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Narrating time toward death: Film analysis of *Cries and Whispers* (*Viskningar och rop*, Ingmar Bergman, 1972)

Abstract

The research is focused on the movie *Cries and whispers* (*Viskningar och rop*, Ingmar Bergman, 1972). It is developed following a hybrid methodology: in the first place, we will develop a narratological classification following the classical categories of, among others, Gaudreault, Jost and Gómez Tarín. In the second place, we will face a concrete textual and interpretative microanalysis of some major aesthetic aspects of the movie. The structure of the article will be composed by: a brief review of the previous bibliography, the methodological explanation, the concrete narrative analysis of the movie followed by the appropriate interpretation, and finally, the conclusions. At the same time, the narrative analysis will be focused on the next topics: the different narrators, the filmic strategies connected with the categories *point-of-view* and *focalization*, and the concrete spatial and temporal coordinates of the movie. The interpretation will connect several thematical and aesthetic marks –specifically, from *The seventh seal* (*Det sjunde inseglet*, 1957)–, showing some clear evolutions on Bergman's style.

Keywords

Film analysis, narratology, microanalysis, Cries and Whispers, Ingmar Bergman

1. Introduction

Our research tries to offer a detailed analysis of the narratological characteristics of the movie *Cries and whispers* (*Viskningar och rop*, Ingmar Bergman, 1972). As we already know, the work of the Swedish director has been notably studied in an international framework. However, we believe that our research can contribute to the state of the art with the introduction of a concrete narratological methodology applied to a controlled text.

We have decided to choose *Cries and whispers* as the main object of study basing our decision in a double justification. In the first place, thinking in a basic practical choice: the movie is built over a precise deperation of the characters and the scenarios, following the

narratological style that Bergman learned during the sixties from the works of the writer Pär Lagerkvist (Steene, 2005: 58; Törnqvist, 1996: 96). That controlled number of parameters will allow us to have a comprehensive understanding of all the elements that compose filmic space and time. In that sense, the movie will allow us to face problems that are part of the whole *bergmanian* work, specifically about the way that the filmic expression deals with narrative tensions of great relevance. As we will develop during the last epigraph of the paper, we think that *Cries and whispers* can be understood as one of the most relevant contributions of the author to the filmic treatment of time, and the existential reflections about death.

In the second place, *Cries and whispers* has been one of the –paradoxically– more celebrated but least studied movies in the *bergmanian* studies during the last years. We can trace a sort of oblivion in most of the published works around the director. In the first place, *Cries and whispers* was received during his opening in theaters with a kind of academic skepticism – maybe triggered by the global advertising campaign that would end with Sven Nykvist winning the Academy Award for his cinematography, and with several nominations for the movie.

From the perspective of the Marxist analysis –especially from the so called *Italian materialist critic*–, the movie was an example of cultural classism and bourgeois annihilation. Those journalists of the post68-era found in the movie a confirmation on the Bergman “betrayal”: he was more interested in his own existential search than in the class struggle. Authors as Guido Aristarco (2002) or Alberto Moravia (M. Ruggiero, 2012: 58–60) were the most relevant examples of this school. The movie followed the same fate in contemporary studies. For instance, in the important and well-known monographic written by Juan Miguel Company (1999), the movie was shown as a companion of the *bergmanian* excess of the decade. Similar approaches can be found in other Spanish studies (Puigdomènech López, 2004; Rodríguez Serrano & Sánchez, 2011), which barely quote the movie. We can't find in these references a narratological study of the film as the one that we are proposing here.

However, the movie has been properly studied using other textual methodologies, like gender studies (Blackwell, 1997) or psychoanalysis (Dervin, 1983; Rueschmann, 1994; Sabbadini, 2007). From the last perspective, we must quote the excellent work of Frank Gado (1986), which continues being, until now, the most relevant and complex approach to the object of study. Through the different examples we can trace notable contributions from the field of the post-structural thinking. With our work, we want to sidestep some of the possible mistakes triggered by the over-interpretations who are derivative of the use of those methodologies. In our reading, we will focus on the categories connected with the strict building of the story. Our scope can be understood as a humble approach to the ways in which every concrete image builds a concrete meaning inside the fictional world.

2. Methodology

Following some of the authors who have faced those problems before us (Hernández, 2008; Zumalde, 2002; Zunzunegui, 2016), we think that we must be careful with the excessive and not necessarily rigorous use of the post-structural methodologies developed during the last decades. Maybe it's time to claim for a sort of “return to the text”. We will try to read the movie following two key parameters: the filmic form and the cinematic story. In our perspective, the interaction between both levels is indispensable to generate a correct approach to the different levels of the generation of meanings inside a text. In fact, we will try to show how both of them work as the two sides of the same coin: the “subject of the enunciation” (González Hortigüela, 2009) or the Mega-narrator (García Catalán & Sorolla, 2014)–, and must be studied with the same interest.

However, we must clarify that our work is not based in a neo-formalistic scope as the one proposed by David Bordwell and his team (Bordwell, 1995, 1996). At the same time, we will not follow in a strict sense the methodology based in the well-known work by Gaudreault y Jost (1995), nor the powerful evolutions of the same line developed by Gómez Tarín (2011). The reader will find, in both cases, an evident intellectual debt with them.

In the first case, the *bordwellian* system has shown certain problems during his application to texts not clearly connected with the classic Hollywood representation (Bordwell, Staiger, & Thompson, 1997). Just as an example specially relevant for our study, in his book about the Dreyer's movies (1981), the author refused explicitly to enter in the concrete philosophical or existential dilemmas of the movies. Of course, his system can show perfectly the traces of the filmic writing, but not the way in which those traces are connected with the human problems that are faced in every single movie –death, God, love... Problems and topics who are extraordinary relevant in our movie, *Cries and whispers*. During the last epigraph of our paper we will try to propose a concrete bridge between the form and his approaches to the showing of death.

In the second place, the analysis of the movie will show that reducing the voices inside the text in a closed list it's an extraordinary complex task. We will discuss matters such as time and space, but the content of the movie works as a concrete problem to the classical uses of the narrative theory.

Being aware of that issues, our methodology will try to work in a clear, rigorous and ordered matter, following the filmic form and, at the same time, being aware of the limits that it marks to the interpretation. Obviously, the scope of our tools and the concrete range of the analysis will propose a subjective, personal approximation to the movie. In order to avoid concrete excesses or aberrations during the hermeneutical process, we will try to – following the example of scholars like Zumalde (2011) or Zunzunegui (2016) stay as close to the surface of the text as possible. However, our research is an opportunity to trigger the dialogue between different methodological perspectives. Our objective is improving the general comprehension of the film. In order to achieve our goal, we will follow a structure based in two main chapters. In the first one, we will analyze the structure of the story – including all the information related to the point of view, focalization, the use of chronology and the narrators system. The second one will connect our analysis with the rest of the Bergman's work. Both parts will be closely connected and will allow us to propose an ordered and coherent argumentation.

3. *Cries and whispers*: A narrative analysis

3.1 Space, time and structure

Cries and whispers works following the rules of the modern cinema (Font, 2002): it doesn't respect the laws of the linearity, and denies the rules of the Aristotelian system. The structure of the film is built as the mentioned plays of Pär Lagerkvist – without forgetting the innovations learned from the Strindberg's theatre (Zubiaur, 2004: 30). When we start thinking *Cries and whispers* is almost impossible not to think in how Bergman followed the Strindberg style: the gaps between space and time are part of the heritage and of the lessons that our director learned during his own experiences in the theater (Marker & J. Marker, 1992: 75). Those little big plays, written thinking in small places –as the *Intima Teatern* in Stockholm–, were located in a very concrete temporal frame –generally, two or three days. The characters are designed subtly, configured with discrete and silent gestures. It's difficult to understand clearly their motivations or their traumas: the spectator must rebuild all the information following the small information scattered on the dialogues or in small, concrete visual details. Bergman itself started to explore this way of telling stories in

two previous phases. During several movies of the fifties – *Thirst* (*Törst*, 1949), *The seventh seal* (*Det sjunde inseglet*, 1957) or *Wild Strawberries* (*Smultronstället*, 1957)–, the time is collapsed in a couple of days but, unlike that, the space is expanded through long travels, sometimes even like in the mood of European *road movies* (Rodríguez Serrano, 2016; Wood, 2012).

Years after, when he discovered de Färo island –starting with *Through a glass darkly* (*Såsom i en spegel*, 1961), he started to compress the spatial parameters too. The characters were now fully trapped on hermetic symbolic landscapes, totally confined in time and space.

Cries and whispers, besides, develop some modifications over this bergmanian system. In the core of the film we can find the relentless description of the last day of Agnes (Harriet Andersson), her death and the effects that it triggers over her sisters María (Liv Ullmann) and Karin (Ingrid Thulin), and over her maid Anna (Kari Sylwan). As we will see, against the classical conception of the Danish naturalistic chamber play, Bergman will deny the linearity of the narration to introduce four flashbacks, some close shots looking to the camera which are not part of the main story, and, finally, a kind of fantastic chapter that we can't clearly determine –is Anna dreaming, a mirage, maybe a kind of poetical addition?¹ The different chapters are separated from the rest of the movie with fades-to-red and fades-from-red.

At the same time, the narrators inside the film are showing interesting issues about their roles and their meanings.

3.2 Levels of narration: Agnes' diary as a case of study

In a first level, we can find the mega-narrator or *grand imagier* (Gaudreault, 1988: 11) – sometimes understood too as the “subject of the enunciation”. As is common on the modern films, we can easily trace his present on some concrete marks over the *mise-en-scene*. Following the classification developed by Francisco Javier Gómez Tarín (2011), we can propose a double nature of this figure:

In the first place, we can find a *Filmic Mega-narrator*, who works specifically over the framing and the physical characteristics of each shot. In this level we can find the classical example of the *bergmanian* characters looking to the camera (Casetti, 1996: 81), and the credits of the film. For instance, at the end of the movie we see a strange message saying: *Sa tystnar viskningarna och ropen* (*Those were the cries and the whispers* – FIG. 1).



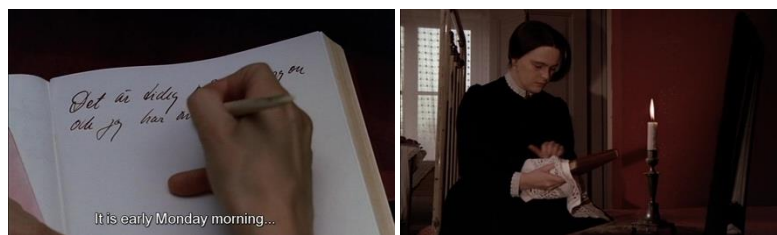
Fig. 01

¹ We can find different interpretations in Botz-Bornstein, 2007; Brattemo, 1990; Cowie, 2013 y Hubner, 2007. Bergman himself wrote in his diaries that these scene should work as a “poem, an invention, or whatever you want to call it” (Bergman, 1992: 87). We don't find any extra information in the script published after the opening of the movie (Bergman, 1992: 87). In our paper, we will follow the methodology applied by Jeese Kalin, who shows that the movie can be perfectly analyzed without making a clear distinction between the fiction and the imagination of the characters (Kalin, 2003: 134-151).

At the same time, the *Filmic Mega-narrator* configures the way in which the camera splits and moves around the space, creating several aesthetic effects using the lens and the depth of field. The first main characteristic in *Cries and Whispers*, as other scholars had explained before us (Coates, 2008), is the concrete use of some colors –red, white and black– to create different spaces. An important section of the movie –with the exceptions of the prologue, the epilogue and one concrete flashback– is completely recorded in interior spaces. Inside the house the objects are used to unveil symbolic connections –the candles lightening the faces, the broken glass that Karen will use to harm herself, the bars in Agnes bed working as a kind of cage.

In a second level, we can point two narrators. The first one is a male, anonymous voice, working as an extra diegetic and hetero diegetic narrator. It's situated in the beginning of the María and Karin remembrances. It's a laconic, soft voice: it only pronounce three or four short sentences, generally speaking about the context of the images that we are seeing. As we will discuss further, this will only increase the intentional chronological confusion about the times and limits of the story.

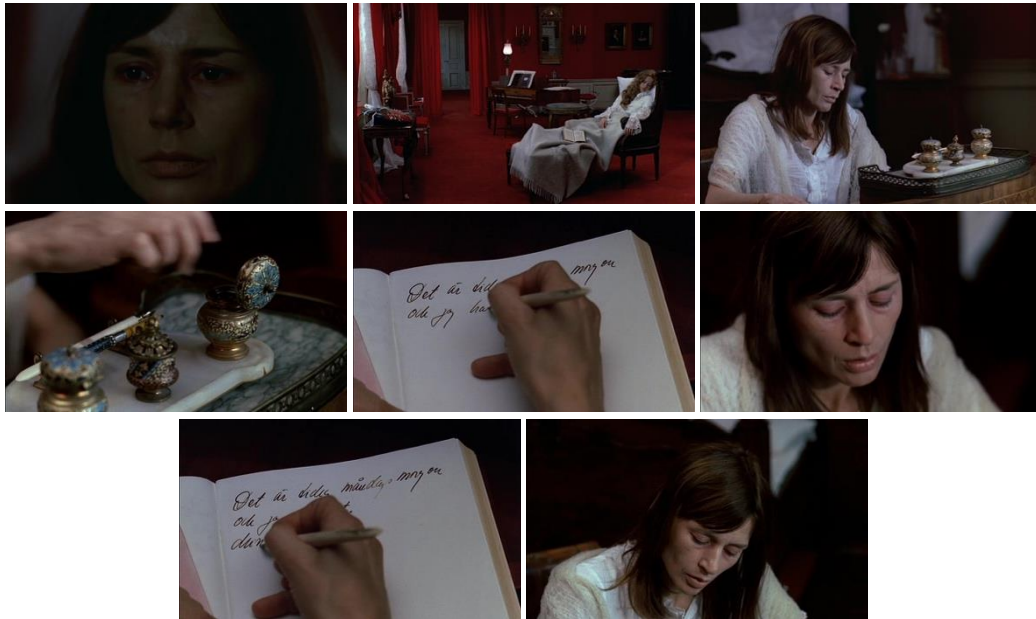
Also in this second level we can trace the presence of the diary written by Agnes, textual operator shown in the opening and in the closing of the film. In the first case (Fig. 02), we can see the pure act of writing and, in a second shot, her own face as a response of her own message. It's introduced as an intra diegetic narrator. In the second case (Fig. 03), we will return to the diary from the Anna's point of view, and we will see several shots as a sort of flashback.



Figs. 02 & 03.

When Bergman chooses Agnes as a narrator, creates some relevant modifications over the point of view. In the first case, we saw Agnes writing –in the present. The content of the text is giving a concrete, mortal phase, of her disease – *It's early Monday morning. I'm suffering*. In a certain sense, the scene shows that some existential possibilities are still open: survival, sanity, even healing. However, at the end of the film, we will receive her writing from the other side of death. She will work now as a auto-diegetic dramatized narrator.

Looking to the structure, Agnes presence as a narrator is used as a tool to open and close the film. In any case, this change in her role will trigger a harsh modification over the formal disposition of the movie – in other words, over the *Mega-narrator*. In the first case – when she writes on Monday–, the form will work as, in words of Noël Carroll, a sort of stich, of suture (1993). The movie will try to use the edition to create some concrete sympathetic effects over the audience. Bergman create a emotional, inner space, toward Agnes. There is a connection between the “A-Shots” (Agnes looking to her diary) and the “B-shoots” (subjective or semi-subjective shots). Let's analyze the formal disposition of the scene:



Figs. 04 to 11

Following the Carroll's system, we can see how the figures 04, 06 (travelling), 07 (concrete shot), 09, and 11 are part of the "A-shots" category. We see Agnes as the main character who directs the direction of the scene. The other way round, figures 05, 08 and 10 are "B-shots", located *inside* Agnes. She looks to her sister sleeping (05), or her own words (08 and 10). There is a concrete suture over the space between the narration and the place of the audience.

Now, let's look to the ending of the film. Agnes, now death, returns to the fiction as a sort of postmortem narrator. Now, the reading is developed by other character –Anna–, and there are some major aesthetic changes. Now we hear music –Chopin's Mazurka N°4, Op. 17 (Azzam Gómez, 2014: 151)– and a *voice over* (Agnes, speaking from the afterlife). At the same time, we know that we are seeing a flashback introduced by a fade-in and four shots (Figs. 12–16).



Figs. 12 to 16.

Now, the voice of Agnes is not speaking about pain or suffering. She introduces new emotions: hope, beauty, love –*All my pains suddenly disappeared. The people that I really love is close to me now (...)* No matter what the future brings, this must be happiness.

Her voice comes to us from the afterlife: she is a remembrance and a ghost. Now that she can't talk, Bergman locates on the soundtrack a small lapse of happiness. At the same time, if we focus our attention on the first *fade-in* (figs. 12 y 13), we see a beautiful visual construction. Anna uses a candle to read, and at the same time, that light is unveiling to Agnes in the frame. The limits of the fire are the limits of Agnes. We can see how the light becomes a concrete writing. Following Jacques Aumont, we are at the same time “seeing light” and “seeing a face”, or in other words, we are seeing how the cinematographic material suggests a deeper transcendence (Aumont, 2014: 73 y 272). We will never know if those four shots are part of the remembrances of Anna. Maybe they are only a fragmented, poetical, segment of the film.

Analyzing the edition, we can see how four shots are used to show the four actresses (figs. 14 and 15). Other two are exclusively centered over Agnes (Figs. 13 and 16), how ends looking directly to the camera and closing her eyes. At the end, Bergman blocks the sympathetic connection but, in exchange, gives us an extraordinary fact: the outstanding, deep love that Agnes feels for her sisters, the small glimpse of happiness.

The closing scene works, then, in a double direction: firstly, it blocks our closeness with the death woman. Secondly it escapes from the classical melodramatic catharsis (Marzal Felici, 1996).

3.3 Point of view and multiple focalizations

All the narrators inside the movie are connected inside a “multiple focalizations” strategy. *Cries and whispers* locates in the narrative center the death of Agnes but, in a certain sense, is just an excuse to explore the complexity of each family. In one hand, we've got two unhappy sisters, dealing with her sexual and emotional frustration. In the other hand, there are clear suggestions that connect Agnes and Anna inside a lesbian relation – topic clearly studied using the *gender studies* perspective (Humphrey, 2013; Ryberg, 2014). Bergman changes constantly the focalization of the story to show small details, glimpses and examples of the emotional repression on the high society of the XIX century.

If we analyze the structure, we will notice that *Cries and whispers* gives a similar length inside the movie to the four main female characters. However, the content of each fragment doesn't explore with the same depth the traumas of each woman. To explore with more clarity the chronological disposition of the movie, we offer the next table to follow in detail the most relevant *lexias*².

Table 1. Lexias, chronology and focalization in *Cries and whispers*. Developed by the author.

Lexia	Brief description	Chronological focus	Character focused
01	Introduction	Time unspecified	Zero focalization
02	Agnes: introduction	Main chronological line (Day 01 – Morning)	Internal focalization: Agnes
03	María: Introduction	Main chronological line (Day 01 – Morning)	Internal focalization: María

² We use the Word “lexia” in the sense given to it by Roland Barthes (1974:13), and in subsequent specific systems developed inside the film studies (Aumont & Marie: 1990: 87).

04	Karin: Introduction	Main chronological line (Day 01 – Morning)	Internal focalization: Karin
05	Anna: Introduction	Main chronological line (Day 01 – Morning)	Internal focalization: Anna
06	Transition	Main chronological line (Day 01 – Morning)	Internal focalization: Agnes
07	Agnes: Flashback (Three scenes)	Childhood - Time unspecified	Internal focalization: Agnes
08	Doctor's visit	Main chronological line (Day 01 – Evening)	Internal focalization: Agnes/Maria
09	María: Flashback (Four scenes)	Youth - Time unspecified	Internal focalization: María
10	Death	Main chronological line (Day 01 – Night)	Zero focalization
11	Ritual with the priest	Main chronological line (Day 02 – Evening)	Zero focalization
12	Karin: Flashback (Three scenes)	Maturity - Time unspecified	Internal focalization: María Karin
13	Reconciliation between María y Karin	Main chronological line (Day 02 – Night)	Zero focalization
14	Anna's dream	Time unspecified	Internal focalization: Anna
15	Departure of the survivors	Main chronological line (Day 03 – Morning)	Zero focalization
16	Epilogue	Time unspecified	Internal focalization: Anna-Agnes

The detailed study of this distinction can give us some relevant information in order to understand properly the movie. We can see how Bergman works with the three main temporal categories: order, length and frequency (Jost & Gaudreault, 1995: 110-134, Casetti & di Chio, 1991: 151-162). The director tries to change the classical lineal structure by creating relevant manipulations over those three levels.

In the first place, we can easily trace two main lines in the information handling:

- a) The first one – designed in our *table 01* as the “main chronological line”- takes place following the rules developed by Pär Lagerkvist, as we saw in the last epigraph. It's composed by three days, since the awakening of Agnes to the departure of the survivors. We can trace the evolution through the lexias 1-6, 8, 10, 11, 13 and 15. The characters are developed in a lineal, conventional way (Sánchez-Escalonilla, 2001: 292-296). In terms of *length*, the sequences are dominated by a slow, languishing rhythm: the story is trying to explore the act of waiting to the death to come. In order to emphasize that idea, we can see once and again some detailed shots focused over clocks (figs. 17 and 18). There are no modifications in the *frequency*: there are no repetitions.



Figs. 17 & 18

- b) The second category is a little more complex. In the first place, we can trace some segments developed *against* the lineal construction of the film: *flashbacks* (lexias 7, 9, 12 and 16), or dreams (lexia 14). As we mention before, Bergman is breaking the classical rules of the Swedish naturalism (Martínez García-Gil, 2007)-, trying to explore other poetical resources. In *Cries and whispers*, the director bets for a sort of “magic realism”. At the same time, the flashbacks are usually introduced by *fades-to-red* (lexias 9, 12 and 14), followed with close-up shots of the main characters looking to the camera (figs. 19 to 21).



Figs. 19 to 21

The first flashback is focused on the childhood of Agnes –in fact, is the beginning of the inner time of the story. It’s the only one narrated by the woman who takes part in it. Finally, it’s not introduced or closed by the *fades-to-red*.

The second and third flashbacks seem more similar and connected between them. They are introduced by the anonymous narrator and located in an unspecified chronological frame. They are presented with the same words –*Some years before...*– and are built with four and three connected scenes. Finally, both of them are speaking about the same topics: the problems of sexual repression and how it ends creating a suffering, wounded body – Maria’s husband tries to commit suicide, Karin mutilates her own sex with a broken glass.

Finally, Anna’s dream. It’s not introduced by any narrator. It doesn’t use any ellipsis: we see how the two main scenes are connected chronologically in a direct, concrete way.

As we can see, Bergman creates a very specific design for each one of the digressions. In every fragment we can trace an specific way of breaking the chronological coordinates, depending on the concrete trauma of the main character. Agnes, for instance, is the trigger of all the changes. However, she doesn’t suffer a concrete *metalepsis* –“every intrusion (...) of the diegetic characters on the meta diegetic universe” (Genette, 1972: 290). On the contrary, when Karin, Maria and Anna decide to look directly to the camera, are defining a different, *other mysterious narrative space* (Burch, 2008: 29). That space speaks at the same time to the audience *and* to the subject of the enunciation. The *fades-to-red* doesn’t have a concrete space, nor a concrete time: they are only traps. They are there only to encapsulate the faces in a violent narrative nothingness.

However, we must recall that every single narrative decision is not only a formal trick. They work following the patterns that Deleuze clearly understood in Bergman’s writing:

Bergman has pushed the nihilism of the face the furthers, that is its relationship in fear to the void or the absence, the fear of the face confronted with its nothingness. In a whole

section of his work Bergman reaches the extreme limit of the affection-image, he burns the icon, he consumes and extinguishes the face as certainly as Beckett (Deleuze, 1984: 148).

This face, image-affection, works in *Cries and whispers* as a sort of double entrance door who leads to a certain lost, dreamed, time. But at the same time, it is a barrier who locates the last horizon: death and the Other.

4. (Filmic) Time as the death's horizon on *Cries and whispers*: An interpretative approach

Certainly, there is a concrete aspect through the works of Ingmar Bergman, which deserves a more detailed study: how his movies face the concrete problem of death. In other words, how his cinema thinks about this *heideggeran not-yet* (2009) and transform it into concrete images. If we trace his filmography, since his first movies death is understood as the logical closing of the story. Two good examples are *Crisis* (*Kris*, 1945), and specially *To joy* (*Till glädje*, 1950), built as a sort of huge flashback focused on the destruction of the main character's family.

The seventh seal and *Wild Strawberries* can be understood as explorations of the last hours of the leading characters. The second one is, by the way, a beautiful essay for the main aesthetical and narrative choices that we have seen in *Cries and whispers* –mix of naturalistic and dream elements, juxtaposition of times and points of view...

As we have seen, *Cries and whispers* developed a relevant change: death is not now only a personal, subjective, anguishing aspect of each subject. At the contrary, death becomes a family matter, an *unveiling* act that we must share. The knowledge that we suddenly acquire seems a paradox: we must share the experience with the people who surround us but, at the same time, something remains non-communicable. Bergman creates a multiple focalization –in opposition to *Wild strawberries*, only focused over Isak–, spreading the points of view and creating a more complex experience.

At the same time, our movie shows a beautiful, solid process of defense of the Otherness. It's not built only over the Christian elements –as in *The seventh seal*, or even in *The Virgin spring* (*Jungfrukällan*, 1960). Here, Bergman proposes an individual, pure reflection about the connection between symbolic elements and narrative point of view. We will work briefly with a single sequence to show it.

In the 1957's movie, Anders Ek played the role of the priest who guided the flagellant's march. His place inside the frame varied depended on three different scales: medium shot (fig. 22), medium-short shot (fig. 23) and a high-angle shot (fig. 24)



Figs. 22 to 24

Ek built his character histrionically. His visual construction is always dominated by the famous suffering Christ – a figure that, by the way, worked inside the movie as a constant threat against the main characters. Ek's speech is dominated by brutal words, creating a connection with the deep, aggressive violence of the flagellant's introduction.

Then, after twenty years, Bergman decides to *re-write* de scene, using Ek again as a priest who speaks about dying. He pronounces a new prayer, now in a quiet, humble, solemn voice. The *mise-en-scene* also changes: the scene is built with two long shots. In the

first one (figs. 25–28), the camera moves from the face of the priest through the faces of the women. It seems to look for any single reaction, any possible effect of the discourse on the characters. It ends with a zoom over Anna (Fig. 28), giving more importance to her presence on the room. In the second shot (Fig. 29), a very long shot is focused only on Ek's face.



Figs. 25 to 29

In 1957 we found an extreme underline of the scene by the angulation of the camera (Fig. 24). Now, Bergman explores the simplicity and the effectiveness of each face (Figs. 25–29) as a concrete answer to death. It becomes the perfect “affection-image”.

Anyway, all the scholars quoted in our research coincide in understanding Anna as the beatific character, the source of hope and faith. She's the only one who can *touch* the corpse during her dream: the rest of the women will stop in the room's shift. This brief, touching zoom (Fig. 28), shows perfectly how the camera can give the best description of the humanity of a face: Anna is not only “the Other” as it was theorized by Lévinas (1991): she can't be another face, she can't take part in the funeral celebration as the rest. The camera points her as the one who knows everything about the true experience of suffering. She lost her child (we saw it on the fifth lexia of our classification – *Table 01*), and now she lost again her only friend, maybe even her lover. Time changes and becomes a terrible experience of *waiting*, of pure grief and despair. Maybe that was one of the major conquests in Bergman's cinema: his ability to trace the burning edge of each life.

5. Conclusion

During our research, we have tried to clarify a certain approach to *Cries and whispers* using a narrative perspective. Now, we can offer the next conclusions:

- 1) Regarding the order and nature of the narrators: We can find several levels, including:
 - a. First level: Mega-narrator or *Grand imagier*. It's manifest – creates concrete marks over the enunciation and concrete credits (Lexia 01). Offers a delegate enunciation.
 - b. Second level: We can find two roles.
 - i. One narrator extra-diegetic and hetero-diegetic. He's male and we can't find any kind of connections with the content of the story (Lexias 03/04)
 - ii. An auto-diegetic and dramatized narrator: Agnes. Bergman uses her to combine two different strategies of narration. In the first one –at the beginning of the movie– (Lexia 02), her own writing on the diary is shown with the classical structure shot/reverse shot. It's located in the present of the story. In the second one, we will access to a

sort of flashback with a lot of aesthetical differences (changes in the patterns of color, extra-diegetic music, different use of light and space... - Lexia 16)

- c. This levels, at the same time, are combined through the point of view. Here, we can find several levels too:
 - i. Zero focalization: Omniscient narration created by an extra-diegetic entity (Lexias 01, 10, 11, 13 and 15)
 - ii. Internal focalization: Situated again over Agnes by her own voice-over and her writings (Lexia 02).

In a concrete, structural level, the story is divided between the four main characters, but we can see how two of them (Anna and Agnes) are more relevant (Lexias 02, 05, 06, 07, 08, 14 and 16)

- d. About the use of time, Bergman works breaking the linearity of the story. The main modifications are developed over the *order* (there is no causality between the lexias) and the *length* (he creates slow and empty shots without dramatic incidents, triggering the sense of nothingness and loneliness on the spectator). He doesn't modify the *frequency* category.
- e. Following the concrete aspects of time, we can trace some connections with the rest of the bergmanian work. Using a micro-analytical methodology comparing *The seventh seal* and *Cries and whispers* we have seen how he decides to re-write his own movie in order to give more dignity to each character.

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