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# A RUPTURED VISION: THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LITERARY MODERNISM AND CINEMA

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A RUPTURED VISION: THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
LITERARY MODERNISM  
AND CINEMA

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Master of Arts  
English Literature

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by  
Charles Russell Bailey  
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## ABSTRACT

The study of Modernism has often been divided by a seemingly unbridgeable gap between what has been deemed "high" art, esoteric works intended for the privileged few, and "low" culture-works intended for the groveling masses. In the first category are traditional art forms such as painting, sculpture, and literature. The lower art forms include mass-produced works that are accessible by design. Until the latter portion of the previous century the cinema, arguably the most important artistic medium of the twentieth century has been assessed as merely disposable popular culture, an "other" to the world of traditional "high" art.

This is no longer the case. Cinema studies have emerged as an accepted discipline across the academy. However, many scholars have overlooked the direct correlation between literary modernism and the maturation of the cinema. It is my intent to prove that literary modernism and the cinema are bound by a common language as well as a common desire to make artistic meaning in a ruptured world. Therefore, I find it imperative to study not only the influence of literature on the cinema, but

also the enormous contribution cinematic tropes have made on the development of many of the most renowned works of literary modernism.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, Charles and Doris Bailey. This thesis exists because of their love and support.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. R. Barton Palmer, for all of his assistance and guidance. His patience and continued support are greatly appreciated. I am grateful to Dr. Alma Bennett for guiding me through my entire experience at Clemson University. Her help has been invaluable throughout my graduate career. I must extend many thanks to Professor Amy Monaghan. Without her efforts and editing expertise this would be impossible.

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## INTRODUCTION

Modernism, at its core, is a reaction to the immense changes that correspond with the Industrial Revolution. If we hold this notion to be true, then it must mean that the basis for all modern art is the availability of new ways to express these feelings of rupture. Modernism's obsession with "newness," therefore, is manifested not only through the desire to make traditional art forms reflect a society that is seemingly incomparable to that of their predecessors, but also in the sheer possibility of creating new forms themselves. This new possibility seems to have found its natural manifestation in what is arguably the most important artistic medium of the twentieth century, the cinema. However, until rather recently, film has been categorized as an artistic "other," a disposable, popular form of entertainment. It was generally assumed that those who deemed themselves serious artists or critics shared very little identity with the motion picture industry at all. This is a case of academic misguidance that endured until the latter half of the century. Gertrude Stein's early quip that she was "doing what the cinema was doing" was often erased from scholarly and public opinion by



Walter Benjamin's less sympathetic criticism (Harrington 103). Despite Benjamin's assertion that cinema "requires no attention" in depth study elucidates the fact that literary modernism and cinema are bound together; both forms initially shared the common goal of making meaning out of the rupture of modernization.

Further study of the period reveals that literary modernism and cinema not only share a common goal, but also a common language. Although many recent scholars have addressed the close development of the two media, few have delved into what I consider the most important function of the "cinematic ness" of literary modernism: in order to fully comprehend the written texts of modernism, one must have at least a vague knowledge of cinematic tropes.

In this study, I intend to analyze the cinematic qualities in the written works of Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, and William Faulkner. It is my aim to increase the discussion on the value of the relationship between these texts and the language of the cinema. Although rarely recognized at the time, these two media have consistently influenced each other since the first film was exhibited in 1895. Thus, I propose that the study of these works is incomplete without knowledge of the influence of the cinema on their creation; likewise, the maturation of the motion

picture industry is heavily indebted to the cinematic  
genius of literary modernism.

## CHAPTER ONE

Existence is Elsewhere: The experiment of language in  
Buñuel's Un Chien andalou and Stein's Tender Buttons

**"La solution d'un sage est-elle la pollution d'une page?"**

**-- Robert Desnos**

**Once upon a time. . .**

P. Adams Sitney has suggested that "modernist literary and cinematic works stress vision as a privileged mode of perception, even of revelation, while at the same time cultivating opacity and questioning the primacy of the visible world" (2). In this study I intend to elucidate the firm connection between modernist literary works and the development of cinema as an artistic medium. It is with Adams's assertion in mind that I begin with a look at two avant-garde classics that represent both the ruptured perception of vision, and a link to what is to come, as the two media begin to grow together. In order to fully transpose the symbiotic relationship between literary modernism and its corresponding cinema it is helpful to begin with the development of the latter.

In The First Manifesto of Surrealism, André Breton defines the movement as "Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express—verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner—the actual functioning of thought" (309). It is from this definition that I will begin my study of Luis Buñuel's Un Chien andalou as both a cinematic manifesto of Surrealist ideology and a poetic linguistic experiment that works in a manner very similar to Gertrude Stein's Tender Buttons.

Buñuel himself, some eighteen years after the 1929 release of the film, reveals that "The only method of investigation of the symbols would be, perhaps, psychoanalysis" (Buñuel 153). This single statement has led to countless academic and popular readings of the film as solely Freudian, or rather an intriguing misreading of Freud. What is overlooked with this assumption is that Buñuel only allows for the "symbols" to be interpreted in this way. He also alludes to the inherent ambiguity of the symbols, "perhaps" there are infinite possible interpretations. Buñuel adamantly declares that "NOTHING, in the film, SYMBOLIZES ANYTHING" (Buñuel 153).

Although the Surrealist movement, along with both Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dali, is greatly influenced by the work of Sigmund Freud, the symbols of the film are obvious

references to these theories that almost any intellectual of the period have been overly familiar with. After viewing several other avant-garde films of the day and declaring them mere "aesthetic essays," André Breton emerged from the Ursulines premiere of Chien declaring, "Yes, this is a Surrealist film" (qtd. in Aranda 63). If Breton's (and the other founders of Surrealism) intention was to create an art movement based solely on psychoanalysis, he probably would have labeled it subconscious rather than surreal. The psychoanalytical references are clearly more concerned with the visualization of the imagination, as Breton and the other Surrealists were not motivated by its therapeutic value (Sitney 32).

In order to properly understand the significance of the filmic structure, let us take a brief look at the synopsis of the film.

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The opening title card bears the phrase "Once upon a time..." We then see a man (Buñuel) sharpening a razor by a window. He cuts his thumbnail on the blade, lights a cigarette, and steps onto the balcony. The man looks up at the moon and sees a thin white cloud about to bisect it. We then see a man's hand holding a woman's eyelids open while the other holds a razor nearby. The cloud passes through

the moon and, in extreme close-up, the razor slices through the woman's eye, allowing the contents to flow onto her cheek.

The following title card reads: "Eight years later." A cyclist, wearing a frilly skirt and a cap with white wings over a dark suit and tie, appears. A woman sits reading. The cyclist loses his balance and falls. The woman, as if expecting the fall, rushes downstairs and kisses him passionately. She then picks up the striped box the cyclist was carrying. The woman reenters her room and opens the box, which contains a white collar and striped tie. She places the collar and tie on the bed beside the frilly skirt and cap the cyclist had previously worn. When she turns around, the cyclist is there (wearing only his suit) and staring at his hand. As the woman approaches the cyclist she notices large ants coming out of hole in the cyclist's palm. The shot dissolves into a close-up of a woman's armpit, then to a sea urchin, and finally to an overhead shot of a woman prodding a severed hand with a stick. A policeman picks up the hand, which is also crawling with ants, places it in the striped box that the cyclist was carrying, and hands it to the young woman. A car almost immediately runs her down.

Back in the room the man tries to seduce the woman. His hands stroke her breasts but she pushes him away. He then bends over to pick up two ends of rope (as a weapon?). When he straightens up he realizes he can't move forward. A shot from behind reveals his cargo: two grand pianos with two dead donkeys and two priests on top. The woman runs for the door. The man drops the ropes to follow, but his ant-covered hand is caught in the door. We are back in the room she just left, but the man is on the bed wearing the cap, skirt, and striped tie.

The following title card reads "About 3 A.M." A man rings a doorbell. The woman answers the door and then leaves. The man at the door orders the cyclist to get up. He throws the skirt, cap and box out the window. Then he has the cyclist stand in the corner with his arms raised.

Another title card: "Sixteen years before." We realize that both men have the same face. One man picks up two books and hands them to the man against the wall. The books become guns and the man fires. The wounded man falls into a park. Upon realization that he is dead, authorities carry him off. Fade out to the room where the woman is about to enter. A moth appears with a skull pattern on its back. The man with the guns is in the room. He puts his hand over his mouth; when he removes it, his mouth has disappeared.

Armpit hair is now growing where his mouth once was. The woman realizes this and checks her own armpit only to realize it is hairless. She responds by emphatically applying lipstick and walking out the door. However, the door leads to a beach where another young man is waiting. They walk together past the skirt and cap. The final title card says "In spring..." It is positioned over the man and woman who are now buried up to their chests in sand and covered by ants.

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Raymond Durgnat has likened the prologue to an "infantile experience" where the razor blade and the eye become symbols respectively for the male and female sexual organ. He furthers this assumption by stating that cutting the eye open suggests that sexuality is a destructive activity (23-4). This approach, although possible, asserts that the prologue is a synecdoche for the rest of the film. However, the prologue to Chien functions on a much more artistic level. Because it is so visually and structurally separated from the rest of the film, the prologue is Buñuel's invitation to join the experiment. The slicing of the eye is not a metaphor for destructive sexual acts; it is rather the locus from which the machine works. The woman is not afraid (she doesn't even flinch). Thus, the entire



cinematic experience stems from the oozing contents of the eye. Buñuel uses this binary (attraction / repulsion) to prepare the audience for what is to come. Ultimately, the function of the prologue is to liberate the gaze of the audience and force each viewer to make his or her own narratives (Talens 60). When this rupture occurs, the spectator can no longer possess a passive attitude toward the film. In a sense, the poetic editing experiment transfers subjectivity and objectivity of the slit eye to the spectator.

**"Eight years later. . ."**

Appearing in the second sequence of the film is a cyclist. Upon closer inspection it is revealed that the man is wearing a dark suit and tie underneath a frilly skirt and winged cap. Durgnat suggests that this man has been castrated due to the "infantile sadism" of the prologue (24). The woman (presumably the one from the prologue) takes from the cyclist a diagonally striped box. When she returns to her room she opens the box to find a collar and tie (also diagonally striped). Durgnat asserts that the tie represents male genitalia; the stripes equal danger, as if taking off the tie is another method of castrating the man (26). On the other hand, when the woman lays out the

contents of the box on the bed, the man appears in the room. It is ultimately important to note that the man who performs the unusual surgery in the prologue is also wearing a diagonally striped tie. Buñuel, as he sharpens the blade, is not wearing a tie. Could the cyclist be the "second" man with the razor? If this is possible, the diagonal stripes on both the tie and the box become the central point from which the viewer is allowed to rearrange the structure and create the narrative. For through these stripes the woman is able to transcend all temporal and spatial rationality and enter the realm of the poetic.

### **"About 3 A.M. . ."**

In one of the more overtly dream-like sequences of the film, the cyclist from the second sequence appears in bed covered with his, by now, customary frills and clutching the diagonally striped box. As soon as the shot is established, a cut is made to the hand of a man as it approaches a doorbell. This image abruptly turns to two hands appearing in the bedroom of the cyclist, through two small holes, vigorously shaking a cocktail shaker. Raymond Durnat proposes that these hands suggest onanism (33). However, this is one of the only scenes in the film that the viewer can assume that the protagonist is in a dream-

like state. The cyclist is in bed and hears a doorbell; the cocktail shaker is probably nothing more than a visual metaphor for what he is hearing at the time. It is also important to remember that Chien is a silent film. It is necessary to rely on visuals to demonstrate inaudible actions that are essential to understanding the film. Any further interpretations devalue the lyrical quality of the film and can only be made after outlining the grammatical substructure of the action.

**"Sixteen years before. . ."**

In subsequent frames it is revealed that the visitor is a sort of doppelgänger of the cyclist. However, he is not decked in frills and forces the cyclist to toss his costume (and box) out the window. Each figure is an alternate representative of sensory perception and, at this point, one vision is dominant.

It is here that the dominant tries to subdue the "other" with books. The books, however, turn into guns and the dominant is blown away. Durgnat assesses books and guns as mere phallic symbols that are "abortive substitutes for sexual virility" (33). Contrary to this opinion, the action is within the confines of a single psyche. When one view suggests books (visualizing education), the other destroys

it. It is here that the rejection of avant-garde ideology is most evident. Here the aesthetics of the avant-garde have been likened to textbook learning which, in turn, must be shot down. The fact that the frills and sacred box have also been destroyed only reinforces the cyclist's new point of view. Where the box once contained the "secret," it is no longer necessary.

After the cyclist has successfully fended off his own educational demons, the film's heroine returns to the room. After a visually complex argument involving the disappearance of her underarm hair (and its reappearance in moustache form on the cyclist's face) occurs, Buñuel further stresses the underlying importance of sensory perceptive discourse. Stuart Liebman stresses the importance of the gesture of tongue wagging (performed by the woman as she exits for the final time). He relates this as the ultimate example of capturing the Freudian mechanism of dream-work (Liebman 144). The dream imagery is not as important to this argument as the recreation of verbal idiom through the use of visual metaphors. In this example it is not important whether or not the action takes place in a dream. What is significant is that a discursive action can be communicated through the gesture, a sensory construct.

Jenaro Talens synthesizes the Freudian and structural analyses of the film by proposing that it demonstrates "the point of view of a man attempting to capture and articulate, from his own perspective and system of values, what he *believes* to be a woman's point of view" (57). This works nicely because it allows the structure to be teased out as an attempt to recreate sensory perception. In this analysis, the conclusion is not that the woman is experiencing a dream, but rather a hallucination (Talens 47). This interpretation allows for further speculation of the linguistic structure of the film. If the dominant gaze is of the woman and she is hallucinating throughout the narrative, the non-linear construction becomes a representation of her "rational" thought process. Through the editing process, Buñuel recreates a completely traditional plot structure through the eyes of someone who perceives the action as reality.

**"In spring. . ."**

It is no coincidence that, upon leaving the cyclist, the woman is in a new land with a new man. She passes by the sacred box and frills without hesitation. This is the moment the experiment finally works. She has passed through temporal and spatial objects into a new perception. She is protected from the ants by her own beach burial. However,

as the final title card reads, the entire process is as cyclical as the seasons. She must endure the eye "surgery" from time to time to perceive "reality."

Un Chien andalou is typically regarded as an avant-garde film simply because of its non-linear narrative and representation of the similarities between attraction and repulsion. Buñuel describes the successful reaction to Chien in the final issue of La Revolution surrealiste as follows:

But what can I do against the devotees of all forms of novelty, even if the novelty outrages their deepest convictions, against a press that has been bribed or is insincere, against the imbecile crowd that found beautiful or poetic something which was, basically, but a desperate, passionate call to murder? (qtd. in Matthews 91)

Buñuel's comment elucidates Chien's position in the art world. The "desperate, passionate call to murder" in question is that of the avant-garde. Buñuel is certainly offended with the novelty associated with avant-garde movements and does not see his film as breaking with tradition. Not unlike the paintings of Picasso, Chien uses traditional methodology to represent what can not easily be represented. Buñuel does not think of surrealism as a trendy, fleeting avant-garde movement, but rather as the ultimate form of traditional artistic realism.

Stuart Liebman comes closest to the issue at hand by asserting "Un Chien andalou must be heard as well as seen" (144). This interpretation stresses the film's role as a linguistic experiment that must come before the analysis of imagery and symbolism. Chien requires the viewer to look at each sequence as an independent sentence or phrase. It is only after the syllabic and grammatical structure of each "sentence" is clear that they can be synthesized as a whole. This does not mean, with the questionable exception of the prologue, that each scene is a synecdoche. It is essential to view them together, but the order in which they are viewed is inconsequential.

Even the title has evoked a mysterious, seventy-five year controversy that is bound in poetic rhetoric. Of course there are neither dogs nor Andalusians present in the film, but the source of the title is worth a look. Un Chien andalou is, in fact, an early collection of poems by Luis Buñuel (Talens 32). However, it was Salvador Dali who proposed that the title be used for the film. Both Buñuel and Dali have tossed around suggested meanings, but at the core, it appears that even the title is a rejection of the aesthetics of the avant-garde. According to Jenaro Talens, the title of the poetry collection and subsequent script are likely to be veiled attacks on poets who constituted

the Spanish avant-garde. More specifically, it is suggested that it is an attack on Federico Garcia Lorca (39). However the title is read, there is still a strong connection to poetry. Although Dali christened the film and Buñuel denies any pretense of attack, it is evident from the title alone that Chien is to be read as a work of poetry. Talens further suggests that the title does not "maintain any relationship with the reality of said object" (40). This is not the case for this film. Although it may or may not represent an attack on Andalusian poets, it does represent the mechanics of poetry. The reference is to the aesthetics of poetic discourse as a whole rather than a specific poem or poet.

Also in Paris, some fourteen years prior to Chien, Gertrude Stein was working on her own linguistic experiment, Tender Buttons. Stein's poem functions by delineating the two axes of language, syntax and vocabulary. Both Tender Buttons and Chien rely on linguistic associations to describe sensory perception. The method of discourse is remarkably similar in both works; however, there is one crucial distinction. Tender Buttons is a study of nouns and objects. Chien, on the other hand, is not concerned with the concreteness of nouns, but instead shows that perception is not achieved through



objects; the only perception is of the actions that surround the objects. Randa Dubnick assesses Stein's method as follows: "As attention becomes focused on the process of perception, that process becomes as much a part of the subject matter as the object perceived" (30). What we see in Un Chien andalou is the continuation of Stein's method. By asserting the role of action in sensory perception, Buñuel looks past the object and focuses on the process. Stein's perception process is hidden. Reading Tender Buttons, the action is outside the text. However, the attention to nouns stresses the subconscious desire for action. Likewise, when Chien disregards objects in favor of the action, the emphasis is somehow reverted back to the object. It is hereby crucial that the film's title is actually not a title at all. Un Chien andalou does not assume the traditional discursive function of a title that represents the body of work. It is evident that it takes the form of a name, or nickname, which it is to be called by, like a child. The meaning does not lie within the body of the film. It is named in the same way that a person is named after his or her grandmother. Therefore, calling the film by its given name objectifies it, bringing Chien even closer to the experiment of Tender Buttons.

Although Un Chien andalou (in cinematic form) actually presents very few printed words, it is necessary to read it linguistically. Tender Buttons is all printed words, but the reading process is conducted in the same manner. Through the reading of either piece, words take on a new role in linguistic thought pattern. Marjorie Perloff focuses on the role of words in Tender Buttons commenting that:

Words, as even Gertrude Stein recognized, have meanings, and the only way to MAKE IT NEW is not to pretend that meaning doesn't exist but to take words out of their usual context and create new relationships among them. (34)

What we see in Perloff's examination is a connection between Stein and Buñuel's word systems. When Stein says "Out of kindness comes redness and out of rudeness comes rapid same question, out of an eye comes research, out of selection comes painful cattle" (Stein 247) we see the transference of meaning from the contextual definition to the perceptive. Likewise, when Buñuel allows two grand pianos, a pair of Marist priests, and two dead donkeys to be summoned out of nowhere and pulled by rope into a room, our focus is not on the objects, but rather our perception of the action and how we might perceive each one out of the context of the present situation. Making it new is

therefore not really breaking with the traditional role of word meanings, but creating a new representation of associations between the syntactical and the perceptive. As noted by Sitney, "Stein never believed that writing could escape meaning...but sense and representation were not synonymous for her" (147).

While researching the work of Gertrude Stein, B.F. Skinner unearthed a published psychology paper on the subject of automatic writing (202-08). As Conrad Aiken points out by quoting Stein: she is aware of the methods, but "never had subconscious reactions, nor was she a successful subject for automatic writing" (38). Skinner associates Stein's description of her experimentation as equal to her earlier paper on automatism and to the response of the average first-time reader of Tender Buttons: "The stuff is grammatical, and the words and phrases fit together all right, but there is not much connected thought" (204). Skinner's research confirms my argument that Tender Buttons and Un Chien Andalou are methodically connected. However, the key connection is not automatic writing. It is, rather, quite the opposite. While the script version of Chien adheres to the Surrealist doctrine of automatism, the concept is wholly abandoned once the cinematography and editing processes begin. What

we have as a result is a precise restructuring of grammar that fuses the rational thought process by way of sensory perception. Thus, Tender Buttons does not reflect unconnected thought. What we have when we look at either piece is thoroughly connected; we, however, must go through the eye-slicing surgery before we can perceive it.

Both Un Chien Andalou and Tender Buttons have been regarded at one time or the other as incomprehensible, elitist works of the avant-garde. While Chien was panned (or praised, depending on the respondent's perspective) for being a "shocker", Tender Buttons was deemed an experimental "hoax" (Kreymborg 169). Both pieces have transcended the barriers of the cult of the avant-garde to become canonized as examples of High Modernism. The numerous psychoanalytical studies of both works are an example of the map preceding the territory. What we have is, instead, two profound linguistic experiments that rely on traditional structures and methodologies to create new functions and associations within language. In doing so, each piece perfects the study of sensory perception from which all other analysis is born. As Mina Loy says: "The greatest incertitude experienced while reading Gertrude Stein is the indecision as to whether you are psychoanalyzing her, or she you" (184).

## CHAPTER TWO

### Joyce and cinema: A Soft Merchandise

Ever since Walter Benjamin criticized the film medium as one that "requires no attention" and thereby creates throngs of "absent-minded" examiners, many scholars have sought to imply a larger gap between high modernism and popular culture than may actually be present (qtd. in Kolocotroni 575). Once again the focus of this study is to prove that literary modernism and the cinema are bound together, if for no other reason than that they grew up together. As discussed in the previous chapter, Gertrude Stein made the seminal link between literary modernism and film when she said that "anyone is of one's period and this our period was undoubtedly the period of the cinema... And each of us in our own way are bound to express what the world in which we are living is doing" (Burkdall 97). That being said, the intent of this chapter is twofold. I would first like to examine the influence of the cinema on the work of James Joyce (and vice versa). In order to fully grasp the cinematic qualities of Joyce's original text it is necessary to examine the author's longstanding effect on

filmmakers. Relating the original text to John Huston's filmic adaptation of The Dead (1987) proves to be fruitful on many levels.

In 1909, James Joyce became the manager of the Volta Cinematograph, Ireland's very first movie-house. This may be one of the most recognizable connections between Joyce and the early cinema; however, as noted by Thomas Burkdall, this connection may be "more commercial than emotional or aesthetic." Although this particular entrepreneurial venture only lasted about three months, it is relatively well noted that Joyce enjoyed the cinema, and that several titles of films shown in his theater resurface in his later writings (4).

However, the landmark event in the study of the relationship between Joyce and cinema occurs on November 30, 1929 (Werner 494). It is in this year that the historic meeting of two of the most famous inventors of fiction, Joyce and Sergei M. Eisenstein, takes place for the first (and only) time, at Joyce's house in Paris. Eisenstein, having read Ulysses and sections of the Work in Progress (Finnegan's Wake), was fascinated by Joyce, and suggests that his own work stands in an analogical relationship to the Irishman's (Palmer 73). According to William V. Costanzo, the fascination was reciprocal. Joyce even

suggested that if a film were to be made of Ulysses, only Eisenstein or the German director Ruttmann would be capable (176). Although Joyce was apparently not overly impressed by the meeting (he never wrote of it), it was widely discussed by Eisenstein. The two masters traded works. Joyce read aloud passages from Ulysses, and played the newly recorded gramophone record of Anna Livia Plurabelle. In return, despite failing eyesight, Joyce asked to see sections of Battleship Potemkin (1925) and October (1924) (Costanzo 176).

Eisenstein, at this time, was already a renowned figure in the film world. His four completed films, at the time of his meeting with Joyce, had earned him international fame, and he was already regarded as an artistic auteur. Of specific interest to this examination is the concept of montage, which Eisenstein perfected.

In an early critical introduction, Harry Levin comments on the cinematic nature of Joyce's writing. He says: "The movement of Joyce's style, the thought of his characters, is like unreeling film; his method of construction, the arrangement of this raw material, involves the crucial operation of *montage*" (88). While Levin is speaking specifically of Ulysses, which he feels "has more in common with the cinema than with other

fiction," the qualities of cinematic montage appear in Joyce's text as early as Dubliners and Stephen Hero.

Gerald Mast offers a simplified definition of the concept of montage: "(1) The dynamic editing of picture and / or sound. (2) The intensive, significant, and often abrupt juxtaposition of shots" (672). However, this does not exactly explain the dynamics of Eisenstein's theory. To fully grasp Soviet montage and its relationship to Joyce's writing one must look at the Japanese and Chinese ideogram. Linguistically, an ideogram is a representative method of combining words depictively rather than phonetically. However, Joyce does this simultaneously. Eisenstein concludes that "It is exactly what we do in cinema, combining shots that are depictive, single in meaning, neutral in content—into intellectual contexts and series" (Costanzo 177). To elucidate the theory of montage within Joyce's text, I have chosen a passage from the first episode in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man:

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow that was coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo... His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face. He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon plat. (245)



Eisenstein called this method of representation the "expressiveness of archaic disproportion." By this he means "the art of pre-history and the art of children, in which the proportions of images indicate their significance" (Burkdall 55). This is, to a degree, nicely exemplified in the above passage from A Portrait. What we see in Joyce's text is something quite different than the opening of most semi-autobiographical texts, something quite cinematic. We see, even in the first paragraph, the beginnings of a montage sequence. Sparse punctuation and Joycean compounds make every word inseparable; as Thomas Burkdall says, "the description represents their product, not their sum" (Burkdall 51). Joyce does not rely on a recollection of an early memory, but rather creates that world. Images rather than phonetic comprehension, a key attribute of montage, illuminate everything in the passage. Significantly, Eisenstein refers to this form of representation as a combination of "monstrous incongruities" that "we newly collect the disintegrated event into one whole, but in our aspect" (Burkdall 54). What we see in the Joyce text appears to reject all tenets of literary realism. The repetitive nature of the passage, as well as its sparse use of punctuation, lends an experimental aesthetic to the passage. However, if we look at Eisenstein's film theory

explanation, it is easy to see that Joyce is using a cinematic technique to express a realistic narrative.

Joyce begins his semi-autobiography by expressing as a child would. However, as we encounter in numerous Joycean episodes, this does not have to come only from the child's eye. It is simply how the mind works. We usually do not think in complete, proper sentences. This is something all filmmakers know. Cinematic temporality is largely constructed of parts of the whole, as the director has perceived them. However, this is often not accepted in literary realism. What is most often criticized when considering filmed adaptations of novels is that it does not compare with the spectator's perception of the written text. Therefore, when Joyce tells us of the moo-cow coming down along the road, he does so exactly as one would present it cinematically; that is to say that he presents it from a visual perspective rather than a linguistic one. In doing so, Joyce has elucidated the sequence. If, on the other hand, Joyce had written the passage as a recollection, the readers would be tempted to recreate the scene by their own relationship with the event. Joyce has eliminated this desire by presenting it cinematically, if you will, exactly as it happened. Ruth Perlmutter elucidates this theory by asserting that Joyce's narrative

and the cinema share rhetoric. She explains that it is characterized by "The simulation of an 'ocular' experience within an acoustic space via framed partial views, expressive fragments that are the verbal correlatives for the close-up, for multiple angles of vision and for aural / visual associations" (481).

By examining this passage in light of Eisenstein's theory, Joyce's cinematic influences are far more lucid. However, this is not to say that any particular film influenced any of Joyce's writings. In this respect I am in agreement with Alan Spiegel, who notes that:

[Joyce] draws upon this medium not as a source of emulation but rather as a mode of precise analogy to define mental and stylistic postures that in all probability had developed independently of it. Clearly it is not the content or quality of any particular film that promotes his interest, but rather it is the formal constituents of the medium itself; the intensities and the elisions, the seamless flow and the jumpy kinetics; the whole range and variety of this new and exciting syntactical temper. (79)

What Spiegel effectively asserts is not dissimilar from Gertrude Stein's attitude toward film. We see in Joyce's text, from very early on, a procedural form that is analogous to cinema. However, with the exception of Soviet montage, and perhaps D.W. Griffith, Joyce's cinematic qualities are far more advanced than most films of the period. What establishes Joyce's "*cinematicness*" is the

highly subjective character of his work. This cinematic quality is most substantial in Ulysses. However, it is prevalent in all of Joyce's narratives. To express this nature via the cinema, I would like to take a look at a passage from the final chapter of A Portrait, from the Villanelle sequence:

At certain instants her eyes seemed about to trust him but he had waited in vain. She passed now dancing lightly across his memory as she had been the night of the carnival ball, her white dress a little lifted, a white spray nodding in her hair. She danced lightly in the round. She was dancing towards him, as she came, her eyes were a little averted and a faint glow was on her cheek. At the pause in the chain of hands her hand had lain in his an instant, a soft merchandise. (488)

This passage is in the middle of a semi-conscious sequence in which Stephen is writing the villanelle that is to be his only artistic endeavor within the novel. While the whole episode is cinematic, this passage exemplifies an element of Joycean montage which Spiegel refers to as "elisions of physical reality" (166). What comes to be strikingly cinematic about the passage is the procedural rearrangement of space and time. While written in interior monologue form, Joyce provides evidence that Stephen's description of dance is central to the action. What we have is the spatial construction of Stephen's thoughts. The above passage and the rest of the sequence may appear to be

disparate thoughts fused together. However, if we look at it as a montage sequence on film, it would appear to be imagistically concrete. Stephen awakens with a verse in mind; he jars himself up to write it down and then falls back asleep. Joyce shifts from third person narration to first in order to show Stephen's subjective perspective. The entire sequence reads almost like directions in a movie script, with images of the dance juxtaposed with Stephen in bed and culminating with the finished villanelle.

Having seen the relationship between Joyce and the cinema, I find it necessary to consider his influence on contemporary cinema. As previously noted, those qualities that have been deemed cinematic in Joyce's work are far more advanced than the majority of films produced in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Therefore, to elucidate the continuing influence of the Joycean aesthetic, I would like to take a look at John Huston's 1987 adaptation of The Dead.

The Dead was Huston's last film, and it is not surprising given his adoration of Joyce and previous attempts to bring a treatment of A Portrait to the silver screen. His adaptation (scripted by his son, Tony) is fairly literal. However, John Huston is not James Joyce. Not unlike the original, Huston pays close attention to

detail. However, as noted by James Naremore, his visual style almost suggests more Dickens than Joyce (Naremore 199). The film is as close to a literal translation as is possible, with few exceptions: there are no children in attendance at the Morkans, and one character, Mr. Grace, is interpolated. However, Huston's attempt to create a near literal translation of the novella may be exactly what differentiates the film from the text. Naremore suggests that "a reverent adaptation continually runs the risk of becoming just the sort of middlebrow artifact that Joyce had quietly satirized throughout the story" (199). Literary adaptations by definition come with myriad trappings. However, Rebecca Hughes and Kieron O'Hara clarify the situation by concluding that:

Prose fiction...not only shows us people's actions and the events that overtake them, but also has the capacity to explicitly convey rich internal worlds...The details of such aspects (for example, how a particular character perceives the actions or words of another), no matter how gifted the actor, cannot be established by visual means with any close faithfulness to the original author's text. (184)

Although much of the pleasure derived from reading a great story or novel lies in the reader's ability to make his or her own visual interpretation, Joyce's dialogue is so vivid that it lends itself to scripting, and the ability to

realistically portray the host of songs and speeches on film actually heightens their effect. As argued above, Joyce's montage qualities often make it easier to comprehend the text imagistically rather than phonetically. Therefore, both Tony and John Huston took their cues directly from the master himself. The problem, perhaps unbeknownst to Huston, is that The Dead can be read as stylistically composed of three parts: the first two dramatic, the last lyrical.

It is within this last third that Huston runs into difficulties. Near the end of the film, Gabriel Conroy (Donal McCann) observes his wife Greta (Anjelica Huston) standing at the top of the stairs listening to "The Lass of Aughrim." In Joyce's novella, Gabriel is in a darkened hallway. He looks up to his wife and contemplates painting a picture of her entitled "Distant Music." In Huston's translation, Gabriel is on the bottom of the staircase, in full light, merely waiting for his wife to descend. Since we never hear Gabriel's thoughts in this scene, it would seem that the importance lies within the song. James Naremore suggests that the result is a lack of proper feeling of detumescence and dramatic crisis (202). However, although I do agree, Huston's emphasis, at this point, is on Greta, not Gabriel. The only way that Huston could have

explained Gabriel's lusty aesthetic portrait would have been through the use of voice-over narration. This would, effectively, not only seem trite and clichéd, but also completely stripped the audience of the pleasure of hearing the song. That being said, to Huston, who is actually almost always more sympathetic to Greta, the real dramatic crisis comes in the new solemnity, which is shown through the experiencing Greta's expressions and emotions during the closing performance. Further suggesting Huston's intent is the fact that he includes Gabriel's story about his grandfather's horse right after "The Lass of Aughrim." In Joyce's text, this story is told at the party, not in the cab. However, Huston rather effectively uses this piece to visualize the discrepancy of mood between the Conroy's. As stated earlier, Huston is more sympathetic to Greta. Although Gabriel is of primary concern to Joyce, Huston wants his audience to immediately know that something is wrong with her. It is still a story about Gabriel, but Huston elucidates his position through his own translation of the final sequences.

In light of this suggestion, I would like to compare both artists' versions of the final sequence of the novella. The final sequence is delivered as interior monologue after the conversation with Greta about Michael



Furey, almost literally from the text. Tony Huston's script merely alters them to be delivered first person. However, there is one key exception. The first four sentences of the last paragraph of the novella are as follows: "A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, falling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward" (242). Tony Huston's script completely omits these lines, moving directly from Gabriel's vision of Aunt Julia's death to "Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland." While this may seem like a trivial omission, Frank Pilipp argues that the sentence "The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward" is the key sentence of the novella. Pilipp furthers his argument by assessing said sentence as "indicating Gabriel's intentions of drawing consequences from his self-awareness, which may entail significant changes in his relationship with Greta" (65). However, as important this fact is to the novella, neither John nor Tony Huston considered it essential to the story. Trying to be faithful to the text of an adored book, it is highly unlikely that Huston would have missed something so epiphanic. However, it is my position that this omission is more of a difference of aesthetic style

than a misunderstanding of Joyce's text. Pilipp argues that "As he recognizes his own emotional paralysis and questions his egotism, and with his own identity in the light of the dead (in particular Michael Furey), the truth hits Gabriel in an epiphanic vision" (65). This epiphany is more Hustonian than Joycean, as Gabriel has been defeated just as he seems to have figured everything out. Huston doesn't suggest the possibility of moving back west; however, it is clear by the end of the film that Gabriel has experienced an epiphany. Through his final voice-over interior monologue, (with an awful backdrop of amateurish shots of snow covered landscapes), Gabriel realizes his love for Greta. Through recognition of the dead Michael Furey, Gabriel says (in both versions): "I've [He had] never felt that way myself [himself] towards any woman but I [he] know that such a feeling must be love" (241). While this may be just a passing allusion in Joyce's text, it is key to Huston's interpretation. However, maybe it is Huston's own emotional paralysis that leads him to this more conventional ending. Hughes and O'Hara argue that "the greatness of Joyce's ending is that it is neither happy nor sad; rather, there is a leveling out between the living and the dead to a point where they are indistinguishable" (189). While I am in agreement with this statement, my

argument rests in the fact that the language of the novella allows Huston to make his own interpretation. Ruth

Perlmutter argues that:

In his ability to visualize verbally, to transcribe outer and inner speech, and to suggest the physical presence of his characters in the world, Joyce was approximating the powers of the cinematic image and the continuous film sequence. (482)

This statement reflects the basis of my argument. Although the meeting between Joyce and Eisenstein is the primary catalyst for the study of the connection between Joyce and the cinema, the only real prerequisite is an analysis of the text itself. Although Joyce never wrote for the cinema directly, it can be argued quite convincingly that he was the first great screenwriter of the twentieth century. This is evidenced by John Huston's last labor of love. As suggested earlier, all artists are products of the age in which they live. Whether directly influenced or not, Joyce's cinematic qualities are not a product of the early years of the century. They are as advanced as the best of any generation and offer a prelude to what is to come in the next chapter.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### "It's better than Ben-Hur": Cinematic Form in Faulkner's Prose Fiction

As I have discussed at length throughout the first two chapters of this study, many casual observations of the Modernist period often rely on a staunch separation of art into two distinct categories: high and low (popular). However, throughout this endeavor I have sought to prove a more concrete relationship between the "high" art of literary Modernism and the more "popular" medium of cinema. Through looking at the works of Stein, Buñuel, Joyce, and Eisenstein it is abundantly evident that literary modernism and narrative cinema developed a symbiotic relationship in response to the newly fragmented world. As I have established, the genesis of this work was the seminal quip by Gertrude Stein that she was "doing what the cinema was doing," even though it is doubtful that she frequently viewed films at the height of her career (Harrington 103). Stein's remark set the pace for many scholarly investigations, and it is now known that Ezra Pound's experimentation with the principles of montage occurs

almost simultaneously with Eisenstein's, and James Joyce was the proprietor of the first motion picture house in Ireland. However influential the new art of cinema was for these men and women of letters, none of them actually worked on a film production.

However, for reasons financial or otherwise, William Faulkner did go to Hollywood. From 1932 until the mid 1950s, Faulkner alternated between his home in Oxford, Mississippi, and Los Angeles, California, during this time working on over fifty treatments and screenplays for both MGM and Warner Bros. studios. Although many critics equate Faulkner's screenwriting career to bonded servitude that impeded his work on novels, it is my ambition to provide scholarly refutation to this claim. I intend to use three of Faulkner's major achievements: The Sound and the Fury (1929), Absalom, Absalom! (1936); and Go Down, Moses (1942) to highlight the critical influence of cinematic form in the production of Faulkner's greatest works.

French film theorist André Bazin has noted that the novelist who experienced the crisis of modernity relates, not to any specific film or film, but rather to the idea of cinema, or, more precisely, to "a cinema that the novelist would produce if he were a filmmaker" (qtd. in Harrington 105). While this may be true of Joyce or Dos Passos,

Faulkner's actual attempts at filmmaking are more akin to the filmmaker attempting to be a traditional novelist. Bruce Kavin suggests that "Faulkner at his best was thinking not in terms of movies but in tropes that are most convincingly explicated in cinematic terms" (qtd. in Harrington 105). Kavin furthers his argument by claiming that "repetition and montage are the two central linguistic and structural devices in Faulkner's fiction" (qtd. in Harrington 109). It is here that I would like to examine this claim as it relates to the structure of Faulkner's fiction.

To begin, it is necessary to reiterate what is meant by the word *montage*. In short, this is the French term for editing. However, it has come to be representative of the style of cutting made famous in the 1920s by Russian director and theorist Sergei M. Eisenstein. Whereas simply editing two frames would result in one shot being mounted beside another to create a seamless transition, Eisenstein's dialectical montage forces two frames to collide, therefore producing a concept in the mind of the viewer that is not depicted on the screen. Eisenstein's famous illustration of this concept is as follows:

A dog + a mouth = "to bark";  
A mouth + a child = "to scream";  
A mouth + a bird = "to sing";

A knife + a heart = "sorrow," and so on. (29)

Kawin reinforces the presence of montage in Faulkner's fiction by categorizing five basic forms of the principle: "the oxymoron, dynamic unresolution, parallel plotting, rapid shifts in time and space, and multiple narration" (qtd. in Harrington 109). As we will soon see, these five forms of montage are easily identifiable in The Sound and the Fury and Absalom, Absalom!; however, little is written on the influence of cinematic montage on Faulkner's later work Go Down, Moses.

Although many scholars dispute whether or not Go Down, Moses is a novel, Faulkner regarded it as one (Brooks, The Yoknapatawpha Country 244). Regardless of genre classifications, there is a consistent unity throughout the work that follows the prescriptions of montage. From the first two pages the reader is able to discern a distinctly cinematic form. Lyall Powers has separated the structure of the book into three parts: the heritage of the McCaslin family, Isaac McCaslin's discovery of that heritage, and "hope that the racial oppression inherent in the family and the culture will one day change" (qtd. in Swisher 159). This organization reinforces the thematic repetition inherent in the work as a whole. What is strikingly cinematic is the development of a communal resolution

through the study of one family. This may sound like a sugarcoated Hollywood ending; however, it is more akin to that method's antithesis. Cleanth Brooks suggests that "what Faulkner is doing is giving human depth to what is too often treated as melodramatic abstraction" (The Yoknapatawpha Country 248). In light of this statement, what is resolved through the repetition of the McCaslin story is the future end of said repetition. When Isaac exclaims, in "Delta Autumn," "But not now! Not now!" he becomes the voice of the communal understanding that change is immanent (or imminent) (344). Therefore, the tension springs not from the quest for a solution, but rather from knowledge that human nature is constantly evolving.

The opening chapter, "Was," is separated by two sections and nearly one hundred years. Here is an early representative excerpt from "Was":

not something he had participated in or even remembered except from hearing, the listening, come to him through and from his cousin McCaslin born in 1850 and sixteen years his senior and hence, his own father being near seventy when Isaac, an only child, was born, rather his brother than cousin and rather his father than either, out of the old time, the old days (4)

Without a beginning or an end, this passage is butted against the story of Isaac's father, uncle, and cousin on a



comic adventure to retrieve a runaway slave from a neighboring plantation. We can already see the principles of montage at work in this early passage. Isaac is introduced immediately, signifying his importance to the rest of the work. However, we are not told his relationship to the story; he simply reveals that his cousin told him. This alone fulfills four of the five basic forms of montage described by Bruce Kawin. For readers, it is not difficult to imagine this scene as a filmic dissolve; we have no punctuation, and thus any hope for resolution is diminished, followed by a rapid shift from the 1940s to the 1850s. There is obviously a parallel between Isaac's introduction and the rest of the story, and although the narration is all third person, it is clear that these are separate narrators.

Although each "story" in Go Down, Moses can be conceived as an independent work, the interrelation between each chapter is such that they are not as lucid on their own. All of the chapters, with the exception of one, deal directly with the story of the McCaslins. The exception, "Pantaloon in Black," can not be classified as distant; it takes place on the same land at the same time as much of the entire book. It is indeed Rider's story that serves to establish many of the cinematic tropes of the whole

McCaslin story. "Pantaloon in Black" is presented in two parts: an omniscient third-person narrator presents the events leading up to the murder of Birdsong, and the second part deals primarily with the sheriff's perspective. The two sections describe dramatically different views on the nature of humanity. However, they are butted together as if they were a single interpretation. Thus, the reader must listen to two interpretations of one story in order to create his or her own unwritten synthesis. Rider's story therefore solidifies the depiction of the community in which the McCaslins live. This is vital to the entire book because, as noted by Cleanth Brooks: "...the actions of Lucas and Ike are unthinkable except against the background of such a community" (The Yoknapatawpha Country 278). In its importance to the text, the introduction of characters from outside the McCaslin clan supports the cinematic structure of the work. Rider's story creates an objective sense of the community at large. Although this is not necessary to the core of narrative cinema, it is often a convention that is employed in order to achieve a greater sense of place outside the diegetic world of the primary characters.

It is the middle section, described by Powers as Isaac's discovery of his heritage, which turns the interrelated stories into a unified whole. Taken by

themselves, this section's stories, which are comprised of "The Old People," "The Bear," and "Delta Autumn," are an excellent allegory for the relationship between man and nature. However, they are more than mere hunting stories. Each of these stories provides the repetition and montage elements necessary for the development of the story of the McCaslins. Within this section, Isaac's journey to manhood is butted against his reaction to the discovery of his family's true heritage. Although mostly told in linear narration, "The Bear" rapidly shifts from the tension of the hunt to the story of Ike's refusal to accept his inheritance. The juxtaposition forces the reader to divert attention away from the peaceful nature allegory established in the earlier sections. It is here that the principles of repetition and montage fuse to establish the entire theme of the work.

The development of the story of the McCaslins is indeed a unified whole. While "The Bear" is often anthologized or published as a novella, the more experimental fourth section is often omitted. Faulkner suggested that this section is not essential for comprehension of the story by itself, but necessary for the whole work. Each section of Go Down, Moses is crucial to one another. Not even "Pantaloon in Black" is extraneous.

Faulkner's use of repetition to expound upon different interpretations of familial heritage is dialectically coupled to the events that shape the community. This melding will prove to be an extraordinary influence on the European and American art cinema for years to come. Although Go Down, Moses contains many filmic tropes, Absalom, Absalom! provides a more lucid insight to the influence that Faulkner's time in Hollywood had on his career as a novelist.

Joseph Urgo argues that "Primarily, Absalom, Absalom! is a celebration of *collaboration* as a fruitful human exercise toward creating new works of art and reaching new levels of comprehension" (qtd. in Wagner-Martin 295). Many critics have suggested that Faulkner learned this technique in Hollywood, and Absalom, Absalom! is certainly laden with cinematic imagery. The general narration of the novel breaks with tradition even when compared to Faulkner's other experimental styles; Absalom, Absalom! presents itself through dialogue between narrators, a technique that is crucial to narrative cinema.

Urgo suggests that, in *Absalom, Absalom!* "perspectives are folded over one another to provide a single, recognizable text, or series of pictures, *by two of the narrators themselves*—and not solely by the reader" (qtd. in

Wagner-Martin 295). Urgo's claim adds to the cinematic form of the novel's narrative structure; he suggests that the narration is a collaborative effort amongst the characters, much like the relationship between a director and a writer, etc. However, although I am in agreement, this serves to provide greater interpretive freedom for the reader.

Throughout Absalom, Absalom!, the reader encounters a constant repetition of the Sutpen story. Although we often know from whom the information is relayed, it is through Quentin that these narrative voices are heard. Therefore, the reader must absorb the information given in the narrative framework in order to make his or her own internal conclusion. Thus the principles of montage are in effect driving the entire plot.

Although Quentin Compson is the primary narrative filter through which we view the Sutpen story, the cinematic qualities of the novel are evident from the beginning of Rosa Coldfield's initial narration. Peter Lurie has noted that, especially with Rosa's narration, Faulkner's prose is "a narcotic, abstract, or surreal effect, such that the world of the novel appears exotic or strange and resists 'objective' representation" (Lurie 104). This view of Rosa's narration represents a form of visual communication that echoes the visual and linguistic

experiments performed decades earlier by the likes of Stein and Buñuel. Lurie further suggests that one must "watch the language perform or experience it in passing, like the shifting imagery on the film screen," a concept that works in much the same way as one must hear a visual piece like Un Chien andalou (115). I agree with Lurie that this is the moment that Faulkner's prose begins to resemble the cinema. However, Lurie is primarily interested in Faulkner's familiarity with cinema's ability to restructure and romanticize the history of the South. While this certainly may affect Faulkner's own representation of the region, there are far too many cinematic tropes in the novel to assume that this is the primary factor. What makes Lurie's analysis work however is that it elucidates Quentin's reaction to Rosa's story and allows his own narration to become an act of creation itself.

Cleanth Brooks has beautifully organized the events of Absalom, Absalom! into a series of six strata. Using these strata, Professor Brooks has carefully placed the events of the novel into traditional chronological order. However, much like the novel itself, they are not chronological by means of the Sutpen story, but rather by the order in which Quentin receives and interprets information. The organization that Brooks provides is useful to readers on

many levels, and it helps to elucidate the cinematic form of the novel. However, Brooks argues that the cinematic nature of the novel is due to "something that a writer of genius who also possessed experimental audacity could have learned from going to the movies at the local Oxford moving picture theater" (Toward Yoknapatawpha 317). While this is certainly a plausible explanation, there are simply too many cinematic techniques at play for this to be the only one.

Repetition is essential to Absalom, Absalom! in much the same way it is in many of Faulkner's works. However, it is not the repetition of the Sutpen story (we already know most of it by the end of the first chapter) that drives the plot; it is the collision of the different interpretations of each retelling. Quentin grows impatient having to listen to the story again and again when he already knows how it is going to turn out. However, he is not bored with the story; he is merely waiting for his opportunity to tell it.

Quentin's approach to storytelling can be equated to Faulkner's own first day in Hollywood. Joseph Blotner tells us of Faulkner's refusal to sit through a screening of The Champ (1931) because he already knew how it would turn out (qtd. in Wagner-Martin 299). Faulkner, like Quentin, was not discouraged. He simply wanted to tell the story

himself. With this in mind, it is as if we as readers are encountering a series of screenplays. We come in contact with four different narrators, each of whom presents his or her own treatment of the story, or as noted by Cleanth Brooks: "instead of having the character tell of a certain experience, we move through a fade-out-dissolve into a sequence that *presents* the experience" (Toward Yoknapatawpha 317).

Joseph Urgo suggests that Faulkner learned [from Howard Hawks] that when adapting a story for the screen, "it need not be a faithful adaptation—it need not even resemble the original property—in order to be a 'successful' film adaptation" (qtd. in Wagner-Martin 301). Urgo further claims that this is what Quentin and Shreve demonstrate as they work on their own "screenplay" of the Sutpen story. Although this is a great insight to the structure of the novel, Urgo's oversight is that this principle is not limited to cinematic narrative; it is a fundamental tenet of storytelling. Faulkner has simply reconstructed the narrative to include a comment on the process of storytelling itself. Ultimately, there is enough evidence to know that Quentin and Shreve are conjecturing. The challenge is not to determine whether or not they are doing so, but rather to determine what parts they are



creating themselves. This strategy leaves open the role of the fifth narrator, the reader. Quentin is described very early in the novel as "...an empty hall echoing with sonorous defeated names; he was not a being, an entity, he was a commonwealth" (7). Like Quentin, every reader is also a "commonwealth." We bring to the table our own conjectures and assumptions just as Quentin and Shreve did in their dormitory. This is how Absalom, Absalom! presents to us its subtle montage. Images collide within the space of the narrative that forces unconscious conjectures on the part of the reader. This technique is so effective that many first time readers will finish the novel believing a series of events occur that are never printed in the text. Urgo elucidates the cinematic nature of the novel as simply "the presentation of the creative process in a reified manner" (qtd. in Wagner-Martin 303-4). While this is certainly one element, the most filmic elements of Absalom, Absalom! are not even in the text, but rather in the reader's own mind. Urgo concludes that Absalom, Absalom! implicitly asks, "Are created projections more important than documented history?" He then states that Quentin and Faulkner repeatedly answer "Yes" (qtd. in Wagner-Martin 307). However, the montage structure of Absalom, Absalom! not only asserts the importance of created projections, but it

also claims that we are unable to look at documented history without making our own conjectures. No matter how much of the Sutpen story is concrete, the reader must always synthesize the elements to come to his or her own new thesis of the story. This is not only true of films or stories, but of everyday life. Although the cinematic connection between Faulkner's period in Hollywood and his writing Absalom, Absalom! is visible, the cinematic tropes that are evident in the novel appear much earlier in his career.

With the possible exception of Joyce's Ulysses, nowhere in modern literature are the elements of montage so abundant than in The Sound and the Fury. For this novel, which was first published in October of 1929, Faulkner could not possibly have been influenced by his time in Hollywood (his first trip still three years away). This novel, unlike later works, shows that Faulkner's influences did not stem from any particular films, but that he could do in a novel what they do in the movies. This early work further highlights the symbiotic relationship of all artists who experienced the crisis of modernity. Although Faulkner had not yet been involved in filmmaking, and there is no evidence that he was a fanatical movie watcher, The Sound and the Fury exemplifies the zeitgeist of Modernism

as well as Faulkner's own understanding of what it means to be a part of it. When discussing the novel's delayed reception, Faulkner notes that it resembles:

the first moving picture projector-warped lens, poor light, clumsy gears, and even a bad screen—which had to wait eighteen years for the lens to clear, the light to steady, the gears to mesh and smooth. (qtd.in Lurie 106)

Thus, The Sound and the Fury is, perhaps, Faulkner's contribution to the "ideal cinema" mentioned by Bazin and others.

One of the first truly narrative films, D.W. Griffith's Intolerance (1916), could potentially be an influence. In Griffith's film, four stories from four eras are told at once. Scenes merge from Babylonian battles to Reformation massacres, then to inmates on death row, and finally to the Crucifixion, with little explanation of how these are connected (Kawin 6). Although it is evident that The Sound and the Fury is the cohesive story of the Compson family, the story is presented in much the same butted-together manner as Griffith's film. For example, we are given the story as told from four different perspectives; it is the story of one family, but the events described crash together in such a way that they do not always appear connected at first glance. The subject of Griffith's film is an abstraction that can not be photographed, but is

suggested through what can be. Likewise, The Sound and the Fury pushes together what can be written about a family to show those aspects of humanity that are unable to be captured by the traditional novel.

Bruce Kavin's explanation of the montage technique applied to The Sound and the Fury is threefold. The first kind of montage is that the four sections "...which proceed from different minds, center on different days, and vary drastically in tone and technique—are butted against each other without explanation" (19). This description is most closely related to the montage of the early cinema; the montage of Griffith and Abel Gance. While Kavin's argument is mostly sound, (the four parts do collide rather abruptly), these parts are obviously not as separated as those of Intolerance are. After reading Benjy's section, the reader will have encountered almost everything that he or she will for the rest of the novel. Therefore, we know what the relationship between each section is, and with the exception of the second section, they all take place during the same weekend. However, it is not so much that there is no explanation; it is rather that there is too much information. The repetitive nature of the novel ensures that the collision is not between disparaging events. It

comes instead from disparaging interpretations of those events.

Secondly, Kawin suggests "the contradictory implications of such scenes as the final one are dynamically suspended through the rhetorical and structural device of the extended oxymoron" as a form of cinematic montage (19). This principle works on many levels, most notably in the sense of irony employed throughout the novel. This technique is similar to what Alfred Hitchcock called the "MacGuffin." Faulkner has instilled a search for something in the mind of the reader that is ultimately of little or no importance. In this case we are speaking of the sense of a need for order, which feels so abundantly crucial throughout much of the novel. The final sequence, which presents a supposedly peaceful solution to Benjy's quest for order, signifies nothing. Benjy can not possibly know the difference between order and chaos. His is an existence of habit, and this is a moment not of peace, but of control. Benjy's own narration is finally what is important. It is this uninterrupted narration, without the help of interpretation, that leads us to Kawin's third kind of montage.

The third type of montage, which is probably the most noticeably cinematic of the three, concerns the use of

time. Kawin suggests "past and present and even fantasy are rapidly and repeatedly intercut, within the streams of consciousness of Benjy and Quentin" (19). When written, these elements often seem heady and confusing. However, if we look at them as we would a screenplay, many of them become noticeably garden-variety Hollywood flashbacks and dream sequences. For example, when Quentin picks a fight with Gerald at the climax of his narration, Faulkner uses this type of montage to blend this fight with the one he had with Caddy's seducer, Dalton Ames. However, the fights are joined together by Dalton's insistence that he explain to Quentin the passion he and Caddy share for one another. What could easily be shown as a conventional flashback on the screen is necessarily muddled in the text because the memory of one fight is as real to Quentin as the present one. This proves to have an excellent cinematic effect. There is no need for dramatic editing; the two scenes are simply butted together as one.

As cinematic as the structure of The Sound and the Fury may appear, its sole film adaptation falls short on so many crucial elements that it is barely even recognizable. Although Faulkner himself learned that a filmic adaptation need not be faithful to its source to be a successful work of art, Martin Ritt's plot-driven film lacks the talent and

ambition of its predecessor. The result is a sub-par effort that focuses on Jason and his relationship with Quentin II. The structure and themes of Ritt's adaptation are so drastically different that they offer little insight to this study. It is Faulkner's own text that elucidates the principles of cinematic montage.

Although reduced to silence by Ritt, Benjy's interpretation of the story is perfectly suited for the screen. In the first five pages of Faulkner's novel there is already evidence of all of Kawin's primary kinds of montage. A typical example appears in one of the earliest scenes, in which Benjy is drawn back in time after hearing a golfer's call for a caddie:

"Wait a minute." Luster said. "You snagged on that nail again. Cant you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail." *Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said...* (4)

Although we know very little at this point in the narration, it is evident that there is a rapid shift in time and perspective. This technique may be confusing to first-time readers; however, there is a cohesive visual strategy in use that clarifies the actions. This strategy appears radical on the page, but is common to the screen. When we enter the scene, Benjy and Luster are walking

through a golf course looking for lost balls to sell back to whom they belong. While crossing under a broken spot in the fence, Benjy is snagged on a nail. This immediately segues to a previous memory; Benjy recalls being in the same predicament at another time. By changing the typeface, Faulkner reveals that this image is not taking place simultaneously with the golf ball hunt. While it may not be evident upon first glance, what we have here is the first dissolve to a flashback sequence. Since Benjy can not "know," he instead feels. He is completely free of spatial and temporal cognition and is therefore limited to association by his own sensitivity. Benjy's shifts between the past and present, unbeknownst to him, are visual clues. Unlike a traditional linear narrative, Benjy's own interpretation of the Compson story functions as a dialectical montage. What appears to be the continuation of one story is in fact the collision of two. The reader is thereby forced to use the clues to determine where one ends and the other begins. However experimental this structure appears on the page, it is a rather simple visual technique when applied to the screen. Considered impossible to film in 1959, Benjy's story is incredibly cinematic on its own. From the onset, the viewer would be able to see that Benjy is a mentally challenged adult. From there it would be



evident that his perspective would be –to say the least– clouded by that handicap. However, each of Benjy's flashbacks could be presented in such a way that the viewer would immediately recognize their context. While this takes away some of the challenge of reading the text, it does nothing to alter the theme of the original work. The collision of these scenes provides the needed repetition of character and theme to establish the "extended oxymoron" that is crucial to the work as a whole.

Although the scholarly debates are likely to live on, Faulkner's experience in Hollywood did not have the negative affect on his novel writing that some critics claim. For most of his career, Faulkner wore the hats of both serious novelist and Hollywood screenwriter. However, the period in Hollywood that he would have likely deemed "bonded servitude" occurred primarily after his major works were completed. Though I am not suggesting that Faulkner wrote any of these works with the movies in mind, there is ample evidence that exposure to the cinema provided a positive influence on the form and structure of his fiction. Many of Faulkner's screenplays are classics on their own, but it is in fiction that he proves that he can do what the movies do.

## CONCLUSION

The basic objective of this thesis has been to document the importance of the symbiotic relationship between literary modernism and the cinema. The main reason for doing a research in that direction was twofold: to prove that literary modernism and cinema are indisputably bound together by a common goal, to "make it new," and to support, within the limits of this work, the very tangible fact that understanding cinematic tropes is an invaluable tool for unlocking the mysteries of these "impenetrable" works.

The cinema has become one of the most important artistic contributions of the twentieth century. However, from a twenty-first century perspective, it is often quite difficult to understand the world's initial reaction to the medium more than one hundred years ago. Gertrude Stein's offhand remark begins and ends this study because it resonates with a direct simplicity that has eluded many scholars for decades. Literary modernism is visual in the same way that a film must also be read. Unlike many works of fiction, the writings I have discussed in this study use

cinematic tropes to help the reader discover the intended vision of each scene. While we are quite accustomed to being "shown" something on a movie screen, we are often expected to create our own understanding of what a piece of literature "looks" like. In fact, the most common complaint about filmic adaptations, as I have shown with The Dead, is that they represent the adaptor's vision of the film rather than the viewer's own.

What was known to Gertrude Stein was perhaps overlooked by many of her contemporaries, even those discussed in this thesis. While it is unclear whether there is a direct link between Stein and Buñuel, I have proven that each of these artists use extraordinarily similar methods to create the same effect in two seemingly different media. What Joyce may have misunderstood was that it was not Eisenstein or Ruttmann that were ready to film Ulysses, it was himself. William Faulkner, on the other hand, could not succeed as a screenwriter because he did not realize that it was not a separate process, he was already making cinematic masterpieces outside of the motion picture industry.

However, the most important thing for all of these artists was to understand the society in which they lived. Their art represents the yearnings to not only create

something beautiful, but also something that created meaning. Each of these artists understood his or her time with a thoroughness that many have failed to see to this day. Literary modernism and cinema were bound together to create a new vision, albeit a ruptured one.

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