

Bo Widerbergs tv-teater / Bo Widerberg's TV-Theater

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Abstract:

The dissertation analyzes the seven studio produced TV-plays made (1979-1992) by the renowned Swedish filmmaker Bo Widerberg. The main focus regards Widerberg's work method, here referred to as "The Widerberg method", which can be described as an acting oriented work method influenced by the American *method acting* tradition from Hollywood in the fifties, especially the films by Elia Kazan. Here one can find techniques or approaches to acting that resemble Widerberg's own ideas on acting as a way of "creating life" on screen or on stage. For Widerberg, the aim was to make the actor get rid of rehearsed mannerisms and through improvisations developing a realistic acting style grounded in the actor's own personal experiences and emotions. Although, aiming at realism in acting, Widerberg's realism can be regarded as a "aesthetically motivated realism" when it comes to film technique. The same goes for his films as his TV-plays. Also, his ideas on *mise-en-scène* implied that it had to be very faithful to real life. In fact, he often builds an illusion of reality through imitation of reality (*mimesis*), only to deconstruct it with the help of camera technique effects (slow motion, fast cuts in relation to slow cuts etc.) that draws the viewer's attention to the work as an artifact. In this aspect, Widerberg's work method reminds of Bertolt Brecht's ideas on *Verfremdungseffekt*, as well as Jean-Luc Godard early experiments on film making in the *Nouvelle Vague*-movement.

Since the TV-plays as well as Widerberg's many and often provocative statements about acting and theater to a large extent were noticed in the media, the dissertation also analyzes Widerberg's role in media, as well as other public discussions and debates surrounding his plays. By starting out from the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's discussions on the cultural field as a structured space with its own rules, agents and battles, the dissertation tries to show how Widerberg with his system of dispositions (*habitus*) manages to occupy a powerful position in the field of the Swedish TV-Theater. His beliefs (*croyance*) on what is valuable to fight for concern his own artistic freedom and thoughts on acting. During his time as TV-director, he becomes more and more concerned with issues such as realistic acting and making TV-plays for the broad audience, mainly the working class, and especially those who never comes to contact with the theater institutions in society.

He often states that he as an *auteur* has the right to rewrite other writer's texts at his own disposal, and the reason he does so, is to make the plays more easy accessible and interpretable. He also re-negotiates ingrained opinions on what is regarded as high brow and low brow culture, among others things by recruiting popular comedians in plays regarded "serious".

Keywords: Acting, method acting, realism, auteur, Verfremdungseffekt, Nouvelle Vague, Arthur Miller, Albert Camus, Tennessee Williams, August Strindberg, Henrik Ibsen, Lars Norén, Bengt Bratt, Roland Janson, Elia Kazan, Bertolt Brecht, Jean-Luc Godard, Pierre Bourdieu.