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Fy og Bi

A Danish Duo: Rurality, Modernity, and Class Struggle in Three Fy og Bi Films from the Silent Era

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Abstract

This thesis analyses three Fy og Bi films from the silent era: *Tyvepak* (1921), *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927) and *Filmens Helte* (1928). The theoretical framework that is utilized in this thesis comes from ideological criticism as well as the concept of representation in film. The method used is textual analysis. The historiographical significance of the thesis fits into the broadly social approach to the study of film history with its investigations and analysis of ideology and class representations. The overarching aim is to connect the thesis to relevant discussions within the field of film studies, such as the research which have been done on slapstick films. Research which is especially relevant for this thesis concerns class and representations, for example of the tramp archetype.

The two research questions of the thesis are:

What kind of social and political dimensions did the Fy og Bi films have?

How are different classes represented in the Fy og Bi films?

The conclusion is that the upper classes are generally represented as the antagonists to the lower classes in society. The upper classes are represented as more lying and deceitful and at the same time more oblivious to the real world than the working class. Fy og Bi does not represent the traditional working class, rather they represent the non-working vagrant underclass. The working classes are generally represented as hard working and tough people, who make the best of their situation.

The ideological dimensions in the films were inspired by the historical context of which they were produced. It was a society in which the rural traditional society was being challenged and transformed into a modern urban one. The films represent the changing social values, especially in relation to the ideological institution of marriage, at the same time as the dominant capitalist society with its own internal logic of ownership rules are respected. There are plenty of criticism targeted towards the upper classes in the films, reflecting the ongoing class conflict of the 1920s in Denmark, even if ultimately, the dominating ideology re-affirms the capitalist structure of the society in the end.

Keywords: Fy og Bi, Fyrtornet och Bivagnen, Fyrtårnet og Bivognen, Ole & Axel, Long & Short, Telegrafstolpen og Tilhængerer

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1. Introduction

Today, not many people are familiar with Fy og Bi.¹ They are largely forgotten around the world. Many film buffs and cinephiles would be familiar with comedic geniuses such as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, but few would recognize Fy og Bi. The Danish couple were popular all over the world and not just in their native country.² Reviewers of the 1920s inevitably came to compare Fy og Bi's films to their American farce counterparts such as the films of Mack Sennett, Harold Lloyd, Buster Keaton, and Charlie Chaplin.³ A Swedish reviewer wrote in the film magazine *Filmjournalen* on the 11th of January 1925 a comparison between Fy og Bi's *Ole Opfinders Offer* (1924) and the Harold Lloyd film *Hot Water* (1924). The reviewer writes that Lau Lauritzen films are "[...] the cozy, popular comedy. Harold Lloyd's films are farces in the true sense."⁴

The defining feature of the comedic duo is that "Fyrtårnet" is tall and thin and "Bivognen" is short and chubby, hence their British names Long & Short. In other national contexts, they were given more witty names. Fy og Bi went by various creative names in different countries in the world. Among others, they were known as Telegrafstolpen og Tilhængerens in Norway, Fyrtornet och Släpvagnen in Swedish, Majakka og Perivaunu in Finland, Ole and Axel in the United States, X & Y in Italy, Pat i Patashon in Russia, Max und Mauritz in Switzerland, Düztaban ve Bastibacak in Turkey and Doublepatte et Patachon in France.⁵ Fyrtårnet og Bivognen is known by their British names Long & Short in international academic writing.⁶

The Fy og Bi films have a strong connection to the folk culture. What has not been studied extensively are the political, social, and ideological dimensions of their films, which this thesis will explore in depth. The aim is to that this thesis will contribute with new insights and towards a better understanding of their filmography. Maybe renewed attention and discussion can bring the couple to their rightful place among silent stars, which can lead to more people discovering and appreciating their vast filmography, as well as more home video releases of their restored

¹ In this paper, Fy og Bi will be referred to by their original Danish names.

² Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 7.

³ Ibid, p. 13–14.

⁴ All the translations from Danish are made by the author of this paper, unless noted.

"[...] det småtrevliga, folkliga lustspelet. Harold Lloyds filmer äro farser i egentlig mening." S-e, Två filmfarser, *Filmjournalen*, vol. 7, issue. 1, 1925: 6, p. 6.

⁵ Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 108.

⁶ Anne Bachmann, *Locating inter-Scandinavian silent film culture: connections, contentions, configurations*, Diss., Stockholms universitet 2013, p. 180.

work. Since the research that have been done on Fy og Bi is scarce, and especially in contrast to their past popularity, writing this thesis can partly be seen as breaking new ground, which is an exciting endeavor.

1.1 Background

In this chapter, the intention is to give some basic background to Fy og Bi. The background will serve as a form of contextualization and therefore make the reader familiar with the subjects of attention. The aims and research questions follow in the end of this chapter.

Nordisk Films Kompagni

Nordisk was Denmark's first film production company.⁷ Nordisk Film was founded in Denmark in 1906 by Ole Olsen (1863-1943). Nordisk Film was especially successful internationally during the 1910s. To understand how successful Nordisk Film Kompagni was, it was among the largest film companies in the world during the silent era. Before the beginning of the First World War, Nordisk dominated the global market together with the two French companies Gaumont and Pathé Frères. After the First World War, the company experienced a crisis, that would not fully end until the advent of sound films.

It was at Nordisk Film that Lau Lauritzen started his career in film. Lauritzen worked as an actor from around 1911, mostly in films produced by Nordisk Film.⁸ In 1992, Nordisk Film was merged with the Danish based media company Egmont Gruppen.⁹

Palladium

Palladium was created as Swedish company, and its roots can be traced back to 1915. Lars Björck (1884-1926) established the company as "Skandinavisk Filmscentral." The company both owned many cinemas in Sweden and rented out films. Björck wanted to get into the production business of films. In the spring of 1919, the Danish film companies Dania Biofilms and Kinografen in Hellerup was bought with this intention. The production company was

⁷ Isak Thorsen, *Nordisk Films Kompagni 1906-1924: The Rise and Fall of the Polar Bear*, East Barnet: John Libbey Publishing 2017, p. 25.

⁸ Det Danske Filminstitut, Lau Lauritzen Sr., *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date, <https://www.dfi.dk/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/person/lau-lauritzen-sr> (Accessed 2021-05-05).

Isak Thorsen, *Nordisk Films Kompagni 1906-1924: The Rise and Fall of the Polar Bear*, East Barnet: John Libbey Publishing 2017, p. 1.

⁹ Nationalencyklopedin, Nordisk Films Kompagni, *Nordisk Films Kompagni*, No date, <https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/nordisk-films-kompagni> (Accessed 2021-05-05).

named Palladium. This was a form of pan-Scandinavian project. The studios for indoor shooting were in Denmark, while the exteriors were filmed in Sweden.

Lau Lauritzen was hired in 1920, having before worked for Nordisk Film. Lauritzen served as the artistic director of Palladium. He took with him the experience from Nordisk film and the actor Carl Schenstrøm. In 1921, Palladium changed owner from Björck to Svend Nielsen (1891-1958). In 1937, Lauritzen retired as the artistic director of the studio. Palladium produced its two last films in 1976, the erotic films called *Sømænd på sengekanten* (1976) and *Hopla på sengekanten* (1976). Palladium continued to distribute films after the production of its own films stopped. In 2017, the company was closed. The film rights in the company were transferred to the Danish Film Institute. During its existence, Palladium produced over 160 Danish feature films and around 50 films in the information and documentarian genres. Except the Fy og Bi films, the company produced four films of the director Carl Theodor Dreyer.¹⁰

Lau Lauritzen

Director Lau Lauritzen was born in 1878 in Silkeborg. His father was merchant Martin Lauritzen.¹¹ Lau Lauritzen directed 32 of 49 Fy og Bi films. The films he directed were made between 1921 and 1933. He also wrote most of the scripts.¹² He spent time in the military and graduated the officer school as a lieutenant. After the officer school, he begun studying to become an actor at Aarhus theatre. In 1907, Lauritzen wrote a manuscript for Nordisk Film. In 1914 Nordisk Film hired him as a director. There he directed over 200 films. He died in 1938, only 60 years old.¹³

Carl Schenstrøm

Carl Schenstrøm (most famous for playing Fy) was born the 13th of November 1881. His father was a plumber that emigrated with Carl to America, where Carl lived in Chicago for 4 years. He was 8 years old when they arrived there. Carl even attended school in Chicago where he learnt English. The family was not very successful in America and moved back to Denmark

¹⁰ Det Danske Filminstitut, Palladium, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date, <https://www.dfi.dk/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/selskab/palladium> (Accessed 2021-05-05).

¹¹ Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 10.

¹² Ibid, p. 17.

¹³ Ibid, p. 10-11.

four years later.¹⁴ Despite the character name of “Fyrtårnet” Schenstrøm was not exceptionally tall. He was 181 cm, a not too exceptionally unnormal height even for the period.¹⁵

Harald Madsen

Harald Madsen was born in Silkeborg in 1890. He joined the circus and performed there in different capacities, including as a trapeze artist, contortionist, and equilibrist. He was discovered at the circus Schumann in 1921 by Lau Lauritzen. During the latter years, Madsen career was negatively affected by paranoia and OCD (Obsessive-compulsive disorder).¹⁶ Madsen’s father was a shoemaker.¹⁷

The Fy og Bi films

The first Fy og Bi film is called *Tyvepak* (1921) and was a Swedish production, directed by Lau Lauritzen with the Swedish actor Axel Hultman in the main role. Despite not being the main characters, it was the vagabond supporting characters played by Carl Schenstrøm and Aage Bendixen that got the attention of the critics.¹⁸ *Tyvepak* is considered the first Fy og Bi film, in which the characters also got their names. This film starred Aage Bendixen in the role of Bivognen.¹⁹ The first film starring Harald Madsen (which is the actor most associated with Bi) and Carl Schenstrøm together was *Flim, Flirt og Forlovelse* (1921).²⁰ Fy og Bi was probably inspired by American comedic films starring the duo Mutt and Jeff.²¹

The original Bivognen Aage Bendixen did not live up to all the expectations of director Lau Lauritzen who wanted a better opposite to Schenstrøm, with more contrasts. One of Lauritzen’s favorite novels was *Don Quixote* and the thought was that Fy og Bi would match the main character of the novel. Fy was the idealist and knight with many crazy ideas. Bi was supposed to be loyal just like Sancho Panza. That is also why they made a Fy og Bi film called *Don Quixote* (1926).

¹⁴ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 19.

Carl Schenstrøm, *Fyrtårnet Fortæller*, Copenhagen: H. Hagerup 1943, p. 7.

¹⁵ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 26.

¹⁶ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 21.

¹⁷ Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 41.

¹⁸ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 17.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 18.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 24-25.

²¹ Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 15.

There were also comic books published within the Fy og Bi Franchise. The comic books about Fy og Bi was published from 1922 until the last issue was released in 1968. The comic books were published for 46 years, far longer than the film series lasted.²²

Fy og Bi was the first comical duo on film that reached international fame and success.²³ Despite reaching widespread popularity in both Europe, Asia, South America, Mexico, and Africa,²⁴ they never became very successful in the American market.²⁵ In America they had Laurel and Hardy which were very popular there.²⁶

When Fy og Bi made the transition to sound films in the early 1930s, it immediately became more difficult to export the films to other countries due to the Danish language.²⁷ In 1930, the film *Taler De Tysk?* (1930) was released in the German language. Fy og Bi speaks broken German in the film. The film was not very successful in Denmark but became very popular in Germany.²⁸

After the film *Han, hun og Hamlet* (1932) Harald Madsen did not want to play Bi anymore, at least at Palladiums film studio in Denmark. He thought that the lamps there generated dangerous death rays. Due to this, Lauritzen had to recast Bi with the actor Hans W. Petersen. The audience did not like this change.²⁹ Madsen did not make more Fy og Bi films in Denmark but did work in Germany and Sweden. He thought that the rays there were less harmful than in Denmark.³⁰

Fy og Bi received thousands of fan letters from all over the world. The letters could ask for different things, such as autographs, but also for marriage. Carl Schenstrøm was a serious and religious man in his private life. Harald Madsen was mostly enthusiastic when he talked about his great passion, which was the circus. It was also through the purchase of his own circus that he lost all his money, and he died a poor man.³¹

²² Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 62-63.

²³ Ibid, p. 13-14.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 54.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 71.

²⁶ Ibid p. 72.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 85.

²⁸ Ibid p. 87-88.

²⁹ Ibid p. 88-89.

³⁰ Ibid p. 91.

³¹ Flemming la Cour & Allan Mylius Thomsen *Fra Fy og Bi til Far Til Fire: Fru Alice O'Fredericks*, Lindhardt og Ringhof 1997, p. 24.

In 1940, the last Fy og Bi film with both Carl Schenstrøm and Harald Madsen was produced by the director Johan Jacobsen. Lau Lauritzen had died in 1938. The film was called, *I de gode, gamle Dage* (1940). The film did not live up to the audience's expectations.³²

In 1948, which was six years after the death of Carl Schenstrøm in 1942, there was a new Fy og Bi film with the Swedish actor Calle Reinholdz as Fy. The film was called *Calle og Palle* (1948). This was the last Fy og Bi film that was made. In the 1950s, after the death of Madsen, many of the old silent films were recut and was provided with sound and comments. These were fairly successful.³³

The duo remained popular in Germany, Denmark and Sweden until their last film was released, but in other countries they become more or less forgotten since the advent of sound. Their films were not translated into these other languages after the entrance into the sound era.³⁴ Critics claimed that Fy og Bi belonged to the silent era and they were described as mammoths in the sound era.³⁵

1.2 Aims and Research Questions

The aims of this thesis are to provide insight into the films of Fy og Bi in ways that have not been done before and highlight the ideological dimensions of the films as well as how different classes are represented. It is relevant to do, since Fy og Bi once were one of, if not the most popular comedic duo on film. To study the ideology on display in these films have the potential to contextualize both the films and era and bring a better understanding, as well as give a wider understanding of other similar films.

The overarching aim and the connection to the field of film studies will be to give a nuancing and more complete overview of silent era slapstick comedy in Denmark and by connecting to research that has been done on American slapstick silent films. Particularly the research concerning the Tramp archetype and class.

The Fy og Bi films have not been extensively studied from this angle before. The theoretical framework that will be utilized is drawn from the concept of the critique of ideology and the concept of representation in film. The method that is used is textual analysis. The films which

³² Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 92.

³³ Ibid, p. 93.

³⁴ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 51.

³⁵ Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 91.

are studied are all the silent films that are currently available online for the public, i.e., *Tyvepak* (1921), *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927) and *Filmens Helte* (1928).

The research questions are:

What kind of social and political dimensions did the Fy og Bi films have?

How are different classes represented in the Fy og Bi films?

1.3 Disposition

The introduction is followed by the second chapter which is called “Previous Research” and chronicles research that has previously been done on the topic Fy og Bi. Then follows chapter 3, which is titled “Material.” This chapter describes the primary material, which are the Fy og Bi films.

The fourth chapter is called “Method” in which the research method textual analysis that is used in the thesis is described and discussed. Chapter five is called “Theoretical Framework”. Here, the theories which is used is described and discussed. In this thesis, it is the critique of ideology and the concept of representation in films which is of main interest, as well as the concept carnivalesque. Chapter 6 is named “Historical Background: Political and Economic Developments in Denmark in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century.” Chapter 7 is called “Film Historical Background: Danish Silent Film Developments” Chapter 8 is named “Findings and Analysis” and deals with the main part of the thesis, namely the analysis.

Chapter 9 is called “Conclusions and Discussion” and in this chapter, the results and conclusions of the paper are described and discussed. Chapter 10 is titled “Further Research” where possible future research ideas on the subject are discussed. Finally, comes the Bibliography and the Filmography sections.

2. Previous Research

There has not been done much academic research on Fy og Bi. In this section, I will give an overview of most of what available at this time. Reviewing which research has been done before will help contextualize this thesis and contribute to the understanding of what more research that could be done on the topic. To the best of the authors’ knowledge, there has not been much research done on the Fy og Bi films, which are comparable to what are done in this thesis.

There have been some hints about some political dimension in the *Fy og Bi* films that has been written. In the book *Fy og Bi*, published in 1980, Associate Professor Marguerite Engberg writes that the vagabond nature of *Fy og Bi* is in sharp contrast to the bourgeoisie that surrounds them. They do not respect private property rights. Other characteristics of the pair is chivalry and helpfulness.³⁶ Engberg's book remains the most comprehensive academic work to date about *Fy og Bi*.

Engberg also writes that, during 1930-31, the *Fy og Bi* films were banned in the Soviet Union because they were regarded as "småborgerlige" (Petite bourgeoisie). However, the films were allowed to be shown already in the next year again. In 1932 it was written in *Kalundborg Dagblad* that:

"Carl Schenstrøm's mournful mustache hangs from large billboards on Prospekt Octobre in Leningrad for the time being. The Russians have accepted the two Danish Actors as good Proletarians and have fun watching them make fun of the bourgeoisie."³⁷

There is a short article written by Hauke Lange-Fuchs published in *Journal of Scandivian Cinema* called "Pat and Patachon: a 'German' comedy couple on the screen." The article is about *Fy og Bi*'s transnational career, with a specific focus on the German speaking market.³⁸

Gerald Cockshott wrote in *Sight and Sound* in 1948 that:

Most of the pictures produced in Denmark are farces and light comedies designed simply to make money and are of little or no interest outside their own country. The films made by George Schænevoigt between 1930 and 1932-*Præsten i Vejlbj* (*The Clergyman at Vejlbj*), *Hotel Paradis* and *Kirke og Orgel* (*Church and Organ*) are still spoken of, as are one or two of the farces of 1933-1936-*13 Aar* (*13 years*) with Marguerite Viby, and *Med fuld Musik* (*With full Orchestra*), one of the many films in which two popular Danish comedians of the silent says appeared: Karl Schenstrøm [sic] and Harald Madsen (known in Denmark by abbreviations of their nicknames: *Fy* and *Bi*); but most of the films

³⁶ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, København: Gyldendal 1980, p. 28.

³⁷ "Carl Schenstrøm sørgmodige Overskæg hænger ned fra store Plakattavler paa Prospekt Octobre i Leningrad for Tiden. Russerne har akcepteret de to danske Skuespillere som gode Proletarer og morer sig kosteligt over att se dem pille Hejgut med Bourgeoisiet."

Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, København: Gyldendal 1980, p. 41-42.

³⁸ Hauke Lange-Fuchs, Pat and Patachon: A 'German' comedy couple on the screen, *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, vol. 4, issue 3, 2014: 209-214.

produced between 1933 and 1938 seem to have been obvious farces, melodramas and novelettes.³⁹

Engberg writes that Fy og Bi in all the films are playing vagabonds, or something that is similar to that. She writes that Fy og Bi in *Han, Hun og Hamlet* (1922) have bourgeois jobs in the form of being gardeners in a girls' boarding school in the beginning of the film.⁴⁰ Despite Engberg's interpretation, being a gardener is probably not something most people would regard as bourgeois work, even if they work at a girls' boarding school.

Engberg further writes that Fy og Bi is part of the lowest bourgeoisie in their films, when they work as for example banana sellers.⁴¹ Being a banana seller is probably not something most people would associate with even the lowest of the bourgeoisie.

Engberg writes that:

“When Lau, as often as he does, uses class differences and social barriers as an obstacle to the happiness of young people, it must be taken as a sign that Denmark was still a class-divided society after all in the 1920s. Otherwise, critics and audiences would have reacted to these rather silly stories for us today.”⁴²

“A film-historical placement of Fy og Bi would also mean a historical placement. The naive universe of the Fy og Bi films belongs in 20s Denmark, where we still slept a kind of sleeping beauty sleep. Not only had we not participated in the horrors of the First World War, but some also had, on the contrary, as the goulash couple in a couple of Fy and Bi's films, made easy money on the war. Our geographical location meant that even in the 1920s we were on the fringes of the European cultural world, belonging to a provincial milieu. Because we can hardly avoid calling the milieu we see in Fy and Bi films provincial.”⁴³

³⁹ Gerald Cockshott, *Films In Denmark, Sight and Sound*, vol. 17, issue 67, 1948: 114-116, p. 114.

⁴⁰ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, København: Gyldendal 1980, p. 57.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 61.

⁴² “Når Lau så ofte, som han gør det, anvender klasseforskelle og sociale barrierer som en hindring for de unges lykke, må det vel tages som et tegn på, at Danmark endnu i 1920'erne var et klassedelt samfund trods alt. Ellers havde anmeldere og publikum vel reageret mod disse for os i dag ret tåbelige historier.”

Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, København: Gyldendal 1980, p. 64.

⁴³ “En filmhistorisk placering af Fyrtårnet og Bivognen vil også sige en historisk placering. Fy og Bi filmenes naive univers hører hjemme i 20'ernes Danmark, hvor vi stadig sov en slags tornerosesøvn. Ikke blot havde vi ikke deltaget i den første verdenskrigs rædsler, nogle havde tværtimod som gullaschparret i et par af Fy og Bis film tjent lette penge på krigen. Vores geografiske placering gjorde, at vi endnu i 1920'erne lå i udkanten af den europæiske kulturverden, tilhørte et provinsielt milieu. For vi kommer næppe uden om at kalde det milieu, vi ser i Fy og Bi film, for provinsielt.”

Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, København: Gyldendal 1980, p. 130.

In Anne Bachmann's dissertation from 2013, *Locating inter-Scandinavian silent film culture: connections, contentions, configurations*, there is a subpart of chapter 2 called "c. A sense of joint proprietorship: The case of Fyrtårnet and Bivognen in Sweden and Norway during the mid-1920s." This part is devoted to the transnational nature of the Fy og Bi films. This chapter has a different focus than this thesis, since it deals more with the nature of production, reception and distribution of the films, rather than an extensive analysis of the ideology and representations, although many points are very helpful. Ideology is mentioned though.

Bachmann writes that Fy og Bi had an appeal to the masses in Denmark. The ideological backdrop of the Fy og Bi films were that they emphasized the outdoor surroundings in rural environments, related to Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig's ideas about the basis of nations specificity, as being "peasanthood and soil." This was different from the more interior focused setting and cosmopolitanism showcased in earlier Danish melodramas. The Fy og Bi films were often built around a form of love story with class differences. This showed the ideals of egalitarianism of the time in Denmark. Bachmann describes it as a staple that the films contained "some kind of challenge to the bourgeoisie."⁴⁴

There is a book called *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte* written by Lars Jakobsen published in 2002. The book is rather short (111 pages) and vividly illustrated but still contains much valuable information, and expanded upon Engberg's work, especially in areas related to Fy og Bi's comic books.

There is also an autobiography written by Carl Schenstrøm called *Fyrtaarnet fortæller* published in 1943. Fittingly, it is comically written, with plenty of anecdotes about his life and career. This one will be used on occasions deemed fittingly in this thesis.

Another book is *Fra Fy og Bi til Far Til Fire: Fru Alice O'Fredericks* written by Flemming la Cour and Allan Mylius Thomsen and published in 1997. The book focus on director, screenwriter, and actress *Alice O'Fredericks*. She was the first female Danish director. Only one chapter, consisting of eight pages that are solely dedicated to Fy og Bi, are in the book. It is truly fascinating book, but not much material on Fy og Bi, even if it has some useful information and perspective. The writing of the book was financially supported by the Danish film institute.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Anne Bachmann, *Locating inter-Scandinavian silent film culture: connections, contentions, configurations*, Diss., Stockholms universitet 2013, p. 189.

⁴⁵ Flemming la Cour & Allan Mylius Thomsen *Fra Fy og Bi til Far Til Fire: Fru Alice O'Fredericks*, Lindhardt og Ringhof 1997.

There is also a book in German called *Pat und Patachon: eine Dokumentation von Hauke Lange-Fuchs, unter Mitwirkung von Marguerite Engberg; und mit einem Beitrag von Kaj Wickbom*. This book is, as the title suggests, written with cooperation from Engberg. Not too much unique information is contained in this book, that cannot be read in the aforementioned works. The new material in the book consists to a large part of excerpts from the press of the time. This is of course interesting, but of what the author of this paper could judge, the selected material in the book is of minor interest to this study.

The book *100 Års Dansk Film* edited by Peter Schepelern contains some information about Fy og Bi, but the parts of Fy og Bi are quite few. In total they are mentioned at 10 pages, and many of these are just mentions and not much else.⁴⁶

It is important to remember, that some sources are less reliable than others. Bachmann notes that Marguerite Engberg claimed that the Fy og Bi films were not very popular in Norway. This conclusion was only based on two reviews, which was not representative of the wider trade-press at the time. On the opposite, they were popular.⁴⁷

Engberg claims that Carl Schenstrøm was connected to the Danish petite bourgeoisie, despite his father being a plumber.⁴⁸ This does not feel like an accurate description. Furthermore, Engberg also claims that Madsen was part of the bourgeoisie, despite him joining the circus at an early age.⁴⁹ Madsen's father was a shoemaker.⁵⁰ Due to this, the description does not seem to reflect the real circumstances. It is therefore wise to be critical towards this source, also considering what Bachmann wrote regarding the reviews.

None of these previous works about Fy og Bi have dealt with ideology and class representation on the same scale or with the same focus as this thesis. This thesis is positioning itself as doing a systematic and deep analysis of the ideological dimensions of the available Fy og Bi films. Some of the previous works have mentioned ideology but not on a very deep level and not with any specific examples or illustration from the films of what it means when Fy og Bi challenge the bourgeoisie.

⁴⁶ Peter Schepelern (ed.), *100 Års Dansk Film*, Copenhagen: Rosinante Forlag A/S 2001, p. 422.

⁴⁷ Anne Bachmann, *Locating inter-Scandinavian silent film culture: connections, contentions, configurations*, Diss., Stockholms universitet 2013, p. 192-193.

⁴⁸ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 19.

⁴⁹ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 1980, p. 21.

⁵⁰ Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 41.

Slapstick Comedy

In the introduction of the book *Slapstick Comedy* edited by Tom Paulus and Rob King, the slapstick genre's neglect in the mainstream historiography of American films is discussed. It is described how slapstick films were despised by the intelligentsia. Later, Charlie Chaplin's films had been singled out for praise, with the result that the rest of the slapstick films fell into "critical obsolescence."⁵¹

In *Hokum! The Early Sound Slapstick Short and Depression-Era Mass Culture*, Rob King writes about how there have existed different types of narratives within film history about silent slapstick films. For example, for a long time there seems to have been a form of consensus among historians that silent comedy films like the slapsticks, went into a great decline after the advent of sound. No other genre seems to be so divided as the comedy one in this aspect.⁵² The framing of slapstick film history has often been directed at the individual careers of the now canonized comedians of the genre. The official narrative has focused on stars such as Keaton, Langdon and Chaplin. Rob King is "concerned with the ways these explanatory models displace any apprehension of the larger province of slapstick filmmaking within which these comedians worked: a historiography oriented around the great silent-era clowns inevitably collapses into the irreducible singularities of so many careers."⁵³

There has been two different ways to view slapstick films cultural image. One is to see slapstick films as "opposed to established values and hierarchies of taste. The other way is to view the films from a nostalgic perspective, two seemingly paradoxical stances.⁵⁴ In the book *Slapstick Comedy*, both viewpoints are presented, and a suggestion of a possible synthesis is put forward by referring to Fredric Jameson and his idea about *ideology of form*. Jameson states that "varied sign system which coexist in a given artistic process *as well as* in its general social formation."⁵⁵ Regarding the historiographical framework about early North American cinema, film historian Peter Krämer noted in 1988 that it was largely focused on films within the dramatic genre.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Tom Paulus & Rob King, Introduction: restoring slapstick to the historiography of American film, in *Slapstick Comedy*, Tom Paulus & Rob King (eds.), 1-17. New York: Routledge 2010, p. 1-2.

⁵² Rob King, *Hokum! The Early Sound Slapstick Short and Depression-Era Mass Culture*, Oakland: University of California Press 2017, p. 3.

⁵³ Ibid, p. 5-6.

⁵⁴ Tom Paulus & Rob King, Introduction: restoring slapstick to the historiography of American film, in *Slapstick Comedy*, Tom Paulus & Rob King (eds.), 1-17. New York: Routledge 2010, p. 2-3.

⁵⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 6.

Muriel Andrin writes how slapstick comedy makes us laugh through the infliction of violence on the actors. Occasionally this violence exceeds its original intention, i.e., to make us laugh and for the audience to laugh at such acts might show a deep repressed wish to bring humiliation to our fellow humans. Slapstick films of the 1910s and 1920s featured vulgarity, cruelty, anarchy, and amorality. Characters and gestures are often shown in an exaggerated way.⁵⁷

In the book *Specters of Slapstick & Silent Film Comediennes*, Maggie Hennefeld describes how many female actresses of the era suffered horrific injuries in the films to make the audience laugh. It was not unusual to see women dunked many times into a pond as a punishment for being active in political activism. These representations reflected the changing social fabric of the early 1900s in relation to women's role in the society. Seeing women get beaten caused discomfort with viewers, therefore the violence against women in the films were usually different from the one against men. When men would get hit on the head with something or run over by a car, the women would disappear, to later reappear, or for example get their bodies miniaturized.⁵⁸

Christopher Beach writes that the divisions of the classes in silent comedies mostly consisted of "crude dichotomies." The characters played by for example Mack Sennett and Chaplin are said to represent typical working-class situations with a high recognition rate for the audience. This gave the filmmakers opportunities to spoof middle-class behavioral standards. Beach writes about how The Tramp in Chaplin's films is a universally recognized icon of what it means to be of lower-class status. The Tramp did in this way not represent a specific person but more of an established stock figure. The Tramp was already a common stock figure in the realm of American popular culture at the time, before Chaplin created his version.⁵⁹

Rob King's book *The Fun Factory: The Keystone Film Company and the Emergence of Mass Culture* studies the Keystone Film Company specifically. Keystone is today mostly remembered for their comedies films that marked the beginning of a so called "golden age" of the American comedy film. In the book, King investigates the transformation that occurred

⁵⁷ Muriel Andrin, Back to the "slap": slapstick's hyperbolic gesture and the rhetoric of violence, in *Slapstick Comedy*, Tom Paulus & Rob King (eds.), 226-235. New York: Routledge 2010, p. 227.

⁵⁸ Maggie Hennefeld, *Specters of Slapstick & Silent Film Comediennes*, New York: Columbia University Press 2018, p. 1-2.

⁵⁹ Christopher Beach, *Class, Language, And American Film Comedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 1.

during the era regarding social class and its relationship to culture.⁶⁰ King describes how Chaplin's Tramp character in the company's films mostly was based on class conflict.⁶¹

King asks which kind of ideological attitudes that are expressed in the Keystone films and to whom the messages were addressed? In the Keystone films, the world was divided between "tramps and millionaires." This fitted well into the working-class culture of the time, which had roots going back further in time.⁶² The representation of class as consisting of tramps and millionaires was not a "realist" one, rather it was a form of allegory, in which the workers feelings of disenfranchisement in the class society were visualized.⁶³

King describes how, in the films of Charles Murray, his character finds himself required to interact with the rich people, for example when he works as a janitor in a hotel and is set to clean up the rooms that they used as seen in *Hogan's Mussy Job* (1915). These interactions reflect fantasies about social mobility.⁶⁴ During episodes of temporary class mobility, Murray then takes revenge on the rich by breaking their social codes (for example spraying fancy diner guests with champagne). Each time there is an intrusion in the rich people's world in Murray's films, the answer in the end would be expulsion and punishment.⁶⁵

It was not uncommon to have different interpretation of the Keystone films. Some critics of the era saw the films as a critique of the class privilege in the society. More conservative commentators also celebrated the films and pointed to the ridiculous behavior of the working class.⁶⁶ The Keystone films begun to transcend what had earlier been a class-based consumption of culture, to being viewed by people from more classes than just the working-class.⁶⁷

Burke Hilsabeck's recent book *The Slapstick Camera: Hollywood and the Comedy of Self-Reference* explores self-reflexivity in slapstick film comedies, a topic we will have reasons to return to in the analysis of *Filmens Helte* (1928).

The knowledge from this previous research will serve as a framework in which my own analysis is situated within. The way the films and material are approached and the subsequent readings

⁶⁰ Rob King, *The Fun Factory: The Keystone Film Company and the Emergence of Mass Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2009, p. 8.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 66.

⁶² Ibid, p. 97.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 98.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 99.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 100.

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 101.

⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 102.

that the authors do of the slapstick films they have watched is of relevance. Especially the mentions of class and the way the topic is handled is of interest.

Film Historiographical Significance

In *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, film historiography is defined as “The study of film and cinema in the past, using historical methods: the main approaches attempt to account for the ways in which cinema as art, technology, economic institution, and social practice has changed over time.”

Film historiography can be divided into four main approaches with several subcategories. There is the aesthetic approach (focusing on cinema as art), the technological approach, the economic approach and lastly a broad social approach. The last approach investigates how cinema has interacted with different political, social, and cultural contexts. In this approach, it is considered what attitudes and social values that are embedded in the films. Did the film represent governmental policy or who made the film and why? It is also studied how the current social trends are represented in the films.

It is possible to combine the different approaches for film historians. In the early days of film historical writing, the books mostly took a “Great Men” approach. Examples includes *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture* published in 1926 and written by Terry Ramsaye and *History of the American Film Industry From Its Beginnings to 1931* published in 1931 and written by Benjamin Hampton. These two books put their focus on filmmakers and inventors, mostly from an aesthetic perspective. Two books, Paul Rotha’s *The Film Till Now* (1930) and *History of the Film* (1938) by Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach, are notable due to their inclusions of examples outside of Hollywood, although they still mostly kept a biographical and aesthetical perspective.⁶⁸

Beginning in the 1960s, newer approaches has been developed. Robert Sklar and Jeffrey Richards insisted that film texts should be analyzed in their proper economic and social context and that film history should be based on empirical principles. This approach is often referred to as “New Film History.”⁶⁹

In the article ”The New Film History” from 1986 Thomas Elsaesser discusses the concept of the term of the title. Elsaesser writes: “Two types of pressure have produced the New Film

⁶⁸ Annette Kuhn & Guy Westwell, *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012, p. 164.

⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 164-165.

History: a polemical dissatisfaction with the surveys and overviews, the tales of pioneers and adventurers that for too long passed as film histories; and sober arguments among professionals now that, thanks to preservation and restoration projects by the world's archives, much more material has become available, for instance on the early silent period.”⁷⁰

In the article “The New Film History as Media Archaeology” from 2004, Thomas Elsaesser takes his starting point in the New Film history and then introduces what he calls “a new historiographical model”, in this case something he calls “Media Archaeology.” Elsaesser did this to re-map the vast field of the audio-visual environment.⁷¹

The paradigm shift that was New Film History could be traced to its characteristics in the 1980s. It was not about the history of film anymore, but the history of cinema. The concept brought interest to

”[...]the institutional emergence and internal organization of the different branches of the film industry; with the age, class, and gender demographics of the audience; with the screenplay as blueprint for production schedules and the division of labor; with the physical spaces of spectatorship, i.e., cinema architecture; but also with the locating of cinemas in residential or commercial neighborhoods; and with much else besides.”⁷²

This thesis is positioned in relation to the New Film History in several ways. This thesis, as is the case with lots of research withing New Film History, is connected to what is happening in the world of film archives. In this case, the novelty lies in that the Danish Film Institute recently digitalized these three silent Fy og Bi films. This is what make the premise of the thesis possible.

Another aspect of how this thesis connects to New Film History is that it deals with a relatively forgotten part of film history, namely Fy og Bi. Despite these connections, this thesis is relatively film-centric, compared to what is being discussed in the context of the New Film Historical paradigm. In many ways this thesis is more traditional within the realm of film and

⁷⁰ Thomas Elsaesser, The New Film History, *Sight and Sound*, vol. 55, issue 4, 1986: 246-251, p. 246.

⁷¹ Thomas Elsaesser, The New Film History as Media Archaeology, *Cinemas Revue d'études cinématographiques Journal of Film Studies*, vol. 14, issue 2-3, 2004: 75-117, p. 75.

⁷² Thomas Elsaesser, Is Nothing New? Turn-of-the-Century Epistemes in Film History, in *A Companion to Early Cinema*, Andre Gaudreault, Nicolas Dulac & Santiago Hidalgo (eds.), 587-609. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell 2012, p. 601.

media studies, since films does not need to be the main focus within New Film History, but rather other cinematic aspects such as cinema architecture as described by Thomas Elsaesser.⁷³

This thesis aims to add pieces of the puzzle to the understanding of Fy og Bi and slapstick comedy films of the period. The thesis aspires to position itself as form of investigation of the ideological discourse of the era. This thesis fits into the broadly social approach to historiography, with its investigations and analysis of class representations and ideology. It is especially important to bring renewed attention to the Fy og Bi films, due to the neglect that the slapstick genre has experienced traditionally. As Tom Paulus and Rob King writes, the genre was despised by the intelligentsia in America and only later was Charlie Chaplin praised.⁷⁴ To get the opportunity to reintroduce Fy og Bi into the film historiographical discourse about slapstick films has both a value for the studies on the genre and is of significance for further studies on the comedic couple and Danish silent film in general.

3. Material

The primary material for this thesis consists of the films *Tyvepak* (1921), *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927) and *Filmens Helte* (1928).

The selection of this material has its reasons. One of the reasons is that there are not too many Fy og Bi films available to the public at the moment. The reasoning is that it is better to study what is available, than what is not. Since the films that are studied cover several years, it is possible to get a sufficient overview of the developments during the silent era.

However, with considerations for the format of the master thesis, it has been decided to only include the available silent films and not the ones with sound. This will create a greater coherence. In the authors view, it is preferable to study the silent films more in depth, than study all the available films but on a shallower level. By only focusing on the three silent films, it opens for a more thorough analysis of these.

The Danish Film Institute have, at the time of the writing of this thesis, three Fy og Bi silent films available for streaming on their website. These are *Tyvepak* (1921), *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927) and *Filmens Helte* (1928). They are available in HD quality, being recently restored.

⁷³ Thomas Elsaesser, Is Nothing New? Turn-of-the-Century Epistemes in Film History, in *A Companion to Early Cinema*, Andre Gaudreault, Nicolas Dulac & Santiago Hidalgo (eds.), 587-609. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell 2012, p. 601.

⁷⁴ Tom Paulus & Rob King, Introduction: restoring slapstick to the historiography of American film, in *Slapstick Comedy*, Tom Paulus & Rob King (eds.), 1-17. New York: Routledge 2010, p. 1-2.

This is part of the project to digitalize all surviving Danish silent films, which consist of approximately 415 titles.⁷⁵ Hopefully, there will be many more surviving Fy og Bi films which will be restored and preserved, and then analyzed and written about, as well as being enjoyed by cinephiles.

The version of the film *Tyvepak* (1921) that is preserved is from the original Swedish version. This version of the film was called *Landsvägsriddare*. The short film enjoyed great commercial success upon its release.⁷⁶

The films *Han Hun og Hamlet* (1932), *Med Fuld Musik* (1933), *I De Gode, Gamle Dage* (1940) and *Calle og Palle* (1948) have all been released on DVD in Denmark. *Blinde Passagiere* (1936) and *Mädchenräuber* (1936) have both been released on VHS. There is also a DVD collection in Germany that consists of 7 DVDs. Unfortunately, the Fy og Bi bits are cut out of the context of their original films and then there is a German dubbing which serves as narration.

What is available on the German DVDs is re-edited and shortened, with a sound narration even on top of the silent clips. Since the original context is lost, any potential to analyze the ideology on a deeper level would be difficult. It could be said that some of the gags could be scrutinized, but I have chosen against this, because firstly there are plenty of gags in the films that are available in something which is much closer to their original presentation. *Bleka Greven* (1937), although to this authors knowledge not available in any home video format, is regularly broadcasted on Swedish television. In 2021, the Swedish Fy og Bi film have already been broadcasted 9 times on the TV-channel TV4 Guld.⁷⁷

It is important to remember that all these versions might not reflect all of which were presented to the audience at the time of the release. I argue that despite that the silent versions might possibly be missing some material, they are still fairly complete and is an adequate representation and retains the possibilities for analysis.

It would be of great interest to study for example the comic books of Fy og Bi, but then there would be a risk of this paper becoming too unfocused. It would also be possible to study the films that are not available through for example stills and descriptions. For this thesis, I have

⁷⁵ The Editors, Hele den danske stumfilmars digitaliseres og formidles, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, 2018-12-03, <https://www.dfi.dk/nyheder/hele-den-danske-stumfilmars-digitaliseres-og-formidles> (Accessed 2021-03-29).

⁷⁶ Det Danske Filminstitut, Tyvepak, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/tyvepak-0> (Accessed 2021-05-10).

⁷⁷ Svensk Mediedatabas, Bleka Greven, *Svensk Mediedatabas*, No date <https://smdb.kb.se/catalog/search?q=bleka+greven&sort=NEWEST> (Accessed 2021-05-10).

chosen not to do so, partly because the material would be too wide, and because I want to say more specific things about what I do know about the films. Especially since some of the sources for the films have tended to have some problems with the reliability.

There are also practical reasons for not visiting archives to do more archival research during the period of working with this thesis. The ongoing pandemic has made it extremely difficult and even impossible to get access to the archives. If that were not the case, visiting the archives to get as much information as possible would have been considered both desirable and realistic.

4. Method

The chosen method for this thesis is the textual analysis. This method will work well together with the theoretical framework. Seeing the films as “texts” to be read, will allow them to be analyzed in ways that would be difficult otherwise.

Textual analysis can be traced back to biblical exegesis and later philology as well as hermeneutics from the 19th century. The French method of close reading (*explication de texte*) is also a predecessor. More recent developments and closer relative to the current method is for example Umberto Eco’s contribution about the study of “open work”. Other inspirations were Jacques Derrida and his work regarding dissemination and difference.⁷⁸ The textual analysis is a way of treating film as a medium seriously. It is different from, for example, journalism writing about film, only viewing the films as entertainment and nothing more. To view a film as a form of text, is not to view films as a conceptualization of reality, but rather, to view it as an artifact, which in turn is a form of construct.⁷⁹

There is a distinction between literary criticism and film analysis in that the former has developed over centuries of contemplation while the latter is a more recent phenomenon. Literature criticism and its subject matter, the literature, share the same kind of medium in relation to words. In this respect, film does not. Film consists of dialogue, noise, music, images, and written materials, while the film analysis consists of words. There is therefore a risk that the film “escapes” attempts to describe the medium with words. Movement is specific to the medium of film, which therefore is lost when you try to seize it. With this background, the best

⁷⁸ Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing 2000, p. 185.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 186.

the film analyst can do is to make the best try to “compete with the object he or she is attempting to understand.”⁸⁰

Textual analysts as Michel Marie and Marie-Claire Ropars developed ambitious systems for how and what to register when doing a reading of a film. This system included, among other aspects, camera movements and off-screen sound. When this kind of attention to detail was given, it would have been impossible to say everything about a specific film. Marie-Claire Ropars wrote 40 pages about the first shots in *Oktyabr* (1927) and *Antonio das Mortes* (1969). Thierry Kuntzel wrote long analyses of *ouverture* parts from films such as *The Most Dangerous Game* (1932). It is possible to do a textual analysis of a single image, for example of the MGM logo. Textual analysis can be applied to the whole oeuvre of a filmmaker or even many different films, for example as Bordwell, Staiger, and Thomson did on the classical Hollywood cinema.⁸¹

In *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, textual analysis is described as “The systematic activity of breaking a film down into its constituent formal elements, especially those of narrative and style.” Textual analysis is an especially useful tool when doing an ideological interpretation of film. It could be claimed, as Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell does in 2012 in *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, that textual analysis is the preferred method used in film studies, at the time of the writing of the book, at least in its wider definition, referring “any more-or-less detailed breakdown or close reading of a film.”⁸²

One of the challenges that the method of textual analysis faces in this thesis is the question of how the texts i.e., the films will be interpreted. This will be handled by contextualizing the films and the period depicted in them, when deemed necessary.

5. Theoretical Framework

Ideological criticism

The theoretical framework which has been chosen for this thesis is the one based on the film theory of ideological criticism, also called critique of ideology.

In 1969, an important editorial was published in the French cinema journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*. The title was “Cinema/Ideology/Criticism”. The context is important for this article. It was

⁸⁰ Robert Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction*, Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing 2000, p. 187.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 190.

⁸² Annette Kuhn & Guy Westwell, *A Dictionary of Film Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2012, p. 425.

published relatively shortly after the worker and student uprising of May 1968 in France. These protests had nearly brought an end to the government of the time. After the events of May 1968, the political radicalism was increased. The events of the time came to have a substantial influence on the intellectual activity among the academia and especially so in film circles.

The editorial from 1969 was translated to English and published in *Screen* in 1971. *Screen* was at the time of the leading British journals with a strong interest in French political culture. The article marked the French journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s turn and commitment to the more radical political environment. Earlier, the journal had been the base of André Bazin (1918-58). Bazin was one of the founding fathers of French film culture. He was committed to the movement of realism, which made him close to being disowned by the new young radicals that took over the journal.

The essay mentions Bazin and gives him credit for focusing on the specificity involved in the film practice. The authors write about their inspiration from Christian Metz, who's 1960s work viewed films with a semiotical lens.⁸³

During the 19th century, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels defined ideology as “a process that conceals the contradictions inherent in capitalism.” The meaning was that capitalism as a system both alienate and exploits the working class. The function of ideology in this system would be to conceal this ongoing process of exploitation. Marx and Engels definition of ideology was negative. During the 20th century, theorists such as Gramsci defined ideology as something necessary, as something that is formative for an individual's consciousness. This theory of ideology was a positive one. The positive definition gives lesser weight to the function of ideology i.e., to conceal the inherent contradictions within the capitalistic system from the people.

Louis Althusser developed both a positive theory, which concerned ideologies in general, and a negative theory dealing with specific ideologies. Two of Althusser's most famous formulations was “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” and also “Ideology interpellates individuals to their real conditions of existence.” The first formulation gives support to a negative definition of ideology. In this quotation, it can be inferred that there is some form of opposition between what is “imaginary” and what is “real.” The quote suggests that the imaginary is false and a form of distorted

⁸³ Edward Branigan & Warren Buckland (eds.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory*, London: Routledge 2014, p. 242.

thought. The real therefore exists outside of what constitutes the imaginary. In the second quotation, it is indicated that individuals exist outside of ideology, and before it. The ideology then represents a distorted subjectivity and false self-image. Althusser further claimed that “ideology is eternal.” What Althusser meant was that individuals always will adopt some form of subjective position and that “the imaginary relation is constant.”⁸⁴

Comolli and Narboni, in *Cahiers*, wrote about that there was a distinction between films that merely reproduced the dominant ideology in society and the ones that challenged this ideology in some way. They also ask the question of what film really is? In their definition, film is a form of industrial product, which in turn is sold for profit, and is also an ideological vehicle. Even if all films are ideological in some way, they do not display or embrace the same ideologies. The ideological criticism aims to identify what kind of politics that are present in a specific film. Comolli and Narboni has a view that underscored that there exists a dialectical relation between what is the “real” world and what is a depiction of the same. What we see in a film is an “ideological refraction of it.” Therefore, cinema, is not representing what is “real” in the world, rather it is reproducing the ideological constitutions in it.⁸⁵

Representation

Classes, things, relationships, and experiences are examples of what can be depicted in films and thus constitutes a form of representation. The depictions can be found in among others, images, signs, narratives, and models. The notion that representation exists, that something which we see ourselves, in turn can mean something else than the exact thing we see, implicates that it is not merely possible to copy the world we live in. This does not mean that a form of material reality does not exist outside of our consciousnesses, but it does mean that any meaningful interpretation of that reality is formed and communicated through the representations, which is what allows us to interact with the reality. A film is not solely a material object that exists in a physical sense, it also exists in the ways it is experienced as a part of the culture. Representation in a film is present on all the levels of it, i.e., the sound and the image. The way the film is arranged, represents the world and the people in it.⁸⁶

Philosopher Noël Carroll makes a distinction which is threefold regarding representation. It is the physical portrayal, the depiction, and the nominal portrayal. These categories can in turn be

⁸⁴ Edward Branigan & Warren Buckland (eds.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory*, London: Routledge 2014, p. 112.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 243.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 402.

transferred into the categories developed by the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. The physical portrayal then is called the indexical, the depiction is called the iconic and the nominal portrayal is called the symbolic. Further levels than these are needed to fully comprehend what is represented. In these further levels, it is understood that films represent a specific historical context and concerns and ideologies of the period. Films also represent the ethical and aesthetic values.⁸⁷

Films are possible to study in terms of their ideological representations. Films represents both social relationships and different psychological features. Films usually tells stories about different people that have certain values that they follow and ideas that they have. The ending of a film can be interpreted in different ways. Usually, the ending will be seen as a comment on what the makers of the film thought was a “correct moral stance.” It is also possible for the filmmakers to use a conventional narrative to convey different forms of ideologies.⁸⁸

Héctor Rodríguez gives an example in *Film Theory and Philosophy* on how a critique of ideology in a film could look like. He describes the ideology of the film *The Wind and the Lion* (1975). Rodríguez analyses both details of the film but also makes general claims about it. He writes, among other things that “The film defends a social picture according to which history is made by great patriarchs who, having overcome the widespread human fear of uncertainty and risk, undertake impetuously virile and dangerous actions.”⁸⁹

Fredric Jameson gives an example of how to analyses the class structure in films with an example from *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975). Jameson identifies three different tiers of classes in the film. These are what he calls the “petty bourgeoisie”, “the national bourgeoisies of the Third World”, and lastly the “multinational capitalism into which the older ruling classes of our world have evolved [...]”.⁹⁰

Carnavalesque

⁸⁷ Ibid, p 405.

⁸⁸ Edward Branigan & Warren Buckland (eds.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory*, London: Routledge 2014, p. 406-407.

⁸⁹ Héctor Rodríguez, Ideology and film culture, in *Film Theory and Philosophy*, Richard Allen & Murray Smith (eds.), 260-281. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997, p. 277.

⁹⁰ Fredric Jameson, From Class and Allegory in Contemporary Mass Culture: *Dog Day Afternoon* as a Political Film, in *Contemporary Film Theory*, Antony Easthope (ed.), 95-107. London: Longman 1993, p. 102-103.

Mikhail Bakhtin wrote about the Carnavalesque in the book *Rabelais and His World* (1968). The carnival as the heart of folk culture can be traced back to the Roman and Greek empires. During the carnival, the normal conventions that govern people's behavior are ignored and other types of "excessive behavior" is in flavor. Bakhtin's thoughts on the carnival are that law and order are lifted together with other rules and social restrictions. In the carnival, the inequality and class differences are temporary suspended. In the carnival, both rich and poor people meet. In the carnival, people will celebrate "obscenities" and laud blasphemy. Everyday language is used frequently, as well as plenty of double entendres. The carnival brings attention to laughing and parody. When something can be said to be Carnavalesque, something often focuses on something that is grotesque, for example various bodily functions as well as sexual innuendo.⁹¹ The type of temporary suspension that occurred during carnivals in the medieval times remained impossible in the everyday life. The nature of the carnival, where hierarchies were temporary suspended, created new forms of expression, such as certain gestures and speech.⁹²

6. Historical Background: Political and Economic Developments in Denmark in the Late 19th and Early 20th Century

Around 1870, the Danish export of grain started to become unprofitable. This was due to increased competition that came from the Russian and American grain. Sweden chose a protectionist tactic to handle the competition. Denmark chose to adapt their agricultural industry to the new market structure. During this period, the Danish agriculture focused their production on pork, egg, and butter. Denmark mainly exported the products to Britain during this period.

The Danish agricultural industry had to conduct an intensive modernization to handle the switch from grain, which turned out to be expensive. This forced the former subsistence economy of the villages to eventually be replaced by a monetary-based system. Because of this, the old peasant culture was dissolved.

In the beginning it was the landowners that lead the work towards modernization, but during the end of the 1800s, they largely cooperated with the farmers. The Danish cooperative movement was very successful and cooperative slaughterhouses and dairies were formed as

⁹¹ Ruth Doughty & Christine Etherington-Wright, *Understanding Film Theory*, 2nd edition, London: Palgrave Macmillan 2018, p. 113-114.

⁹² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1984, p. 10.

well as purchasing associations. Due to this success, the export of Danish agricultural products multiplied during the years 1875-1914.

Due to the extreme rationalization of the agricultural industry of the period, many of the agricultural workers found themselves out of work. Many of those workers emigrated to the United States. Around 300 000 people from Denmark emigrated to the United States, which was much less than emigrated from Sweden and Norway. The other Danish unemployed workers that stayed at home was mostly employed in the strongly expanding industry sector.

In 1857, the freedom of trade in Denmark was introduced. The same year, Privatbanken was established which facilitated the supply of capital. During the 1850- and 1860s the railroads and harbors were expanded. These factors contributed to the rapid industrialization which Denmark experienced during the period. There was also a great urbanization in the process in the Danish society at the time. Between the years 1870 and 1901 the proportion of people in Denmark that lived in the cities increased from 26 to 44 percent.

In 1864 due to the defeat in the Second Schleswig War, the national-liberal government fell. The national-liberals became Højre, which was dominated by higher ranking civil servants and landowners. In the year 1866 there was a constitutional revision that gave the elite in the society a comfortable representation in the Danish Landstinget (the upper house of the Danish parliament). Farmers and radical intellectuals organized themselves in Venstre the year 1870. Their foremost demands were the so called folketingsparlamentarism and a democratic election.

Venstre were challenged by the conservative Council President of Denmark, Jacob Brønnum Scavenius Estrup. He was supported by the landowners in the country. Estrup argued that the parliamentarism was unconstitutional. In 1872, Venstre gained a majority in Folketinget (The Danish Parliament). Estrup therefore ruled through several provisional finance laws. This was done with the help of an emergency clause that existed in the constitution. As a response to this, Venstre said no to every important proposition from the government. This was called visnepolitiken. In other words, the situation was a political stalemate.

The Danish labor movement made lots of advances during the same time. Louis Pio founded a social democratic party in the year 1871. The party was represented in Folketinget from 1884. The goal of the party was socialistic in nature. The party wanted the workers to control the means of production. In relation to the party's tactics to achieve its goals, it was reformistic. In the 1870s, the first unions were created. In 1898, De samvirkende Fagforbund was formed. In 1898 the Arbejdsgiverforeningen was also formed. In 1899, the latter recognized the former as

a partner to negotiate with. This agreement was the first step into an integration of the labor movement in the Danish capitalistic society. Within the social democratic party, there were a lot of opposition to this integration. The party had a principle until 1916, that they would not be a part of any government without having a majority in Folketinget.⁹³

To try to reverse the growing number of people moving from the countryside, there were new laws accepted in 1919 that divided many of the large landowner's land, and instead created 10 000 smaller ones. The political climate of the 1920s in Denmark was one of open class conflict. The industry, the businesses, and the rich farmers was represented by Venstre and Det Konservative Folkeparti (earlier known as Højre). Det Radikale Venstre and The Social Democrats represented the working class.⁹⁴

During the First World War, regulations on the export of food was introduced in Denmark. During December 1916, sugar was rationed. Each person was allowed half a kilo per week. In 1917, when unrestricted submarine warfare begun, the Danish shipping industry suffered big losses. The production of butter, meat, and milk went down. The availability of fodder became scarce. There were also shortages of margarin, coal, fuel, and kerosene. In April 1918, rationing of milk and bread begun. In 1915 on June the 5th, the women in Denmark got the right to vote and be elected to political positions.⁹⁵

The post-war economic crisis affected Denmark. In 1922 Landmandsbanken, a large bank in Denmark, crashed. In the government, the question of the eight-hour workday was debated. In the election of 1924, the Social Democrats won with 55 mandates while Venstre got 28. The Conservatives got 28 and the Radicals 20. The Germans in Slesvig got one mandate. The outcome led to the first Social Democratic government in Denmark. It was led by Thorvald Stauning.⁹⁶ In 1925, there was a large lockout where the farmers demanded *i.a.*, lower taxes.⁹⁷

The Social Democrats, under Thorvald Stauning governed Denmark during the years 1924-26 which was the first time for the Social Democrats. The rest of the 1920s, Denmark was governed by Venstre. The economical politics of the 1920s in Denmark was marked by a liberal approach.

⁹³ Lars-Arne Norborg, Jordbruksomläggning, industrialisering, demokratisk genombrott (1864-1914), *Nationalencyklopedin*, No date
<https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/danmark/historia/jordbruksoml%C3%A4ggnig-industrialisering-demokratisk-genombrott-1864-1914> (Accessed 2021-05-17).

⁹⁴ Lars-Arne Norborg, Mellankrigstiden (1920-39), *Nationalencyklopedin*,
<https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/danmark/historia/mellankrigstiden-1920-39>
(Accessed 2021-05-18).

⁹⁵ Alf Henrikson, *Dansk Historia II*, Stockholm: Bonnier 1989, p. 715-716.

⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 723.

⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 724.

Freedom of trade, tax cuts, austerity and free trade was some of the policies introduced. Wage workers, the military as well as farmers with loans were negatively affected.⁹⁸

7. Film Historical Background: Danish Silent Film Developments

The roots of modern cinema and film can be traced far back in Denmark. The Danish Thomas Rasmussen Walgensten (1627-81) was the first person to commercially make use of the so called *laterna magica*, even if the Dutch Christian Huygens (1629-95) are credited with the invention. In 1896, the first film was shown in Denmark. Already in 1897, the first Danish films were made, presumably by Peter Elfelt. In 1904, the first cinemas started to operate. In 1906, Nordisk Film Kompagni was founded. Nordisk Film Kompagni faced competition in the domestic market from 1909 by the Aarhus based film company Fotorama. The fast growth of the cinema market in Denmark attracted the governments attention and in 1907, film had to abide local censorship.⁹⁹

The most successful film from Nordisk Film Kompagni during the early 1900s was *Løvejagten* (1907). It was a successor to *Isbjørnejagten* (1907), where a real polar bear was killed. For *Løvejagten* (1907, two lions where bought. These two lions where then shot by hunters for the film.¹⁰⁰

The years from 1910 was the heyday for Danish silent film. The outbreak of the First World War had catastrophic consequences for the Danish film industry. The export of films closed, and the inflow of money stopped. After the end of the war, it was too much competition from American films which stopped Danish films from regaining their earlier position.¹⁰¹ The only real international success of Danish films of the 1920s was *Fy og Bi*.¹⁰²

To better understand the historical context that the films were shown in, the premiere of a *Fy og Bi* film is described. By giving a detailed description of the viewing context it will give an insight to the time through the eyes of the audience. It shows how viewing film was a part of

⁹⁸ Lars-Arne Norborg, Mellankrigstiden (1920-39), *Nationalencyklopedin*, <https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/danmark/historia/mellankrigstiden-1920-39> (Accessed 2021-05-18).

⁹⁹ Casper Tybjerg, 1896-1909: Teltholdernes verdensteater, in *100 Års Dansk Film*, Peter Schepelern (ed.), 13-28. Copenhagen: Rosinante Forlag A/S 2001, p. 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 22.

¹⁰¹ Casper Tybjerg, 1910-19: Spekulanter og himmelstormere, in *100 Års Dansk Film*, Peter Schepelern (ed.), 29-62. Copenhagen: Rosinante Forlag A/S 2001, p. 29.

¹⁰² Casper Tybjerg, 1920-29: Et lille lands vagabonder, in *100 Års Dansk Film*, Peter Schepelern (ed.), 63-89. Copenhagen: Rosinante Forlag A/S 2001, p. 63.

the audience normal life and how the film viewing experience was connected to other expressions of commercial and cultural nature.

Film, Flirt og Forlovelse (1921) premiered in Copenhagen on the 17th of October of that year. People were of course allowed to smoke in the theater. When the lights were dampened inside the theatre, the cigarette sellers sold their last packages. Before the film begun, there were advertisement being shown. One of the advertisements were for corsets, with the result that some young men in the audience would whistle at what they saw. There was also advertisement for local restaurants and new cars. After the advertisement there was a cartoon short film with The Katzenjammer Kids that was shown. After all the audience members were back from the visit to the lavatories, the main attraction, the Fy og Bi film *Film, Flirt og Forlovelse* (1921), could begin.¹⁰³

8. Findings and Analysis

8.1 Analysis of *Tyvepak* (1921)

Story Synopsis

The basic story of the short film *Tyvepak* (1921) is relatively simple and straightforward. The runtime is 30 minutes. Mr. Blomsen, who is a merchant, spends time in the countryside together with his housekeeper and his two daughters. The daughters run away with two young men that have arrived from Copenhagen. At the same time, Fy og Bi takes advantage of the situation.¹⁰⁴

About the Available Version of the Film

The intertitles of the only available print that is available is written in English. In this version, the title of the film is given as “*Love and Burglars*.” Despite the intertitles being in English, The Danish Film Institute writes that the preserved film material is sourced from the Swedish original version.¹⁰⁵

Two-reeler

¹⁰³ Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ Det Danske Filminstitut, *Love and Burglars*, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/tyvepak-0> (Accessed 2021-05-10).

¹⁰⁵ Det Danske Filminstitut, *Tyvepak*, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/tyvepak-0> (Accessed 2021-05-10).

The short film is introduced as “A “Palladium” Comedy in two parts.” The two parts are referencing the two-reeler, a common format of the era. A reel, in the context of the motion picture industry, is a circular frame, which is specifically designed to hold around 300 meters of 35-milimeter of film. In the early days of the film industry, one reel contained what constituted about 10-15 minutes of running time, depending on the speed of projection. The length of a motion picture was therefore indicated by how many reels the picture had. The films were designated as being a “one-reeler”, “two-reeler”, etc. Today, the word “reel” has a different meaning than it originally had as it been possible to have an entire full-length film on just one reel.¹⁰⁶

Tyvepak (1921)

The first intertitles of the short film read “Mr. Blomsen – a contended being – with a facial area of great attraction.” Below is written the name of the actor that plays Mr. Blomsen, in this case, Swedish actor Axel Hultman. The intertitles are immediately contrasted with a man that appears to have nervous dream, having two flies crawling on his face. When one of the flies’ crawls into his mouth and he unknowingly swallows it, he is awoken from the sleep on the hard surface he had chosen. The man is not shown to possess what would align with any traditional sense of attraction. The ironic intertitle makes fun of the well-dressed man, that sleeps with his tie still on. There is a large newspaper besides him. The film immediately pokes fun at the upper classes in society.

The film cuts to a new scene and the intertitles reads: “...had instructed Miss Madsen, his housekeeper, to keep her weather eye on his frivolous daughters.” The housekeeper is played by Olga Svendsen, which the intertitle also informs the viewer of. Madsen is sewing, while Blomsens’ daughters are reading their books. They are noticing that Miss Madsen appears to be falling asleep. They look at her, laugh and seem exited. Immediately when the housekeeper falls asleep, the two daughters escape.

There is an intertitle that reads “The lads of the village joy-riding.” Two well-dressed young men jumps out of a car with a steaming engine that seemed to have crashed by the side of the road. They have a little picnic by the side of the road, with alcohol bottles. These men are obviously not part of the lower classes of the society, which is indicated by the way they dress and their access to the car. At the same time, the two daughters’ undresses on the beach nearby,

¹⁰⁶ The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, Reel: cinematography, *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/technology/reel-cinematography> (Accessed 2021-05-14).

preparing to swim. The daughters reveal trendy and for the time modern swimsuits. By mistake, when they are hiding because they fear someone is going to see them swimming in the ocean, they hide in the bushes and the “lads” drag them backwards to reveal their faces. It can be interpreted that they do not want to be seen by other people since they would report it to their father, therefore possibly bring shame to him that he does not know how to control his daughters. The two “lads” asks the daughters out for a double date. They agree but emphasize that it must be kept secret from their dad. Their father represents the traditional and unmodern view of the world. He embodies the old land-owning rural upper-class.

Fy og Bi drink from the comically small teacups and have whipped cream all over their faces. This shows their lower-class status. They are not used to drink and eat in an upper-class environment. The housekeeper wakes up, starts screaming and runs away. She wakes up Mr. Blomsen who gets his shotgun. When Mr. Blomsen and the housekeeper arrives outside, Fy og Bi have left and the two daughters are back, unaware of Fy og Bi, wanting to pretend that they have been there all the time to not make their father angry. Mr. Blomsen exclaims “How dare you call my daughters vagabonds!” Here the father becomes frustrated that his daughters would be associated with the lowest class in the society.

When Fy og Bi pass the abandoned picnic casket with food and alcohol, they start to eat and drink immediately. They must escape when the “lads” come to pick it up again. Fy og Bi overhear that they will meet the girls at 6 o’clock. Fy og Bi do not have access to writing equipment, so Fy cuts open the arm of Bi and uses a feather to write in blood on a small piece of paper, which is an old page from a newspaper. They leave the note on a table by the front of Mr. Blomsens’ house. The note says that his house will be broken into at 6 o’clock. The message they write to Mr. Blomsen contains an incorrect spelling of “House.” Mr. Blomsen calls the local magistrate. The magistrate sits by his table, surrounded by geese on the floor inside. He promises to help him prevent the planned burglary. Many local men grab their pitchforks and helps out in the hunt for the thieves. Due to various circumstances, the young men arrive and go through the gate at the announced time of 6 o’clock, and the local men assume the two young “lads” are the burglars.

After the men in the village are busy apprehending the alleged thieves, Fy og Bi break into Mr. Blomsens’ house and begin to collect the valuables, consisting of silverware. In the girls’ room Fy og Bi find a perfume bottle. Bi seems to wonder what it is and Fy sticks it under his nose, before drinking it and immediately spitting it out. The perfume is obviously something which they are not familiar with. This shows the working-class unfamiliarity with such luxuries. The

daughters help to free the innocently accused lads. Fy og Bi flees but are being hunted by men on horses.

In their escape, Fy og Bi steal the lads' car, which Bi drives. The lads stop two men on motorbikes, which leads to a chase sequence. Fy og Bi are captured and as a punishment they are tied to the back of the car and must run after while its driving. The magistrate got the silver back and when they congratulate each other Fy og Bi runs away. They let them go since they already had the silver again. This can be seen as a form of negotiation. Fy og Bi initiated class warfare, just as the labor movement had started organizing themselves, and the upper classes want peace, as long as they do not have to share their resources. For Fy og Bi, they were not the initiators of the conflict. Their actions were merely a reaction to the inequality and the unfairness of the system. The film reflects the current political trends in a creative way.

It is difficult to pinpoint one single ideological motive in the film. On one hand the social order is challenged but later restored. On the other hand, the films ideological positioning is not traditionalist or reactionary, especially regarding the social themes, even if the film takes a somewhat traditional approach to the ownership of property. It can be interpreted that it is understandable that the lower classes steal, and they should be forgiven if they hand the property back. The film therefore both challenge and defend the ruling ideological order of the contemporary society.

Class Indicators

When writing about the class differences and the archetype of the tramp, it is worth remembering that the film is not necessarily meant to be interpreted literally. Just as Rob King writes about the Keystone films, it was not a realistic portrait but rather one which captured the working classes feelings of disenfranchisement in the society and served more as an allegory.¹⁰⁷ Therefore it is important to remember that in this analysis, what is discussed is not the direct connection to the real world, rather it is the embodiment and spirit of the marginalized that is expressed in the film.

Reading and literacy is one of the indicators that the filmmakers use to show the difference between the classes. Mr. Blomsen has his big newspaper, and the daughters are reading books, even though the men are more interesting to them. Mr. Blomsen is never seen actually reading

¹⁰⁷ Rob King, *The Fun Factory: The Keystone Film Company and the Emergence of Mass Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2009, p. 98.

the newspaper either, he seems to always fall asleep while reading it. As a contrast to the presumed interest in reading from the upper classes, Fy og Bi, have problems spelling and expressing themselves through writing. The reading is shown as a class-marker, even if the film does not necessarily show the upper-classes as more enlightened or well-read than Fy og Bi.

When Fy og Bi appear for the first time, it is described that they are “preparing their toilet.” They are shown cleaning themselves in a lake. This shows the separation from the rest of society. The daughters are only introduced as “The frivolous ones” and remain nameless throughout the film. The young men in the film are just described as the “lads.” The same can be said of Fy og Bi, which are merely aliases and not real names. They are alienated from the wider society. For the two daughters, they have the possibility of getting married and acquire what would be considered “respectable” titles, for example being called Mrs. followed by their husband’s name. Their father is not referred to by his first name, instead always as Mr. Blomsen. The Danish Film Institute name both the “lads” and “The frivolous ones” as Inger and Else, and Billy and Willy, respectively.¹⁰⁸ However, these names did not appear onscreen in the version of the short film that is currently available.

Tyvepak (1921) has an obvious class perspective. The film cannot be said to be carnivalesque though, according to the definition outlined earlier. There are no instances where the class differences are temporary suspended. The class divide is always in focus and the sharp differences on full display. Mr. Blomsen represents the upper classes. The family can even afford a housekeeper. Fy og Bi do not really represent the working-class, which is largely absent in the film. In this film, it is not implied that they are working, they are only described as “vagabonds.” Instead, they represent another form of underclass. The ideological implication is that there is not space for the non-working underclass in traditional rural societies. It is also Fy og Bi’s lack of ownership and professional skills that force them into the situation in which they are. With the rationalizing of the economy a specialization would be needed.

Mr Blomsen is the opposite of Fy og Bi. The upper classes are represented as gluttonous, with a gargantuan appetite for resources, both for material ones and knowledge. Fy og Bi on the other hand are both quite skinny in this film, as is not the case when Harald Madsen takes over the role.

¹⁰⁸ Det Danske Filminstitut, Love and Burglars, *Danish Film Institute*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/tyvepak-0> (Accessed 2021-05-10).

Fy og Bi sit down at the table outside with the sleeping housekeeper. They start stuffing their mouths with the cakes on the table. Fy makes a joke when Bi tries to grab the first cake and says, “How dare you?” and slaps his hand, and the second after begin stuffing his own mouth full. The difference between the classes is clear. Fy makes clear for the viewer that they know it is illegal to do what they did, but at the same time, the moral reasons for not stealing weighs lightly compared to their hunger. This kind of hunger is different to the gluttony displayed by the upper classes. The upper classes eating habits are shaped by their longing for more resources and overconsumption, while the lower classes just try to survive.

This longing for food among the lower classes was deeply rooted in a harsh historical reality. The film was released just a couple of years after the ending of the First World War. During the war, food was heavily rationed.¹⁰⁹ This was fresh in the public and audiences mind and therefore resonated with them. In the context of the film, when the vagabonds experienced difficult starvation and hardship during the rationing, the wealthy Mr. Blomsen did not seem to suffer the same unfortunate fate, if one were to view the size of his waist. This ideological expression of the obvious class conflict can be connected to the class conflict of the Danish society of the time. Normally it is the upper classes that created the problem description. In this film’s ideological framework, it is a problematization from mainly the underclass perspective.

The Tramp Archetype, Clothing

Fy og Bi’s clothes are dirty and they remind the audience of the tramp archetype. Fy’s suit is held together by a rope tied around his waist. The clothes are ill fitting on both Fy og Bi. Fy’s moustache is wild and ill-kept. In the scene they appear after their morning routine, Bi climbs over the closed gate into Mr. Blomsens’ property while Fy simply opens it, which is a gag. They are portrayed as whimsical and the film poke fun at their behavior. Apparently, the countryside was trusting, and they did not care about locking the gate. The film shows, in a humoristic way, what the consequence of a too big class difference could be, namely that the poor are forced to steal to feed themselves.

The Tramp was already a universally recognized icon representing people of lower-class status during the period. The Tramp was not necessarily representative of a specific person but was

¹⁰⁹ Alf Henrikson, *Dansk Historia II*, Stockholm: Bonnier 1989, p. 715-716.

more of an established stock figure. The Tramp as a stock figure was already common within the American popular culture during the time.¹¹⁰

Generational Difference

Tyvepak illustrates generational differences. Age is seen as a form of divider. The older generation tries to control the younger. It is noticeable that the older generation is seen sleeping on several occasions, which might be interpreted as a metaphor. It is a gag, but it also has meaning. The older generation seem oblivious to the interests of the younger ones. This shows the contrasts in the Danish society of the time, between the traditional, and the emerging modernity and urbanization that was taking place.

In Denmark, unmarried women gained civil rights in 1857. In the year 1880, married women got the right to take care of what they earned themselves. In the beginning of the 20th century, the marriage laws were reformed. In 1922 Denmark introduced “Law on Formation and Dissolution of Marriage.”¹¹¹ Even though some form of gender equality had an early acceptance in Denmark, the meaning tended to shift over time. What was seen as gender equality in the 1920s was seen as inequality in the 1960s.¹¹²

Anna-Birte Ravn and Bente Rosenbeck writes that “While the marriage reforms of the 1920s stated the equality of the spouses and gave married women individuality and status as economic citizens vis-à-vis the emerging welfare state, Danish tax legislation until 1970 denied married women any citizenship status – indeed, according to the wording of early 20th century tax laws they were either considered to be non-persons (local tax law), or they were treated like children under age (state law).¹¹³

There is an analogy in the film between a property crime and the courting of the two daughters. These two things seem to be in parity with each other. During the time period in which the films were produced and given the relative inequality of the marriage institution as described above, the daughters were considered to have an economical value that was possible to commodify. They were to be traded on the marriage market and not just given away to any man, at least in the father’s view. The ideology expressed in the film is firmly against the traditional view on

¹¹⁰ Christopher Beach, *Class, Language, And American Film Comedy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 1.

¹¹¹ Anna-Birte Ravn & Bente Rosenbeck, Gender and Family Policies in Denmark in the 20th Century, *Institut for Historie, Internationale Studier og Samfundsforhold, Aalborg Universitet, FREIA's tekstserie No. 67* <https://doi.org/10.5278/freia.16110135>, p. 4.

¹¹² Ibid, p. 1.

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 18.

marriage, even though it might not seem very radical in today's modern world, but when it was released, it challenged the older generations.

Mr. Blomsen is the patriarch of the family. In the end of the film, it is implied that there is a form of transactional relationship between the different kinds of assets. It appears that the young people's re-discovery of the lost silver corresponds to a reward. The reward is in the form of access to the daughters. It seems to be implied that there eventually will be a more formalized type of fusion between the sexual and economic capital, i.e., in the form of marriage. This is a part of the difference between generations, which seems to have separate definitions of love and marriage.

The Rurality and the Urbanity

The rural framing in the short film is of interest. At the same time as the film is set in the rural environment, some form of urban modernity seems to be present. We see the geese, but we also see the contrasts of the traditional rural society with the modernity that comes from the city in cars, in the form of modern mechanized vehicles. The women dressed in modern and for the time provocative swimsuits, at least from a traditional perspective. The way the young people date, and the whole dating culture is constructed and represented seems to be rather modern, even if their father shows his strong dislike of the concept. The rural represents the old and traditional, while the urban represents the new, young, and modern. The different kind of needs that the city dwellers and the people in the countryside people have would also shape their ideological perspectives.

This probably reflects the real conflict in Danish society of the time. The urbanization rate had increased rapidly in the prior decades. Between 1870 and 1901, the population in the cities increased their proportional share from 26 percent to 44 percent.¹¹⁴ This was not unique to Denmark. In the year 1800, only 3 percent of the earth's population lived in cities. In 2009, it was over 50 percent that lived in cities. In the cities, there are typical traits that is developed and different from the ones in the countryside. Examples of one of these traits are anonymity.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Lars-Arne Norborg, Jordbruksomläggning, industrialisering, demokratiskt genombrott (1864-1914), *Nationalencyklopedin*, No date <https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/danmark/historia/jordbruksoml%C3%A4ggnings-industrialisering-demokratiskt-genombrott-1864-1914> (Accessed 2021-05-17).

¹¹⁵ Bengt Hubendick, Jan Ovesen, Mats Franzén & Sture Öberg, urbanisering, *Nationalencyklopedin*, No date <https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/urbanisering> (Accessed 2021-05-14).

The ensuing conflict is what the film represents, something that obviously took many decades to adapt to.

8.2 Analysis of *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927)

Vester-Vov-Vov (1927) was one of Fy og Bi's biggest successes.¹¹⁶ The story of the film is much more complex than *Tyvepak* (1921), and not just because the latter is a short film. The ambition is higher, and the scope is wider. The same goes for the representations of class in this film which is a smorgasbord for everyone who is class-conscious.

Story Synopsis

Old Malin (Petrine Sonne) lives on Jutland's west coast with her adopted son Tom (Erling Schroeder). Tom is in love with Karin (Karin Nellesen). Karin's father does not want her to marry Tom. Tom allows Fy og Bi to build a primitive house on the beach. Fy og Bi decide to try to catch fish, but instead lose their boat because of a whale. When a storm rages across the beach, Fy og Bi's house is blown away. The captain of a ship that gets stranded close to Fy og Bi has information that leads to the revelation that Tom is the only son of a wealthy English couple. Fy og Bi help the family to reunite. They also uncover that the alleged ghost hauntings on the beach really are smugglers that was under the leadership of Tom's love rival.¹¹⁷

Vester-Vov-Vov (1927)

The film is described as a comedy with 7 acts. All the intertitles of the available version are written in Swedish. Behind the title of the film there is an image of the characteristic silhouettes of Fy og Bi. Next there is the logo of Palladium inside an earth globe. The silhouettes of Fy og Bi are walking on top of the earth globe. This showcases both their international popularity, but also their international solidarity. This shows class is just not a Danish phenomenon but exists everywhere. This is also showcased in many of their other films where they are not afraid to travel from Denmark. Even in this film, they do travel to England.

The first intertitle reads "Have you seen the roaring North Sea?" The film cuts to the roaring North Sea. The film shows fishermen coming in with their boat from the sea. It shows the difficulty the men have pulling the boat up on the beach. Here the film shows the working class

¹¹⁶ Det Danske Filminstitut, At the North Sea, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/vester-vov-vov> (Accessed 2021-05-14).

¹¹⁷ Det Danske Filminstitut, At the North Sea, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/vester-vov-vov> (Accessed 2021-05-14).

doing extremely tough labor under difficult conditions. The film is obviously respectful and sympathetic to the working-class men.

One of the characters is called “pious” Søren. Søren greets people by saying “Good day, and God’s peace.” The other men in the tavern make fun of him for not drinking and secretly put lots of alcohol in his coffee. This shows that the film is not afraid to poke fun of religion.

The fish merchant in the village wants to marry Karin and has gotten permission to do so from her father, against Karin’s wishes. The film takes a strong stance for the right to choose one’s own partner and not have the father to decide it. The fish merchant is not portrayed as a good man. He pulls Karin’s arm in front of her father, even if she gets away from him. Karin’s dad sees it but ignores it. The theme is recognized and reoccurring from *Tyvepak*. The same problem with the old generation trying to control the young generation is present. Even in this simple fishing village, traditional marriage, and their way of doing things was threatened from the younger generations. This is something which the film portrays in a positive light, namely young peoples’ right to choose their own marriage partner.

Fy og Bi show up for the first time around 10 minutes into the film. They are walking over the landscape, holding hands. Fy og Bi stand and watch the fisherman getting their boat out in the water. Fy og Bi are inspired and try taking their fishing rods out in the high waves with hilarious results. They realize they need a boat to be successful. Their handholding has meaning on many levels. It is a gag but can also be interpreted as meaning that they stand together outside of society. They are outsiders. The ideological implications are the unity of the working class. Even if some groups in the underclass could have shifting interests, unity was emphasized. There exists strength in unity, something which the emerging labor unions in Denmark showed.

Old Malin and Tom live under quite simple conditions. When Fy og Bi want to buy their little boat, they loan it out for free. They also let them use some planks to build a house. Finally, the house is built, although it is not very stable. Bi remarks that he is happy to be “master in his own house.” This represents the solidarity which the working class shows. The working-class and lower classes need to care for each other since no one else did. The question of ownership is also important. Fy og Bi were homeless before. Building their own house could be a way for them to climb the class ladder. This is connected to their wish to become more included in the society.

The fish merchant Strand goes to Fy og Bi’s house and says that he will pay them 50 öre per kg for the fish they catch, something that makes them very happy. They bow in front of the fish

merchant, the innkeeper, and his friend. When the innkeeper has left, the fish merchant tells his friend that he does not like that Fy og Bi have moved into the village community. They agree to try to scare them away. Here, it could be said that the old wealthy merchant upper class in the fishing village was adamant to make changes in their way of life. Outsiders like Fy og Bi were not welcome. The ideological interpretation that can be understood from this, is one which is situated against the old social order of the small villages and the old time thinking that was ingrained in those societies.

Meanwhile Fy og Bi try to calculate how much money they can earn by catching and selling the fish. They set up an unrealistic goal and Bi suggests that they can catch 1000 kilo a day. Fy og Bi's fishing endeavor is not very successful. It ends with them insulting and pushing each other. A whale puts an end to their fish catching dreams by destroying their boat and they note that it was more difficult to fish than they could imagine.

This shows Fy og Bi's lack of professional skills. This is what distinguish and separates Fy og Bi from the working class. The working class is more aware of their skills and the value of the work they are doing. Fy og Bi do not even have the competence to hold a work. Their alienation from the rest of the society is severe.

While it is storming, Fy og Bi's house blows away. When Bi asks "Where is the house?" he asks it not just for himself but for all the people missing their own home. They run after their house which flies away in the wind. With great difficulty, they put their house back again, not without a lot of slapstick comedy. When Fy grabs a rope, Bi asks if he is going to hang himself. Fy responds that the rope is to keep him connected to the house and he had it tied around his waist.

During a dance in the tavern Fy og Bi show up. They stand by the side of the dancing couples and look obviously out of place. They both look uncomfortable in the new social situation with dance and music. One man encourages them to ask some girls up to dance. The girls they ask to dance runs away and laugh at them. Instead, they start to dance with each other. Fy og Bi start dancing a form of wild Charleston dance.¹¹⁸ Their very special kind of dance soon attracts the attention of everyone else who stops dancing and watches the couple. After their success, everyone in the room wants to dance with them and they even get female dance partners. This

¹¹⁸ Casper Tybjerg, 1920-29: Et lille lands vagabonder, in *100 Års Dansk Film*, Peter Schepelern (ed.), 63-89. Copenhagen: Rosinante Forlag A/S 2001, p. 83.

is a carnivalesque moment of the film, where the class and social differences are temporary suspended.

On Old Malins birthday, Fy og Bi are invited. Karin is also there. Her father shows up and says that he has told her before that he has forbidden her from meeting Malin and her son. Malin visits Fy og Bi in their house and tells them about when a ship from England was shipwrecked close to her home. She found Tom outside and took him in.

When there is an English ship that is shipwrecked and in danger of being destroyed by the waves, it engages lots of strong men that with a lot of work manage to save the crew. Fy og Bi want to help but are stopped and can only watch. The crew speaks English, which Fy claims that he and Bi know very well, and the intertitles immediately reveals this not to be the case since English is mixed with, in this case because of the language of the intertitles, Swedish. The skipper explains that this is the second time that he was shipwrecked here and in the same place too, 20 years ago. The skipper notes that a man who drowned with his wife and child looks like Tom. The skipper reveals he was the only survivor in the last shipwreck.

Here the literacy theme reoccurs, same as in *Tyvepak*. Fy og Bi are not literate in a traditional way. Despite this, they have some limited practical knowledge, while bound for comical misunderstandings, their oddness and outsiders help improve the situation. The ideological meaning of this, can be seen as a system in which the traditional upper classes did not have real practical knowledge for the modern world. It is possible to make the interpretation that the upper classes do not need to possess practical knowledge, since they can just exploit and expropriate the lower classes for what they need.

Fy og Bi travel to England and come back by airplane. They have brought back Tom's grandmother and grandfather. She gets afraid that they are going to take Tom from her. Fy og Bi tell them that Tom is the son of the man that drowned 20 years ago. It turns out Tom is the son of an English Baron. When the news is known in the village that he is a noble person and very wealthy, the local people in the tavern seem excited. The theme of class mobility is shown. The emphasizes at this point in the film is that class only occur through blood. If Tom were just a regular young man, it seems very unlikely and even impossible that the situation would have changed for the better.

When Tom announces that he does not wish to travel to England because he wants to stay with Karin and his mother, Bi tries to explain that he will become a millionaire when he arrives in England. Fy og Bi tell Tom's grandparents that, "He vil not – he is en very stor idiot." It is

complicated to communicate with the grandparents since Fy og Bi are the only ones who speak a little bit of English. The grandparents immediately agree to bring Karin to England when they understand what they are saying. Karin's father shows up and explains that Karin can still not marry Tom, since he has promised her to another man and that he is a man who stands by his words. Here the traditional and conservative ideology of the small fishing villages are on display, even if this stance is ultimately criticized in the film.

Fy og Bi go back to their house. They figure out that the fish merchant, who is the intended husband for Karin, is a smuggler, who have conducted the smuggling operation with the smugglers dressed as ghosts. Fy og Bi dress up as ghosts themselves and manage to scare and catch the fish merchant dressed in his ghost attire. One of the smuggling members is pious Sören. This again levels criticism against, not so much old religious ideals, as against the hypocrisy within some religious circles. In the ideology of which the film is situated, the old and religious part of society is criticized. Karin's father announces that he takes back his words and allows Tom to marry his daughter instead. Here he adapts to the modern society something which the films support.

The film ends with Tom, and Karin sailing away with his grandparents. Fy og Bi are onboard as wedding guests. They are dressed in fancy clothes. Both have walking sticks, long coats, and white gloves. The butler on the ship laughs at them. Fy og Bi say, "Do you stand there and laugh at two gentlemen?" He stops laughing and bows down in front of two very serious-looking Fy og Bi. The final shot with people in it is of old Malin in the middle, with Fy og Bi holding one arm each. She is dressed in very extravagant clothes and an enormous hat. We see the boat sail away and then we see the Fy og Bi silhouettes walking, the same as in the beginning with "Slut." signaling the end of the film ("Slut" is Swedish for "The End").

Class indicators

Yet again, literacy and language proficiency are a theme which is handled in the film. Fy og Bi are not well-read, their language skills (however weak they are) they must have acquired not through formal schooling but from practical knowledge. Either the upper classes of the small fishing village lacked this kind of language knowledge, or they had it, but did not wish to help, which would fit into the pattern of the film in which they despised and wanted to get rid of outsiders.

In the film, the wealthy elite used their knowledge, in this case their perceived superiority, to try to trick and humiliate the lower classes. It might also be that the upper classes are not as

knowledgeable as they like to think of themselves. The film's ideological criticism of the society of the time could be read as having the relevance of class is more of a social construct, rather than something which is predetermined by some kind of limiting function inside the individual. As the ending shows, anyone could become a part of the upper class, at least if the circumstances are right. In the film, the circumstances are very specific and probably not translatable to reality. It more represents an idealized daydreaming than an actual possibility.

Another indicator that the filmmakers use to show class differences is the question of ownership or lack thereof, which could also be called the lack of resources. The absence of a house for Fy og Bi combined with the lack of monetary resources to acquire one, makes them inclined to construct one themselves. Due to their lack of skills and training, it is a house of very low quality, however it is better than sleeping outside in the even windier environment. The lack of professional skills has dire material consequences for Fy og Bi.

The ideological expression of the film is one which is against the traditional view on marriage, i.e., that the father decided the marriage partners for the women. The traditional view is contrasted with a modern one. The modern view puts focus on the young people and their right to choose. It is implied that neither Tom nor Karin would be happy in arranged marriages, quite the opposite.

The film's ideological view is that class is not static, on the opposite, it is something open to change, but only under certain specific circumstances. It is possible for the characters to move up in the class hierarchy. The question though, if it is only possible abroad, like in England and that they could not stay in Denmark. It is also notable, that the reason for the movement upwards the class ladder is only made possible by reason of blood or by good deeds. Nevertheless, for Tom's fiancé Karin and his mother Malin, it is possible through their close association with Tom. For Fy og Bi, they move up the class hierarchy due to their good deeds. It seems like they are welcomed by the family. In this way, the film has a contradictory representation on class, in that its foremost is connected to kinship and secondarily to good deeds, but only if the first prerequisite is fulfilled.

It is noticeable that Fy og Bi's clothes change drastically in the ending of the film. The new clothes denote that they are now wealthy and respectable people. This is in sharp contrast to their earlier archetypical tramp outfits. Just as Fy og Bi says to the laughing butler, "Do you stand there and laugh at two gentlemen?" Obviously, Fy og Bi are very special looking and maybe does not yet possess the social capital to immediately convince the urbane butler, but

they are already beginning their path and socialization process into the upper classes and the aristocratic British environment.

Class becomes a form of masquerade in relation to class identification and indicates that it is partially a form of social construction. Class is connected to a distinct position within the economical system in relation to the ownership of the means of production. There are obviously many ways to view the definition of class. One is to view it as a reflection of an economical reality and another way as something that is constructed in a cultural and social game. The film gives mixed messages in its approach to this. In some ways it embraces different positions in relation to the question of whether class is merely a social construction or not.

8.3 Analysis of *Filmens Helte* (1928)

Filmens Helte (1928) is the most complex of the films regarding its narrative structure. The film features self-reflexivity and meta-filmic elements.

It was not uncommon for early filmmakers to parody the film industry. The Meta-cinematic parodies appeared at least as early as 1901 with the short film *The Countryman and the Cinematograph* (1901). Perhaps the story in the short film is apocryphal but nevertheless it is an important mark. It shows a person from the countryside having trouble separating what is projected and what is real, i.e., the fiction from reality. In the film the person from the countryside reacts to a screening of *L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat* (1896).¹¹⁹

Story Synopsis

Sullivan is the head of a big film company. The film company's specialty are western films. The company's great assets are two of their male leading stars which are very popular. It is decided that new actors are needed in the roles and the company immediately starts looking for two new stars. Fy og Bi are cast as the new start in the cowboy film. Despite lots of difficulties along the way, they manage to finish the film.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Simon Joyce, Genre parody and comedic burlesque: Keystone's meta-cinematic satires, in *Slapstick Comedy*, Tom Paulus & Rob King (eds.), 49-66. New York: Routledge 2010, p. 55-56.

¹²⁰ Det Danske Filminstitut, *Filmens Helte*, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/filmens-helte> (Accessed 2021-05-15).

Det Danske Filminstitut, Long and Short, The Film Heroes, *Det Danske Filminstitut*, No date <https://www.dfi.dk/en/viden-om-film/filmdatabasen/film/filmens-helte> (Accessed 2021-05-15).

Filmens Helte (1928)

The film is introduced as a comedy in seven acts. All the intertitles in the film are from the Swedish version. Fy og Bi's characteristic walking silhouettes, with Fy walking towards the right corner and Bi close behind him, appear.

The first intertitle reads "In the lawless Wild West...". The claim of the lawless Wild West has ideological implications. The connotations of something which is called lawless in this context implies that there should be some form of order in a civilized society. The camera focuses on a sleeping man in a tent. A love rival approaches the sleeping man and points a gun at him. The audience is quickly made aware that the Western environment with the tent and the two cowboys in, is a film-within the film. The audience get to see the film production crew and the director interrupting the scene.

In the book *Hollywood by Hollywood: The Backstudio Picture and the Mystique of Making Movies*, Steven Cohan describes how this kind of convention is known as a "reality cut." It means that the audience do not know for certain that the film-within-a film really is a framed film until we are shown the so called "reality" which shows us the information we need to discern what is really going on. A famous example of the use of the reality cut can be found in the film *Sullivan's Travels* (1941), in which a fight on top of a moving train ends with both men falling off into the waters below. The text "The End" appears on a screen which signals that it is a film-inside-a film.¹²¹ Interestingly enough, the manager of the film company in this Fy og Bi film is named Sullivan, which means the later film makes a possible reference to the earlier-mentioned film.

The film cuts to another room where many people are waiting, in hopes of getting picked to be in the film, no matter how small the role. There are many kinds of people there, most of them seem to be from the lower classes of society, judging by the way they are dressed. One woman complains that she only earns 10 kronor a day. Fy og Bi eagerly wait to get picked. Here, the consequences of the capitalist society are shown. The people, in this case many seems to belong to the same fraction of the society as Fy og Bi. The workers are of the temporary kind and get paid very low wages for their work.

¹²¹ Steven Cohan, *Hollywood by Hollywood: The Backstudio Picture and the Mystique of Making Movies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018, p. 37-38.

We get to see the manager of the film company, Sullivan. His office is big and spacious, in sharp contrast with how crowded the room for the hopeful extras was. He has a telephone and large desk. This shows the obvious class differences.

The contrast between the manager and the poor extras can be read as an allegory for the capitalists and their exploitation of the workforce in their eternal hunt for profit. The production needs its workforce, but it seems like almost all the profit has been canalized to the top, i.e., the manager. At the same time, the workers are starving. This scene helps to highlight the economic reality which has been created by capitalisms' ideological apparatus, which is normally hidden.

Both the films, *Filmens Helte*, and the western film which constitutes the film-within-a film, show the normally invisible work done in the final products that are the films. Meta-films like *Filmens Helte* reminds us that a film is a form of product made in the capitalist system, that there is a material reality outside the fantasy world in which the audience loses themselves in imaginary dreams.

When the director of the Western picture comes into Sullivan's office and shows him glowing reviews from their past film, Sullivan compliments the two main actors. The film director, with a monocle and bowtie, thinks the reason for the success of the film lies on him and not the two young male stars. He says that what he did with them he could do with anyone. Sullivan asks, "Do you mean, that you can make a movie star out of anybody?" The director confirms this.

Here, a similar theme regarding the mobility between the class hierarchical ladder is brought up. The film asks each person is a form of *tabula rasa*, which can be shaped and formed in any way deemed necessary or appropriate. It can also be read as a way for a capital intense industry, in this case the film industry, to shape the workers in the way that is needed. The body and mind are merely seen as tools.

Sullivan has a bar table with lots of alcoholic beverages built into the wall. Sullivan also has another wall that can turn and change a bookshelf to reveal a chaise longue instead. The bookshelf here works as a class marker. Just as in the two other films, the upper classes are not seen actually reading their many books, they merely possess them. Especially in an age before Internet, the books contained the knowledge, which due to the cost of the books was kept from people like Fy og Bi. Another obstacle is the education level, something which is connected to their class. Even if Fy og Bi got access to the books, they probably would not be able to make much of the content due to lacking literacy skills. Sullivan has lots of buttons under his desk.

One of these buttons makes the wall open and his secretary glides in with her desk and typewriter. Sullivan smokes cigars.

The two daughters of Sullivan are romantically interested in the two leading men. They go and visit them on the set. They want to keep it secret from their father which the film crew helps them with, even keeping a lookout for their father. When Sullivan finds out that his daughters are interested in the two leading men, he demonstratively fires them in front of his daughters to show his powers. Sullivan asks to pick two new leading actors from the extras.

The theme of the two other films *Tyvepak* and *Vester-Vov-Vov* re-appears. It is the conflict between the traditional father and the daughters who want to pick their own husbands. Again, the film firmly takes the stand that the daughters, and the young men, have the right to choose their marriage partners. The representation of the conflict is timely, considering the change to the marriage laws during the era, which was described earlier in the thesis.

When the director of the film goes out where all the potential extras sit, the people stand up, and the men lift their hats. When the director picks a man with a long beard, Fy og Bi take on long fake beards. When the director picks a man with long hair, Fy og Bi, adjust the fake beards to become long hair, but to no avail as they do not get picked. This represents how the labor force always needed to adapt themselves to the demands of the capitalist society. Fy og Bi also try to dress up as Tyrolese, with hats and mustaches. The representation of the capitalist system and structure also plays on the slapstick genre and the expectations that existed within that structure of the time. Therefore, the gags worked on many levels, both as an ideological representation and as a genre expression.

Fy og Bi put lots of pepper on their sandwiches. This draws the attention of some of the other extras. The sandwiches are big, with what looks like pieces of meat on them. Fy notices that the other men are watching them and tells Bi. Bi turns to them and says, “Don’t stare – have you never seen food before?” Fy og Bi start eating their sandwiches while the men besides them look destitute. When Fy og Bi get picked as the new leading actors Fy gives what is left of the sandwiches to Bi who gives it to the two men that sat next to them before, who longed after the food. One of the men lifts his hat to show respect. Now this man says to the other people that are looking longingly for the food, “Don’t stare – have you never seen food before?” Again, the lower classes of society are represented as hungry and destitute.

Sullivan’s daughters are shown with tennis rackets. This places them in the upper classes and is in sharp contrast to Fy og Bi. They are introduced as the new cowboys and leading actors in

the film. After various mishaps and an unfamiliarity with the acting profession (problems with lassos and Fy og Bi beating each other up), the film is released. The film opens at the Cino Palace. When the film begins, it introduces itself as a drama. Instead, the film immediately inspires laughter among the audience. Fy og Bi walk into the premiere hand in hand. Fy has a tie and Bi has a bowtie. When Sullivan sees them in their clothes, which are much better than usual, he gives them money to buy new clothes. Fy og Bi come back dressed in full evening dresses. The evening dresses are ill fitting. Fy's is too small, and the pants end far above the ankles. Bi's is too big and loose-fitting. This shows their cultural capital is limited. When Fy og Bi notice that the audience laughs at them, they leave the theater. They walk out hand in hand. Sullivan is angry and the film director devastated, he drinks in the bar.

Even when Fy og Bi tried to dress up, they failed to convince other people about which class they belonged to. Even when they get the monetary resources to upgrade the wardrobe, the result is still laughable due to their limited knowledge, background and socialization process which have placed them in the life situation of which they are situated within. The cultural aspects of class are just as important as the economic and material dimensions.

Bi is afraid they are going to be punished and Fy is crying. When Sullivan notices that the audience is cheering and congratulating him after the movie ends, his anger is changed into happiness. When the director gets to know the good news, he is very drunk. When he understands the film is a success, he re-affirms that he can make a movie star out of anyone. These connects to a wider discussion about supply and demand in the capitalistic system. Could anyone take any position in the capitalist system? Which qualifications are necessary? Are humans more like machines or are there something which is unique to humans, some form of essentialist sentiments? The film seems to argue that at least for the occupation of film stars, there might be qualities in people from even the lower classes. These qualities might be hard for people from the higher classes to immediately distinguish.

Steven Cohan describes how the meta-film sometimes are called "backstudio pictures."¹²² In this genre, the films are usually set in Los Angeles and recurring themes are success, power, ambition, and labor. There are usually a set of character types that are predictable. The films

¹²² Steven Cohan, *Hollywood by Hollywood: The Backstudio Picture and the Mystique of Making Movies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018, p. 2.

also feature “a self-reflexive mode of representation”. The backstudio pictures do not need to have a common formal structure in order to be placed within the genre.¹²³

Misunderstandings about genre was not uncommon during the era. In *Filmens Helte* Fy og Bi tries to make a serious film but ends up with a comedy that people laugh hysterically at. In the book *The Last Word: the Hollywood Novel and the Studio System* written by Justin Gautreau, there is an example found in the character called Merton. *Merton of the Movies* was written by the novelist Harry Leon Wilson and published in 1922. Wilson wrote the novel while he was in Hollywood to oversee a screen adaptation of one of his novels, *The Spenders*. In the novel *Merton of the Movies*, there was critique against the idea that just following the writings of the film magazines of the time would lead a person to stardom. In the novel, much comedy is drawn from the fact that the protagonist, Merton Gill, refuses to believe that the film industry could do anything wrong.

Merton is crazy about films and works as a shopkeeper in the calm midwestern town Simsbury, Illinois. He is saving up money to travel to Hollywood. Inside the novel, Merton represents the loyal customer who spends all his money on films, even though he is still distanced from them. He dreams of becoming a movie star.¹²⁴ Merton wished to find success as a serious actor in the film industry, instead, when he intends to do his roles seriously, he is successful but as a slapstick actor, a category of actors he despised himself.¹²⁵

There are obvious similarities between this novel and its subsequent film versions and *Filmens Helte*. Fy og Bi tries to perform seriously, but wind up making a performance with slapstick qualities, therefore transforming the purpose of the film. Fy og Bi misunderstood their own role, but also the industry, even if Fy og Bi’s connection and loyalty to the film industry did not seem to be as deep going as Merton. Fy og Bi, just as Merton, lacks self-awareness. In some way, the film industry also lacks self-awareness in *Filmens Helte*. In the case of Merton, the filmmakers know that Merton is funny and makes use of this, unknowingly to him. In *Filmens Helte*, all the people involved in the production are oblivious to its comedic qualities until it is screened for the public. It is fascinating to see a common American genre being translated and put into a Danish setting and context. The conventions and genre expectations, for example that

¹²³ Steven Cohan, *Hollywood by Hollywood: The Backstudio Picture and the Mystique of Making Movies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018, p. 3.

¹²⁴ Justin Gautreau, *The Last Word: the Hollywood Novel and the Studio System*, New York: Oxford University Press 2021, p. 22-24.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 28.

anyone can become a star, seems to be intact, while there of course are plenty of peculiarities that are unique to the film.

When the people see Fy og Bi and come running towards them, Fy og Bi misunderstand and jump out of the window where they land on two police officers that arrest them. The police bring them to Sullivan, holding them up in front of him. Sullivan offers them each a 5-year contract. The film director suggests ten- or twenty-years contracts. Fy og Bi get angry with the police and take the policemen's hands away from them. Bi answers Sullivan that it is risky to commit oneself. Their final answer is that they are going to think about it but that they do not promise anything. They turn around with great confidence and walks out of the restaurant. Before they walk out of the restaurant, they lift their hats of two times. Finally, we see the two Fy og Bi silhouettes, the same as in the beginning with the word "slut" written over them. "Slut" (i.e., "The End") written over them.

In the book *The Slapstick Camera: Hollywood and the Comedy of Self-Reference* written by Burke Hilsabeck, it is said that many slapstick comedies are intelligent and even asks philosophical questions. Some comedies can pose questions like, what is the best way to move a piano up a couple of stairs? Many comedies focus on the ontology of cinema itself, for example *Sherlock Jr.* (1924), where the projectionist falls asleep in front of his own machine. The film can be understood as a form of meditation of the audience relationship to the film screen and that the projected film image is a pre-condition for the acceptance of the illusion.¹²⁶

In *Filmens Helte* the self-reflexivity also raises questions of the ontology of film. What we are seeing is a film within a film, and Fy og Bi plays versions of themselves as they are credited as Fy og Bi, even inside of the film. When Fy og Bi watch a version of themselves in the cinema, they are meditating around both their own careers as well as the audience's reaction to the same.

Casper Tybjerg writes in *100 Års Dansk Film* that when Fy og Bi hold hands it symbolizes their childishness. Usually, Fy is the protector of Bi.¹²⁷ The childishness of Fy og Bi has relevance in relation to the representation of class and ideology in the film. It could be interpreted that Fy og Bi, through their childishness represents some pre-ideological subjects, and just as children, they are not yet fully socialized into the ideological reality. In some ways, Fy og Bi exists

¹²⁶ Burke Hilsabeck, *The Slapstick Camera: Hollywood and the Comedy of Self-Reference*, Albany: State University of New York Press 2020, p. 1.

¹²⁷ Casper Tybjerg, 1920-29: Et lille lands vagabonder, in *100 Års Dansk Film*, Peter Schepelern (ed.), 63-89. Copenhagen: Rosinante Forlag A/S 2001, p. 73.

outside of the dominant ideology. Inside of Fy og Bi's childishness there is also some form of ideological criticism since they refuse to be socialized by the rule of the dominating classes.

Fy og Bi's hesitance to participate in the economic system and into society could be interpreted in different ways. If we assume that the films are connected, and that they are made in a chronological order, there might have been something that happened after the film *Vester-Vov-Vov* which made them excluded or otherwise feel uncomfortable with the upper-class life and the British aristocracy.

There is also a question if the film is re-establishing a certain ideological order or if they ultimately disturb this. Slapstick comedy is, as the name hints, meant to be violently comic. In the Fy og Bi films, just as many other slapstick films, the rules around ownership, the cultural norms (for example how to behave in a "normal" bourgeoisie way), are routinely questioned. On the other hand, some of these norms are re-established and the old order prevails in the end of for example this film, when Fy og Bi refuse to participate in the capitalist system as workers anymore. It is like Fy og Bi are two oddities and exceptions in an otherwise structured capitalist system. Their philosophy could probably best be described as anarchic and when they realize they can not change the system, they prefer to continue to stand outside it.

Once again, the film gives a rather contradictory perspective on whether class is a social construct or not. In some way, it could be argued that the director's intention, that he can make anyone into a movie star, is a form of allegory to class, that anyone could be "made" into an upper-class person. If this happens, as it does in this film, that Fy og Bi do become actors, they are not yet used to the conventions and even if they are successful, it would take a long time to learn all the social dimensions around it. At the same time, as Fy og Bi escapes to their next adventure, they seem to re-establish the old class order that was in the beginning of the film. The duo seems to be aware that they do not fit into any other role in society and seem happy with their freer vagabond nature and lifestyle, despite the difficulties it brings.

Class indicators

In this film, reading and literacy is once again used to represent the upper class. In this film, it is less prevalent than the other ones though. Sullivan has lots of books but does not seem to be reading anyone of them. There is also the re-occurring theme of class mobility. It seems that the audience of the time must have appreciated the feeling of seeing people like Fy og Bi make fun of the upper classes and wreak havoc along the way. The hypothesis of this film is that literally

anyone can become a movie star, which is echoed by the director of the fictional film-within-a film, western picture.

In this film, Fy og Bi suffer from food insecurity. This is made clear by the way their big meal of the day is made up of two pieces of bread with some pepper on. They lack the resources and professional skills to get a reliable income and therefore a reliable source for food. The other people who constitute a similar form of underclass appears to be starving and longing for food. The only form of value in the capitalist system that these people have is to be looked upon, to be gazed at, fulfilling a film audiences' voyeuristic pleasure.

Yet again, the relationship between Sullivan and his daughters represents the growing discrepancy between the old and the younger generation. The theme of the traditional society vs the modern one is represented here. The traditional society bears different ideological meanings and demands than the modern one. In this film, the conflict is not necessarily between the dichotomy of the urban and the rural, even if the modernity could be thought of as originating from the cities.

Fy og Bi's clothing at the end of the film serves as another class indicator and an allegory to how someone can dress up and pretend to be a part of a certain class, but due to the lack of social capital, these people would never really be a part of that class. The full evening dresses that are comically misfitted on Fy og Bi represent the difficulty of class mobility.

9. Conclusions and Discussion

The questions which are asked in this thesis are:

What kind of social and political dimensions did the Fy og Bi films have?

How are different classes represented in the Fy og Bi films?

Once again, it is important to put an emphasis on what I mean when writing about the representation of class in the films. The representations of class in the film are not intended to be interpreted in a realistic sense. There obviously do not exist characters that are exactly like Fy og Bi in reality. Instead, they embody and visualizes certain kind of stereotypes both from the real world but also from the slapstick genre. In these films the tramp archetype is represented, here in a nationalized Danish context. Rob King writes about how the portrayal of the working-class characters in American slapstick silent films, and specifically those from Keystone, captured the feelings of disenfranchisement that was felt in the American society at

the time and can be viewed as allegorical.¹²⁸ It appears that the Fy og Bi films are similar in nature, in that they represent an allegory and are representations from a forgotten group in the society.

It could be said on a general level in the films that the upper classes are represented as more lying, deceitful, oblivious, even if some of them have the capacity to show generosity towards others, the main antagonists for Fy og Bi are usually some upper-class people. In the case of *Tyvepak* it is Mr. Blomsen, in *Vester-Vov-Vov* it is the local fish merchant. In *Filmens Helte* Sullivan is not really an antagonist, rather it is Fy og Bi that are in the center. The main antagonistic force in the film is the traditional marriage system, in which the father decided the partners for the children, as well as the capitalistic system with the production of films as measured by their economic success and not any other artistic qualities.

The working classes are represented in general as righteous and hard working. When the fishermen are seen working and Fy og Bi stand by idly and watching them, it is a comment that hard work pays off. What is problematic in Fy og Bi's case, and something which is brought up in all the films in different ways, is their lack of professional skills.

In the first film they are more destitute and are not afraid of stealing. In the two other films, they no longer steal. This might show a changed acceptance in the society to this kind of behavior. During the First World War, food was rationed in Denmark.¹²⁹ The more distance to that period, the less accepted it seemed to become to steal to feed yourself. In *Vester-Vov-Vov*, Fy og Bi are not shown lacking food. This is also because of the generosity of the neighbors in the fishing village, of which they are shown eating with and being invited into their homes. In *Filmens Helte*, Fy og Bi and the lower classes are still shown as hungry, but the film does not condone stealing of food anymore as in *Tyvepak*. In *Tyvepak*, the message seems to be that it is acceptable to steal food to survive, and even if it is understandable that the poor might steal silverware, the limits of acceptance and sympathy only reaches as far as to the food.

A theme of literacy is running through all the three films. Fy og Bi are vagabonds which means that their access to literature is limited. The upper classes are shown having access to knowledge in the form of literature and newspapers, despite this, they seem not to have much interest in

¹²⁸ Rob King, *The Fun Factory: The Keystone Film Company and the Emergence of Mass Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press 2009, p. 98.

¹²⁹ Alf Henrikson, *Dansk Historia II*, Stockholm: Bonnier 1989, p. 715-716.

the topics. Instead, it is Fy og Bi's practical knowledge, in the case of English, however limited their capability is, that manages to be of use for the people.

Class mobility is another ideological dimension of the films. In the capitalist society, which is represented in the film, it is of great importance that the characters can move upwards in the class hierarchy. Having the possibility to do so, even if it is a small probability, still works as a motivator for the lower classes. Connected to the difficulty to move upwards in the class ladder is the lack of ownership of the lower classes. The political climate which existed in Denmark in the 1920s was one of open class conflict.¹³⁰ This probably contributed to the ideological representations of the films, in which the conflict is visualized.

The picturesque rural Danish fishing village as depicted in *Vester-Vov-Vov* seem like a nostalgic longing to a more uncomplicated past with more solidarity between neighbors. This kind of friendliness between neighbors are contrasted with the hostile urban environment in *Filmens Helte*, where even the poor people are more anonymous in relation to each other, as shown when Fy og Bi sits with the rest of the extras, waiting to get picked for a small role in the film. When Fy og Bi are invited to eat with Old Malin and Tom, it symbolizes a pre-capitalistic time and not the industrialized cities which became more and more common for so many people in Denmark at the time.

The tension between the urban modern and traditional rural society is felt and made clear often throughout the films. In *Vester-Vov-Vov* there are criticism against religion, in which a character known as pious Søren, the only obviously religious character in the films, turns out to be a criminal. The films level criticism against what they perceived as the negative aspects of the traditional society. In the modern society, capitalism still was not challenged though. The social values might change, but the view on the material ones and the economical did not.

Fy og Bi tries to masquerade as upper classes through their clothing in the ending of both *Vester-Vov-Vov* and *Filmens Helte*. They are easily identified and called out on their masquerading by the other characters. An ideological reading might be that it is difficult for the lower classes to fit into upper class society, not just because of economical resources, but also due to the lack of social capital. Fy og Bi does not in any way represent the traditional working class, rather

¹³⁰ Lars-Arne Norborg, Mellankrigstiden (1920-39), *Nationalencyklopedin*, <https://www.ne.se/uppslagsverk/encyklopedi/l%C3%A5ng/danmark/historia/mellankrigstiden-1920-39> (Accessed 2021-05-18).

they represent the non-working vagrant underclass, similar to the Tramp archetype in American films of the period.

What could also be said is that *Tyvepak* (1921) is not carnivalesque, while *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927) show this tendency occasionally. *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927) features an especially memorable wild Charleston dance where all the class differences were abandoned. *Filmens Helte* does not seem to feature carnivalesque moments either. There is no abandonment of the class constraints of the contemporary Danish society at play.

My perspective on the results of this study is that they showed some surprises. Before watching the films, it would be difficult to know what to expect. Just watching American slapstick films would not be sufficient to understand the context of *Fy og Bi*. On the other hand, *Fy og Bi* resonated with audiences all over the world and as discussed had many similarities with many American slapstick film. The difference lies in the national context and environment with the specific peculiarities of Denmark in the 1920s and the cultural and political climate of the time.

The method of textual analysis was useful as a tool of analysis. In this thesis, there was not much focus on the aesthetics but rather on the patterns and representations of ideological messages, especially that the characters expressed through action and behavior. It would be interesting to study more *Fy og Bi* films to understand the wider context even these films, some of their most famous and well-known, should be sufficient to make conclusions during the silent era.

The dominating ideology in the society is both challenged and re-affirmed. Traditional views on marriage are challenged, while the traditional dominant view on ownership, and the wealth of the upper classes are defended. The norms in the films that are questioned are the traditional view of marriage that the father is supposed to approve the men for the daughters. What is defended is the traditional view on ownership in the context of the capitalist Danish society. The norms that are defended, and the ones that are not, constitutes the ideological narrative in the films. The film both criticizes some of the dominant ideology of the time and defends others. The films do not constitute a real threat to the structure of the capitalistic society. Quite the opposite, since even the erosion of the father's influence over his daughter's marriage would not contribute to the fall of the capitalist society or structures present. The ideology of marriage which seems to be expressed in this film is one which says it is fine to change that institution and adapt it to the more modern approach, if it does not affect the overarching dominating

capitalist system. The dominant ideology of the society therefore shines through in the film and reinforces itself.

The question of the upper classes' ownership is challenged, but in the end not in any serious way. Fy og Bi even participates in the class charade when they dress up in the symbols for the upper classes, therefore doing their best to adapt themselves to the capitalist system when they get the chance, as in the ending of *Vester-Vov-Vov*. In the ending of *Filmens Helte*, the hesitation which Fy og Bi showed towards their newfound fame as movie stars has more to do with the perceived loss of freedom of their lifestyle and their misunderstanding of the film industry, more than any question regarding their will to become a part of the upper classes, as shown in *Vester-Vov-Vov*.

To summarize, the upper classes was in general represented as antagonists to the lower classes, and more lying and deceitful, but also more oblivious to the world that Fy og Bi, which are situated in their harsh reality. The working classes are generally represented as hard working people which do not complain about their harsh situation. The ideological dimensions in the films were inspired by the historical context, where a rural traditional society was challenged and transformed into a modern urban one. The social values changed, while the principals of the capitalist society did not. Ideologically, the films uphold a capitalist structure, even if they are not without lots of critique against the upper classes and a call for more fairness, if not for economical resource, then for at least food. The dominating classes are not seriously harmed in the films. The films are more an expression of how the dominating ideology of the time navigated in sensitive topics during the ongoing class conflict in the Danish society of the 1920s.

After analyzing the films, it is easier to understand the ambivalence of their reception in the Soviet Union. The Fy og Bi films were banned in the Soviet Union during 1930-31. They were regarded as representing the petite bourgeoisie. The ban was lifted already in 1932 again and they were celebrated.¹³¹ It could be said that the films contain enough of criticism against the production owning bourgeoisie classes to be enjoyed by a diverse range of people at the same time as the films firmly reverts to the dominating capitalist society at the end. Maybe the absurdity of it all could be enough for some people to question the validity and reassurances of the capitalist system.

¹³¹ Marguerite Engberg, *Fy & Bi*, København: Gyldendal 1980, p. 41-42.

Lars Jakobsen, *Fyrtårnet og Bivognen – filmens helte*, Galten: Wisby og Wilkens 2002, p. 71.

10. Further Research

There are plenty of possibilities for further studies, considering that relatively few academic texts have been written about them. It would be fruitful to analyze the Fy og Bi films that still exists in archives and are waiting to be restored and released. Once the access is provided, it would be of importance to widen the international knowledge about Fy og Bi. It would be of importance for researchers active in silent comedy films. Especially researchers with interest in Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton should take notice and pay attention to the neglected Danish pair. Without acknowledging this worldwide phenomenon, the risk is that modern researchers miss important reference points and sources for inspiration. Doing more extensive research and comparing them to other international films of the period would have an immense value for drawing the international film research community's' attention to the couple.

There are of course plenty of other approaches which could be taken when investigating the Fy og Bi films. One that would also be very relevant, would be to study the transition from silent to sound films with a Danish and Nordic perspective, especially since they were so immensely popular. Another possible approach would be to study the comic books of Fy og Bi, either from a commercial perspective and their long-lasting appeal or the development of the content over time.

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Filmography

Primary films

Original title: *Tyvepak*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Sweden

Year of release: 1921

Producer: Unknown

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Screenwriter: Lau Lauritzen

Cinematographer: Hugo J. Fischer

Editor: Unknown

Music: Not applicable

Actors: Carl Schenstrøm (Fyrtaarnet), Aage Bendixen (Bivognen), Axel Hultman (Blomgren), Olga Svendsen (Ms. Svensson, Blomgrens' housekeeper), Margot Linnet (Inger, Blomgrens daughter), Pip Overbeck (Else, Blomgrens daughter), Osvald Helmuth (Billy), Harry Komdrup (Willy)

Black and white

30 minutes

Original title: *Vester-Vov-Vov* (1927)

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1927

Producer: Svend Nielsen

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Screenwriters: Lau Lauritzen, A.V Olsen

Cinematographer: Valdemar Christensen, Hugo J. Fischer

Editor: Unknown

Music: Ole Høyer

Actors: Carl Schenstrøm (Fyrtaarnet), Harald Madsen (Bivognen), Jørgen Lund (Willing, inkeeper), Kate Fabian (Mrs. Willings), Karin Nellemose (Birthe, Willings daughter), Petrine Sonne (Old Malin, old fisherwoman), Erling Schroeder (Tom, Malin's son), Karl Jørgensen (Fish merchant)

Black and white

101 minutes

Original title: *Filmens Helte*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1928

Producer: Unknown

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Screenwriter: Alice O'Fredericks

Cinematographer: Valdemar Christensen, Carlo Bentsen

Editor: Unknown

Music: Not applicable

Actors: Carl Schenstrøm (Fyrtaarnet), Harald Madsen (Bivognen), Holger Reenberg (Producer Sullivan), Eli Lehmann (Sullivans daughter), Inger Schmidt (Sullivans daughter), Katy Valentin (Sullivans secretary), Nicolai Brechling (The film director), Erling Schroeder (Film actor)

Black and white

71 minutes

Other films

Original title: *L'arrivée d'un train à La Ciotat*

Production company: Société Lumière

Country: France

Year of release: 1896

Director: Auguste Lumière, Louis Lumière

Original title: *The Countryman and the Cinematograph*

Production company: Paul's Animatograph Works

Country: United Kingdom

Year of release: 1901

Director: Robert W. Paul

Original title: *Isbjørnejagten*

Production company: Nordisk Films Kompagni

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1907

Director: Viggo Larsen

Original title: *Løvejagten*

Production company: Nordisk Films Kompagni

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1907

Director: Viggo Larsen

Original title: *Hogan's Mussy Job*

Production company: Keystone Film Company

Country: USA

Year of release: 1915

Director: Charles Avery (uncredited)

Original title: *Film, Flirt og Forlovelse*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1921

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Original title: *Han, hun og Hamlet*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1922

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Original title: *Sherlock Jr.*

Production company: Metro Pictures Corporation

Country: United States

Year of release: 1924

Director: Buster Keaton

Original title: *Hot Water* (1924)

Production company: The Harold Lloyd Corporation

Country: USA

Year of release: 1924

Director: Fred C. Newmeyer, Sam Taylor

Original title: *Ole Opfinders Offer*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1924

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Original title: *Don Quixote*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1926

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Original title: *Oktyabr*

Production company: Sovkino

Country: Soviet Union

Year of release: 1927

Director: Grigori Aleksandrov, Sergei Eisenstein

Original title: *Taler De Tysk?*

Production company: Deutsche Lichtspiel-Syndikat (DLS)

Country: Germany

Year of release: 1930

Director: Georg Jacoby

Original title: *Præsten i Vejlbj*

Production company: Nordisk Tonefilm

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1931

Director: George Schnéevoigt

Original title: *Hotel Paradis*

Production company: Nordisk Film Kompagni, Nordisk Tonefilm

Country: Sweden, Denmark

Year of release: 1931

Director: George Schnéevoigt

Original title: *Kirke og Orgel*

Production company: Nordisk Film

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1932

Director: George Schnéevoigt

Original title: *The Most Dangerous Game*

Production company: RKO Radio Pictures

Country: United States

Year of release: 1932

Director: Irving Pichel, Ernest B. Schoedsack

Original title: *13 Aar*

Production company: Nordisk Film

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1932

Director: George Schnéevoigt

Original title: *Han, hun og Hamlet*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1932

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Original title: *Med fuld Musik*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1933

Director: Lau Lauritzen

Original title: *Mädchenräuber*

Production company: Majestic-Film GmbH

Country: Germany

Year of release: 1936

Director: Fred Sauer

Original title: *Blinde Passagiere*

Production company: Majestic-Film GmbH

Country: Germany

Year of release: 1936

Director: Fred Sauer

Original title: *Bleka Greven*

Production company: Triangelfilm

Country: Sweden

Year of release: 1937

Director: Gösta Rodin

Original title: *I de gode, gamle Dage*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1940

Director: Johan Jacobsen

Original title: *Sullivan's Travels*

Production company: Paramount Pictures

Country: United States

Year of release: 1941

Director: Preston Sturges

Original title: *Calle og Palle*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Sweden, Denmark

Year of release: 1948

Director: Rolf Husberg

Original title: *Antonio das Mortes*

Production company: Mapa Filmes

Country: Brazil

Year of release: 1969

Director: Glauber Rocha

Original title: *The Wind and the Lion*

Production company: Columbia Pictures, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), Herb Jaffe Productions

Country: USA

Year of release: 1975

Director: John Milius

Original title: *Dog Day Afternoon*

Production company: Warner Bros., Artists Entertainment Complex

Country: USA

Year of release: 1975

Director: Sidney Lumet

Original title: *Hopla på sengekanten*

Production company: Palladium

Country: Denmark

Year of release: 1976

Director: John Hilbard

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