



**TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO**

**The modernist novel and early film: a case study in influences**

Línea de trabajo

**«Aspectos formales y culturales de la novela inglesa moderna»**

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## ABSTRACT

Para este proyecto, que sitúa la novela inglesa modernista en su contexto cultural, tanto mi tutor como yo hemos decidido enfocar este estudio en las convenciones artísticas del cine en sus primeros años.

Una vez que en la introducción queda clara la fecha de las primeras prácticas cinematográficas con sus consiguientes reacciones por parte de la audiencia, es crucial empezar un análisis de los diferentes aspectos formales del cine según una de las escritoras y críticas más influyentes de la Inglaterra entre los años veinte y treinta, Virginia Woolf. Sus reflexiones en el artículo “The Cinema” encierran importantes observaciones sobre esta innovadora expresión artística desde un punto de vista psicoanalítico; escrito bajo la influencia de teorías y celebridades que ya habían establecido importantes líneas de debate en la literatura de mediados del siglo XIX y que se mantuvieron en las primeras décadas del siglo XX hasta el día de hoy, como las del psicoanalista Sigmund Freud.

Por otro lado, no menos importante resulta mencionar y considerar la crítica de otra novelista moderna que a su vez fue una grande inspiradora de Virginia Woolf, y con esto me refiero a la crítica literaria y novelista experimental Dorothy Richardson, la cual ofrece en sus artículos en la revista sobre cine *Close Up* una visión feminista de los medios de expresión adoptados en el cine, como por ejemplo considerar el cine mudo como una variable femenina por su enfoque en la expresión de sentimientos sinceros a través de la expresión corporal y un adecuado acompañamiento musical, y por otro lado el cine sonoro como un medio de manipulación masculina en una sociedad patriarcal que dibuja al hombre como el centro de todo.

Finalmente, una vez que los puntos de vista teóricos quedan expuestos, es esencial para una investigación sobre las primeras aplicaciones del cine analizar alguna película – en el caso de mi análisis, dos películas vanguardistas que son consideradas a día de hoy como clásicos del cine: *Un Chien Andalou* (1926) y *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920) – que refleje todas estas convenciones culturales y artísticas detalladas previamente, al igual que analizar la obra en la que Virginia Woolf, como investigadora pionera de las características del nuevo lenguaje sugerido por este nuevo arte, pone en práctica sus observaciones e incluso plantea nuevas posibilidades para este lenguaje: *To the Lighthouse* (1927).

## INTRODUCTION

How could the shape of accidental visual forms – such as the shadow Virginia Woolf saw in one performance of *Caligari* with the form of a tadpole, appearing suddenly on the screen due to the imperfections and mismatches of the former projectors and cameras used for the first films, be more influential and thought-provoking than the actual performances?:

For instance, at a performance of *Dr. Caligari* the other day a shadow shaped like a tadpole suddenly appeared at one corner of the screen [...] But if a shadow at a certain moment can suggest so much more than the actual gestures and words of men and women in a state of fear, it seems plain that the cinema has within its grasp innumerable symbols for emotions that have so far failed to find expression. Terror has besides its ordinary forms the shape of a tadpole; it burgeons, bulges, quivers, disappears. Anger is not merely rant and rhetoric, red faces and clenched fists. It is perhaps a black line wriggling upon a white sheet. Anna and Vronsky need no longer scowl and grimace. They have at their command—but what? Is there, we ask, some secret language which we feel and see, but never speak, and, if so, could this be made visible to the eye? Is there any characteristic which thought possesses that can be rendered visible without the help of words? It has speed and slowness; dartlike directness and vaporous circumlocution. But it has, also, especially in moments of emotion, the picture-making power, the need to lift its burden to another bearer; to let an image run side by side along with it. The likeness of the thought is for some reason more beautiful, more comprehensible, more available, than the thought itself. (Woolf, “The Cinema”: 4-5)

This reflects what awakened the interest of one of the most influential English modern writers and critics, Virginia Woolf – whom I have selected as the critical figure of reference for this project – in analysing the effects of visual arts under the influence of both her friend Roger Fry, who was a very well-known English artist and art critic and also a member of the Bloomsbury Group, and of Freudian psychoanalysis as well.

As suggested above, this interest in the visual arts is going to focus on the “seventh art” of modernism: the cinema; which is the subject of the 1926 article in which Woolf expresses all her insights and impressions about this artistic invention in its early years. Rather than depicting the technological devices and techniques used in its development, in the previous quotation we find Woolf’s own admiration about the moving images on the screen in terms of a new art form with an innovative language, not coded in conventional utterances, but one that expresses innumerable different meanings through its pictures and moving images instead. All these theoretical accounts are detailed in the first section concerning “The new language suggested by cinema” and its subsequent subsections; the last one, “Other

psychological criticisms”, is an overview of different opinions of film by some modern critics and psychoanalysts who have discussed how audiences react to films, from a Freudian perspective.

I have supported this theoretical approach through the book in which Suzanne Raitt provides an accurate analysis of Woolf’s novel *To the Lighthouse* (1926), along with the different articles concerning cinema and psychoanalysis that are in the edition published in 1998 by Laura Marcus, James Ronald, and Anne Friedberg of the journal *Close Up*, which was edited for the first time by Kenneth Macpherson, the novelist Bryher and the poet H.D., and published between 1927 and 1933. Here, critics and psychoanalysts, such as Barbara Low and Sachs Hanns, help readers, as well as film spectators, to conceive cinema from many psychological perspectives.

However, we can not forget that cinema had already existed a few decades before modernism; the first film cameras for moving images were invented and used by the Lumière brothers in the 1890s and the première of the Cinématographe took place in 1895. One of these first public exhibitions was filmed from a moving train, and was about its arrival at a station, provoking some of its spectators, who were in a deep state of amusement, to hysterically scream and run, believing this train to be truly chasing them; thus, reflecting how the individual “could be psychologically and physically transported by visual technology” (Nead: 124). Moreover, these new ways of looking at the visual world could capture unseen aspects of human, animal, and in this case, object motion.

These moving images are a result of the development of previous optical experiments: stereoscopes, dioramas, magic lantern shows, zoetropes, mutoscopes and peepshows; which led to the latter development of new visual technologies appearing in a range of cultural forms, such as sensation theatres with their special effects, and department-store windows<sup>1</sup>.

On the other hand, referring back to the cinematic criticism selected for this paper, in the second section, due to my personal interest in showing the differentiation between men and women in film, I have chosen to discuss “The early representation of women”, which explains how women were conceived to be looked at on the screen in those years, and in the subsection devoted to the literary critic Dorothy Richardson, who was so involved in depicting this innovative artistic development as seen in her contribution of articles to *Close Up*, we are also

able to see this differentiation from a feminist point of view; regarding silent cinema as the most sympathetic and honest means of artistic expression in contrast to her almost complete denial of the arrival of sound cinema since she believed the incorporation of dialogue to cinema a masculine strategy for manipulation in a patriarchal society.

Both Raitt's book and this new edition of *Close Up* have been the key bibliographic sources for this feminine vision of cinema of modernism, as we will see through Dorothy Richardson's re-edition of her column of articles contributed to the first edition of *Close Up* by Laura Marcus, "Continuous Performance", as well as female critics, such as Laura Mulvey, Mary Doane, and Anne Kuhn, that discuss the psychological aspect of film from a feminist point of view.

In the third section, preceding the conclusions from this research project, it has been crucial for me to provide both literary and filmic masterpieces of modernism where all the theoretical conventions explained throughout these sections are put into practice.

First of all, for best reflecting the interrelation between fictional narrative and the innovative language suggested by film, we have a complete depiction of Virginia Woolf's autobiographical and experimental novel, *To the Lighthouse* (1927). My analysis begins with a brief introduction to the story and the characters, and then it focuses on its most important aim, providing several details of its middle section "Time Passes" that make obvious Woolf's approach to the visual unconscious that characterises the new cinematic language, and indeed, seeing how it presents new possibilities for this communicative conventions apart from those already established by excluding any relevance or even any kind of activity from any character, and giving darkness the dominant role.

By extension, and to reflect the permeability between the avant-garde arts and film, I have selected *Un Chien Andalou* (1926) and *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920) for my final commentaries. The former, directed and produced by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, is a surrealist short film from which we can barely derive any cultural or psychological explanation for the action depicted – something that also defines surrealism perfectly since it invites to a deeper analysis of human behaviour. About the latter, directed by Robert Wiene and considered a masterpiece of German expressionism, in total opposition to the aims of cultural transmission of surrealism, we focus on the plot, as well as a number of



psychoanalytic insights into what the characters of the film represent, with a view to identify how it reflects the submission of the German population to authority to the point that they get themselves in a deep state of madness.

Both of them use conventional visual codes characteristic of the first experimental cameras of modernism, as well as common devices such as the use of chiaroscuro to highlight dramatic events; but whereas Luis Buñuel was considered as a great director – although *Un Chien Andalou* was highly controversial in its first years of public exhibition – Robert Wiene was criticised for including a frame to the film when its script did not include one by the German social theorist Siegfried Kracauer and the German author Hans Janowitz.

In conclusion, although differently, they both genuinely illustrate the most remarkable artistic conventions of early cinema.

Along with Raitt's book, Maggie Humm's book *Modernist Women and Cultural Cultures: Virginia Woolf, Vanessa Bell, Photography and Cinema*; has been a really transcendental source that has also helped me to learn about not only that interest of Virginia Woolf in the visual cultural devices of her period, but also the relation between the avant-garde arts and cinema, which has been extended in Uli Jung's and, Walter Schatzberg's *Beyond Caligari: The Films of Robert Wiene*, by proving further notions of expressionism for my commentary on *Das Cabinet des Caligari*.

## **1. THE VISUAL UNCONSCIOUS OF FILM**

### **1.1. THE NEW LANGUAGE SUGGESTED BY CINEMA**

As stated before, the most significant point of this research about cinema concerns Woolf's conception of the cinematic language, literally defined in her article as "some residue of visual emotion... something abstract, something which moves with controlled and conscious art" ("The cinema": 4). As far as I understand her insights in this essay, her main goal when considering the function of language in film is to highlight the existence of implicit messages not being coded by conventional language, but made visible to the spectators' eyes by a new innovative and visual language instead: "is there, we ask, some secret language which we feel and see, but never speak, and, if so, could this be made visible to the eye?"(ibid.).

Once that I have introduced her own concept of this language, I want to explain how these spectators' brains are needed when they enter in the first place into that state of distraction and visual pleasure suggested by Virginia Woolf which is involved in watching films.

First of all, this state of visual pleasure that Woolf identifies with the act of watching films is what she matches as her first significant point in "The Cinema". Here, main thing established is the aim of cinema as something enjoyable for its audience through its pleasant images and scenes appearing visible to the eye: "the eye licks it all up instantaneously, and the brain, agreeably titillated, settles down to watch things happening without bestirring itself to think" (1).

Then, she realises that apart from merely observe, we need to process the intended meaning of those scenes in order to understand what is really happening. This second point is when the brain takes action. Besides, here it is also when the spectator experiences his or her own exclusion from the film in the sense that although his or her look and mind control the cinematic scene by decoding it, this spectator does not take part of the action developed in this scene since they can not change neither dialogue nor setting, and they can not even end this scene either.

She refers to this experience as one of immortality and ephemerality: "this beauty will continue, and this beauty will flourish whether we behold it or not [...] We are beholding a world which has gone beneath the waves" (2). The crisis of the spectator's exclusion is illustrated here due to these two terms being contradictory with each other. In addition, this exclusion is not only noticed by the fact of the spectator not being allowed to take part in the film's action, but also through the element of the individual spectator as constantly irrelevant because she or he "could be anyone, leave the cinema, and the film would still continue" (Raitt: 60).

Finally, Woolf establishes as her third theoretical point the effortless transition of narratives offered by the cinema by selecting the same setting for both cinematic and fictional narrative. This cinematic effects are tremendously relevant because they postpone the spectators' crisis of absence in the films through the repetition of some scenes, making these spectators feel closer to the action by those "violent changes of emotion produced by their [the emotions'] collision" ("The Cinema": 5) related to their sympathy for the characters on the screen.

Moreover, highly relevant to this new mode of perception is another different critical concept with which Woolf, according to the psychoanalytic analysis of Raitt, anticipates contemporary film theory, and which is crucial to the understanding of cinema: Suture. This concept helps contemporary critics to understand her insights better.

In film theory, it means “the constant reconstruction of the spectator/subject through each successive image of the film. (...) This concept in classical cinema depends on the editing technique known as ‘shot/reverse shot’” (Raitt: 65). This technique is explained by Stephen Heath as follows:

A reverse shot folds over the shot it joins and is joined in turn by the reverse it positions; a shot of a person looking is succeeded by a shot of the object looked at which is succeeded in turn by a shot of the person looking to confirm the object as seen; and so on, in a number of multiple imbrications. (Heath: 54)

Consequently, suture works by implying points of view, in Anne Kuhn’s words, “the narrator is not foreground as a ‘person’; ‘I’ is not enunciated” (Kuhn: 49). This absence would be filled by the spectator, already becoming the subject of the look and whose point of view will be reflected in the film’s next image. It can be said that this also postpones the anxiety of the spectator about his or her own absence by seeming that he or she is watching it from within the space of the film itself as if he or she were actually there.

Furthermore, this technique allows the spectators to discover from which point of view the original shot was taken, and also to feel ourselves as bound into the film’s network of looks since we are in the same position of the characters appearing now on the screen.

In conclusion, all of Woolf’s terms in “The cinema” – pleasure, absence and “smoothing away” – are related to the process of suture, seeing how the initial pleasurable feeling of the spectator is replaced by anxiety of absence when becoming aware of the frames of the film as the limits of the images, “we behold [the images] as they are when we are not there.” (“The cinema”: 2). Then, this absence is made good by this shot/reverse shot in making the spectator feel included into the narrative process, hence making her or his absence, as Woolf said, “smoothed away”.

## 1.2. OTHER PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISMS

Apart from analysing Woolf's personal insights about this innovative cinematic language, it is also important to highlight some other critical figures that were a source of inspiration for her in terms of theorising the visible unconscious of the human being in film, and that published their theoretical approaches to cinema in *Close Up*.

Psychic mechanisms of the specular were a key issue in both psychoanalytic and film theory of the 1920s and 1930s. The magazine *Close Up* (1927- 1930) became a focus for debates about Freudian theories of perception. Some of its critics, most remarkably Hanns Sachs, were deeply concerned with the idea of making film a visual source which could make the psychological coherencies of the human being visible. How this might be achieved, is by adopting Freud's concept of "symptomatic action", concerning those small, trivial gestures which might betray character and plot and which are indispensable means of expression. For example, one of Woolf's deepest concerns is the psychic power of film to suggest through its "unconscious optics" that film itself is an entirely cognitive process. Thus, the clear linkage of the brain and the eye make the influence of Freud's theory about the unconscious evident in her critique about film.

Moreover, in relation to this concept, Sachs, in his article for *Close Up* "Film Psychology", defines film as "revealed as a kind of time-microscope, that is to say, it shows us clearly and unmistakably things that are to be found in life but that ordinarily escape our notice" (Sachs: 12). What concerns him most in his writing is those relations between consciousness and unconsciousness, suggesting film-work as functioning not only by analogy but also by contrast with dream-work. "Whereas the dream disguises unconscious desires, the film reveals them" (Marcus: 244). So, it is clear that Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1904) was a crucial influential source for Sachs's own criticism and analysis of film.

A key example which Laura Marcus selects for her edition of this magazine, and which reflects the interrelation between film and psychoanalysis is Pabst's *Secrets of a Soul* (1926), since this is a psychoanalytic film in itself, both in theme and because it problematizes Freud's constant resistance to the idea of film being capable of representing human abstractions at all, and the subsequent interest of Hanns Sachs and the theorist Karl Abraham in the making of films involving the concept of psychoanalysis. Among these filmic productions, *Borderline* (1930) was defined by its director Kenneth Macpherson as an attempt

for something that “had not been done, has not been touched, except in Pabst’s frankly psychoanalytic film, *Secrets of a Soul*” (quoted in Marcus: 241).

On the other hand, in this magazine, the psychoanalyst Barbara Low developed her complex theory of the relationship between children’s perceptions of cinema and childhood development. She realised that, although cinema might reinforce early childhood feelings of omnipotence in a regressive way, yet more radically it could be a “therapeutic vehicle” (Low, 1927: 49), precisely because it allowed children not to repress their “magically fulfilled desires” (Ibid.).

As we can see, all these new linkages between screen perceptions and audience identities being made by psychoanalysts and film theorists, result in more progressive representations of subjectivity conducive to gender concerns being offered, as we will see in the next section.

## **2. FEMINIST ACCOUNTS TO FILM**

### **2.1. THE EARLY REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN FILM**

Debates about the innovations of cinematic language were from early on associated with discussions of the representation and construction of gendered identities. Woolf and others addressed the question of femininity and the look.

According to Mary Ann Doane, the representation of women is clearly subjected to the production of the cinematic image. As an illustration of this we have the production of the Hollywood star, although women were there to be looked at socially and culturally long before Hollywood. Already in 1899 Thorstein Veblen noticed in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* that the function of middle- and upper-class wives was as the consumers of valuable goods in order to show that their husbands’ wealth should be displayed, making them the direct owners of these women by imposing some type of orders and prohibitions, such as determining what kind of clothes they were allowed to wear in order not to awake physical desire in other men. This reinforces the figure of men as proprietors being increasingly supported by the public exhibition of films recreating this kind of scenes.

Furthermore, the introduction of woman as a pleasurable object of film has brought with it some controversial accounts, such as they impeding the progress of the

cinematic narrative: “The presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation” (Mulvey: 11). For example, when recording scenes performed by the famous actress Greta Garbo, the filmmakers sometimes pause their cameras on her face for a considerable length of time to simply highlight her beauty. However, according to Laura Mulvey, woman’s image can not be just pleasurable, pointing out (influenced by Freud) that the spectacle of the female body is always a threat to the male ego, which enters into a kind of anxiety or fear of losing the penis: “The woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified” (Ibid.: 13).

All this is highly related to Freudian theories about children and sexuality, for example, his statement of children’s learning sexual differences through the dramatic discovery of seeing their mothers’ genitals and thus, realising that they have not penises. All this reference to women not having penises remarks their own blaming for this lack, therefore threatening the figure of man as the centre. Another example involves the adoption of fetishism, defined by Freud as the replacement of “the normal sexual object... by another which bears some relation to it, but is entirely unsuited to serve the normal sexual aim”<sup>2</sup> – for instance, underclothes, hair, feet. This adoption arises from the desire to erase the memory of these children seeing the “castrated” female body for the first time. This results in a tendency to concentrate in some object which could substitute in their minds for the penis rather than accepting that castration is a real possibility since women do not have penises. From here, according to Mulvey, derives the obsession of woman as an icon of film in the sense that the audience only focus on her physical image, but this again is a contradiction since this display of images of women represents a constant reminder of that male fear. Consequently, “the fetish is on the interface between safety and danger” (Raitt: 65).

Finally, once this early vision of women on the screen is seen, it is time to focus on other feminine aspects of film concerning women spectatorship rather than woman as object of the look.

## 2.2. DOROTHY RICHARDSON'S CONTRIBUTION TO *CLOSE UP*

Now, continuing to provide different insights for these former responses of the spectators to film regarding femininity and the look, it is important to mention the novelist Dorothy Richardson as she, with her articles about film in *Close Up*, was a very influential feminist writer and critic who also was considered by Virginia Woolf as a great source of inspiration for her both theoretical and feminist accounts of cinema in this magazine. In some biographical works about Virginia Woolf, it is said that she deeply admired writers such as Richardson and James Joyce; both became figures of crucial influence in her critical work.<sup>3</sup>

Richardson, like Woolf with *To the Lighthouse* (1926), wrote what is considered a very clear example of cinematic writing, namely the short story "The Garden" (1924). She was concerned with representing the creative consciousness proper of childhood, and the use of memory: "Pretty pretty flowers. Standing quite still, going on being how they were when no one was there."<sup>4</sup>

This illustration of presence and absence is closely echoed in some passages of Virginia Woolf's "The Cinema" I quoted earlier, specifically those ones describing the beauty of the images of the screen in which we, as mere spectators, take no part. Moreover, as we will see later, in "Time Passes", it can be said that Woolf created a new cinematic aesthetic of potential cinema through a radical experiment in narration in which "reality itself is presented as if in the absence of the perceiving subject" (Marcus: 154). In these texts, she, together with Richardson, removes from the scene the omniscient narrator since he or she is identified by them with the hegemonic worlds of nineteenth-century fiction. "In so doing, they transcribe a spectral mimesis" (ibid.: 154-5), which is also going to be predicated on the "speaking silence" of the cinema which Richardson is going to support later in her contribution to *Close Up* so deliberately in total contrast with her rejection of "talking pictures".

All this suggests what is going to be her enthusiastic involvement in the project of *Close Up*, to which she contributed more than twenty articles – most of them for her regular column called "Continuous Performance". Actually, her primary concern was directly connected to all this former response to cinema by its audience, specifically how they reacted to the different aspects of cinematic representation, communication and viewing. She explored the conditions of cinema spectatorship in practical terms – for example, wondering what shape should be a

cinema auditorium – and phenomenological terms – how would be the spectator integrated into the filmic spectacle. I will briefly describe these concerns by citing one of Richardson's articles in "Continuous Performance", "There's no Place Like Home". She mainly thinks that the local cinemas given to every man have to have the form of a garage:

For the local, or any, cinema, the garage shape is the right shape because in it the faithful are side by side confronting the screen and not as in some super-cinemas in a semi-circle whose sides confront each other and get the screen sideways. The screen should dominate. That is the prime necessity. It should fill the vista save for the doorways on either side whose reassuring "Emergency Exit" beams an intermittent moonlight. (quoted in Marcus: 168)

In the production of fiction as film explained just above, Richardson maintained in principle a conceptual distinction between these two terms, remarking the privilege which one of them has over the other. In an article on "Films for Children" she reflects this privilege stating that "the film, with its freedom from the restrictions of language, is more nearly universal than the book and can incorporate, for the benefit of the rest, the originality of each race unhampered by translation."<sup>5</sup> In another *Close Up* article, she refers again to this distinction between film and literature, not only fiction, strongly defending the sphere of the literary: "The film is a social art, a show, something for collective seeing... Reading, all but reading aloud, is a solitary art... The film is a skyey apparition, white searchlight. The book remains the intimate, domestic friend, the golden lamp at the elbow."<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, she was equally interested in referring to specific films and film technique and exhibition. Her contribution concerning the function of musical accompaniment describes the transition from the elementary performances of a pianist in the picture palace of North London, with his playing constituting a continuous improvisation with variations of tone and tempo according to what was showing on the screen, to his replacement by a miniature orchestra, which at each change of scene would correspondingly change one tune for another using several instruments and producing harmonious effects, once this little palace prospered. This adoption of orchestras resulted in disaster, reducing the audiences because of frequent cares where the music accompaniment mismatched the projection. "By whatever means, the aim is to unify. If film and music proceed at cross purposes the audience is distracted by a half-conscious effort to unite them. The doings of an orchestra, that is an entertainment in itself, go far in destroying the entertainment one came forth to seek" (163).



Moreover, in her article about filmic captions, she criticises the uselessness of providing for such an extended length of time of the projection a screenful of names, the parts and their players followed by further information about the whole internal production of the film. Instead, she thinks the caption should properly be the technical device used to “launch us on our journey: a screenful of psychology, history, or description of period and locality” (164). These captions must be relatively “invisible”, meaning that film can present the life of the spirit directly by making these captions appear for a short length of time on the screen with the aim of making their texts not seen as captions by the audience.

Equally interesting is also her personal amusement about the use of slow-motion cameras for the films. In order to describe their function, she depicts the process of two different slow-motion exhibitions, such as a picture of three runners about to finish a mile race, and another one of horses clearing a hedge. They both are instances of continuous movement, and the purpose for presenting these pictures as slow-motivated is mainly to make them funny to the audience by changing the feeling they would transmit in case they were shown in regular motion. “The three figures, first shown moving at normal pace, were in desperate competition, agonised heads thrown back, open mouths agasp at the last effort of supremacy; not a pleasing exhibition.” Finally, once this technique is put into practice “the laughter came, for the slowness, the anomaly” (182-3).

On the other hand, one of her most relevant accounts for film theory, increasingly important throughout “Continuous Performance”; is that of addressing the focus of this cinematic approach to the subjectivity dependent on the gendered identities of the audience; she discusses the meanings of cinema spectatorship for women, thus conceiving cinema as a woman’s sphere. She emphatically refers to this opposition between the feminine and the masculine by gendering silence as feminine, and speech as “fulfilling a masculine destiny” (157) for communication. It might seem that Richardson establishes what could be seen as essentialist definitions for these two identities; however, the definitions for women are extremely unstable since she, as well as Woolf,<sup>7</sup> firmly believed in the social constructedness of women’s identity. Besides, the reason for her to provide apparent essentialist definitions for women is not precisely that she was an essentialist critic; on the contrary, her main intention is to highlight men’s idealized or demonised conceptions of femininity in the form of satire.

An interesting account for this analysis refers to the contrast between the apparent self-confidence of women about their own sense of being, not needing any kind of filmic illusion to convince them that they exist in comparison with that of men, who only achieve this sense through an endless effort and thought, and through some kinds of artistic illusions or effects. She takes note of this by looking at women talking in the cinema, realising that this talking action exhibits “the film audience’s increasingly sophisticated response to early cinema; viewers no longer look in awed silence at anything and everything that is projected before them” (156). In Richardson’s words:

She is innocently, directly, albeit unconsciously, upon the path that men have reached through long centuries of effort and of thought. She does not need, this type of woman clearly does not need, the illusions of art to come to the assistance of her own sense of existing. Instinctively she maintains a balance, the thing perceived and herself perceiving [...] It is only in recent years that man has known beauty to emanate from himself, to be his gift to what he sees. And the dreadful woman asserting herself in the presence of no matter what grandeurs unconsciously testifies that life goes on, art or no art, and that the onlooker is part of the spectacle. (quoted in Marcus: 175)

According to this, as Richardson suggests, the modern woman refuses to be a passive spectator; and the cinema is the means whereby she inserts herself into the spectacle. That is why Richardson insistently relates silent cinema with women, because they find themselves both in and in tension with the aesthetic of the silent cinema. A personal definition of hers of woman and man separately will respectively be that of Being and Becoming, going woman as being against the prevalent concept of the “new woman” in her reworkings of Victorian injunctions for children’s behaviour as an “evolving” creature.

In her article “The Film Gone Male” she claims that women excel in memory since they, according to some male thinkers, largely remember and contemplate “things regarded as past and done with”, and as this action is seen by these thinkers as useless, women are conceived by them as passive subjects “scarcely touched by evolving civilization” (206). However, there is also another different type of memory, which unlike a mere backward glance “gathers, can gather, and pile up its wealth only round universal, unchanging, unevolving verities that move neither backwards nor forwards and have neither speech nor language” (ibid..).

This is another reason why women are directly connected to silence, defined by Richardson as “humanity’s silent half, without much faith in speech as a medium of communication” (ibid..). Another of her theoretical insights concerning the use of speech by

women, is how in such an essentialist manner men claim the apparent inability of women to properly talk when actually their use of speech is tremendously more diverse than that of men since women are only interested in the idea of using language as a medium for hiding their emotions:

Chatter, chatter, chatter, as men say. And say also that only one in a thousand can talk. Quite. For all these women use speech, with individual differences, alike: in the manner of a façade. Their awareness of being, as distinct from man's awareness of becoming, is so strong that when they are confronted, they must, in most circumstances, snatch at words to cover either their own palpitating spiritual nakedness or that of another. (ibid..)

This gives us an insight into what became Richardson's explicit hatred of sound cinema, since film, regarded as a medium of communication, experienced the transition from being magnificently able to evoke, transmit, reflect and express emotions through the simplicity of moving characters and objects, to including speech as a masculine medium of propaganda and/or demagoguery. "In becoming audible and particularly in becoming a medium of propaganda, it is doubtlessly fulfilling a masculine destiny. The destiny of planful becoming rather than of purposeful being" (ibid..).

Finally, she concludes this article by wisely claiming that the new film is covered by the shadows of censorship, being language a weapon for manipulation against the most instinctive and sensitive emotions of its audience and even its characters.

In conclusion, this, together with Mulvey's analysis, is what constitutes my feminist account to cinema, in which we can see that men and women are different in terms of spectatorship, both as subjects and objects of the look, and which concludes the theoretical part of this research project.

### **3. CINEMATIC CONVENTIONS IN NARRATIVE AND IN FILM**

#### **3.1. VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE***

Once that every theoretical account selected for this whole research of cinema has been explained, now is time for me to proceed and show examples where all these cinematic conventions are put into practice. I will start by depicting the most significant autobiographical literary work in which Virginia Woolf translates in the form of fictional

narrative her observations and disclosures about the new cinematic language, which clearly had an amusing effect upon her during the years she worked as an experimental novelist: *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Indeed, the fact that this novel was written in the same year as her article “The Cinema” gives us an idea of her interest in the question.

To begin with, the story consists in an observation across the years at the vacation house of Mrs Ramsay and her family, which faces the gales of the North Atlantic, seeing how they seek to recapture meaning from the flux of things and the passage of time. Though it is the death of Mrs. Ramsay that the novel turns on, her presence pervades every page in a poetic evocation of loss and memory that is also a celebration of domestic life and its most intimate details. In short, this book, as we will see, manages to provide a powerful allegory of the creative consciousness in which Woolf was so interested.

The entire novel is characterised by Woolf’s innovative use of the narrative voice. The sentences constituting the dialogue can be completely discontinuous with one another in tone and style – for example, when reading a sentence spoken by Mrs Ramsay in direct speech and the subsequent ones in the form of indirect speech when reporting her own thoughts, or even through an omniscient narrator contemplating the scene – with the goal of enabling readers to form a total mental perspective of the background selected for the images, as well as reflecting some of the character’s perceptions of the world, like this one by Lily:

Only like a bee, drawn by some sweetness or sharpness in the air intangible to touch or taste, one haunted the dome-shaped hive, ranged the wastes of the air over the countries of the world alone, and then haunted the hives with their murmurs and their stirrings; the hives which were people. (Woolf: 44)

Some of the symbols for all human thoughts in this novel are the windows to which Mrs Ramsay attaches so much importance: “Windows should be open, and doors shut” (ibid.: 15). This explains the relevance of picturing a mental perspective of all features characterising the physical appearance of its objects and characters - especially that of Mrs Ramsay’s – in order also to transmit Woolf’s personal feelings about these characters, since they are the alter egos of Woolf’s real life – Lily for Woolf herself, Mr Ramsay for Leslie Stephen, and Mrs Ramsay for Julia Stephen, among others; designed to make this novel her most accurate autobiography reflecting her distorted mental state as she remembers the evils of her life, like the death of her mother and her father’s intransigence.<sup>8</sup>

Mirrors also act as remarkable symbols as they reflect Mrs Ramsay's internal crisis of her inner self as she observes her decaying beauty as a message of mismanagement: "When she looked in the glass and saw her hair grey, her cheek sunk, at fifty, she thought, possibly she might have managed things better – her husband; money; his books" (9).

In "Time Passes" (the central section of the three into which the novel is divided), the waves that meant so much for her are laid down stopping any kind of movement, drawing a still sea which is only able to reflect a false beauty, like a hall of mirrors. In addition, this part of the novel is the one which fits into the new cinematic narrative design the best.

This section is considered to be the strangest one of the book because it is here that the intended plot of the story recognised by the readers in the first half is almost completely abandoned. The main reason for seeing this strange middle section as the most experimental, including new possibilities of cinematic narrative, is that, in effect, here the inclusion of the spectator into the film's spectacle of which Woolf insists so frequently in "The Cinema" is radically broken: "Whereas the first half is concerned with the construction of the human gaze, the relationship of watcher to the scene that is watched, in the second part there is no longer anyone watching. Narrative is realised simply through the passage of time" (Raitt: 88).

There is an evident absence of characters throughout the descriptions, being readers only able to witness nonsensical historical changes of human events such as marriage, childhood, and death. These descriptions are seemingly nonsensical because it really makes no sense to describe and recreate human events when there is no real human character involved in the action. Even Woolf felt herself perplexed when writing this part in her diary:

I cannot make it out – here is the most difficult abstract piece of writing – I have to give an empty house, no people's characters, the passage of time, all eyeless & featureless with nothing to cling to: well, I rush at it, & at once scatter our two pages. Is it nonsense, is it brilliance? Why am I so flown with words, & apparently free to do exactly what I like? (18 April 1926, 76)

Therefore, in "Time Passes", gaze is not focused: "Her eyes fell on nothing directly, but with a sidelong glance" (Woolf: 121). As this gaze stands absent, there is no existent stable system of perspective, no possibility of suture:

Faint and flickering, like a yellow beam or the circle at the end of a telescope, a lady in a grey cloak, stooping over her flowers, went wandering over the bedroom wall, up the

dressing-table, across the washstand, as Mrs McNab hobbled and ambled, dusting, straightening. (127)

According to Suzanne Raitt, “Time Passes” is the extreme of the cinematic scene with which Woolf was so fascinated, as it follows some cinematic characteristics that Woolf claims in her article: “we see life as it is when we have no part in it” (“The Cinema”: 2).

This absence of focus might have resulted in lack of structure; however, as I have highlighted before, those human historical changes are just seemingly, and not actually, nonsensical because later in her writing, Woolf was perfectly able to make all the parts of this book fit together by only showing childhood, marriage and death, among other human meanings, as irrelevant in this second part, whereas in the whole meaning of the book they are of crucial importance.

On the other hand, focusing on the new kind of narrative of potential cinema, and knowing that “the human subject is both ‘eyeless’ and ‘I-less’” (Raitt.: 90), a subject completely unable of properly picturing either dreams or experiences with nature is going to be the thing that in the meantime will lead to an interest in finding a language for the unconscious by focusing on what is felt about the things dreamt by these sleeping subjects instead of claiming what something is like by looking at it. Evidence for this is the fact that this second part involves the passing of a single night – although the readers of this book know that years have passed between parts I and III. The only dominant objects in this part are the lighthouse, warning ships from the rocks, and the sea, whereas the human characters sleep. “Nothing, it seemed, could survive the flood, the profusion of darkness [...] Not only was furniture confounded; there was scarcely anything left of body or mind by which one could say ‘This is he’ or ‘This is she’” (Woolf: 127).

Mainly, it can be said that darkness has marginalised the subject of the look – the human eye. In this section, it is also possible to consider this darkness and water as if they were the same substance. “Both distort and erase contours [...] furniture and people are suddenly unrecognisable, gesture and voice involuntary spasms rather than part of a continuing narrative” (Raitt: 92).

Moreover, there are some images from “The Cinema” which closely echo this new language based on the subjectivity of thought rather than vision which constitutes this entire part; in particular, the most significant parallel between these two texts comes near the end of

it: “sometimes at the cinema in the midst of its immense dexterity and enormous technical proficiency, the curtain parts and we behold, far off, some unknown and unexpected beauty. But it is for a moment only” (5). This problematic moment of insight in *To the Lighthouse* is also the problem of the cinematic scene, motivating Woolf to speculate about the evolution of this innovative language: “Here is a scene waiting a new art to be transfixed” (2). This is when she talks about the curious shape of the tadpole suggesting the possibility of an emotional language independent of any human narrative, which she tries to adopt in “Time Passes”.

It is important to know that the main reason for the transition from introducing images in part I of *To the Lighthouse* with the shaping influence of the spectator, to doing the opposite in the second part (although their lexicon is the same) is death – specifically, Mrs Ramsay’s death. Here, again darkness and the change of seasons play a key role in representing this decaying state of beauty that becomes physical death at the end of the section: “The nights now are full of wind and destruction; the trees plunge and bend” (Woolf: 119).

Furthermore, once Mrs Ramsay is gone, this governing darkness gives rise to the concern with observing the frames of all elements of the scenes -both human and artificial objects- as signifiers for the recent absence of the human body which used to inhabit the house once:

What people had shed and left – a pair of shoes, a shooting cap, some faded skirts and coats in wardrobes – those alone kept the human shape and in the emptiness indicated how once they were filled and animated. (120)

This represents a completely empty house which used to be full of people. How everything succeeding Mrs Ramsay’s death –for example, the sound of the wind against the trees and all kind of shapes without animation or spectators – is covered by a mourning and highly feminine silence of light and darkness, which in the cinematic language would be the black and white of early cinema: “The shadows of the trees, flourishing in the wind, made obeisance on the wall, and for a moment darkened the pool in which light reflected itself” (Ibid.), and it is also a mourning for life, for how everything that used to be brilliant and have some consistence in the world is now suddenly being extinguished. Here the projections are even more unstable than before.

Finally, once the “long night” (128) is over, the human eyes retake their leading role, and Lily Briscoe finally awakens. In Raitt’s own words: “Someone is keeping guard again” (Raitt: 99).

### **3.2. UN CHIEN ANDALOU**

As the explanation of this permeability between the new cinematic language and fictional literature is completed, I am going to provide two commentaries of two different films which reflect key cultural conventions of modernism, specifically the emergence of the avant-garde arts through cinema.

To begin with, *Un Chien Andalou* – produced by Salvador Dalí, and directed by Luis Buñuel – breaks all audience’s expectations by providing a surrealistic story from which it is really difficult – but not impossible – to derive any cultural or psychological interpretation.

One curious and controversial aspect of this film is that, although avant-garde films were formally seen as emblematic of new modernist psychological perceptions, the director Luis Buñuel pointed out in some reviews of this film that this short-film had nothing to do with any conventional avant-garde film of the period, and gave neither a coherent psychological account, nor any logical perception of some themes or attitudes of some of its characters. This is controversial in the sense that the plot of this experimental film, as well as his own interest in surrealism, emerged from the great interest Luis Buñuel had in dreams, which he considered a reflection for the obstacles of his own that he perfectly knew. This film is a combination of a dream of his with one of Dalí. Therefore, although we already know that the plot of this film is very difficult to understand, it makes no sense to say that this film does not accomplish the role of the conventional avant-garde films when it actually accomplishes some of their formal aspects, such as resembling Freud’s psychology of dreams.

Moreover, *Un Chien Andalou* can be seen as an illustration of some of the disastrous consequences in terms of humans’ mental state by the fears suffered after the First World War. Hence, this short- film bases itself on Freud’s psychology, not only of dreams, but also of those psychoanalytic theories calling into question the prevailing morality as a social construct.



The alternative title (used by the producers) is itself an indication of this interest in mental disturbance: “It is dangerous to lean in” in opposition to the instruction written on a train window: “It is dangerous to lean out”.

*Un Chien Andalou* was filmed with the main goal of claiming, apart from the psychological, the social dimension of art. It is very important to take into account the permeability between avant-garde and modernism by seeing the power of film to approximate art; specifically, how an avant-garde means of expression such as surrealism is the key source and the genre selected for this film.

On the other hand, I would like to provide a segmentation for this film in spite of the huge difficulty involved due to the absence of both narrative and logical accessible interpretation of the different scenes constituting this short film.

Principally, seven sequences might be found through the different spaces in which the action takes place, and through the sub-headings locating the action in at specific times.

1. Once upon a time, we can see a man in a balcony sharpening a knife with which he is going to notch a woman’s eye while a cloud briefly hides the moon.
2. Eight years later, from a window, a woman and a cyclist see a young man with an androgynous look playing with a hand and being struck by a car.
3. Around three A.M., the cyclist, who is resting, receives the visit of his other self and get punished against the wall.

[Seventeen years before, his other self takes two books from a desk and gives them to the cyclist].

The books given become guns and the punished shots at his alter-ego.

4. The dead body falls to the countryside against the back of a naked woman. Later, a group of men collect it.
5. Back into the room, the woman observes a butterfly with the symbol of a skull drawn on it. Then, she abandons the cyclist.
6. At the beach, this woman takes a walk with another man and they find some of the clothes with which the cyclist was dressed in.

7. In spring, the bodies of both the woman and this young man lie half-buried in the sand.

These scenes lend themselves to different interpretations; in my view, Buñuel intended to reflect through this film the oppressive mental state of the human being in such a way that the first thing seen after the woman's eye has been cut is her own contemplation of a civilized man (the cyclist) being driven by his most primitive instincts – promiscuity and murdering of his civilized self along with the humiliation and mistreatment of the catholic institution as we see by two priests being tied to a piano and dragged by him. Consequently, this woman in her sane state decides to abandon him for another man, hence provoking this former insane man into killing them.

Along with this segmentation, it is also crucial to focus on two different formal aspects concerning this filmic production: The filmic text, and the story.

First of all, concerning the filmic text, this film relies on very conventional visual codes. Middle-grounds and foregrounds are predominant with the occasional introduction of general grounds of exterior scenes. It uses a fixed framing with mostly horizontal compositions. Sometimes, the right angle is interrupted by some low angles in order to show the street views, and specially, to show the young androgynous man surrounded by a multitude of people, who in the same way as the ants, are dispersed in all directions. Then, it also shows a slight low angle in the moment of the cyclist's touching the woman's breast; and finally, an imaginary ground from the wall in which both woman and cyclist observe the hand from which ants spread.

With regard to lighting, chiaroscuro is used to contribute to the dramatic effect of this film, showing the alter ego as the opposite of the original or real self.

The soundtrack serves also to identify this film as avant-garde, combining some fragments from popular tangos with tracks from Beethoven and Wagner; act as signifiers for the impossibility of love, and to accompany the erotic scenes, respectively. Taking this selection of classic masterpieces such as *Tristan und Isolde* in *Un Chien Andalou* deepens its intent of addressing this avant-garde films to a more attentive audience, remarking the importance of incorporating arts into film. This selection of more sophisticated music genres presents a great

contrast with the music genres selected for popular films of the period, which tended to be based on tracks of Jazz and Blues, which are distinctly much more popular and recognizable by the general public.

Besides, this selection of tracks accomplishes at the same time one aesthetic aspect of film which – remembering Richardson’s accounts – was the importance of being its musical accompaniment in total connection with what is going on the screen.

On the other hand, this incorporation of arts into film does not only take place in *Un Chien Andalou* through music, but also through painting. For example, the scene of the couple half buried in the sand resembles to Goya’s painting *Fight with Cudgels* (1820). Another instance is the woman leafing through a book with a picture of the painting *The Lacemaker*, by Vermeer (1669); and finally, the death of the other self of the cyclist also resembling Manet’s *The Luncheon on the Grass* (1863).

Concerning the syntactic codes of the filmic text we can observe enchainé angles (the man biking), casting angles (after the alter ego’s death), and foregrounds (focusing on the butterfly’s skull). These cinematic viewing angles succeed each other at a fast pace. Some failures of raccord (cinematographic continuity) become very interesting for this formal depiction: The androgynous young man being hit by a car while holding a box and later appearing on the screen without it, and then, the woman who, in her escape from the cyclist, gets this same man’s hand trapped by a closing door which, seen from the perspective of the contiguous room, opens the opposite direction.

Equally significant to Buñuel’s intention to make this film different from other conventional avant-garde films is the split between this filmic production and a convention of classic film called MIR—which refers to the modes of institutional representation of classic films, which are a series of standardised rules applying to the codification of the new filmic language in order for these new fictional world of films to offer internal coherence, lineal causality, psychological realism, and spatial and temporal continuity. Since in this film we hardly found any logical or coherent psychological account, or spatial and temporal continuity, *Un Chien Andalou* does not follow the rules of this cinematic institution.

It could be argued that this non-compliance of lineal causality and psychological realism simultaneously breaks some of the constructed and stereotypical reflections of consciousness,

as well as the unconsciousness of the human being through filmic production supported by Virginia Woolf; *Un Chien Andalou* would then be one of the pioneer films involved in the creation of a new experimental film language. Apart from that, I also consider this short-film to be a magnificent representation of what Virginia Woolf classified as the early stage of film, for being itself mainly made to be a pleasurable object for the human gaze; but with an almost complete absence of suture since it is very difficult for the spectator to feel himself or herself included into the flow of images.

Secondly, and now giving further detail of the formal aspects of the story, the most important notion is that this tenuous connection of images, according to Dali's own words: "It does not say nor wants to say anything; it is just a simple observation of events which, instead of being conventional, and randomly constructed ones, are factual events, or similar to the factual, and therefore, enigmatic, incoherent, irrational, and non-sensical events".<sup>9</sup> This reinforces the subjectivity of interpretation.

Everything that could be outlined about the narrative of this story –if it really exists- is that the time is not lineal, albeit the great leaps in time are occasionally seemed as fictional, since, despite the subheadings, there is a continuity in the action developed in the same space and with the same characters.

It is also interesting that those captions providing information about the internal production of the film – director, actors, screenplay and photography – appear during such a brief length of time, achieving in the meanwhile to locate the audience by only giving relevant information and not boring them by making this information appear on the screen for an extended length of time.

*Un Chien Andalou*, therefore, can be considered to exemplify modernist cinema's traits in its innovative use of language (where images work by unexpected associations) and its interest in making visible the current ideas about the unconscious.

### **3.3. *DAS CABINET DES DR. CALIGARI***

The paradigmatic film selected in representation of one of the most pioneering cinematic movements emerging from avant-garde cultural modernism —Expressionism – is *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (1920), directed by Robert Wiene. which was considered by many as “a masterpiece of the avant-garde, a forerunner of international art cinema” (Jung and Schatzberg: 51).

As a starting point, it is important to know that the term “Expressionism” appeared in relation to the German visual arts shortly before the First World War. It was a broad movement committed to the exploration of inner reality and emotional subjectivity. Like the anti-traditionalist tendency of modernism, it tended to reject conventional “realism” and its mimetic approach to the surface realities of the world.

Although this film is not an adaptation, it draws on German folk tale and Gothic traditions. In addition, in cinematic art, it proved highly influential as a source and point of reference for adaptation.

Its elaborate sets, distorted camera angles and the use of chiaroscuro and dark shadows represent one of the most ambitious examples of cinematic modernism, as well as the most typical conventions of avant-garde film-making. The techniques of narrative following a terrific storyline, point of view, and visual design in *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* made the film highly influential and, more importantly, a work that has been frequently made reference to as a source of inspiration by subsequent generations. Likewise, the central characters, Dr. Caligari (played by Emil Jennings) and Cesare (played by Conrad Veidt) have become icons of modernist performance.

My own analysis of the film is indebted to the insights of theorists like Siegfried Kracauer and Hans Janowitz, who have discussed both its political dimension and formal aspects.

Despite the film’s critical status, many debates have taken place regarding the supposed mediocrity of Robert Wiene. For example, the well-known theorist of German sociology Siegfried Kracauer claims in his book *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947) that this director undermines the revolutionary aspect of this film and makes it a conformist film by constructing a frame, which means that every spectator and interpreter of *Caligari* might be

induced to see the film within the specific framework concerning the mentality of the German people.

Therefore, from this analysis of the German mentality it would follow that one of the themes involved in this kind of films of the Weimar period is the nation's readiness to submit themselves to a tyrant such as Hitler. Through expressionism, what this theorist intended to do was to explore the German soul to find a reason why this population would do such a thing:

Thus, behind the overt history of economic shifts, social exigencies and political machinations runs a secret history involving the inner dispositions of the German people. The disclosure of these dispositions through the medium of the German screen may help in the understanding of Hitler's ascent and ascendancy. (Kracauer: 11)

He believes film is the best way to do this because more than any other medium it is able to show the inner dispositions of the people.

In his chapter on *Caligari*, he characterises it as “the archetype of all forthcoming postwar films” (ibid.: 3) distributed films. By limiting himself to select films exclusively from Germany without reference to their popularity, the selection of motifs from this limited number of “art” films is neither psychology nor sociology; therefore, concealing the conception of the artist as the mediator for the spirit of the times.

Very interestingly, he distinguishes a dichotomy between submission and rebellion illustrated in the film version of *Caligari* because its director deprived the film of its revolutionary content by transposing the primary plot into the subjectivity of a madman. By including a frame he puts “the original into a box” (quoted in Jung, Schatzberg: 55). This symbolises for him the overall German submission to authority.

Other accounts of this addition of a frame have been provided by Hans Janowitz, who in contrast to Kracauer, does not see this addition in political terms. According to him, this is a symbolic tale about a man's tragic circumstances without any reference to a political theme:

Dr. Wiene, a man in his early fifties, of an older generation than ours, was afraid to venture in this new form of expressionist art. Therefore, to excuse the story, the oblique angles of the roofs and rooms of the scenery, the stylized masks of the actors, the askew painted world, the “Caligari world”, the “crazy world of 1919”, he intended to change our script on a very important point: at the end of the film our symbolic story was to be explained as being a tale told by a mentally deranged person, thus dishonouring our drama – the tragedy of a man gone mad by the misuse of his mental powers – into a

cliche, in which every incident was to be explained in a cheap manner, in which the symbolism was to be lost. (Janowitz: 48)

Mainly, he refers here to Wiene's opposition to the expressionist settings by explaining this story as a representation of madness. Nonetheless, it has to be known that Wiene had immediately accepted the plans suggested by the set designers. He constantly refers to the inclusion of this frame as destroying the true intent of the script, hence destroying in the meanwhile the impact of their narrative. Moreover, he grants that the frame he considers foolish serves at least to make the film's expressionism appealing to the audience; but again, his main point is still that the primary goal of the script is to tell the tragic story of a psychiatrist who has gone mad. Returning to German submission to authority, this story magnificently symbolises the madness implicit in authority by Caligari's exploitation of Cesare: "... our Dr. Caligari, the great authority, was mad, mad with the lust to kill, with the lust to force his brutal instincts on innocent subjects!"<sup>10</sup>

Kracauer and Janowitz both conclude their essays by claiming that without the frame, the film would have been much more powerful and honest.

Eventually, a comparison between the original scenario and the finished film may explain the reasons why Wiene saw himself forced to include the frame. What Kracauer and Janowitz both imply is that Wiene, confronted by the script, decided for commercial reasons to impose a frame even though there was none before to make it more palatable to the audience. However, what Kracauer and Janowitz did not know is that there was actually already a frame in the story, and what Wiene did was to replace it by another one he considered more suitable.

With this new frame, Wiene removed the main story from the outstanding theme of personal nostalgia to make the spectator feel more sympathetic and identify himself with the sufferings of the main character. By contrast, the frame as it is found in the screenplay also puts the audience at a constant distance from the action because they are constantly reminded of the frame by the titles of the first person narrator who tells his tale after twenty years they occurred.

In the original script, the closing frame is missing, thus arousing the ire of Kracauer and Janowitz, but nonetheless, heightening the film's complexity and its acknowledgment as a work of art. For instance, by extending the expressionist setting into the concluding frame,

Wiene avoided a sharp break between fantasy and reality achieving to have the audience in tension, and leaving certain openness in regard of the story's interpretation.

The expressionist distortion of the setting in which the psychiatric work takes place makes the spectator wonder if what she or he has seen is real or not. In the last scene, Caligari appears as a respected psychiatrist fundamental in society, but at the very end Wiene has him look directly into the camera and closes in an iris around his head. Here, the spectator is reminded of Caligari's first appearance as a mad mountebank. Besides, the element of the iris around his head makes the spectator to question the solidity of Caligari and his promise to cure Francis.

Although the main plot follows the script faithfully, there are some interesting interventions of Wiene. For example, one way in which Wiene contributed to enhance the effectiveness of the scenes is through the first appearance of the somnambulist. The box containing Cesare is delivered to Caligari's booth at the fairground, but in the film, the first appearance of Cesare is at the fairground in front of Caligari's booth, where Caligari is exhibiting a poster of this somnambulist and invites the visitors to enter his tent and see the thing for themselves. Inside this tent, the camera gradually moves closer to the stage and finally moves to be in front of Cesare when he opens his eyes and stares at his public, definitely one of the most dramatic and memorable moments of the film; and it was Wiene who recognised that the first view of Cesare should not be casual as it is in the script, but striking as he is showed in the film.

Another difference between film and script is the illustration of Francis and Alan's friendship. In the latter, Francis is a private tutor and Alan a young student, hence being these two of a considerable difference of age. However, in the former they are of the same age, thing that in the meanwhile makes them both suitors for Jane and competitors for her affection. This change of characteristics is crucial since it provides more conflict and entertainment, as well as additional interpretations for the audience.

Linked to this relationship is that of Jane and Francis, which appears as stable in the script but not in the film. For example in the former, after Allan's funeral, "they share a momentary vision of Allan's spectral appearance which brings them even closer. Keeping the frame in mind, at this point we can already anticipate that this liaison will eventually lead to their marriage. Here the scriptwriters seem to adhere to fairly conventional and bourgeois



expectations for stable relationships” (Jung and Schatzberg: 62). In opposition, Wiene eliminates the scene above in order to show a much more open ended relationship. Besides, by omitting the apparition of Allan’s spectrum, the main intention of Wiene is to adapt the script to the modernist sets. Ghostly apparitions seem to be inappropriate within the context of a modernist setting. The last image shows Jane and Francis staring a plaque with the following inscription:

*“Here stood the cabinet of Dr. Caligari  
Peace to his victims – Peace to him! The City of Holstenwall”*<sup>11</sup>

This last line suggest a return to the frame and a confirmation of Caligari’s death as something true. By contrast, the ending frame of the film unexpectedly cancels the happy ending of the inner story, hence the traumatic events that were thought to be solved remain until the last scene, which does not even provide a conclusion. While Janowitz considers this as ambiguous, it could be regarded as a director’s strategy to obscure the first- person narration of the script by creating an illusion of a third-person narrative. That is why this concluding frame is so provocative.

It could be drawn as a conclusion of all this that Wiene’s film was underestimated and criticised for being too theatrical; however, it is important to take into account those editing techniques mentioned above to appreciate the cinematic qualities of the film.

Personally, if I had not have these two cultural reviews of the film, the only thing I would see of it would be a madman tired of constantly failing when trying to succeed in his scientific invention of a somnambulist, and who is supported by the overall society for the simple fact that he is an authority, with the exception of the only man who seems to be sane and tries to stop his murdering, but ends up by being seen as the one gone mad. However, with all this information I have been able to draw some conclusions, for example, that the plot of this film was written according to the current political situation of the German people in those years; thing that has led me to conceive its characters differently.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Taking into account both characteristics and the huge influence of cinema since its birth to its early development in the modern age, it can be argued that cinema did encourage changes in the modernist aesthetics, since it determined part of not only the visual technologies, but also of the writing of the period. For instance, many modern narratives, such as *To the Lighthouse*, adopted the recently emerged cinematic communicative techniques, and moreover, a large amount of articles in magazines and even critical reviews in the form of books discussing the culture of the period talked exclusively about the production and the meanings of films in every imaginable critical aspect.

Last of all, my final conclusion is that the significance of psychoanalysis in literature and in culture since the last decades of the 19th century is what has justified this constant analysis and discussion of the different meanings of cinema since it was born to the present day. All that interest in relating the unconscious meanings of the human being to the cinematic action through the interpretation of dreams, for example, is what give evidence of this.

## NOTES

1. To find further details of this event see Goody (6).
2. This information is found in Freud (65) in Raitt.
3. For an interesting account of Woolf's literary career, such as the source of inspiration that Dorothy Richardson was for her see: Raitt (7).
4. This extract is from D.R., "The Garden"(21) quoted in Marcus.
5. This is a quotation from D.R., "Films for Children"( 21-27) quoted in Marcus.
6. D.R., "Continuous Performance – Almost Persuaded"( 34-35) quoted in Marcus.
7. "Woolf's work seeks to undo any male-humanist essentialist concept of the human, and particularly woman's, identity": Raitt (27).
8. "Her novel accomplishes the obliteration of the maternal figure, and the transformation of the paternal with an intensity that is very far from naïve.": Raitt (35).
9. These words of Buñuel are literally quoted in: Gala. Análisis de Un Perro Andaluz.
10. This is a quotation from Janowitz (73) in Jung and Schatzberg,
11. This words from the original script of Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari are found in Belach, Helga., Bock, Hans-Michael.(110), quoted in Jung and Schatzberg.

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