicide, out of despair. But she will live, come back to life again. She'll get out of herself and start to work for others.
> *And that's the only important thing, I think. To forget, if you can forget yourself.*
> *Q:* And that's why you have that Bibi Andersson sequence end flooded in white light?
> *Bergman:* Yes.[35]

As long as Eva and the other characters act reflexively, asserting false memories and false present selves, they increasingly find themselves becoming an image of death. But when Eva successfully forgets herself and begins to focus outward, a line of flight is created for her liberation. Bergman's choice to end Andersson's interview with a flood of light (fig. 4) invites us to view this as no less than a beatific experience—one that contrasts drastically with the dissolving image of Andreas that concludes the film.

Figure 4. Interview with actress Bibi Andersson.

Marc Gervais, in his analysis of *A Passion*, suggests that the interpolation of interviews with the actors into the film casts it as a "text-in-process-of-becoming," or a "cinema of virtualities, showing us various potentialities."[36] And indeed, the "process-of-becoming" extends not only to the formal elements of the film but also to its themes, characters, and underlying philosophy. This is also resonant with Deleuze's philosophical project, in which all categories of human inquiry—philosophy, art, and science—are characterized by a compulsion to *create* and to therefore bring things into a state of becoming.[37] However, as the characters of *A Passion* restrict their potential "becomings" by denying their pasts and fixating on immutable versions of their presents, they arrive at the paradoxical end of becoming: a continuous state of becoming-death. As a depiction of this process, *A Passion* offers a powerful testament to the harmful effects of alienation, humiliation, and repressed trauma—forces that, for Andreas, prove so oppressive that they lead to his complete disintegration.

However, *A Passion* also shows that, by forgetting oneself and disavowing any attempts to falsify one's past and present, there is indeed a way out of the Kingdom of Death. Where Andreas, Anna, and Elis circumscribe the affirmative powers of the false by fabricating their own "objective" narratives, Eva embraces the multiplicity of not-necessarily-true pasts and incompossible presents, thereby forgetting her own identity and creating the possibility for genuine, selfless human connection. Thus, by simultaneously affirming the truth of her past and present and

decoupling her actions and lived experience from a single, objective narrative, Eva paradoxically takes falsification further than any of the other characters. In other words, by modulating her focus from what "was" and "is" to the subjunctive—what "could have been" and what "can be"—Eva opens a line of flight from the perpetual becoming-death of the other characters and embraces the multitude of other forms of becoming that are afforded by the *puissance du faux*.

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NOTES

I am grateful to Colin Gardner for his feedback on this article, and especially for pointing me in the direction of Deleuze's essays on Samuel Beckett, which proved integral for my interpretation of Bergman's film.

1. Note that the standard English distribution title for this film is *The Passion of Anna*. In this article, I use the more literal translation, *A Passion*, as it better reflects how each of the main characters contributes in distinctive ways to the thematic "becoming-death" of the film.
2. Ingmar Bergman, *Images: My Life in Film*, trans. Marianne Ruuth (New York: Arcade, 1994 [1990]), 304.
3. The concept of "becoming" is central to Deleuze's philosophical project and has therefore been a subject of much discussion in the secondary literature on his work. Many different disciplines are represented in this literature, including not just philosophy but also anthropology, education, women's studies, and ethics, among others: Inna Semetsky, *Deleuze, Education and Becoming* (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2006); João Biehl and Peter Locke, "Deleuze and the Anthropology of Becoming," *Current Anthropology* 51, no. 3 (2010): 317–51; Erinn Cunniff Gillson, "Responsive Becoming: Ethics between Deleuze and Feminism," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Nathan Jun and Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 63–88; Samantha Bankston, *Deleuze and Becoming* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017).
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989 [1985]), 131.
5. Among the works that have been vital to my own understanding of Deleuze's philosophy of cinema are William Brown, "'There Are as Many Paths to the Time-Image as There Are Films in the World': Deleuze and *The Lizard*," in *Deleuze and Film*, eds., David Martin-Jones and William Brown (Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 88–103; David Deamer, *Deleuze's* Cinema *Books: Three Introductions to the Taxonomy of Images* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); and Richard Rushton, *Cinema after Deleuze* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2012).

6. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 130. This represents a rather more extreme form of his earlier statement that "truth has an essential relation to time" in Gilles Deleuze, *Proust & Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000 [1964]), 15.
7. Aristotle, *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 2001), 48.
8. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 130, emphasis added.
9. Deleuze, 131, emphasis added.
10. Deleuze, 131.
11. Deleuze, 133.
12. I am grateful to Colin Gardner for his suggestions about how the characters of *A Passion* rely on a different restrictive discourses like humiliation, guilt, denial, and so forth.
13. Bergman, *Images*, 249.
14. Marc Gervais, *Ingmar Bergman: Magician and Prophet* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), 122, emphasis added.
15. Gervais, 115.
16. Bergman also explores the permeable borders of ego in an earlier film, *Persona* (1966), in which the conflation of two characters is famously depicted by literally fusing partial images of Liv Ullmann and Bibi Andersson's faces.
17. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 133.
18. The unreliability of Bergman's narrator is especially apparent in the incongruity between one scene in which Andreas accuses Anna's prayers for the deceased Johan as "goddamn lousy acting" and another following shortly thereafter in which the narrator describes their relationship as lacking in passion but being basically happy: "[T]heir words were never poisonous or contaminating." This is also noted in Gregory Currie, "Bergman and the Film Image," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 34 (2010): 323–39, quotation on 336.
19. Another direct way that a "proliferation of identity" features in the film is found in the character of Johan Andersson, the unfortunate victim accused of perpetrating the mysterious crimes, who is rumored to be schizophrenic by suspicious islanders.
20. Peter Harcourt, "*A Passion*: Analysis," in *Ingmar Bergman: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Stuart M. Kaminsky and Joseph F. Hill (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 288.
21. Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, vol. 3, *The Guermantes Way*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin, rev. D. J. Enright (New York: Random House, 2003 [1920]), 110.
22. Bergman, *Images*, 306.
23. Gregory Currie offers a similar interpretation of these two scenes, though his emphasis on their being representative of Andreas's eventual mental collapse overlooks the significance of the sun's multiplication in the first image. Currie, "Bergman and the Film Image," 335.
24. Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998 [1993]), 170.

25. Deleuze, 168.
26. Deleuze, 169, emphasis added.
27. Deleuze, 168.
28. Deleuze, 26.
29. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 132.
30. Eva, it will be noticed, is left out of this discussion. As I will show in the final section of this article, identity and memory function so differently in the context of her character that she constitutes a line of flight from the process of becoming-death.
31. It is perhaps worth noting that throughout much of this scene, the Sarabande movement from Bach's Keyboard Partita No. 3 in A minor, BWV 827 plays on Elis's radio. This same piece, musicologist Alexis Luko points out, also features in Bergman's other films set on Fårö Island: *The Hour of the Wolf* (1968) and *Shame* (1968). While sarabandes occur throughout much of Bergman's work (even attaining a titular function in his last film, *Saraband* [2003]), the association in *A Passion* with Elis's character is notable for how it parallels his desire to "freeze the past" in images. As music scholar Alexis Luko notes, "These sarabandes have a special knack for freezing time and lulling characters into blissfully hushed states of deep introspection." Alexis Luko, *Sonatas, Screams, and Silence: Music and Sound in the Films of Ingmar Bergman* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 119.
32. Bergman, *Images*, 305–6. The dream sequence is shot in black and white to further strengthen its ties to *Shame*, while also setting it apart from the rest of *A Passion*, which is filmed in color.
33. To my knowledge, this intertextual allusion to *The Seventh Seal* has not yet been noted in the scholarship on Bergman's filmography.
34. While their exact location is ambiguous, this scene is also notable for being one of very few indoor settings in which a clock is not audibly ticking in the background. While outside of the scope of this article, there are suggestive resonances between how Bergman uses sound design to create various velocities, or planes of time in *A Passion* and what Deleuze refers to as "peaks of the present" and "sheets of the past" in a film.
35. Gervais, *Ingmar Bergman*, 115.
36. Gervais, 112.
37. Deleuze presents his most concise description of the aim of philosophical inquiry in a coauthored volume with Félix Guattari: *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994 [1991]).