

## CHANGING LOVE IN 'SCENER UR ETT ÄKTENSKAP' (INGMAR BERGMAN, 1973)

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### Summary


Scener ur ett äktenskap (1973), the popular television series by Ingmar Bergman, has been said to double divorce rates in Sweden. Indeed, a quick look at some social statistics shows a rise of approximately 16.000 divorces in 1973 to an astonishing +26.000 the year after. However, when looking at the wider Western context, divorce rates are similar in the US and other European countries, be it more gradual. More than encouraging divorce, the series most likely touches upon crucial changes in society and conceptions of love and marriage. It is the relation of the series to its social context that we aim to bring forward in this article. We find that Scener ur ett äktenskap (1973) strongly connects to the society it is created in and the changes said society undergoes. Johan and Marianne struggle with the ideal of everlasting passion in marriage. On an individual level, they struggle with their identity within and in relation to their marriage. As the reasons to marry in society evolve from practical to the pursuit of happiness, they struggle to remain together. Scener ur ett äktenskap (1973) provides a rare representation of love and marriage, as it reacts against dominant representations. It does so by showing only true love and respect after a harsh divorce. It is only when marriage as a whole and the banality of everyday life is abandoned that the main characters succeed in loving.

### Keywords

1960s, 1970s, Ingmar Bergman, Love, Scenes from a Marriage, Sexuality

### Introduction

"When *Scenes from a Marriage* aired, the streets of Stockholm were empty", one respondent states in our study on Ingmar Bergman's historical audience in Sweden (Author, forthcoming). Also in literature, the superlatives are abundant when speaking about the series' impact onto Swedish society in the early seventies (Steene, 2005; Duncan ea., 2008). *Scenes from a Marriage* (1973, henceforth shortened as *Scenes*) has been said to double divorce rates in Sweden. Indeed, a quick look at some social statistics shows a rise of approximately 16.000 divorces in Sweden in 1973 to an astonishing +26.000 the year after (SCB). Yet when looking at the wider Western context, the rising divorce rates are similar in the US (Illouz, 2012: 6) and other European countries (Eurostat). The trend of rising divorce rates already sets in at the end of the nineteenth century, together with other shifts in gender roles, economics, and the work-leisure balance (Shumway, 2003). Because of these societal changes, love and sexuality

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acquire new meanings, away from the strict Victorian climate and towards the "free" love and its associations we know from the sexual revolution in the 1960s (Levine, 2007; Kaufmann, 2011).

*Scenes* can be seen in light of both changing meanings of love and sexuality and a changing media coverage of these views in the 1970s, as "television was the most significant cultural form for the dissemination and acceptance of the monumental changes in sexual identities, practices, mores, and beliefs that developed in the wake of the sexual revolution" (Levine, 2007:4). In this sense, part of the series' success no doubt can be related to the television medium itself, with its large reach and popularity (Loisen et al., 2016). In addition, as was generally the case for 1970s television, new ways of representing on television only developed *after* the political, social, and cultural changes were already happening (Levine, 2007:10), and thus the series' success undoubtedly ties into social changes beyond just the medium.

Although the series is often mentioned as groundbreaking, there is hardly any research devoted to why it might have had that kind of success. Earlier work on *Scenes* focuses primarily on the narrative structure of the story and its themes (Kalin, 2003), the series' heteronormativity (Tay, 2006; Dahl, 2005; Humphrey, 2013), or the series' psychological preoccupations (Librach, 1977). In this article, we therefore explore the societal footprint of the series. More than encouraging divorce, *Scenes* most likely touched upon crucial changes in society and views on love and marriage that peaked in the 1960s-1970s (Shumway, 2003). Hence, we discuss how dominant ideas of love and marriage developed and changed throughout the 20th century, specifically during the 1960s and 1970s. We build on previous work to describe how Bergman himself is situated within these changes and how *Scenes* is an example of that. The series itself is analyzed on the filmic, narrative, and ideological level, and on each of these levels the characteristics of a changing society are noted.

### **Scenes and Society**

Two problems arise when relating *Scenes* to its surrounding society. The first is that we cannot unambiguously consider the television series as a reliable source of information on a social context, a discussion well-known to historians (see Maltby, 2011: 5-6 for an overview). In short, using a film - or series in our case - as a historical document raises questions of representativity *of that time*, and especially, risks overestimating the significance of a selection for analysis (Maltby, 2011: 6). One way to overcome this problem of over-estimation, is to include reception-related data to nuance. Looking at *Scenes* in Sweden specifically, it seems hard to over-estimate its reach. We know that viewer rates rose from approximately 26% after the third episode, up to 40% of the Swedish population by the time the last episode was broadcasted. The audience consisted of twice as many women than men (Steene, 2005: 409). The importance of the series can also be observed in the larger Swedish newspapers at the time, where we can see discussions on the series and divorce in general (*Expressen*, 17 May 1973, "Hur slutar det för Johan och Marianne?"; *Expressen*, 8 June 1973, "Nu kan vi fråga Ingmar Bergman om äktenskapet"; *Aftonbladet*, 17 May 1973, "Kan man ha det bra ihop efter skilsmässa?"; *Aftonbladet*, 18 May 1973, "Hur går det för skilsmässobarnen?"). There are some extra article-series, like "Scener ur *mitt* äktenskap" [Scenes from *my* marriage] in the popular newspaper *Aftonbladet*, where people talk about their marriage or divorce (e.g. 25 May 1973). The popular women's magazine *Svenska Damtidning* runs articles in conjunction with the series on similar personal stories like in

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*Scenes*, from the different perspectives (e.g. “den andra kvinnan” [the other woman], Svensk Damtidning no. 23, 7-13 juni 1973). They even offer legal advice on the side of these articles, educating housewives on their rights in a divorce (“Hemmafruar - ni har också rättigheter!”), Svensk Damtidning no. 26, 28 juni-4 juli 1973).

While the series has had a huge success and was Bergman's breakthrough among the wider Swedish audience (Steene, 1998), the audience likely had middle and higher class backgrounds. Reasons for believing this are that firstly, it is the middle class that is most free to experiment with love and sexuality over the course of the 20th century, as they are less bound by economic restrictions (Shumway, 2003: 7). Secondly, Bergman is known to mainly portray problems and situations from a bourgeois ideology point of view (Bergom-Larsson, 1978), which is also what he was most criticized for in the previous decade (Widerberg, 1962; Bergom-Larsson, 1978; Steene, 1998). As is valid for emancipation in general, people lacking education and/or economic means are not very likely to have had the opportunity to divorce.

A second problem that we encounter when relating *Scenes* to its surrounding society is that the problematic question of a potential 'impact on' or 'interaction with' a presupposed audience remains (Staiger, 2005; Wilding, 2003). It is therefore important to point out that it is not our aim to reconstruct or even assume a unidirectional impact or influence, nor to draw causal relations between the series as text and the society surrounding it. On the contrary, the aim of the article is nothing more than a modest attempt to explore some of the tangible traces pointing to the complex relationship between social constructions of love within a culture and its representations in media.

### **Love Revisited?**

Western societies changed gradually and radically in the 1960s in terms of economic conjuncture, social circumstances (like education for women), emancipation of women, personal freedom, increased mobility, and the erosion of certain (sexual) values in the 1960s-1970s (Benze'ev & Goussinsky, 2008; Illouz, 2012). Levine (2003) asserts that the changes seemed so radical during this time because of two reasons. First, these evolutions started much earlier but there are many backlashes between 1930-1960 which obscure previous advancements in equality between the sexes, racial equality or gay rights. Second, the 1960s are a turning point for the convergence of social movements with on the one hand scientific progress that facilitates control over sexuality through the use of contraception, and on the other hand liberating changes in legal frameworks. This brings about a social transformation towards a process of *individualization* (Beck et al., 1995). Individualization implies that choices are less and less governed by external control and social or moral laws, and more and more by independent decision-making by the individual. Where it differs from previous, similar tendencies in society is that from the 1960s on it happens on a mass scale and it are now also women who make their own choices on how to organize their lives and personal development, as they are increasingly freed from family obligations. This, in turn, changes the lives of both men and women, especially when in a couple (Beck et al., 1995).

We can already see in the 17<sup>th</sup> century how - along with industrialization and the rise of capitalism - marriage (a term in which we include all forms of long-term commitment relationships) was increasingly seen as a site for realizing personal happiness rather than as a social institution (Kaufmann, 2011; Shumway, 2003). According to Beck et al. (1995), we can distinguish three stages of how men and women relate to one another as a couple as society evolves from pre-industrial to modern times. Subsequently, also the meaning of marriage

changed. At first, neither sex had individual possibilities. The family was an economic unit and marriage partners were chosen accordingly. Here, one's sense of self was more closely related to the social surrounding like extended family and religious structures (Johnson, 2005; Illouz, 2012, Benze'ev et al., 2008; Kaufmann, 2011; Shumway, 2003). As the extended family broke up, men increasingly started organizing their own lives while the family remained intact purely because of the (psychological and practical) confinement of women to the private sphere. Only here - in symbiosis with the industrial revolution - marrying for love started to emerge. From around the 1960s, both men and women had increasing opportunities for making a life of their own (Beck et al., 1995). By now, love became the most determining factor in one's choice to marry (Kaufmann, 2011). The individual's freedom to choose over his or her own life in itself became the general imperative to which all - both men and women - must conform, despite the internal contradictions the imperative increasingly posed and still does. An example is that the labor market expects complete mobility while this implies an 'other' who supports the family and private sphere behind the professional (Beck et al., 1995). Especially for women, conflicts arise as entering the labor market results in "two competing urgency systems, two clashing rhythms of living, that of the family [or marriage] and the workplace" (Hochschild & Machung, 2003:250). In other words, sexual freedom and gender equality exacerbate gender roles as the crucial source of antagonisms in couples (Beck et al., 1995). Love is bereaved of "its holy status and it becomes, ambiguously, both a source of transcendence as it is a contested site for the performance of gender identity" (Illouz, 2012:9). And so, gender expectations are crucial in maintaining the marriage (Illouz, 2012:9; Johnson, 2005:77). This, in turn, might stand in opposition to individual goals, such as self-actualization and/or a career. Failure to deal with this contradiction is in essence a failure of "the family model which can mesh *one* labour market biography with a lifelong housework biography, but not *two* labour market biographies, since their inner logic demands that both partners have to put themselves first" (Beck et al., 1995:6). In other words, it is the result of how society shapes demands and expectations but it is experienced as a personal failure (Illouz, 2012; Benze'ev & Goussinsky, 2008), because that is what the new imperative of individualization implies: every individual governs their own choices so when there is a problem, it relates to the individual's choice. Consequently, in our culture we are encouraged to endlessly self-scrutinize insecurities and (choices in) love (Illouz, 2012:163). This is what we henceforth call the autonomy-recognition conflict (Johnson, 2012; Illouz, 2012; Beck et al., 1995).

Another important change in the meaning of love and marriage through the process of individualization happens through changing views on sexuality. Sexuality becomes autonomous and gains a new meaning, away from reproductive purposes and towards individual gratification (Levine, 2007:9-10). The sexual liberation was closely associated with the emancipation of women (e.g. the importance of anti-conception) and sexuality became a goal in itself (Levine, 2007; Kaufmann, 2011). Because of this, both love and sexuality became *just another* source of pleasure, not necessarily related to one another (Kaufmann, 2011).

The social transformation of the 1960s can also be witnessed in Sweden. The Vietnam-conflict brought about a social debate in the 1960s while at the same time, the Swedish economy underwent a structural change as there is an increase in employment in the public sector and a decrease of employment in industry after 1965. At the same time, there was a growth of export industries and competition from abroad that stimulated concentration and

centralization of capital. The working class reacted with for example strikes as they were no longer loyal to the social democratic policy of increasing efficiency and boosting production as it had been in the after-war years. All of this is said to have contributed to a larger social awareness amongst leftist intellectuals, as well as to the threat of privatizing education and other factors led to radicalization at the end of the 1960s (Bergom-Larsson, 1978). Emancipation in particular was gaining more force in the afterwar-years in the Nordic countries compared to the rest of Europe. Historically, Protestantism had intensified "the Victorian climate" at the end of the 19th century, but also encouraged the emancipation of women (Kaufmann, 2011: 92-3). Moreover, women had more social rights in the Nordic welfare institutions early on, especially compared to the rest of Europe. Women were considered independent citizens rather than that their rights were being shaped in relation to their husbands and their positions as mothers (Åmark, 2006). This facilitated labor force participation for women in particular and emancipation in general.

### Love Representations

Two important tensions come to the fore where reality seems to stand in stark contrast to how love is represented in mass media, e.g. Hollywood-films that were widespread in Europe, especially after World War II (Loisen et al., 2016: 98). First, there is a tension between passion and marriage (see also Illouz, 2012). This tension relates to conflicting models of love and passion generally (Kaufmann, 2011), that (potentially) simultaneously develop. In passion, we get carried away and tend to give up ourselves in order to be reborn with someone else. Passion is a utopia in the sense that it turns against the existing world in order to achieve something new. The marriage model, on the contrary, is where the everyday is built up with this 'significant' other. This is necessarily grounded in the world that passion explicitly rejects. Passion needs us to give up our previous identity while marriage heavily relies on an already existent (and gendered) identity which is yet to be acknowledged (Kaufmann, 2011:131-142). Yet in the portrayal of love, there is no such tension. Generally, Hollywood films build on romance novels traditions (Roach, 2016) where only what happens *before* marriage matters (Kaufmann, 2011:94-95; Wilding, 2003). This representation helped to shape the unrealistic love-ideal where passion should be established *within* marriage and preferably be everlasting (Johnson, 2005; Illouz, 2012; Sprecher & Metts, 1999; Benze'ev & Goussinsky, 2008). In contrast, historically, passion was never conceived that way, it was even considered dangerous to have passionate feelings (Shumway, 2003; Kaufmann, 2011).

The second tension in representation is to be situated in the rapid emergence of women liberation movements from the 19th century onward. The equality of the sexes did not have any space within passionate love stories in films (Kaufmann, 2011) nor in the happiness of marriage that society promotes (Ahmed, 2010).

These irreconcilable tensions between the *ideal* and the *representation* on the one hand and the everyday *reality* on the other hand give rise to disappointments. Numerous authors point out how unrealistic expectations shape disappointments in love while the expectations themselves are never questioned. The result is that people discard one partner in exchange for a new one with whom they hope to realize the ideal again (Illouz, 2012:210-219; Benze'ev and Goussinsky, 2008:21; Johnson, 2005:45; Ahmed, 2010:7). Beck et al. (1995) even see this mismatch between expectations of an ideal and reality as the main reason for escalating divorce rates.

When researching Ingmar Bergman's personal ideas about love based on his autobiographies, we find similar tensions and disappointments (Author, forthcoming). Bergman is situated in a transition period towards a strong focus on the romantic and the sexual in society (see e.g. Illouz, 2012 and Giddens, 1992). Even though previous representations in media of love in marriage were not representative of reality either, from the 1960s on, the gap between cultural representation and reality is marked by a different contradiction "between the couple – normally seen as the source of love and solace – and the autonomous individual of advanced modernity" (Kaufmann, 2011: 111), the latter being shaped by the individualization process. In order to achieve happiness within the couple, defined roles should be taken up and building a family is seen as essential (Ahmed, 2010:78). These 'obligatory' roles often conflict with values of individual accomplishment (cf. infra). It is exactly this contradiction between autonomy and recognition that is the main theme in Bergman's *Scenes*.

As such, Bergman goes against dominant portrayals of romance and love as we know it from Hollywood movies and romantic novels in the past (Kaufmann, 2011; Roach, 2016). In these representations that Bergman reacts against, love is straightforward, unambiguous, static, and the participants know what they feel and act upon it (Illouz, 2012: 210). The culmination of these feelings of 'real love' is a wedding (Wilding, 2003:376). Now, let us take a look at *Scenes* in detail to explore how it deviates - or not - from love ideals in particular and society in general at the time of its release.

### **Scener ur ett äktenskap**

*Scenes from a Marriage* (1973) is a tv-series written and directed by Ingmar Bergman. In six episodes, 'chapters', of approximately 50 minutes each, we witness the disintegration of a ten year marriage between Johan and Marianne. According to Kalin (2003:152), the two central themes are (1) the demystification of love to something ordinary and (2) the wish to accept the partner and oneself. In other words, what we have described above as the autonomy-recognition conflict.

Both characters advance individually and their marriage evolves. Johan's identity changes from very self-confident to doubt and insecurity about everything. Marianne, on the contrary, increasingly realizes she is only what others expected her to be as a wife and mother (Bergom-Larsson, 1977; Thomson, 2006; Kalin, 2003). Her growing self-consciousness is a typical theme for the 1970s (Kalin, 2003) and connects to the second wave of feminism during that period (Illouz, 2012). Others have been more critical about *Scenes'* feminist potential as for example the consequences of divorce for Johan and Marianne's children are missing from the series. Also, the series never fundamentally questions gender roles. The presupposed feminism is considered a "male abandonment from responsibilities that patriarchal privileges entail and woman's emancipation as byproduct" (Thomson, 2006: 224). Maria Bergom-Larsson argues that the process of a growing self-consciousness is undone by ending the series with Marianne having metaphysical or existential fear (Dagens Nyheter, 5 Oct 1974, "Johan och Marianne bakom samhällets masker").

### **Methodology**

To explore the love and marriage representations of *Scenes*, we use Vos' (2004) theory of three layers of meaning in film texts: filmic, narrative, and ideological. We start with the filmic or cinematographic layer, where we look at how things are presented in image and

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sound. In the narrative layer, we analyze the unfolding of the story, which in this case, is strongly dialogue-driven. In the ideological layer, we explore which deeper meaning the story possibly holds, as it is mainly the ideological layer that connects to deeper social meanings. However, we do not treat these layers as hermetically separated in the analysis below as they clearly interact to convey meaning.

The smallest units of analysis are the scenes, i.e. any change in time or space. Within these scenes we selected different shots for analysis based on their representativity for the scene, or for their uniqueness within the whole. Not all story-elements have been included in the analysis, only those most relevant to the representation of love and marriage.

## **Analysis**

### ***Filmic layer***


Throughout the series, Bergman has a realist and naturalist style. As usual, Bergman puts focus on dialogue with few filmic experiments (Steene, 2005: 55). Partially, the realism connects to the upcoming social-realism within Swedish cinema halfway the 1960s, with for example Bo Widerberg as one of the prominent filmmakers. The filmic style of *Scenes* shows clear links between Bergman's theater- and film work. He uses compositions rather than camera movements, he prefers continuity editing, and the focus lies on the actors rather than on the audiovisual medium itself. The latter is also characteristic of Swedish filmmaking (Steene, 2005:135; Törnqvist, 2003:218). In sound, *Scenes'* hyperrealism is reinforced as there is no non-diegetic music.

As is common to Bergman's work, there is an extensive use of close-ups, most often when the viewer gains psychological insight into a character through lines of dialogue, monologue, or in discussions between characters. The camera framing reveals more about the evolution of the couple. In the beginning they are often framed together, almost claustrophobic. More and more they appear in separate and wider angle shots, only to be reunited within one shot again in the last chapter, upon reconciliation of Johan and Marianne. In the most extreme example in the fifth chapter, the camera cuts to a long shot right before they start fighting over the divorce. The camera strongly reinforces and symbolizes the mental distance between the main characters.

The framing further differs interior versus exterior. The rare exterior shots have a more liberating feel to it with the use of bird view camera angles and extreme wide shots. An example is when the couple drives to work in the second chapter, implying that when both are at work doing their own thing, they are more 'free', which stands in opposition to being locked inside in their house and marriage. The use of framing here thus echoes the aforementioned imperative of freedom of choice for the individual versus its social limitations.

### ***Light and candles: the link between the filmic and the ideological layer***

Another symbolic aspect throughout the series is the use of candles and light. Candles seem to symbolize the traditional, conservative moral obligations within marriage, with sometimes deteriorating consequences. For example, in the first chapter, Johan and Marianne have dinner with their friends, Peter and Katarina. The latter two pick on each other and eventually end up in a terrible fight. During the whole discussion, the candles on the table in front of them are

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continuously in the frame. As Johan and Marianne fight about the lack of sex in their marriage in the next chapter, candles occupy the frame as well. Later, in the scene where Johan is about to confess his mistress to Marianne, she lights up candles. After his confession she blows them out. When they have dinner after not having seen each other for a year, there are no candles anywhere in the frame. However, when Johan is about to leave the house and they talk in a two-shot, we detect unlit candles in the background, unlit because a new moral definition of marriage is on its way. In the last chapter, then, the second scene starts with Marianne blowing out some candles and leaving some lit, while talking about her current husband, Hendrik, and how marrying him was wrong as it has put her in a submissive position. Some candles lit and others not could symbolize that despite the burden of her new marriage, there is some relief in the newfound balance to Johan, now outside of their marriage.

Light and dark in general give clues about feelings of the characters as the story progresses. A clear example is to be found when they are at work. Johan is in a dark room with only dark backgrounds during the conversation with his colleague, his unfaithfulness is suggested in their conversation. Furthermore, Johan is performing an experiment where the subject (his colleague) is trying to follow a moving dot of light with a pencil. In contrast, Marianne is in a light pale room as she talks to a new client who wants to divorce her husband, just because there is no love, something that seems to hit home with Marianne. Later, right after Johan has made his confession in the third chapter, Marianne goes into a dark kitchen, which may symbolize the road of suffer she enters at that point.

### ***Identity-building and -crumbling***

It is clear that both characters go through opposite personal evolutions. These evolutions resonate with changes in society like the sexual and women's liberation. Where Johan has a seemingly clear defined identity in the very first scene, Marianne can barely describe herself outside of her marriage to Johan and her relation to her children. In the third chapter, when Johan confesses his infidelity to Marianne, these identities are at their most extreme. Marianne is making sandwiches for Johan while he is talking about his unfaithfulness. Marianne takes the blame while Johan takes up a victim role: "Jag vet inte vad som ska bli av det här, jag vet ingenting, jag är totalt förvirrad" [I don't know what will become of this, I don't know anything, I am utterly confused]. As Johan is planning to leave to Paris for a year the morning after, Marianne proposes to pick up his favorite costume from the dry cleaner. She shows compassion when he states he cannot take their restricting life anymore. All she seems to feel is care for him, even when he is not faithful to her. While she increasingly becomes aware of her own socialization as woman in the fourth chapter, she still takes up the mothering role here. It is only in the fifth scene that she more or less seems to have taken distance from that role, accentuated by low angle shots of her, giving her more power through the cinematography. Now the roles have reversed and it is Johan who proposes to go out for dinner, while all dinner-related dialogue and action before was initiated by Marianne.

Johan's identity becomes unstable from the fourth chapter on, and especially in the fifth. As his career goes downhill, he becomes insecure and 'wants to come home' to the family that gave him a secure surrounding, materially but also in terms of (gender) identity. Implicitly, Johan coming home would mean that Marianne needs to revert to her previous, strongly gendered role of supporting Johan, which she is not prepared to do anymore. Gender



roles and increased awareness of these roles are thus crucial in how the story develops. When Marianne thereupon rejects him, Johan becomes aggressive and they fight. This violent scene is vital in the buildup to the end. Even though couples hate each other throughout Bergman's oeuvre, it is rare to see physical violence. It is the absolute depth of depths that is shown here, which is meaningful as it is the first time they openly show their emotions, giving force to the reconciliation happening in the next chapter (Kalin, 2003). It is only when there are no expectations left, that a new type of love can be established.

In the last chapter, their initial identities have reversed: Johan does not know who he is while Marianne is happy with herself. The sexual liberation she boasts stands for her liberation in a wider sense. This relates to the aforementioned evolution towards the autonomy of sex, linked to Marianne's liberation as a woman. The evolution of both characters seems to be also a measurement for their sense of identity and the extent to which they can feel successful in (any kind of) love.

### *Components of love in 'Scenes'*

The three components that constitute love in *Scenes* are the material, the everyday, and the social. Although they are interrelated, we will discuss them in that order.

Strikingly, the start of Johan and Marianne's marriage was not love at first sight. The representation of their love in this way is revolutionary in itself. The fact that they got together for practical considerations and only later fell in love is valuable to the story. It is exactly 'the practical' consideration as a reason for (maintaining) marriage that *Scenes* seems to resist from the very beginning, where Peter and Katarina show us how love cannot survive when it is only practical and/or material. Also when Johan and Marianne speak about separation after Johan's confession, they mainly speak about financial issues. It is exactly this that Johan wants to escape from: "Jag ska bara försvinna, hör du det? Jag ska dematerialisera mig (...) jag är behovslös, det ända som intresserar mig är att jag kan stiga ur det här" [I will just disappear, do you hear me? I will dematerialize (...) I have no needs, the only thing that interests me is that I can get away from this]. He gives up the material for the emotional, as if both stand in opposition to each other. This idea persists throughout the series: in the end they can only be 'happy' and emotionally close when all the practical, the everyday, and the material is gone.

Another, related component is what we have termed the banal perfection of the everyday. It is the focus on the practical, on what is visible to the outside world and not on their feelings, that makes others see the couple as perfect. In the beginning of *Scenes*, this is how they define their happiness: no material problems, good friends, a good job (for Marianne) and security, order, happiness, loyalty (for Johan). Throughout the series, the perfect 'everyday' is used in a genius way as it highlights the banality of their relationship. When Johan will flee to Paris with Paula the next morning, Marianne sets the alarm for him, makes his breakfast, helps him packing, ... and it is Johan asking her to do so. It is this dynamic of mutual dependency in the everyday that makes it impossible to separate. Yet it is so banal that the whole situation becomes poignant. This is emphasized even more when both are naked in the bathroom the morning Johan will leave. Being naked does not matter as they do not *see* each other anymore, not physically and not mentally. This coincides with Horvat's (2016:4) statement that habit is the worst thing that can happen to love. Ironically, it is this

habit that Johan longs for when wanting to return home in the fifth chapter. Not only that, Johan suddenly lacks a part of his identity as his failed marriage becomes a personal failure.

This brings us to the third and last component of love in *Scenes*, the social component. Here we can really see the transition between the socially defined ideal partner and the individual striving for an ever-better ideal love, in line with the individualization process. More broadly, the conflict between the social and the individual relates to changing ways of organizing marriage (socially driven versus driven by a search for personal happiness). The focus is constantly on how others look at Johan and Marianne as a couple and they both try to escape this social control: Marianne by attempting to cancel the Sunday dinner at her mother's place, Johan by running away with Paula. He literally states that he looks most forward to not having to celebrate birthdays and Christmas with everyone anymore. But he is ashamed, and this is another way in which the social component of love materializes in *Scenes*. We are ashamed when "we have failed to approximate 'an ideal' that has been given to us through the practices of love. What is exposed in shame is the failure of love, as a failure that in turn exposes or shows our love" (Ahmed, 2004: 214-215). Being ashamed requires both identification with the other and with the love ideal and is in that sense a social emotion.

The type of love that Johan and Marianne evolve away from is thus its practical, material and socially defined form. This corresponds to the institutional organization of marriage that is built on monogamy and the sharing of economic resources in order to increase wealth (Illouz, 2012). This marital organization stands in contrast to the all-consuming passion (and personal happiness) that Johan and Marianne strive for and thus it is only when they give up on their traditional views, that a different kind of love can be realized, in which this passion has its place.

## Conclusion

We can conclude that *Scenes* strongly intertwines with the society it is created in and the changes said society undergoes. Johan and Marianne struggle with the ideals of everlasting passion and individual accomplishment in marriage. On an individual level, they struggle with their (gender) identity within and in relation to their marriage. As the reasons to marry in society evolve from practical to the pursuit of happiness, they struggle to remain together. Johan wants passion and goes out to search for it but when it fades, he wants to come back. Both identities of Johan and Marianne are strongly connected to "love" in different ways. Marianne first conservatively constructs her identity around the family and her marriage. As this shatters, she finds herself in new ways, an evolution tying into the societal process of women emancipation as well as sexual liberation at the time. But also Johan's identity is dependent on how he loves. He feels accomplished when he has a career, a family, a wife and a lover. Even though his sense of self initially seems quite strong, when he loses love, his identity also seems to be lost.

The last chapter embodies all that Bergman has reacted to in the previous chapters. Finally, Johan and Marianne are liberated from the banal 'everyday' and mutual expectations that determined their relationship before. They know each other, respect and accept each other as they are and they love each other. Even though they are not together, they support one another. It is through marriage that they have the love they have in the end, but they had to get rid of marriage to be able to live it to the fullest. It might be the hope for another type of happy ending that inspired people to divorce. Even if things turn to the worst when two people separate, there is still a chance for love in the end. In this regard, *Scenes* poses a fairly

rare representation of love and marriage. Additional research might elaborate further on discourses of love in other works by Bergman. Also an audience study would undoubtedly reveal more in what the meaning of its representations is for the audience and how the series possibly can be considered as a turning point.

At the very end of the series, Johan does not want to talk about love as it makes it banal. They wish each other good night, and again the banal stands for something bigger, now in a positive way. In this small gesture, *Scenes* confirms love a second time. To conclude, this reminds us of what Barthes (1978:24, italics in original) eloquently states in his seminal work, *A lover's discourse: fragments*,

“First of all, when the lover encounters the other, there is an immediate affirmation (psychologically: dazzlement, enthusiasm, exaltation, mad projection of a fulfilled future: I am devoured by desire, the impulse to be happy): I say yes to everything (blinding myself). There follows a long tunnel: my first yes is riddled by doubts, love's *value* is ceaselessly threatened by depreciation: this is the moment of melancholy passion, the rising of resentment and of oblation. Yet I can emerge from this tunnel; I can "surmount," without liquidating; what I have affirmed the first time, I can once again affirm, without repeating it, for then what I affirm is the affirmation, not its contingency: I affirm the first encounter in its difference, I desire its return, not its repetition. I say to the other (old or new): *Let us begin again*”

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