

INGMAR BERGMAN'S PROJECTED SELF:
FROM W. A. MOZART'S *DIE ZAUBERFLÖTE*
TO *VARGTIMMEN*

This is the second article¹ sponsored by the Institute exploring Roman Ingarden's notion of post-aesthetic analysis² vis-à-vis W. A. Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*.³ According to Ingarden, the post-aesthetic phase analyzes works stemming from the original, including such standard fare as scholarly analysis as seen in interpretation and exegesis. His methodological description, however, piques our interest as Ingarden suggests that the post-aesthetic analysis also includes works of art stemming from the original, or, in the case of the current study, Mozart's opera. In the initial study, I theoretically explored the post-aesthetic phase by applying it to Bergman's cinematic setting of Mozart's opera by way of example. This phase of the investigation extends beyond theory into praxis as another of Bergman's films, *Vargtimmen*,⁴ one of the more vociferous progeny of Mozart's opera, is post-aesthetically analyzed. According to Ingarden's description, we will combine two of the activities within the post-aesthetic phase – hermeneutic and expressive – as we will be interpreting a work expressively stemming from the original.

Before continuing, however, it is important to consider whether or not the basis of this investigation is phenomenological. Am I risking the intentional fallacy as I rely on what I think I know about Bergman's view of the opera in his film? Typical phenomenological analyses bracket anything from outside the work that may unduly influence the development of the hermeneutical hypothesis and the eventual experience of the work. Two answers address this question. First, the nature of post-aesthetic analysis seeks inclusion of other works, as we examine the "life" of the original reflected in works appearing throughout our culture. In this way, and not unlike Hegel's suggestion that, during the last stages of a successful dialectical process, the separation of the knower and known disappear, we will see the diadic nature become triadic, as the two works ("the known[s]") and the percipient ("the knower") merge into a "knower-becoming-the-known" synthesis. Second, as E.F. Kaelin often

instructed during his phenomenological seminars, we should “do the needful.” More specifically, we consciously include only those elements that help us experience more in the work thereby allowing us to more fully experience its total effect.⁵ Counter to this approach are current trends in interpretations of the arts, which result in essentially “tattle-tale hermeneutics.” In this practice, hermeneutics become more litigious than interpretative as critics seemingly rush to allege sexist or racist tendencies. By suggesting that the opera is sexist or racist, however, “the work” falls into a static background while only the allegedly sexist or racist elements dominate the foreground. If one “reads” the work, according to the “-ist *du jour*,” consequently, we figuratively and literally experience less of the work. The total effect is reduced by oftentimes a considerable amount. In a phenomenological description, the background and foreground are anything but static as the total experience of the work, in Kaelin’s terms, results in a dynamic flow of the work’s elements structuring consciousness as their appearances in the back- and foregrounds is a fluid, not stagnant, activity.

Also to be avoided is the “ipse dixit” or authoritarian fallacy. In the days before postmodernism, this fallacy resulted from completely relying on “the last word” for experiencing works of art. In this paradigm, we were taught what to think about works of art, resulting in hermeneutical “foreclosure.” While postmodernism has dealt that paradigm a death blow, “allegational hermeneutics” threatens another ipse with a different type of foreclosure. To remain in the phenomenological mode, students must remain students – not the authorities, and not the “inquisitioners” – of art. After rigorous study, they develop defensible opinions about their experiences of works. They, however, produce “first words,” not last words. They achieve closure which is understood to be stipulative. As students of activities within consciousness, we are not concerned with what to think, but how we think about art – and life.⁶

What, then, do we bring to the hermeneutical table to most fully experience Bergman’s *Vargtimmen*? What can we bring to our experience to achieve a total effect? Following Kaelin’s postulates,⁷ we seek interrelations within the elements of the work that set the stage for deepening. A visual metaphor for this phenomenon would be a comparison of two brain scans: the darker scan illustrating a mere modicum of activity; the other brimming with colorful activity. Such activity in the latter requires involving significantly more synaptic connections than in the former. Should we seek to have a brimming experience of *Vargtimmen*, then, we would look for interrelationships not only occurring within the film but also between the film and Mozart’s opera. Relevant biographical material will clarify these interrelationships further, thus illuminating much that has been missed in previous analyses.