



# **Wordless Secrets: Ingmar Bergman's Persona: Modernist Crisis & Canonical Status (Studies in Nordic Literature and Film)**

*Peter Ohlin*

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Ingmar Bergman's film *Persona* (1966) is considered both one of his greatest masterpieces and his most enigmatic and abstract film. The highly influential film achieved global critical acclaim and has been the subject of numerous studies and interpretations. *Wordless Secrets* is a ground-breaking new study of *Persona*. It asserts that the essential Swedish context of the film has been overlooked by Bergman's international audience, which has mistakenly preferred to focus on the abstract and metaphysical aspects of *Persona*. By repatriating the discussion of *Persona* to its Swedish context, the book argues that: a) the film's setting is seen not just as a barren rocky shore, but as a landscape with people who live and work there and whose marginalization is not metaphysical, but immediate and political, as well as cultural; b) the profession of the nurse is not accidental, nor only symbolic: Alma's confusion may in part stem from the transformation of the nursing profession in the 1960s in Sweden; and c) the Holocaust photograph from the Warsaw ghetto is not just an image of total violence and cruelty, but also alludes to the Swedish guilt over neutrality in the face of Nazi war crimes. (Series: Studies in Nordic Literature and Film)

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