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OBJECT / SUBJECT: THE FILMS OF ERIC ROHMER

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SUMMARY

In Eric Rohmer's *Six Moral Tales* there is a discrepancy between what the voiceover of the protagonist of the film is saying and what the images are showing. Until now, most studies have seen this as a confrontation between the director's narration and each of the protagonists'. But this article makes a different interpretation. It claims that the characters are aware of their true thoughts and hide them with deceitful words, but their gaze, conveyed by the camera, denotes their true feelings. The mise en scène becomes a transcendental element in a cinema of words. If image and word contradict one another, the viewer will have to be active and not be content with the showing of the film, but investigate its meaning. It is the enunciation of the film from where the true discourse, invisible and intangible, has to be extracted.

KEY WORDS

Cinema, Discrepancy, Enunciation, Aesthetics, Eric Rohmer, F. W. Murnau, History, Showing, Narrative, Objectivity, Subjectivity

ARTICLE

The distance between words and images in Murnau's films

Eric Rohmer's enthusiasm for Murnau's films is well known. And the parallels between the plot of the *Moral Tales* and the first film made by the German director in the USA have been constant. The love triangle between a man and two women –identifyied archetypally in the intertitles of the film as the *city*

woman and the *wife*, *Sunrise* (1927)– is undoubtedly the source of inspiration for the series of six films where the protagonist is torn throughout the story between the temptation of the *seductive woman* and the stability of the *chosen woman*. (1) The latter is presented in the last of the six tales, *L'amour, l'aprés-midi* (1972), as a wife too. The outline of Murnau's film has infected Murnau's *Moral Tales* (1962-1972), in which some of the leading characters, the protagonist of *Ma nuit chez Maud* (1968) or the baker's wife in *La boulangère de Monceau*, have no name either.

A plot line with a long tradition, the love triangle is the engine of the events in the *Moral Tales*. Familiarity with the three-sided intrigue predisposes the viewer to follow the action according to the conventions established by custom. But in Rohmer's films, although they are presented as first-person narratives, the audience do not fully identify with the protagonists and, as a result, feel no satisfaction or relief at the decisions taken in matters of love. That happens because another discourse is superimposed on the story itself, at the level of the enunciation that is the true essence of the film and which structures the reflection on film itself and its mechanisms that is implicit in all Rohmer's work.

And how is that superimposed discourse generated? It is not surprising that the author is a film-maker who hides his real name, that of an anonymous individual (Jean-Marie Maurice Schérer), behind the shield of a director's pseudonym (Eric Rohmer). Hervé Joubert Laurencin (2) claims that Murnau's influence goes beyond the pretext of the plot and is concentrated in his capacity to avoid sentimentality and generate distance and coldness. It may well be that very distance that surrounds Rohmer's characters and keeps the audience at arm's length. However, about the discrepancy between words and images to be observed in *Moral Tales* and which generates that distancing not shown in the films, Joubert Laurencin relates the construction of Rohmer's films with silent cinema where "*les paroles aussi sont decalées, mises ailleurs: sur les intertitres, tout simplement, ce qui laisse à l'image la possibilité de s'exprimer par elle-même, chose qui ne reviendra jamais dans le parlant, ou n'y reviendra que par un travail enorme*". (3) The images in Murnau's films shot in the silent period are independent of the texts around them, just as images and words are independent in Rohmer's. They are emancipations of a different nature, but since Rohmer was an admirer of Murnau's films –as well as an expert on the language of film–, it is not unusual to establish a close relation between the construction of Murnau's silent stories and Rohmer's extremely talkative.

Films with meaning: the superimposed discourse

Although Rohmer constructs transparent films with a classical structure, he can be seen as a modern film-maker because he experiments with film language. (4) These experiments cannot seen at a glance; they consist of including almost unnoticed –unlike noisy film writings like Jean-Luc Godard's– elements

which being new meaning to the story. If image and word contradict one another, the viewer has to be active and not be content with the showing of the film; he has to investigate its meaning. (5) It is the enunciation of the film from where the true discourse, invisible and intangible, has to be extracted. Rohmer breaks with the convention of including the whole of the story in the plot of the film text. His films go beyond that: "by showing, we mean, but we must not mean without showing". (6) The play between meaning and showing is the key to assimilating Rohmer's films in their totality.

As if it were the game he proposes in his last film *Triple Agent* (2004), the viewer of his films always has to mistrust the truth his characters tell. Nothing of what is shown is ever what it seems, and if it is it is never absolutely convincing. And how can that be in the work of a director who approaches reality from transparency?

At the end of 1965, Rohmer held a conversation (7) with Jean-Claude Biette, Jacques Bontemps and Jean-Louis Comolli, in which he stated his interest in portraying a space (8) and a time (9) in his films which belong to a particular existence, from an objective perspective. He described his film work as a process in which he avoids any kind of manipulation of that space-time authenticity, since he wants to convey to the viewer the referent he takes from reality as faithfully as possible. And, indeed, that objectivity is unquestionable throughout his work. No manipulation of space or time can be perceived. Rohmer stays firm in his assertion: "the truth that has interested me so far is […] the objectivity of space and time". (10)

Even so, in the prologue to the publication of the literary stories which provide the starting point for the film versions of the *Moral Tales*, Rohmer confesses his twofold interest in the methods of approaching reality offered by cinéma-verité and the literary genres that allow an approach to the study of the psychology of the characters: "[…] although seduced by the methods of cinéma-verité, I was not unaware of the resistance offered by the forms of psychodrama or the intimate diary, for example, to my intentions". (11) Rohmer knows the difficulty of penetrating the subjectivity of a character from the limits of objectivity. In some passages in his films it even seems that he is putting the discussion of the interest provided by the predominance of one aspect or another in his characters' mouths. As we have seen so far, it could be one more component to add to the sum of the final meaning of the story. Rohmer puts in the words of the protagonist of *Ma nuit chez Maud* the essential element of his films and fundamentally of the *Moral Tales*: "It's over! That all happened a year ago. And that's it. Have I made you thoughtful?" And the protagonist replies lucidly: "Forgive me if I have spoken lightly. I am in the hateful habit of seeing things only from my little point of view." From the power of the one who decides, Maud-Rohmer replies: "No, no: I'm interested in your point of view. If not, I would already have said goodnight". Maud would have thrown him out of the house and Rohmer would not have made a whole film about him.

The element that first allows us to state that the *Moral Tales* are narrated from a subjective perspective is the fact that the protagonist of each film becomes the narrator of the story. (12) Through the voiceover each protagonist organises the narration and controls its structure and content completely. He governs the discourse according to his own will. He always speaks well of himself, places himself in an unbeatable position that betrays a manipulation of the discourse to his own benefit. The viewer is placed cognitively beside the protagonist since he knows everything that is happening and everything he is thinking from his own perspective. "Have I made you thoughtful?": the minutely prepared and thought out discourse used by the protagonists of the *Moral Tales* is a self-narrated monologue (13) because it is a discourse where the present narrator individual and the character individual from the past blend into a single cognitive subject. The narrative distance between the present time (the narrator's) and the past time (the character's) is practically cancelled out. Present and past blend in a single present. Although these are events that took place in the past, the feeling of immediacy is constant. That presence of a "single cognitive subject" in a "single present time" means that the viewer is aware of the protagonist's thoughts at all times. "I am in the hateful habit of seeing things only from my little point of view": the narrators of the *Moral Tales* carry out a narrative function (since they are the ones that relate the events), but they also carry out an ideological one (since they impregnate everything they say with their thought and their opinions). (14)

If sharing thoughts with a character in the story who is a homodiegetic narrator usually arouses affinity and sympathy in the viewer, in the *Moral Tales* that does not occur. In Rohmer's films the restriction of knowledge of the events taking place puts the viewer in a cognitive situation which is parallel at all times to the character's, but is to the detriment of his identification with the character due to the protagonist's lack of frankness. The set of inventions, manipulations and secrets of the narrators in the *Moral Tales* give a glimpse of a certain way of acting and dealing with life. They reveal the six protagonists' true being. That absence of sincerity in the narration allows for an interesting investigation of the mechanisms of the character's mind.

The narrators of the *Moral Tales* construct the stories according to their interests. They are quite aware of the control they have over the story, which on occasions one of them even refers to in his condition as narrator. The contrast between the voiceover and the other discourses that occur through the film – essentially the information supplied in the dialogues and the perspective from which the events taking place in the images are shown– reveals to what extent the protagonist has manipulated his voiceover commentary.

Therefore the subjectivity of the narrator comes to dominate the story. The chronology and the space may be apparently objective, but they are not what control the unfolding of the narration as a whole. The dialogues replace functions that could be done by the protagonist's voiceover, since in some films,

through the minimal presence of the voiceover, his thoughts, reflections and ideas are transmitted through conversations with other characters (*Le genou de Claire*, 1970, *Ma nuit chez Maud*, *L'amour, l'après-midi*). In the *Moral Tales* three types of dialogue may be distinguished according to the type of narrator and the voiceover discourse found in each film. The *conversation scenes*, in which a single conversation develops, transmit spoken thought. (15) The *integrated conversations* are made up of dialogues inserted with extreme precision into the story. (16) And the *complementary dialogue* includes conversations where no outstanding information is given and which have a purely circumstantial function (they are mostly greetings or polite questions and answers). (17) The close relation established between the protagonists' voiceover discourses and the dialogues they engage in with the different characters in the film betray the strict control the narrators have over the general structure of the story. The word spoken and the word thought produce a compact narrative which the narrator-protagonists of the six films compose according to their interests.

We can observe that there are narcissistic, arrogant or contemptuous remarks about some of the girls, etc. in the voiceover. Those words and the attitude they show generally create a large distance between the character and the viewer. The viewer probably does not come to identify with those characters, but he does adopt the same point of view from which the events are told, since they reach him through the consciousness of the protagonist. A considerable distance opens up between affinity with the characters' thoughts and proximity to an understanding of their point of view: the viewer may feel both strong disagreement with the protagonist's mind and strong proximity to his point of view. That imbalance is crucial in Rohmer's six films: sharing a point of view but not a thought. It is a veiled feeling, quite peculiar and quite particular to the *Moral Tales*: to be or not to be on the protagonists' side. The fusion that could give rise to an absolute interpenetration between protagonists and viewer never takes place. The distance, mentioned at the beginning *à propos* of the article about Murnau, established between the narrator and the audience, allows the viewer to assess the main character's behaviour in each film and try to discover which part of his discourse is true and which is not. In *Triple Agent* (2004) explicitly and in the *Moral Tales* tacitly there is a search for the true nature of the protagonists.

That the method used for delving into those masculine subjectivities is to give the voice to the characters themselves shows that the author is seeking an approach to reality. He does not want to intercede in that showing of the ego, but prefers the characters themselves to be the ones who, by becoming narrators, fulfil the creative functions of his persona, with no intermediaries. The showing is present even in that subjectivity.

The contradiction within the ego itself

A lover of Naturalism and a professed admirer of Balzac, Rohmer is, as well as a modern film director, a container that has been filled with the accumulated wisdom of French literature. Like the writers of the second half of the 19th century, he allows the reader, who always knows more than the characters, to discover the truth. Despite sharing the cognitive point of view of the protagonists and narrators of the *Moral Tales*, the viewer has the capacity to go beyond what he sees, what he is shown and to discover "the relation of a person with himself". With that comment, the director shows how his films approach people's capacity to deceive themselves and lie to themselves, beyond recounting the love relations in themselves. The characters tell a story which is not true. The words that constitute their voiceover commentaries diverge from what the viewer observes in the images. But as opposed to what Joël Magny, (18) Pascal Bonitzer (19) and Marion Vidal (20) claim, it is not the author who uncovers his characters' lies; they betray themselves with their own gaze. "The character talks about himself and judges himself; he is filmed insofar as he is judged". (21) They know their true thoughts, but they conceal them behind deceitful words. Their gaze, however, transmitted by the camera, denotes their true meaning. If in the *Moral Tales* the plot revolves around a man's indecision in choosing between two women, Rohmer's film construction works on a visible level what the character wants to make the audience believe, from his verbal discourse, and beneath that shows what is really happening. But he keeps his intervention –so emphasised by many scholars and called the "absent point of view"– (22) on the sidelines and allows the showing to provide the meaning. That does not include an external look at the story which could be identified with the director's; it allows the protagonists' optical point of view to prevail and adds to the layers that make up the narrative. By saying that, I am not arguing that the films are made with a subjective camera, but that they include semi-subjective images that are closely related to the gaze of the male narrator protagonists.

Francesco Casetti (23) considers that we have to work the point of view from three dimensions: *seeing* (optical point of view), *knowing* (cognitive point of view) and *believing* (passionate point of view). And he points out that those three dimensions can pursue a single objective or collide. In the *Moral Tales* the three dimensions of the point of view show considerable divergences which are crucial to the meaning of the story.

The voiceover discourse of the six film texts presents a point of view, from which the events are shown, which generates a contradictory feeling in the viewer and becomes one of the main issues of the six films: the audience, probably, feel the same as the protagonists but it is not certain whether they share those feelings. In the six stories the dominant optical point of view belongs to the protagonist, i.e., the *mise en scène* of the film reveals a patent optical subjectivity which is the protagonist's own. And that subjective gaze transmitted by the camera is evident from the beginning of each story. It may seem a contradiction that Rohmer defends an invisible, transparent camera, but it can also be interpreted that likening it to a person's eyes is the best way of making the camera invisible. However, there are few

subjective shots to be seen throughout the story; only at occasional significant moments of the film, generally related to instants of intimacy, introspection and reflection by the character.

Indeed, the optical point of view presented in the *Moral Tales* is most a semi-subjective point of view. (24) I am referring to a close interpenetration between the film image and the gaze of a character, in this case, of the protagonist; to a subjectivisation of the frame produced by the relation between an observer and someone observed (shot A – shot B), which is given to a greater or lesser degree according to the arrangement of different elements (camera angle, distance between observer and observed, size of the shot, camera position, content of the shot…) That optical point of view that is peculiar to the protagonist is expressed particularly when he is looking at the seductive and chosen women, whom he observes with quite different attitudes.

Whilst he does enjoy approaching and even, at some specific moment, intimidating the seducer (short frontal shots), he always keeps a considerable distance from the chosen girl (more open lateral shots), who imposes a certain respect on him, whether because she is a lady who radiates coldness and perfectionism or because with the distance he manages to keep an unspoiled image. Here Hervé Joubert Laurencin again detects a point of contact with Murnau's work, since he considers that the laterality of the chosen girl refers to the obliquity that presents Gretchen in the eyes of Faust in the film of the same title: "*L'autre problème géométrique du film, et qui nous ramène directement à Murnau et à son Faust, est celui de l'obliquité [...]. Cette latéralité signifiante en termes de mise en scène est très exactement présente dans le Faust de Murnau, dans la séquence de la fête de Pâques à l'église, lorsque Faust revient chez lui sous les traits d'un jeune et bel homme, et qu'il tombe amoureux, au premier regard, de Marguerite*". And he contrasts that laterality with the frontality of the seductive woman: "*Tandis que s'affiche, réference pictural encore, une frontalité déclarée dans la présentation de Maud (Françoise Fabian), la libre-penseuse, le narrateur tient à l'église, au début du film, une position au contraire latérale, et porte donc un regard oblique sur la 'fidèle' dont il a decidé arbitrairement de faire sa femme devant Dieu (Marie-Christine Barrault). Ces deux présentations géométriques correspondent, cela va de soi, aux attitudes intellectuelles et morales des personnages face au monde et aux autres*". (25)

The signified gaze at these women makes the viewer, like the camera, align his eye with alongside that of the protagonist. He sees what the protagonist is looking at from his optical perspective, though it is not a literal subjectivity. That generates a perceptive sympathy by the viewer, who identifies with the protagonist's gaze, transmitted through the camera. To construct a particular point of view in the film, that optical perception is complemented by the cognitive perception.

In the *Moral Tales* the character who dominates the gaze in the story also dominates the knowledge. The cognitive point of view is also shared with the protagonist. The viewer always knows exactly the same as

the character and therefore the story presents a focalisation (26) that is only related to the protagonist of each film. The voiceover discourse of each protagonist boosts that shared cognition since it is what leads and recounts the events that take place. Indeed, it is the main source of information. The viewer is situated cognitively alongside the protagonists.

The collision between these three points of view comes when the third dimension is envisaged. The viewer does not believe in what he is being told and therefore no relation of trust is established with the protagonist. If so far the audience have shared an optical gaze and a cognitive gaze with the protagonist of each tale, it is highly likely that they do not share that ideological gaze from which he observes the world around him. The morality defended by the protagonists is a morality that they construct and which is useful to them, but which it would be difficult for a viewer to assume. They are hypocritical, amoral, false… what viewer wants to identify with a character of that kind? It is possible to assume the eye, the ear and the cognition of those characters, but not their way of thinking. That generates a strange feeling in the viewer who feels very close to the protagonist, but on the other hand does not identify with him, so that paradoxically a great distance opens up between protagonist and viewer. The *Moral Tales* are films of thought in every sense: the characters express their thought through the voiceover, the conversations, the gaze, etc. The structure of the films is thought. The film in itself is a game of thought. Rohmer proposes a game between different desynchronisations which, as opposed to what some authors claim, seems to occur essentially in the interior of that subjectivity of the protagonist: it is his gaze that betrays his true thought to the detriment of what the voiceover says.

Rohmer is fully conscious of that machinery and exploits it to the limit. He looks for the same idea he defends in the theories on realism he writes as a critic. The fact that he gets so deep and with such complexity into the interior ego of the six characters expresses his interest in portraying the true nature of the mind of a human being. The contradictions denoted by those characters' words or gazes, their moral doubts, their haughtiness and their insecurity, are, in short, inherent components of any individual. From that rich subjectivity, full of nuances, Rohmer achieves a splendid objectivity in his portrait of human consciousness and psychology.

We consider that this series is an emblem of the paradox that underpins the cinema for its twofold capacity to show and narrate (interpret). The *Moral Tales* are halfway between what is considered objective and what is considered subjective. The objective appearance of certain moments of the film, such as the descriptions of the places, is a veil that conceals the true entity of the *Moral Tales*, closer to the psychological novel than to cinéma-verité.

And the director acknowledges: "I like to show in the films things that seem to repel cinematic transcription, to express feelings that are not filmable, because they are sunk deep in consciousness. In

the *Moral Tales* I have deliberately wanted to show one's relation with oneself. […] The character talks about himself and judges himself […]. We must show what exists beyond behaviour, even though we know that we cannot show anything more than behaviour". (27) When Rohmer considers the possibility of filming sensations that come from the depths of human consciousness he is not referring to visualising them in images but only to suggesting them.

Self-deception as evasion of reality

Rohmer's work and the reflection he extracts from his films lead us to think of the alienation his characters suffer. They do not live their own reality; they generate an alternative, fictitious one. (28) In a recent French film, *L'emploi du temps* (2001) by Laurent Cantet, we can also observe the farce the protagonist invents for himself as a life of his own. The difference between Rohmer's series of films and Cantet's film lies in the way of approaching that alienation. In the first case it is read only in the enunciation of the film, since it is an alienation that to a certain extent is uncovered by the film language. In the second, it is part of the story.

All these characters, products of the modern cinema, reflect on the fact of being another person. (29) They self-deceive "an ego which, abandoned and left alone with itself, perceives its emptiness and falls into melancholy and despair". (30) In the end, what Rohmer sets out to deal with in his films is, as opposed to what can be read superficially in the plot, life void of meaning. (31) As Bonitzer points out, "*Cette obsession affreuse de n'être rien, ce désespoir qui plane ('rien' est le mot du désespoir: ce qui vient, intolérablement, à la place de ce que j'ai cru, de ce que j'ai aimé, de ce qui a rempli pendant un tenps de ma vie), c'est ce qui donne sa tension au filme, malgré l'absence d'evénements et même, cas-limite du cinéma de Rohmer, construction dramatique*". (32) That is the essence of Rohmer's films. Rohmer and Cantet's characters are escaping from a void that is all their own and they do so by generating a fictitious reality that lives with and feeds of the reality to which they belong. In both cases, however, it is expressed quite differently in cinematic terms.

Existence without passion

If, as Núria Bou claims in *Plano/Contraplano* from a reflection by Eugenio Trías, passion is "the starting point or the 'datum' that opens self-knowledge and knowledge of the outside world to the subject", (33) Rohmer's characters, and eminently the protagonists of the *Moral Tales* blinded by self-deception, do not know the meaning of the word passion. And if this article began with a reference to the films of Murnau,

set in a classical tradition, I will end by applying a classical reading to Rohmer's modern films. The husband and wife in *Sunrise* recover their love with a returned gaze. Rohmer's characters do not know passion since they have never participated in a gaze of that kind. Bou argues that "the exchange of glances becomes an indicator of the passion that springs up between the protagonists of classical films". (34) Neither Jérome, nor Frédéric, nor Adrien, nor Bertrand, nor the two protagonists of *Moral Tales I* and *III*, whose names we do not know, live a returned glance in the style of the classical films. Because when the shot-countershot fails, the story becomes modern and passion fades away.

NOTES

(1) According to the terminology used by Marion Vidal. VIDAL, M. *Les Contes moraux d'Eric Rohmer.* París: Pierre Lherminier, 1977.

(2) LAURENCIN, H.J. "Une Trouble affinité de main: Rohmer et Murnau". In: VARIOUS AUTHORS *Pour un Cinéma comparé: influences et répétitions*. París: Cinámathèque Française, 1996.

(3) *Ibid*., p. 82.

(4) "Films in which the camera is invisible could be modern films". Statements by Eric Rohmer taken from *Pier Paolo Pasolini contra Eric Rohmer: cine de poesía contra cine de prosa*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1970. [Interview with Eric Rohmer published in *Cahiers du cinéma* (November 1965), no. 172].

(5) "We must show what exists beyond behaviour, even though we know that we cannot show anything more than behaviour". *Ibid*., p. 66

(6) Ibid., p. 71.

(7) This is one of the richest and most revealing interviews on the director's work published in no. 172 of *Cahiers du cinéma*. Joaquim Jordà took it up in *Pier Paolo Pasolini contra Eric Rohmer: cine de poesía contra cine de prosa*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 1970.

(8) In the *Six Moral Tales*, Eric Rohmer tries to show the spaces of the film as faithfully as possible to the way they are in reality. He tries to place the viewer in the location and make him forget that there is a camera showing him the setting. That realism is boosted because most of the settings Rohmer uses are natural. And he describes the ones where the six stories take place in detail. That detail, that minute attention, enable him to observe an integral spatial unity. At all times the viewer knows the location where the events are taking place exactly: Paris, Clermont-Ferrand, Annecy, Saint-Tropez... Moreover, the continuity of the montage promotes the spatial coherence. Memories constantly relate the contiguous

spaces in such a way that their transparency and unity are unquestionable. The space shown in the *Moral Tales* is absolutely faithful to the real spaces where they have been filmed. Rohmer captures their real nature with maximum exactness and objectivity.

(9) If the viewer knows where he is, where the action is taking place at all times, he also knows exactly what stage the story has reached. Time in the *Six Moral Tales* is constantly made explicit. The marking of time, like the marking of space, is very specific. Through elements present in the image (like clocks or calendars) or through the dialogue or the narrator's voiceover, the viewer is always aware of the passage of time; and at what stage (approximately) or in which season of the year or even on which particular day the action is taking place. That passage of time in some of the *Tales* is more specific than in others, but in any case it should be emphasised that in the six films time is structured linearly. That is to say that the events follow a chronology that is never broken. There is no anachrony in any of the stories.

(10) *Pier Paolo Pasolini contra Eric Rohmer. Op. cit*. p. 54-55

(11) Foreword to ROHMER, E. *Seis Cuentos Morales*. Barcelona: Anagrama, 2000. p. 7.

(12) Although it is not shown explicitly, Jérôme, the protagonist of the fifth *Moral Tale*, *Le genou de Claire*, also becomes a narrator who intervenes actively in the organisation of the film. If the other five narrators are extradiegetic and homodiegetic, i.e. they appear from the exterior of the diegesis, Jérôme does so from the interior. He is made a homodiegetic and intradiegetic narrator, since he talks about himself through his conversations with other people, essentially Laura and Aurora. But what places him in the same organising position as the other characters is that in this case his voice is expressed through the "virtual" diary that is opened for the viewer and is constituted as a film. The cuttings that signal the pasage of the days are the dates in the diary Jérôme is keeping. The contents of the diary are the images of the film. Jérôme is an implicit homodiegetic narrator.

(13) Terminology taken from Dorrit Cohn and equivalent to G. GENETTE'S "transposed discourse".

(14) According to the classification of the functions of the narrator made by G. GENETTE.

(15) They appear in *Le genou de Claire,* the only *Moral Tale* that does not contain a voiceover discourse and the dialogues are an equivalent of the voiceover commentary that appears in the other films; *Ma nuit chez Maud,* the other *Moral Tale* with less voiceover commentary, in such a way that what the protagonist as first person narrator does not express extradiegetically he expresses intradiegetically as a character. The structure of the film is absolutely focused on the conversations between the different

characters and the protagonist; the fragments of *L'amour, l'après-midi* that include a few voiceover commentaries also have conversation scenes.

(16) The narrator introduces some of the words expressed by the characters directly, in other cases they fit, without presentations, into the content of the voiceover discourse. They show the subjective unity of the story dominated by the protagonist-narrator (*La colectionneuse* and *La carrière de Suzanne*).

(17) In *La boulangère de Monceau* and in certain scenes from *L'amour, l'après-midi* the dialogues become a dispensable element, as opposed what happens in the two previous dialogue types, which are indispensable to the unfolding of the story. The absence of a friend-confidant for the protagonist fosters that lack of direct communication.

(18) "*La cámera n'est pas un personnage extérieur au drame, qui en aurait une vision plus large. Cela réintroduirait une subjectivité complémentaire (la vision que l'auteur aurait des événements) ou supposerait un point de vue démiurgique que ne peut voir le personnage central, ce à quoi il est mêlé. Ce mécanisme permet au spectateur de participer aussi bien à la conscience du personnage qu'à une vision objective des faits*". And adds: "*Si Rohmer ne juge pas ses personnages, il pointe néanmoins cruellement, par sa mise en scène, l'ambigüité de leur comportement*". MAGNY, J. *Eric Rohmer*. París: Rivages-Cinéma, 1986. p. 31.

(19) "*[...] différence entre le narrateur et l'objectif; cet écart définit l'espace moral et intellectuel de ces films: l'objectif enregistre des rencontres, que le narrateur interprète*". BONITZER, P. *Eric Rohmer*. París: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1999. p. 24.

(20) "*Le spectateur lit l'image à deux niveaux: dans la version officielle du narrateur et dans sa version brute, les deux ne se juxtaposant pas forcément. Nous pouvons, par exemple, être avertis avant le narrateur des qualités méconnues de la boulangère ou au contraire rester jusqu'à la fin insensible à son charme. Nous pouvons croire la version officielle de ses avances ou ne voir dans son infirmé, n'est jamais redondant, jamais superflu*". VIDAL, M. *Op. cit*. p. 41.

(21) *Pier Paolo Pasolini contra Eric Rohmer. Op. cit*. p. 66.

(22) BONITZER, P. *Op. cit*. p. 23.

(23) From narratological works by Seymour CHATMAN and Edward BRANIGAN, among others.

(24) The kind Edward BRANIGAN calls metaphorical point of view or François JOST secondary internal ocularisation.

(25) LAURENCIN, H.J. *Op. cit*. p.91 and p. 93.

(26) Fixed internal.

(27) Pier Paolo Pasolini contra Eric Rohmer. Op. cit. p. 66.

(28) "*Ils ne peuvent supporter la realité telle qu'elle est, ils ont besoin d'y injecter du rêve*". BONITZER, P. *Op. cit*. p. 33.

(29) "*Ils ont failli, sur le bascule d'un instant, être un autre*". BONITZER, P. *Op. cit*. p. 54.

(30) BÜRGER, C.; BÜRGER, P. *La desaparición del sujeto: una historia de la subjetividad de Montaigne a Blanchot*. Madrid: Akal Ediciones, 2001. p. 312-313.

(31) "*Il faut alors rétablir les faits, redresser, prolonger et compléter le récit pour avoir la vé rité. Mais ici, ce qui est en cause, ce n'est pas telle action honteuse ou criminelle, c'est tout le sens de la vie*". BONITZER, P. *Op. cit*. p. 42.

(32) BONITZER, P. *Op. cit*. p.42.

(33) BOU, N. *Plano/Contraplano: de la mirada clásica al universo de Michelangelo Antonioni*. Madrid: Nueva Visión, 2001. p. 15.

(34) BOU, N. *La Mirada en el temps: mite i passió en el cinema de Hollywood*. Barcelona: Edicions 62, 1996. p. 102.

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