

## *Imposition of Life*

The question regarding the purpose of life in cinematic art is ridiculous and remains naïve at its best. In the very basis of such inquiry lies a fact that is so closely related to the finality of life. That is, to die. Thus, in the factual level, the purpose of life is to die. Though we cannot say that is the *truth*, but it is undeniably the fact of life. But what about in the level of *truth*?

*Truth*, which is, and if not, then should be, the one and only aim of filmmakers, is in the simplest sense the absolute subjectivity and, in the simplest form, the totality of what the filmmaker experiences. Hence, a filmmaker does not, and should not, ask the questions regarding the purpose of life in his/her work but rather be imposing to the audience what *is* life experienced by the filter of his/her subjectivity.

But the problem that the truthful filmmakers face is that their *truths* are often disagreeable to the audience in terms of comprehension and expectation. That is to say, there are certain expectations that the audience carry within their heads before sitting in front of the screen. This only proves that cinema's inferiority compared to other arts due to the fact that cinema had not been able to exist without commercial interests.

Audience expectation is becoming increasingly problematic, for there is so much that the audience can gain from allowing themselves to open up to the film rather than expecting to be fed the images, storyline, character development, etc. that they expect to see. Audiences expect none but the artist's style when they go to a museum to see an exhibition but cinema and its other temporal cousin theatre are unfortunately bound by commercialism, which lies to its global audience that the only way to experience cinema is to see an interesting story being unfold.

As such is the case all around the world (due to Hollywood and its subordinate film industries that try to mimic the Hollywood style of presentation and distribution), the level of comprehension of people in general are becoming more and more stupefied. Film industries around the world have to understand that cinema is not only the most profitable art but it is also the most ideological art; film industries around the world need to critically approach what they have been, and are, presenting to the innocent public.

I had amazing opportunities to screen Ingmar Bergman's masterpiece *Persona* (1966) once in the USA and once in China. Audiences consisted of people who have never seen a film by Bergman. The film is known for some critics as the greatest "art film" ever made, and that the film is "too difficult for the public to understand". Well, both of my audiences in the USA and China were absolutely mesmerized by the film. Not only did the film left a great psychological and emotional impact to the audience, it sparked invaluable discussions regarding the film and cinema at large.

The bottom line is this: films should not be shunned because they are deemed to be incomprehensible or because they don't meet the commercial expectation. Audience around the world needs, and wants, to be given a freedom of choice – a freedom to be able to choose films without expectations other than that of the filmmaker's imposition of life as a *truth*.

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2016/03/29  
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