

Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Persona

(_litterær_praksis) Fra latin for “maske”. En “organiserende bevissthet” eller en “identitets-ikledning”. En identitet eller “annet selv” som f.eks. en dikter/forfatter bruker for å uttrykke følelser og meninger som ikke nødvendigvis er hennes eller hans egne. Dikteren har frihet til å tre inn i en annen bevissthet og “kropp” enn sin egen og skrive tekster ut fra denne andre bevisstheten (Hamburger 1985 s. 85). Personaen gir dikteren et perspektiv å presentere virkeligheten fra (Platz-Waury 1978 s. 264).

En forfatter bruker vanlig psevdonym for å skjule sin identitet, dvs. holde den hemmelig, mens en persona fungerer som en rolle som forfatteren bruker for å utforske virkeligheten fra et bestemt perspektiv eller gjennom en ny, tentativ identitet.

“A persona is a character or figurative mask that an actor, writer, or singer takes on in order to perform. Originally a technique just for theater, the concept was popularized in literature by the poets Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. Both men had a few named personae through whom they wrote famous poems. When a writer uses a persona through which to create a work of literature, it is understood that the resulting work takes on the traits of the poet him or herself and the different lens that the persona brings to the work. [...] there is a strong connection between the concept of persona and using a different character through which to experience the world. [...] Sometimes the term alter ego is applied to a character that an author creates in a work of fiction who has the thoughts and experiences of the author. Again, while this is similar to a persona, the alter ego represents the real thoughts and emotions of the author, while a persona gives an author a way to explore another character’s thoughts and feelings as if the author were really that person. [...] The potential of writing through a persona opens up many possibilities for an author. All writers to some extent create and interpret the experiences of characters who are not themselves. Using a persona, however, takes this one step further, much as Method acting requires an actor to completely get inside the head of a character to understand why he or she would act a certain way. An author may write through the persona of a different character to understand parallels between their two world views, work through certain poetic problems, or simply free himself or herself from the limitations of his or her own life experiences. Using a persona requires a high level of compassion and empathy on the part of the author

to legitimately explore a situation through a lens not his or her own.” (<http://www.literarydevices.com/persona/>; lesedato 03.11.16)

Den amerikansk-britiske dikteren T. S. Eliot publiserte i 1915 det modernistiske diktet “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, der Prufrock “is one of T. S. Eliot’s most famous personae. In this persona example, Eliot creates a dramatic interior monologue of a man who feels isolated and thwarted. While many critics at the time found it insignificant and the epiphanies therein trivial, others found the concept to be thoroughly modern. [...] Ezra Pound was a mentor figure to T. S. Eliot, and was the editor for “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” He, too, wanted to explore certain themes through the possibility of a lens of another character’s experiences, and so adopted some examples of persona for his works of literature. Most of the personas he used were real-life poets, such as Sextus Propertius, a Latin elegiac poet who lived during the 1st century BC. Ezra Pound used the persona of Sextus Propertius to use Propertius’s style in homage to the poet.” (<http://www.literarydevices.com/persona/>; lesedato 03.11.16)

I lange diktverk som T. S. Eliots *The Waste Land* og Ezra Pounds *Cantos* er det mange personaer, “mangfoldiggjort og foranderlige” i tid og rom (Hamburger 1985 s. 157), et helt arsenal av bevisstheter. Ifølge Ruth Nevo er det i *The Waste Land* (1922) “no point of view, no single style, idiom, register, or recurrent and therefore linking linguistic device which could define a subject, in the sense of a dominant speaking or projecting persona” (Nevo i Bloom 1985 s. 97). Pound brukte selv betegnelsen “persona” (Fraser 1960 s. 64), “masks or personae (Personae is the title he gave to his collection of shorter poems). Rather than the poem representing the voice of the author, as in much lyric poetry, the speaker in Pound’s persona poems is a made-up character with whom Pound did not completely identify. This allowed Pound to be satiric, even sarcastic, not only about the subject of the poems but about their speaker, although he sometimes appears to share the sentiments of the poem’s persona, making for an interesting ambiguity.” (Charles Bernstein i <http://wings.buffalo.edu/epc/authors/bernstein/essays/pound.html>; lesedato 20.11.15)

Den amerikanske dikteren Sylvia Plath var ifølge ektemannen Ted Hughes “a person of many masks, both in her personal life and in her writings. Some were camouflage cliché facades, defensive mechanisms involuntary. And some were deliberate poses, attempts to find the keys to one style or another” (Perloff 1990 s. 183). “In many instances, the [Plath] poems establish distinct perspectives and narrative personas, separate from that of the poet, diminishing the individual speaker and expand from the particular moment or experience into a universal one, leaving not a private experience or solely narcissistic reflection of the poet but an experience that can be – and must be – shared with the community for the individual to gain closure and understanding. Ultimately, Plath’s meticulously crafted works depict worlds of fantasy and imagination as well as reality experienced by the narrative persona which distinguish the poems from a strict confessional mode, defined only by the poet’s own experiences, and offer a clear,

deliberate attempt to both communicate and comprehend these experiences to the audience through immersive and powerful literary pieces.” (Jessica J. Feuerstein i <http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi>; lesedato 14.11.16)

“While the persona in Plath’s work has primarily been read as her own self, identifying how these distinct personas are in many ways creations by Plath *separate* from her own self is of great importance. [...] often in her works, Plath takes on the persona of a Jew (i.e “Daddy”, “Lady Lazarus”, and “Getting There”), or “God’s Lioness,” and creates simultaneously fantastic and terrifying landscapes, ones of imagination rather than merely bound by the real. [...] They present experiences filtered through poetic craft and a determined level of detachment or separation from the poet herself through the personas created within each work. They also create a sense of speaking perhaps not to a specific individual or friend, but to a perceived audience or community that is meant to share and understand the experience presented. [...] The personae in her poems speak to a wide variety of listeners, thus dramatizing a struggle with both human and natural forces. They speak to other people, often a child or family member; to quasi-mythological figures, often invented by the poet... Whatever the poetic form, the intention is clearly to find a voice and a situation that will externalize the internal, conflicting agencies of her personality. [...] The reader is thus not necessarily entering Plath’s own personal world and experience, but one bound in the imagination of the persona controlling the poem.” (Jessica J. Feuerstein i <http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi>; lesedato 14.11.16)

I hele verket til den tyske dikteren Rainer Maria Rilke er det “en stadig fram-og-tilbake-veksling mellom personaen for aristokraten og personaen for pariaen” (Hamburger 1985 s. 136-137).

“The term persona refers to an author’s use of a literary mask to hide his or her true opinion about a matter. For example, if you were writing about how you act while waiting in long lines, you might want to honestly inform your reader that you become a raging lunatic, that your heart rate doubles, and that you can keep calm only by doing sit-ups and push-ups. Yet if you are not proud of this type-A tendency, you might present the persona of a patient person who has mastered the ability to meditate calmly and think deeply about important issues when forced to wait in a seemingly endless line. [...] The vitality of a writer’s voice or persona often has a tremendous influence on readers’ responses. Sometimes readers say they enjoy a text because an author seems straightforward and personable. In contrast, sometimes readers dislike a book because the author seems stuffy or cold-hearted.” (Joseph Moxley i <http://writingcommons.org/open-text/writing-processes/think-rhetorically/716-consider-your-voice-tone-and-persona>; lesedato 26.09.16)

“Begrepet latinske betydning er “maske”, noe som samsvarer med Couturiers oppfatning av at forfatteren er seg mer bevisst sine lesere enn vi ofte antar, og at han ofte “gjemmer” seg for dem. Den jungianske betydningen av ordet som

hvordan en person presenterer seg selv til omverdenen, er også relatert til den latinske opprinnelsen. I jungiansk sammenheng er *persona* “[...] not a pose or some other intentional misrepresentation of the self to others. Rather, it is the self as *self-constructed*, and may change according to situation and context” (Cuddon 1991:702). Denne betydningen er relevant her, da den understreker at det dreier seg om en variabel og ikke nødvendigvis en helhetlig størrelse. Selv om *persona* i dag som oftest brukes om et litterært verks fortellerstemme, kan det også vise til et *alter ego*: “a ‘second self’ created by the author and through whom the narrative is related” (Cuddon 1991:702). Ved å sammenstille forfatter og *persona*, håper jeg å fjerne meg så langt fra den biografiske forfatteren som mulig, uten å avvise sammenhengen mellom tekst og forfatterliv.” (Marte N. Dahl i <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/26031/Gjxglerensxmasker.pdf>; lesedato 12.08.16)

“En forfatter*persona* skapes av hva forfatteren legger igjen av spor av seg selv i teksten, og hvordan han eventuelt iscenesetter seg selv i teksten. Disse sporene samsvarer ikke nødvendigvis med forfatterens intensjon, da de kan være ubevisste grep fra forfatterens side, eller vi kan rett og slett ta feil. De har ikke nødvendigvis en sammenheng med forfatteren i det hele tatt, da sporene han legger i teksten kan være villedende, og til og med lagt ut for å narre oss. Forfatter*personen* er en ubegrenset kilde til påvirkning på leserens konstruksjon av forfatter*persona*, derfor bør fokuset holdes på publiserte tekster, med andre ord hva forfatteren bevisst eller ubevisst viser i skriften. [...] Allikevel er forfatteren i teksten, det vil si vår forfatter*persona*, etter min oppfatning alltid et samlet produkt av leserens projeksjoner, forfatterens og skriften *per se*.” (Marte N. Dahl i <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/26031/Gjxglerensxmasker.pdf>; lesedato 12.08.16)

Den amerikanske sykehusvaktmesteren og forfatteren Henry Darger skrev i årene 1911-72 det som sannsynligvis er verdens lengste roman. Fantasy- og science fiction-romanen *Realms of the Unreal* omfatter 15145 sider. I dette illustrerte gigantverket bruker Darger mange høyst forskjellige personaer. Skikkelser ved navn Darger tilhører ulike armeer i romanens krigerske handling, men har forskjellige yrker og annen identitet. Navn som Judas Darger, Dargin og Henry Dargerina dukker opp. En professor Hendro Dargar presenteres som “the eminent geologist and authority on forest fires, earthquakes, and vulcanology”. Den biografiske Darger siterer fra vitenskapelige verk og legger ordene i munnen på Hendro.

Den portugisiske dikteren Fernando Pessoa er berømt for sin mange personaer i diktene sine. Disse identitets-ikledningene forringer ikke opplevelsen av oppriktighet og sannhetsvilje i hans dikt, men brukes blant annet til å vise “den hele identitet i hans mangfoldige jeg-muligheter” (Hamburger 1985 s. 198). Pessoa kunne finne på å si ting som “I dag snakker du ikke med Fernando Pessoa, men med Álvaro de Campos” (*Morgenbladet* 16.–22. november 2007 s. 28). Bernardo Soares er et Fernando Pessoa-heteronym (Pessoa kalte sine mange fiktive dikterpersonligheter heteronymer) og han er “forfatter” av *Uroens bok* (skrevet

1922-35, utgitt i 1982).” “In a trunk of more than 25,000 pages of manuscript discovered after he died were writings by nearly 80 people, or “heteronyms”, created in Pessoa’s lifetime. These were literary alter egos that all had differing views on the big subjects: life, death, modern tedium; and the conflict between rational thought and human emotions. Each heteronym was given a biography, psychology, politics, religion, even physical description, and the main characters were interconnected. Alberto Caeiro, for example, was an uneducated, unemployed man of the country who was seen by Ricardo Reis – a doctor and classicist – and Álvaro de Campos – a naval engineer, dandy and traveller – as a master writer. All three men were poets, and wrote with their own styles and beliefs, contradicting each other and together forming a kind of manifesto for the variations of self internalised through the act of writing.” (Syma Tariq i <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/04/fernando-pessoa-portuguese-writer-multiple-faces>; lesedato 10.11.16)

“Bernardo Soares was another major persona; a clerk who detailed in prosaic resignation the tediousness of work, life, the city and the futility of desire. His *Book of Disquiet* – a collection of incomplete writings found on loose scraps of paper and published nearly 50 years after Pessoa’s death – makes for sleepless, existential reading. The fact that *pessoa* means “person” in Portuguese cannot be lost on readers. The pessimism of Pessoa’s personas fits so directly into that well-celebrated moody male modernist canon that the only logical reason why he is little known outside of Portugal (despite his work being belatedly translated into English and other languages) is his self-obscuration. And new heteronyms are still being exposed, like the recent discovery of Maria José, the only female voice – that of a 19-year-old, miserably ill hunchback – written into the chorus. [...] Pessoa’s work goes beyond camouflage. This lifelong crafting of various personalities leaves Fernando Pessoa himself as a mystery. “Fernando Pessoa, strictly speaking, doesn’t exist,” wrote Álvaro de Campos, sparing the author the trouble of living a “real” life. The result of all this is a defiance of the author myth – the idea of the all-seeing, all-knowing individual talent. Long before deconstructionists attacked language and meaning, and took apart history and systems of thought, Pessoa looked at himself in the mirror and saw everyone at the same time. Pessoa’s world glimpsed the idea that everyone is equal, but also different – and that makes him the most human of modern literary heroes, even 75 years on. [...] “My soul is a hidden orchestra; I don’t know what instruments are ringing and grinding, strings and harps, timbales and drums inside me,” wrote Bernardo Soares. “I only know myself as a symphony.” ” (Syma Tariq i <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/04/fernando-pessoa-portuguese-writer-multiple-faces>; lesedato 10.11.16)

Den engelske lyrikeren Philip Larkin stiller ofte en persona mellom seg selv og leseren, en persona som ligner en besteborger og som har fått noen kritikere til å hevde at Larkin representerer selvtilfredshet og innskrenkethet (Platz-Waury 1978 s. 223).

“Madame Nielsen er den foreløpig siste personaen til den danske forfatteren og kunstneren Claus Beck-Nielsen, som erklærte seg død i 2001. I 2014 utga Madame Nielsen romanen *Den endeløse sommer* (på norsk i 2015) og tidligere i år *Invasjonen. En fremmed i flyktningestrømmen*, en “dannelsesroman” der hun følger flyktningene som er på vei gjennom Europa fra Hellas til Danmark.” (*Morgenbladet* 27. mai–2. juni 2016 s. 54) “En dag i december år 2000 tog författaren Claus Beck-Nielsen bort det karakteristiska “Beck” från sitt namn, han gav upp sin lägenhet, fru och barn och gick ut på gatan som Claus Nielsen, mannen utan personnummer. Det blev början till en tragedi. [...] I ett års tid lever han på gatan som papperslös. Till myndigheterna säger han att han förlorat minnet. [...] Den persona som började som ett litterärt projekt tar gradvis större och större plats. Till slut blir det omöjligt att svara på frågan: Vem är Claus Beck-Nielsen?” ([https://www.tanum.no/_dokumentar-og-fakta/biografier/claus-beck-nielsen-\(1963---2001\)-:-en-biografi-9789173551137](https://www.tanum.no/_dokumentar-og-fakta/biografier/claus-beck-nielsen-(1963---2001)-:-en-biografi-9789173551137); lesedato 02.09.16)

“Madame Niensens” bok *Invasjonen: En fremmed i flyktningestrømmen* (2016) er en blanding av dagbok, reisereportasje og roman. “Som sjangerbetegnelsen og forfatternavnet – hvem kaller seg Madame i dag? – avslører, dreier det seg ikke om noen vanlig journalistisk reisefortelling, selv om tid og sted er angitt og forflytningene er dokumentert med fotografier. Madame Nielsen er den nyeste personaen til den danske forfatteren og kunstneren Claus Beck-Nielsen, som erklærte seg død i 2001, og som siden den gang har forvaltet sine verk under et knippe forskjellige navn og identiteter. I tidligere utgivelser, som *Selvmonds-aktionen* (2006) og *Store Satans fald* (2012), har Nielsen vandret rundt i blant annet Irak, Afghanistan og Iran, og forfatterens spill med identitet, fiksjon og virkelighet har hele tiden vært et viktig element. [...] Er det greit å skrive om flyktninger på denne måten? Kanskje kan Nielsen skrive skamløst fordi Madame også befinner seg utenfor: Hun er en konstruksjon. Overalt på reisen blir hun møtt med spørsmålet om hun er mann eller kvinne, hun er en rolle folk har vansker med å forholde seg til, men hun er også en konkret kropp, en som ser, erfarer og skriver. Når skal vi lære oss å akseptere forskjeller, også utenfor kategoriene vi kjenner? Det er akkurat her det verker.” (Carina E. Beddari *Morgenbladet* 1.–7. april 2016 s. 46)

Persona kan også brukes om visse karakterer/figurer i filmer, f.eks. i Todd Haynes’ film om Bob Dylan kalt *I’m Not There* (2007), der helt ulike skuespillere, og blant dem en kvinne, spiller Dylans “identiteter”. “Six Dylan alter egos circulate through the film: Cate Blanchett and Christian Bale are the nearest-to-literal incarnations, with Richard Gere as a mix of Dylan and Billy the Kid, Ben Whishaw as Dylan by way of Rimbaud, and Marcus Franklin, a 10-year-old African-American, embodying Dylan inhabiting the persona of Woody Guthrie. Finally, Heath Ledger plays a movie star haunted by the experience of having recently played “Dylan” in a film within the film. [...] These six Dylan avatars mix and match qualities, and Haynes constructs a way for each to embody not-Dylan from a fresh angle, with a

different degree and distance from the literal source. Guthrie, Rimbaud, and Billy the Kid are personas Dylan adopted and they slip, relatively briefly, in and out of the film's structure." (Larry Gross i <http://www.filmcomment.com/article/the-lives-of-others-im-not-there/>; lesedato 02.11.16)

En "sock puppet can be described as a phony name or Internet account made up by a user in order to masquerade as someone else on any given forum, website, blog etc. Sock puppets can make controversial comments or voice opinions for/against a cause without revealing their true identity or motives. The puppeteer may even respond to their own posts (under false identities) praising the articles they wrote themselves or to disagree with comments that may criticizing them on other sites. [...] An article on The Atlantic Wire claims "sock puppet reviews aren't just unethical, they're also unconvincing" in the discussion that was sparked by author R J Ellory posting reviews of his own books on Amazon under fake usernames. "Here's a tip: if you've decided ethics don't matter to you anymore, at least make your sockpuppets interesting. If you're going to create fake personas in order to aggrandize your own work and sabotage others, at least have some fun with the charade! Don't be like Ellory or Millar, creating dull, lifeless mouthpieces who write like desperate robots. [...]" The history of reviewing one's own work under another name predates the internet. Walt Whitman and Anthony Burgess were both famous for having reviewed their books under pseudonyms." (<https://fordhamcyberculture.wordpress.com/2013/06/06/sockpuppeting-the-ethics-and-who-does-it-harm/>; lesedato 30.08.16)

"People do things they would never have done in their own faces under the new persona of a mask. They become somebody else that they may at any time throw away. Lynching and torture are carried out by people in hoods with circles cut out for eyes. Bandits rob under the anonymity afforded by the mask. Crimes are at an all-time high during Halloween. A normally quiet individual may become loud and debauch under the veil of the night. Because the face acts as a primary identification label, to cover, conceal and disguise it makes possible a number of acts that would usually have been out of character. Even something as mild as everyday makeup produces a change in the person, that is, a rise in confidence that is not felt in the bare face." (Hana Kim i <http://humstatic.uchicago.edu/faculty/wjtm/glossary2004/mask.htm>; lesedato 03.10.16)

Den amerikanske fotokunstneren Cindy Sherman tar bilder av seg selv i svært ulike påkledninger, settinger, og "roller". "Probably never before has an artist used her or his own self so exclusively as a model for so many diverse personae." (Gaggi 1997 s. 28) Sherman "is a contemporary master of socially critical photography. [...] Sherman turned to photography toward the end of the 1970s in order to explore a wide range of common female social roles, or personas. Sherman sought to call into question the seductive and often oppressive influence of mass-media over our individual and collective identities. Turning the camera on herself in a game of extended role playing of fantasy Hollywood, fashion, mass advertising, and "girl-

next-door” roles and poses, Sherman ultimately called her audience’s attention to the powerful machinery and make-up that lay behind the countless images circulating in an incessantly public, “plugged in” culture. Sexual desire and domination, the fashioning of self identity as mass deception, these are among the unsettling subjects lying behind Sherman’s extensive series of self-portraiture in various guises.” (Glen Ridge i <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-sherman-cindy.htm>; lesedato 23.09.16)

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