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Sorcerer: The Story of a Failure

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Table of Contents:

Introduction:

William Friedkin directed in 1977 a movie called *Sorcerer*. It was adapted from a novel written by Georges Arnaud in 1953 called *The Wages of Fear*. It deals with four men who need to leave their respective countries for various reasons. Victor Manzon (Bruno Cremer) is French and needs to leave Paris after a bank fraud. The second, Kassem (Amidou) is a terrorist who is being tracked down by the Israeli police after a bomb attack in Jerusalem. The third protagonist, Jackie Scanlon (Roy Sheider) is an Irish man who is also being chased down by the victims of a robbery he committed in a church. Finally, the fourth man, Nilo (Francisco Rabal) is a contract killer. They all find exile in South America in a little village called Porvenir. Despite their miserable jobs in an American oil company, they are totally broke and consequently, compelled to drift in a damaged village.

After the explosion of an oil well that triggered a fire, those four men are asked to transport through the jungle some boxes of nitroglycerin in order to extinguish the fire. This liquid well known for being volatile has the ability to explode with any slight shake. Trucks are fixed and used in order to transport those boxes through the damaged and savaged landscapes of South America. They struggle to find a way in the overwhelming Nature in order to reach and extinguish the fire.

William Friedkin began his career at WGN TV in Chicago,[1] directing TV shows on this channel. One day, he had the opportunity to make a movie out of the story of a prisoner on death row.[2] His first documentary, *People Vs Paul Crump* in 1962, enabled him to realize how much the power of images could influence the viewers. Indeed, it was a movie that questioned the reasons why Paul Crump was sentenced to death. Friedkin displayed all the vices and weaknesses of the procedure. The Governor of Illinois saw the documentary and decided to change his sentence to life imprisonment, having doubts about the guilt of Crump.[3]

In 1971, Friedkin directed *The French Connection*, which granted him five Oscars, and two years later he directed the well-known *The Exorcist*. Both of those movies had a huge success worldwide, and were very lucrative. Indeed, *The Exorcist* stayed for a long time as one of the most bankable movies. It means that the money earned when the movie was

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[1] Friedkin, William. *The Friedkin Connection*. New York, Harper Collins Publishers. 2013. 21
[2] Friedkin. 2013. 31
[3] Friedkin. 2013. 56

broadcasted in theaters was bigger than the money invested to produce the movie. It allowed Friedkin to be part of the Director's Company, which was composed by the three most bankable directors at the time that is to say, Francis Ford Coppola, Peter Bogdanovitch and Friedkin himself. They were free to produce a movie with the condition that the budget would not exceed three million dollars, and ten percent of the benefits would be their share. While looking for a good screenplay to adapt on screen, Friedkin remembered an old movie he had seen, *Le Salaire de la Peur* made in 1953 by Henry Georges Clouzot. He flew to Paris in order to meet Clouzot, a French filmmaker whom he admired, and asked him for the rights to copy his movie. With the agreement of Clouzot, Friedkin hired Walon Greene, the screenwriter of Peckinpah's *The Wild Bunch* (1969), to rewrite the screenplay. They spent four months re-writing the scenario before showing it to Universal Studios. Because of the prologue of the movie occurring in four different places all over the world in addition to the main part happening in Ecuador, the producers feared a huge investment. But Charles Bludhorn, director of the Paramount and of Gulf+Western, an oil company that was more or less ruling the Dominican Republic, proposed to co-produce the movie with Universal and to film on-location in this country for the main part of the movie.

For his movie, Friedkin absolutely wanted Steve McQueen for the leading role and Lino Ventura for the supporting role. But after Friedkin refused to Ali McGrath the position of executive producer, McQueen declined the leading role. Universal suggested Roy Sheider to replace McQueen, (Jackie Scanlon or Domingez), and Friedkin went back to France in order to find another actor, Bruno Crémer (Victor Manzon or Serrano). Two other actors were the Moroccan born Amidou (Kassem or Martinez) and Francisco Rabal (Nilo).

The shooting in Europe and in the United States of America went pretty smoothly, predicting an easy and efficient filming, except for the fact that Friedkin was known to be a perfectionist, quick tempered, and irritable. The scenes were shot numerous times, so that Friedkin could obtain what he really desired. In the Dominican Republic, many crewmembers were fired. Friedkin fired five executive producers before proclaiming himself executive producer.

Friedkin wanted to film his movie with a particular light. This light could only be spotted in the morning, between 5am and 11am. It was a bluish light that brought the feeling of an awakened dream. Due to the short time span of this natural bluish light, the shooting of his movie was delayed. Other than that, he encountered many more difficulties during the

shooting. For instance, it took three months to build the bridge for the most heroic sequence of the movie of the trucks crossing a suspended bridge over a river. The bridge would always break up and the trucks always fell over in the water. Unfortunately, after the three months the river was drained out and they had to relocate to a river in Mexico. All those elements required more and more money to be involved in this movie. Also, many crewmembers got the malaria and were compelled to go back to the United States of America in order to be cured. Once again, a huge amount of time had been lost, so much so that at some point, everybody thought that Friedkin was doomed as well as his movie. Finally, the budget rose up to twenty two million dollars instead of twelve million![4]

On the 24th of June 1977, *Sorcerer* came out in the theaters. A month before, *Star Wars* directed by Georges Lucas appeared on screens (May 25, 1977); any other movie could not compete with *Star Wars*. There was no room for anything else even Friedkin's one. "What Went Wrong"[5] wondered the famous critic Charles Champlin in the *Los Angeles Times*; Sorcerer was not accepted by the audience. The respected *Village Voice* critic Andrew Sarris continued to sink the movie down by stating, "What I can swear to is the total pointlessness of the picture"[6]. Sarris was a very influential critic in America, who introduced Americans to European film theory "the idea that a great director speaks through his films no less than a master novelist speaks through his books."[7] His reviews were taken very seriously. Vincent Canby for *The New York Times* also wrote a critic for the director he was holding in contempt "The money, could have been better spent subsidizing a couple of beds at the Paine-Whitney Clinic."[8] By the end of the seventies, contemporary audiences had a kind of disdain for intellectual and unconventional stories, and they were looking for blockbusters like *Star Wars*, *Encounter of the Third Kind* (Steven Spielberg), *Saturday Night Fever* (John Badham) all released in 1977 featuring stars and with more appealing topics. That year, Friedkin was not the only one failing in theaters, Martin Scorsese and his *New York New York* released on the 21st of June also failed (an unfortunate month of June apparently).

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[4]"Levy, Anastasia. ""Sorcerer", L'histoire D'un Tournage Apocalyptique Pour William Friedkin" *Télérama Cinéma*. 13 July 2015. Web. 01 May 2016.

[5] Champlin, Charles. « What Went Wrong » *Los Angeles Times*, July 24, 1977

[6] Sarris, Andrew. « A Devil of a Bad Movie, but not Diabolical » *The Village Voice*, July 18, 1977

[7] Powell, Michael. "Andrew Sarris, Village Voice Film Critic, Dies at 83." *The New York Times*. June 20, 2012. Web June 22, 2016.

[8] Canby, Vincent. » Review for Sorcerer » *The New York Times*, July 10, 1977

Despite of the gigantic failure when released, *Sorcerer* has remained for the connoisseur a classic of American cinema. For instance, Matt Groening the creator of the famous TV show *The Simpsons* dedicated one of his episodes to the breath-taking sequence of the trucks crossing the suspended bridge. In the fourth season, ninth episode called "Mr. Plow" (November 1992), Homer improvises himself a plowman and needs to rescue his friend Barney stuck in an avalanche. During his rescue trip, he, like in the movie, has to do with narrow paths, and a bridge that can break at any moment. Other than respecting the imagery of *Sorcerer*, Matt Groening asked Alf Clausen to reproduce a music that would be similar to the one composed by Tangerine Dream for *Sorcerer*. Clausen created a mechanical rhythm orchestrated by synthesizers that would recreate the same tension in the original sequence. Though the motive of this imitation is a simple homage, there was no intent of making this scene as breath taking as the original one. Nevertheless, it is the only reference of this movie that can be found in the mainstream culture, through The Simpsons.[9]

Many questions are raised today to understand *Sorcerer*'s flop back in 1977. Jean Baptiste Thoret would say that the title misled the audience, who was expecting a picture similar to his previous one *The Exorcist*.[10] As a matter of fact, Friedkin did generate a mysterious movie ahead of its time that could not be perceived at its real worth. Despite the rise of the New Hollywood during the seventies, starting with *Easy Rider* directed by Dennis Hopper in 1969, *Sorcerer* paid dearly for a movement that was running out of steam. The same thing happened for Cimino's *The Deer Hunter* (1978). At that time, spectators were no longer interested in the New Hollywood movement. Instead, they were appealed by what we call today blockbusters. Blockbusters are movies "designed to success at the box office based on a formula designed to attract a wide audience through genre prescriptions, exhibitions practices and marketing tactics."[11] In other words, producers and directors used every device that would please the spectators, that is to say an easy narrative, including a love story, action, and a happy ending.

Today, Friedkin's movie experiences a revival, thirty years after its release. A new version of Sorcerer has been reedited So far, no scientific work can be found dealing with

[9] Internet Movie Database, The Simpsons Season Four, Episode 9. Web. 10th of May 2016
http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0701184/?ref_=ttep_ep9
[10] Thoret, Jean Baptiste. *"Sorcerer" présenté par Jean-Baptiste Thoret*. 24th of June 2015. Posted on Youtube on the 30th of June. Web. 7th of January 2016
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-0W_fggyvA
[11] Stringer, Julian. *Movie Blockbusters.* London, Routeledge. 2003. 114

Sorcerer. Only a few articles and blogs are slightly discussing some issues of the movie and especially discussing the problems faced during the shooting of the movie. What is interesting is this lack of research on this particular movie that totally failed back in 1977 and that experiences glory now in 2016. In order to understand the construction of the movie that might have moved the spectators away from theaters, I have decided to find the influences, the styles and genres borrowed by Friedkin. To do so, Kristin Thompson's *Storytelling in the New Hollywood* is a solid basis for the beginning of our dissertation as it defines the structure of both classical stories and art cinema narration. Then, Alissa Darsa and William Siska, two journalists who worked on Art Cinema narration helped me to dig out the stake of this style influenced by European film theories. All those approaches frame the structure of the movie by giving an explanation to this unusual construction.

Finally, we used the approach of space in cinema made by Antoine Gaudin and André Gardies in order to clarify the use of two distinct environments that are displayed in the movie.

Actually, William Friedkin opposes two dichotomic concepts in his movie, he puts at work both realistic features and supernatural elements that create a disturbance in the understanding of the movie. So how did he manage to mix those concepts and what kind of cinematographic devices did he use in order to trigger this puzzlement and disorientation on his characters and also with the audience?

In a first part, we will focus our dissertation on the construction of the movie itself in a chronological way. The first subpart will be dealing on the classical narration that at some point clashes with the Art Cinema narration. The focus of the second part will be on the Art Cinema narration, and then the third subpart will discuss the road movie genre that is borrowed by Friedkin. And in the second part, we will discuss the issue of space in *Sorcerer,* which comes close to both supernatural and realistic features.

I Construction of the Movie

The construction of *Sorcerer* deserves to be detailed. Indeed this movie appears as very ambiguous because it borrows different styles; the Classical Narration which is based on a logical cause-effect plot (introducing a character, facing a problem, solving the problem, and happy ending); the Art Cinema Narration, which is a style that counters the Classical Narration as there is no logic in the narrative (aimless characters, no real goal, more focus on the subjectivity of the characters that plays with the viewer's expectations because they are not used to this kind of structure). Those two styles being opposed by definition (the movie under study can be divided into three parts, which are different in genre, style, space and time that) can trigger confusion and perplexity when the spectators are watching it. This part of the dissertation will be divided into three parts, which will be dealing with influences, and styles borrowed.

1) Part one

a) Kristin Thompson's approach and Syd Field guidebook to the Classical Narration

The three-act structure is a concept meant to explain the logical structure of a classical narration type, cutting the movie into three distinctive parts (narratively and temporally speaking). Kristin Thompson mentioned this concept in *Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique* in 1999.

According to her, any movie adapting a classical narrative structure can be divided into three parts starting with the introduction of a problem, continuing with "a conflict between a protagonist and an antagonist leading to the seemingly unsolvable problem and ends with an action providing a solution to the problem."[12] To her, "breaking a narrative into parts gives the spectator a sense of direction in which the action will proceed and thus aids comprehension."[13] So that the narration carries simple steps for the audience to understand the construction of the movie.

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[12] Thompson, Kristin. *Storytelling in the New Hollywood. Understanding Classical Narrative Technique*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1999. p 22
[13] Ibid. p22

The three-act structure can also be analyzed in a temporal way. Syd Field wrote in 1979 *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting,* which can be considered as a guidebook of how to write a story respecting a Classical Narrative, as it gives rules and pieces of advice to the future screenwriters. Field's advice is to divide a movie into three parts; a first part that would last one quarter of the whole movie. The second, and major part (as it is the longest) would go on half of the movie while the last part would get one quarter (¼-½-¼). Of course, this "rule" is not to be followed meticulously like a recipe, but can be flexible and does not need to be respected at all cost. The aim of Field is to underline the importance of a clear and structured narrative for the viewers to understand what is going on.

Sorcerer is composed of three distinctive parts and is not equitably divided as Syd Field recommends it. The first part is twenty-four minutes long and introduces the characters. The second part being the main part (because of its length and its ability to both fascinate and question the spectators), is eighty-eight minutes long, includes the wandering of the characters in the village and their pursuit of achievement in the jungle. The last part is nine minutes long, giving to the spectator an open-ended resolution.[14]

Now, if we dive more into each part of *Sorcerer* and try to enforce Field's temporal vision and Thompson's work on the structure; we can notice irregularities. The first part does match a classical narration in terms of time (¼ of the movie) and of structure (logical cause-effect plot). Nevertheless, the second part is a huge rupture compared to the first. According to Thompson and the Classical Narration style, this second part has to display a conflict, and or a problem, but our protagonists ran away from their problems that were set in the first part. They are found in this devastated village with an irrational cut without any visual or oral explanations of this magical teleportation.[15] Their problems left behind, they have no other aim than surviving (working hard to earn a small wage, try to avoid the greedy police…). Basically, it is an antagonist that would be responsible for their predicament, but in this particular case, we could consider the characters as both protagonist and antagonist. Indeed, they are set as the protagonists since the beginning of the movie, and then as soon as they get to this village, it is hard to tell what is the problem. And maybe their decision to run away (conscious but inevitable decision) is the problem. Finally, and still according to Thompson, the last part is said to be the resolution of the problem set in the first part. Here in *Sorcerer*,

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[14] Explained further in the development.
[15] See on page 3 two screenshots, which are shots following each other in the movie that show the irrational cut.

the end remains far from a basic happy ending as it casts questions that cannot be answered and above all, an open-ended resolution.

b) Classical Narration

Classical narration has been influenced by German expressionism according to Thompson. German expressionist movies tends to proceed on an emphasis on the character's subjectivity, that is to say, everything the character hears and sees, so can the spectators.[16] (Use of Point of View shots and diegetic noise) Though German expressionism cannot be summed up as such, we have focused on this particular point (emphasis on subjectivity) as it matches with *Sorcerer*'s characters.

Actually, German expressionism has been introduced by Alissa Darsa (an art journalist). In her article, she mainly focuses on German expressionism as a pioneer genre that influenced many other avant-garde styles and techniques, such as Art Cinema narration. According to her, German expressionism is said to be a break between subjectivity and reality.[17] The focus is on both the subjectivity of the character, and his relation to reality that surrounds him. It creates confusion as the character evolves in a reality that is totally different from the one the spectator is used to, the one he lives in.

German expressionism triggered anxiety in the narrative. Reality was shown as confused and unsubstantial, both in movies and in paintings. And as Bordwell mentioned it, the emphasis on the character's subjectivity relies on the fact that whatever the characters sees or hears, the spectators hear it and see it too[18] even his dreams and memories. This distorted reality tends to disturb the spectator, because he experiences the same thing as the character.

German expressionism affected Classical narrative, indeed the movies' topics changed in order to give more unity and clarity in the plot, so that the spectator cannot be lost or disturbed by the unusual reality in which the character evolves in. Contrary to German expressionism, the characters are assigned to a set of clear traits that will last through the whole movie. They all desire something; their goals define the main lines of the story (romance and action). No disturbance is allowed; otherwise the audience would get lost and confused.

In *Sorcerer*, the introductive part of the movie (first twenty four minutes) displays four vignettes. Each preface introduces the character, respecting a classical linear narrative.

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[16] Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. "Categorical coherence: A closer look at character subjectivity." *David Bordwell's Website on Cinema.* Web. 2008. 11th of June 2016.

[17] Darsa, Alissa. "Art House: An Introduction to German Expressionist Films."*Artnet News*. 26 Dec. 2013. Web. 04 May 2016

[18] In this case, the spectator cannot hear anything as Wiene's movie is silent.

That is to say, each character is shown with a brief setup, followed by a complicated action, which is shortly developed, and with a climax. Everything is about the characters during their respective story they are the characters who matter, the focus of the spectator's eye. They are in the frame whatever happens in their story, except for Scanlon, who do not appear on the screen after the car accident. The scene, in which he does not appear, is about the mob that he has robbed. The boss hires contract killers in order to find him and kill him. Even if Scanlon is not in the frame, he remains the topic of the dialogue; it shows the importance of the character in the story. This scene justifies the linear narrative of this character. After his robbery, he is being chased down and needs to run away in order to stay alive.

The spectator can observe the characters evolving in their own environments, with clear motive; bank fraud for Victor Manzon, contract killer for Nilo, theft for Jackie Scanlon and the bomb attack for Kassem.

Manzon's vignette starts with an establishing shot. It enables the spectator to spot the "Arc de Triomphe" as the vanishing point of this shot. Two young girls wearing a uniform walk alongside the street, we can assume that the scene is happening in Paris, in the morning. The camera pans from the right to the left in order to follow those two girls walking, and then moves horizontally from bottom to top. While carrying out this pan, the focus of the length changes and zooms in towards a Haussmannian building and more precisely towards a window. Little by little, the shape of a man can be spotted, looking out the window. The camera keeps on zooming until a reverse angle shot that enables the viewer to spot the protagonist from behind the window, in the character's apartment. Manzon is in the same position, facing the window after a few seconds of this steady shot, he sits in a baroque armchair. This long shot in Manzon's apartment used by Friedkin allows the spectator to witness the comfortable situation of this man reading his newspaper.

Manzon reading his newspaper

He is overwhelmed by furniture and ornaments in this bourgeois apartment. Manzon remains seated during a few seconds and then stands up. The camera pans horizontally in order to follow him crossing his huge apartment to his bedroom. This pan lets the spectator spotting the wealth of this character. The numerous paintings with golden frames that are hung to the walls, the sculptures, the silver dishes and the height of the ceiling emphasize this idea of a rich character. Then, a wipe by with a reverse angle shot leads the spectator inside the bedroom where his wife lies on the bed surrounded by papers. She is writing a novel. The camera follows Manzon going to the bathroom with his tie untied around his neck meanwhile she is reading to him what she wrote. At that point, both of the characters are filmed alternatively in close-up. Manzon is shown through the mirror in an indirect way, and his wife is filmed lying on her stomach in the bed. Manzon's face is cut into two parts; it can be interpreted as an "image crystal"[19] according to Deleuze. This shot of Manzon through the mirror contains both the actual image, as he slightly appears on the left side of the frame, while the whole center of the frame is focused on the virtual image reflected by the mirror.

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[19] Deleuze, Gilles. *L'image-temps (cinéma 2)*. Paris: Minuit (Collection "Critique"), 1985. 21(my translation)

I saw a woman carrying
a jar on her head.

The act of showing Manzon through the mirror drags his actual image out of the frame, that is to say off-screen. Little by little, the camera zooms in so the viewer can only see Manzon's face through the mirror. This bathroom mirror is divided into two parts, which cuts his face into two parts as well. It foreshadows Manzon's future double identity, in order to erase his tracks in the present world. The decomposition of the image can be a hint of what is going to happen, between the reflection, the character-to-be in an imminent future, and the reflected, the character who exists in the present diegesis. According to Deleuze, the "image crystal" generates a "puissance du faux". David Roche translates it into the power of the false and the fake,[20] it gives ambiguity to the meaning of this shot, and to the character. Indeed, Manzon's reflection is supposedly Serrano's one, this character struggling in order to survive in the South American village, Porvenir. This image reflects the fake identity Manzon will borrow in order to hide from the French law.

This way of filming Manzon triggers confusion for the audience, as this scene in which Manzon and his wife are filmed alternatively with zooms in, raises a tension when she reads. A sentence catches the audience's attention "Personne n'est quelque chose et rien de plus" translated as "No one is just anything" in the subtitles seems to be the theme of

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Sorcerer. It raises the question of the futility of life and the impact human beings have on earth during their existences, the choices made and the consequences it trigger.

During the alternative zooms in, Manzon's wife is reading a passage of her novel that is significant because it foreshadows what is going to happen next in the story. Manzon seems concerned by his wife's speech, as if he knew that it might be his turn to face the same situation in his wife's novel. Then, Manzon finds a present box in which a watch is hidden. He is still seen through the mirror, his face cut into two parts. The watch is the symbol of the inexorable mechanism of time. It also shows the relation he has with this woman. It is the basis of a classical "two plot line" according to Bordwell. The first plot involves a heterosexual romance and the second involves another sphere, in Manzon's case, his work. After the couple is being shown in a medium close up sitting on the bed and saying that they love each other, the cut quickly switches to another scene in another place. This transition allows to display the two plot line. The other place in which Manzon is shown corresponds to his workstation that will lead him to face a problem.[21]

Once again, this narrative technique is meant to lead the spectators towards an understandable and easy story and as Thompson said, "the techniques of continuity editing, set design, and lighting that were developed [...]were designed not only to provide attractive images but also to guide audience attention to salient narrative events from moment to moment."[22] So far in *Sorcerer*'s narrative, it is not disconcerting for the audience (apart from the mysterious connection between the characters), the unity in the narrative, the coherence in the evolution orchestrate all the details of a classical narrative. If the narrative tends to change direction, it is because of a shift in the protagonist's goals.

Nevertheless, when the vignettes are taken separately, they do all respect a classical linearity, but if we take them as a whole, then it is disconcerting. Nilo and Kassem's vignettes are connected by music. The sound of a synthesizer flows from the end of Nilo's introduction to the beginning of Kassem's one. The two others are not connected at all as no music or logical continuity is displayed; the intercut quickly switches from one place to another. We, as viewers, have no idea when do the scenes take place, if they all happen at the same time. The episodic construction of the plot participates to the confusion of the viewer, because this

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[21] TC in 4 : 37 TC out 9 : 22

[22] Thompson, p 1

way of editing deals with the Art Cinema narration, within a logical construction of each vignette itself.

Each vignette in the movie under study comes to a climax. Each story is fundamentally different, and each of their climaxes appears equivalent, they all need to run away from their country. In opposition to any classical narrative, *Sorcerer*'s one differs with the climax; indeed there is no resolution of the problems faced by the characters. Instead, they decide to escape, leaving what is basically to be the motive of their linear narration.
The four protagonists lack a resolution of their "unsolvable problem", except if we consider their climax as an epilogue. But since the narrative is still focused on them, the audience cannot take this end for granted. When the characters get to the village, the narrative tends to be closer to the German expressionism as explained above by Alissa Darsa.

Indeed, German expressionism influenced both Classical narrative and Art Cinema narration. For the Classical narrative, it helped the new filmmakers to create story that would be more easy to understand, as the German expressionist movement is known for its rejection of Western conventions but also its distorted reality, which mainly triggered reactions and emotions.[23] Concerning the Art Cinema narration and as Darsa mentioned it in her article, German expressionism "paved the way for many other avant-garde styles and techniques."[24]

2) Second part

The shift from initial motivation to survival for those four characters brings the notions of wandering and wondering as well. Once in the village, the characters do not have any clear motive in order to respect the linear narration that was at work previously. They are aimless thus wandering in the village wondering what are they going to do. This notion of "wondering" applies to the audience as well indeed, the protagonists are found in a village, far away from their environment, without any continuity in the narrative. This irrational cut tends to confuse the spectator who was used to this logical continuity.[25]

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[23] Darsa, 2016
[24] Darsa. 2016
[25] See page 3

a) Art Cinema narration

There is a drastic change in the environment, which can be seen as muddy, miserable and thus hostile. In order to orchestrate this irrational cut, Friedkin displays thirteen shots that introduce the environment in which the characters will live in. The roads are partly flooded and are strewn over.[26] It is way different from the milieu we have seen in the introductive part. The protagonists' reality has changed. At that point the German expressionism is at work. The characters' reality has been transformed, and so is the way they are being filmed. Their subjectivity is emphasized with close-ups and diegetic sounds. The introduction of Scanlon in the second part of the movie testifies this shift of narrative technique. He is shown with a close-up, after few shots representing his nightmare. He wakes up, sweating and dirty, and walk across a huge open dorm where people sound like they are dying. The spectator can hear nasty coughs, people spitting on the ground, sniffing loudly. It is not quite a distorted reality like German expressionist artists depicted it, but it is a reality that is not mastered, and it is enough for the spectators and the characters to be lost and confused.

Alissa Darsa discusses this genre through the movie *The Cabinet of the Doctor Caligari* by Robert Wiene in 1920: "In scenes throughout the film, sidewalks lead nowhere, walls appear warped, creating strange shapes, and buildings rise at distorted angles in the background.[27]" This way of showing a distorted reality provoked emotions when the spectators watch the movie. It creates confusion, as this reality does not correspond to the one they are living in. This is exactly what the audience experience while watching this second part of *Sorcerer*. The way Friedkin introduces the place that will host the following part of the movie is depicted through thirteen steady shots. Each of them testifies of the pitiness of the village, they show pictures of Nature with mountains and forest,[28] muddy roads, dogs and crabs eating garbage, posters of political campaign, a man sleeping among garbage, a naked kid walking barefoot on garbage as well. All those shots portray the poverty and the predicament in which the characters are.

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[26] See page 29 screenshot 2
[27] Darsa 2016
https://news.artnet.com/art-world/art-house-an-introduction-to-german-expressionist-films-32845
[28] See screenshot 2, page 3

In the second part of *Sorcerer,* Friedkin uses the Art Cinema narration style, notably influenced by German expressionism as mentioned above. William Siska is a Film & Media Arts Professor at the University of Utah. He explained Art Cinema narration as "(…) those narrative films in which abstract issues are foregrounded in dialogue and by direction of the viewer to the image."[29] David Bordwell went even further in this concept of Art Cinema Narration. He clarified its emergence with the hatching of the New Waves in Europe during the fifties and sixties. Resnais, Fellini, Antonioni, Bergman were one of the most influential filmmakers of that time. Art Cinema Narration had three main characteristics; objective realism, subjective realism and the authorial presence. Each of those elements can be found in *Sorcerer*. Objective realism depends on a realistic construction of the diegetic world. It enables a certain freedom of the cause and effect logic, an episodic construction of the plot and an open-ended resolution.[30] The spectator does not master the dimension of time in *Sorcerer*; Friedkin does not give any hint concerning the time passing by. We have no idea, as viewers, how long the characters have been in this village. Except for Kassem who mentions that he managed to save less than one hundred within a year, and Nilo whose arrival is filmed. We can assume that Kassem has been staying in this village for at least a year, while Nilo has just arrived.

Subjective realism is based on an emphasis on psychological state. No clear motives are depicted; the characters tend to drift in the supernatural environment aimlessly. The focus is on their subjectivity, and on how they do not belong to this unfamiliar environment. For instance, when Scanlon leaves his dorm, he is filmed in full shot, walking in the village. All the villagers that he meets are carrying something (bags, helmets on their heads…), doing something, as the symbol of belonging to this place whereas Scanlon is walking aimlessly nowhere.

Finally, the authorial presence or signature stands on an overt and self-conscious narrational commentary.[31] Those three elements are the basis of the Art Cinema narration.

In Friedkin's movie, the viewer witnesses a shift from initial motivation to survival. The characters do have other goals, running away from this village/country by any means, but it seems that they are unable to pursue them, due to their predicament. The dimension of

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[29] Siska, William. "Review of the Ambiguous Image: narrative style in Modern European Cinema by Roy Armes". *Cinema Journal* Vol 16 N°2 (spring 1977) 85-88

[30] Thanouli, Eleftheria. "Art Cinema" Narration : Breaking Down a Wayward Paradigm. University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Web. 9th of May 2016
http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/scope/documents/2009/june-2009/thanouli.pdf

[31] Thanouli

drifting aimlessly is at work here, thus it respects subjective realism explained by Bordwell. It actually meets the other notion of Art Cinema narration, which is objective realism. Those two concepts seem inseparable as gaps and delays in the narrative converge with the aimless goals of the protagonists. Concerning the authorial signature, Friedkin did want to convey a message through some scenes of his movie and we can recognize his hand, the documentary genre. He managed to film with a will of immediacy, which creates realistic scenes. After the oil well fire, scenes of army trucks bringing back corpses of inhabitants trigger a riot in the village. The viewer can experience a sensory cinema: plastic noise effect, bloody corpses. Friedkin shows the dehumanization of this population by filming burnt corpses wrapped in plastic, it emphasizes their conditions of suffering workers. They are scorned either living or dead. The riot occurring after this scene belongs to the documentary genre, notably thanks to the hand-held camera, which renders a shaking image therefore an objective realism. There is a clear will of denouncing this system through those scenes.

By focusing on the stakes of the movie and the influences it had, we can wonder why Andrew Sarris criticized this movie by pointing out a "total pointlessness of the image[32]." The definition of modern art may given by William Siska answers A. Sarris "The definition of modern art that emerges is that of an art which the general public and those critics who reflect its standards find baffling, obscure and pointless[33]." This quote is a general answer to all the critics who influence the public. According to Siska, the public and the critics only rely on the norms of cinema, basing themselves on a simple and understandable story, in which the action takes over the boredom of a modern art movie that depicts reality. In other words, if the audience does not understand the essence of the movie because it is complicated, it is not relevant.

b) Objective Realism

Art Cinema narration and Classical narration analyzed by Thompson and Bordwell can help us clarify Friedkin's movie. As we have already commented, Objective Realism tends to a realistic construction of the story. If we pay attention to the staging through the second part of the movie, we can notice that the camera itself plays a role in the perplexity of the spectator. Indeed, the camera seems to play a double role, as a narrator and as a witness of

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[32] Sarris, Andrew: A Devil of a Bad Movie, but not Diabolical. *The Village Voice*, July 18, 1977
[33] Siska 1977 : 86

the uncontrolled fate of the characters. The observational documentary studied by Bill Nichols influenced Friedkin's way of filming. The observational documentary is meant to observe life simply and spontaneously with a minimum of intervention. The viewer gets closer to the action and to the characters. The hand-held camera resembles our own eyes. For example, the scene of the bomb attack in Jerusalem is actually a real one. Friedkin's crew was shooting when they heard a deflagration they immediately went where the explosion had occurred and started to shoot.[34] This footage has been used in the editing. It gives a true dimension to the scene. The filmmaker is thus sharing his observations with the viewer, which in turn "calls on the viewer to take a more active role in determining the significance of what is said and done."[35] Here, we can question this statement made by Nichols, and wonder if Friedkin wants to denounce or to help the viewer being alert. The act of filming reality simply gives more genuinity to the narrative and to the scenes, so that the viewer can be more alert. It enables the spectator to feel closer to the characters and thus live their story by their side.

All those realistic devices displayed by Friedkin clash with the "supernatural" elements that compose the narrative and thus play with the expectations of the viewers. Indeed, numerous changes occur between the first and the second part. First, there is a huge rupture in the editing with an irrational cut from the initial environment of the characters to the damaged village "Porvenir." It is the outbreak of the Art Cinema Narration in the movie. It is the beginning of a new story that gathers the four characters we have seen previously, and from then on, they progress in the same environment and in the same frame. The way they are filmed is totally different from the first part of the movie. They were shown mastering their environment, and were filmed surrounded or overwhelmed by objects (for Manzon), by the crowd (for Kassem), the city of Elizabeth and its advertisements (for Scanlon). This device is used in order to depict how much the characters fit perfectly in their own environment. In the village, Friedkin uses a lot of close-ups in order to show their facial expression or their entrapment. Indeed, now the narrative appears slow and aimless, just like the characters the only focus is their subjectivity, and how they apprehend their new lives. They are depicted staying still or going forward very slowly because of the humidity and the heat of the place. The environment looks hostile and supernatural thanks to the thirteen shots introducing the village. At that point, the audience is expecting a new issue that will disturb

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[34] Friedkin. 2014. 330

[35] Nichols, B. (2010), *Introduction to Documentary*, 2nd ed., Indiana University Press, Bloomington. p174

the narrative and lead the characters some place else. But what comes up to them is not a problem but a mission that would enable them to escape from this village, that is to say a new goal for those aimless protagonists. They all have the aim of running away from this place, but the lack of money prevents them from it. We assume that none of them has the ability to go back home; otherwise they would be either killed or imprisoned. This mission is their only escape from this village. During their progression through the muddy paths of the jungle, every stop, gap and trivial moment triggers danger and nervousness because of the nitroglycerin ready to explode each time the road is craggy and steep.

3) Third Part

a) Road movie

In *Sorcerer*, the road movie genre is also at work during fifty-six minutes. The road movie is said to be an issue of American culture and a "post war phenomenon",[36] according to Timothy Corrigan. Still in accordance with Corrigan, each road movie features a "relationship" between a man and a machine (a car, a motorbike…); the machine appears as the object that will enable the man to hit the road. There is also a breakdown in the family unit; the characters in the road movie are leaving everything behind in order to look for a mystical or unknown destination.[37] All the objects through the trip are menacing and assertive, they constitute obstacles for the characters. And we can notice an identification to the machine; both the character and the machine are going forward as one. Indeed, the characters in *Sorcerer*, immersed in an inhospitable territory, end up losing their moral and geographical landmarks. By getting rid of their past, their culture, and their identities, and after a drastic dispossession, they still do not find the meaning of their existence. Roads and obstacles appear as a testing or proving ground for the characters. As we have already mentioned, the characters in *Sorcerer* ran away from their respective countries. Before this situation, we can notice that they all have a kind of relationship with machines that in a way foreshadows the following narrative. Nilo, the first character being introduced, and also the most mysterious character, is seen transported by a lift after the crime he committed. Kassem

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[36] Corrigan, Timothy. *A Cinema Without Walls: Movies and Culture after Vietnam*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991. 143

[37] Moser, Walter « Présentation. Le road movie : un genre issu d'une constellation moderne de locomotion et de médiamotion », *Cinémas : revue d'études cinématographiques / Cinémas: Journal of Film Studies*, vol. 18, no 2-3, 2008 ,p .7-30

sees his friend being taking away from him by the police in a truck. Manzon witnesses his brother-in-law committing suicide in his car while Scanlon gets in a car accident after robbing a church. All the characters have links with the machine way before they have to hit the road. There is a similarity between Corrigan's assertion and Friedkin's movie, from the breakdown of the family unit, to the threatening elements along the road, and above all the strong relationship between men and the machine.

According to Jean Baptiste Thoret, the road movie genre can be considered as superstitious because "Hitting the road is not running away but being caught up."[38] Even if the characters desire to run away from everything they have done in the past, they are inexorably reached by what they have escaped from. This idea is also carried on by Michael Atkinson in the review *Sight and Sound* "Road movies (...) express the fury and suffering at the extremities of civilized life, and give their restless protagonists the false hope of a one way ticket to nowhere. (...) Road movies have always been songs of the doomed, warnings that once you enter the open hinterlands between cities, you're on your own."[39] The superstition relies on the fact that the characters featuring a road movie desire a rest in their daily life, and despite this wish of fleeing; they are sentenced to face what they have been running away from. Indeed, in this particular case, *Sorcerer* is a superstitious movie thank to its road movie genre as it borrows motifs from the horror movie, the fog motif, the presence of ghosts, the bluish lighting. All those elements trigger fear and expectations from the audience, the horror movie also appears as an inexorable movement of running away. In the horror movie the aim is to run away in order to survive whereas in the road movie, the runaway rhymes with finding a meaning of one's life.

Narratively speaking, the road movie genre enables Friedkin to display gaps and delays that raise tension, because as Jean Baptiste Thoret says, the characters in *Sorcerer* are being caught up by time. The obstacles that come across their way compel them to stop, and slow them down. It proves how much they do not master this environment due to the troubles they have in order to fit in and adapt themselves in this hostile country. Also, it allows a logical continuity based on two goals, survival and the achievement of the mission. A logical

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[38] Thoret, Jean Baptiste. *"Sorcerer" présenté par Jean-Baptiste Thoret*. 24th of June 2015. Posted on Youtube on the 30th of June. Web. 7th of January 2016 my translation
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-0W_fggyvA
[39] Atkinson, Michael. "Crossing the Frontiers." *Sight and Sound 1* (1994): 14-18.

continuity has been respected in the introductive part but not in the beginning of the second. The spectator can feel confused about the uneven construction of the movie.

The characters, in spite of their will to manage the mission that had been given to them, know deep down that this trip might be the last one. This very risky mission to transport nitroglycerin through damaged roads seems impossible. Despite this sense of fatality, they keep on trying to survive.

But the environment in which they are living appears as a major obstacle, and it is relevant to focus our dissertation on space and the feeling of placelessness.

II Space and Placelessness

In the first part of the movie, space is centered on priority elements (usual environment for the characters and the spectators, their environment is familiar with the one in which the characters are (France, USA, Mexico, Jerusalem)), which creates homogeneity and spatial continuity. The characters are seen in their own environment; at ease in their space, they master what surrounds them because they logically belong to this milieu. It is totally different from what is following in the movie (the waiting situation, when they are found in the village wandering and the ordeal situation that is to say during their mission). As soon as they get to the village, the mastered and open space turns into an inhospitable and wired space. In this part of the dissertation, we will focus on space within the second part of the movie and its impact over the characters. André Gardies and Antoine Gaudin both analyze space in cinema. The first centers his approach on semiotics while the second examines space in a contemplative form that is to say that implement the senses of the spectator.

According to Gardies, who analyses space in Clouzot's *The Wages of Fear* (1953), we can dissociate the hither and the elsewhere. "The separation between the hither and the elsewhere intensifies itself with an opposition between a real dysphoric present and a euphoric imaginary future past."[40] In Clouzot's movie those two spaces are against each other even if they constitute the elements of the diegesis. Etienne Souriau has defined diegesis in 1951; he explained it as "everything that is meant to happen, according to the fiction that presents the movie, everything that this fiction would imply if we would suppose it real."[41] The represented space has a fictive dimension (the diegetic reality) while the space that has been used for the shooting belongs to reality. Gardies mentions the term "euphoric imaginary future past" in relation to the Henry Georges Clouzot's version of *Sorcerer*. In his movie, *The Wages of Fear*, the characters' goal is to earn money in order to go back to their initial place. Their ideal is their home, which is totally different in Friedkin's version the characters cannot go home, anywhere but home is an ideal. That is why in this case we cannot talk about a

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[40] Gardies, André, *l'espace au cinéma*. Paris: Meridiens Klincksieck, 1993.120 (my translation)
[41] Souriau, Etienne *Vocabulaire d'esthétique*. Presses universitaires, 1990, p. 581 (my translation)

"euphoric imaginary future past" but only a "euphoric imaginary future" for the characters in *Sorcerer.*

The conflict between the probable elated future and the miserable present is highly at work in the second part of the movie. The miserable present depicts reality whereas the euphoric future sends images that come close to an oneiric aspect. The spectator is aware of the situation in which the characters are as Friedkin shows them struggling in the village. Concerning the euphoric future, it is only through the characters' speech that the viewer can imagine this euphoric future; it is at the border between reality and oneirism. Three different spaces can be noticed in this second part, the waiting space, the desired elsewhere and the ordeal space all gathered within the diegetic space.[42]

1) Waiting space

a) Dysphoric present

The village in which the characters are found in the second part of the movie appears as a "incorporating and closed."[43] The wire motif is shown in some of the thirteen introductive shots of the second part. Agrippa, a woman working in the hotel in which Manzon lives, is seen behind a wired window (a shot that is anaphoric as it appears at the beginning of the second and third part). Then, Manzon is also shown seated next to a wired window.

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[42] Gardies. 1993. 122
[43] Gardies, André. 1993. 118 (my translation)

The way the village is filmed confirms this idea of entrapment. The shots are framed by either the muddy ground or the worn shelters, which prevents the spectator from watching an open space. Several motifs become visible in the shots, which testify of the entrapment of the characters.

Even the spectators can experience this feeling of entrapment. Friedkin does not provide any vanishing point in those shots, which compels the spectators to focus on the damaged and secluded dimension of the village. The numerous shelters that compose the village are set like a maze this fact emphasizes the idea of the entrapment of the characters. Their situation appears dysphoric compared to their initial one any escape seems impossible or blocked.

Besides this closed space, the characters have to face the South American climate as well. It adds more difficulties for them to evolve in this space indeed it is a tropical climate. If we consider the physical state of the protagonists, we can notice that they are always wet, either caused by humidity and heat (sweating) or by the regular rain that falls and makes the ground muddy. The weather seems pretty harsh and very different from what the characters were respectively used to (except for Nilo, who is introduced in Veracruz, Mexico). This climate does not allow the characters to walk around normally, because of the mud and the heat.

Another important motif is the burden motif. Besides the characters walking around aimlessly, the inhabitants also walk around but with heavy charges on their backs (a bloody bull head, heavy bags, loads of dry leaves). The inhabitants are shown with a concrete burden, Friedkin uses a large shot of an intersection where the villagers are walking and carrying large things. The characters' burden might be what they have done in the past, that will never be erased, what they are living with, which compels them to wander and to accept their predicament.

The landscape has an ambiguous aspect in *Sorcerer*, it has both a contemplative dimension and it is also part of the action like a new character being introduced.

According to Antoine Gaudin, landscape in cinema has a contemplative dimension. A shot that shows landscape allows the action to be put on pause.[44] In *Sorcerer*, the landscape is on the contrary, part of the action. Indeed, the landscape appears as a force that displays obstacles and difficulties on their path. The landscape is the essence of the difficulties encountered by the protagonists more than that, the landscape is a full character in this movie as a matter of fact the characters are struggling in it and against it (the jungle during the

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[44] Gaudin, Antoine. *L'espace cinématographique, Esthétique et dramaturgie*. Paris: Armand Colin, 2015. 30-31

ordeal situation), the landscape or Nature seems alive, standing on the characters' way. In the waiting space, the landscape has an ambiguous aspect, it slows them down in their movements within the village, and it allows the action to be put on pause.

The dysphoric present is also enhanced by the miserable working condition and the low wages. Kassem is seen carrying heavy tubes in the water without any protection in case of an accident. The fellow he is working with is hurt when the tube they are holding is falling over. Manzon is working in the American oil company[45] he looks awkward with the tools he uses trying to link two pipes. This image of Manzon working with his hands is very different from the image the spectator had when he was well dressed and surrounded by bourgeois furniture. The idea of placelessness becomes visible for all the characters who definitely do not fit into this place.

Apart from being closed, incorporated, the landscape in Sorcerer plays an important role in depicting how the characters belong to the environment they live in, or not.

The landscape is also a way to introduce the situation. The presentation of all the protagonists, in the first part of the movie is made with a long shot that is slowly turning into a medium shot with a zoom in. It is a means to introduce the space that surrounds them before focusing on the characters themselves. For instance, for the vignette that introduces Kassem, Friedkin uses a long shot of Jerusalem. In this shot, a crowded place is shown and slowly, the camera zooms in until the spectator can tell on who, the focus is. The act of zooming in gives dynamism to the shot and to the protagonists it shows ease and control of the space. This device gives a godlike vision of the characters, they are introduced to usher this idea of doomed and chosen protagonists. On the contrary, when introduced in the village, the characters endure the inherent conditions of this place, mud, heat and humidity. Friedkin uses steady shots in order to emphasize the static and aimless aspect of his characters despite their few movements.

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[45] Compania de recursos petroleros, SA (name mentioned in the movie on a sign)

b) Euphoric future past (as their former situation)

As we mentioned it above, Gardies term "euphoric future past" cannot be fully applied to *Sorcerer*. Indeed, it refers to the Clouzot's movie in which the characters dream of going back to their own places. In *Sorcerer*, the characters are obliged to run away from their place without any hope of going back. Nevertheless, this expression of "euphoric future past" counts if we withdraw the word "past." The characters in *Sorcerer* doomed to wander in this village and to never go home, cannot visualize their past as an ideal. If they go home, they might get either killed or imprisoned.

This notion of placelessness can be noticed here, through the character of Scanlon. Placelessness is the disconnection between place and self. The self is the core of the consciousness and the place is the particular portion of space occupied by a thing or person with definite boundaries.[46] The disconnection of place and self occurs when Scanlon leaves his country. His belief that escape will solve his problems (and his life) appears irrational as time always catches up. Leaving his country is a form of freedom but it only brings disorientation, as G. Stein wrote in *Everybody's Autobiography* "There is no there there."

The first time the spectator can glimpse Scanlon in the village is when he wakes up. The shot starts with the camera filming horizontally from top to bottom. We can see a gecko hung to the mosquito net; slowly the camera stops its movement and focuses on Scanlon's hand. His hand is sweaty and filthy he is grabbing his blanket while moaning, we assume he is having a nightmare. A few inserts come up and reveal pictures of his car accident back in Elizabeth, of a barred window and of a rooster. Scanlon is haunted by his former place, the one he does not belong to anymore. Home is meant to be a relief, a shelter, a place safe and secured. In those three shots depicting Scanlon's nightmare, there is an opposition between his initial place meant to be a safe place, and the feelings it trigger. Home has become an unbearable place, and its visualization provokes a sense of torture for Scanlon. Apart from his own place and Porvenir, every other destination is a solution for him.

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[46] Bardet, Pascal. "Place and Placelessness." Seminar. AN0A142X. Université Toulouse 2 Jean Jaurès. 28 Octobre 2015. Séminaire de Littérature

A euphoric future is hardly reachable for those characters, partly due to the closed space in the village. The characters are often shown with close-up or with a large shot but surrounded by trees and constructions. The camera work employed by Friedkin enhances this idea of entrapment.

Even in the frame, they seem trapped. The wire motif, the shelters and the ground that frame the shot in addition to the presence of fences, gates and also prison bars in other shots, deal with this sense of seclusion.

The "euphoric future past" comes down to a euphemism, as any aim cannot even be achieved.

Besides being unreachable due to a closed space, the euphoric future does not provide any financial solution either. All the characters are broke despite of their hard work. And

even if they manage to save up some money, it is never enough to get away. Kassem manages to save up one hundred pesos within a year, while Scanlon is compelled to share his three pesos a day with the police; it is completely redhibitory for Scanlon's survival and escape.

In this waiting space, landscape appears as an antagonist, it prevents the characters from achieving their goals. The camera work used by Friedkin emphasizes this idea of enclosing space, it seems that the protagonists have either no escape or future in this village.

2) The wish for elsewhere

As the characters can never go back home, an escape from this village is necessary if they want to stay alive. Throughout the movie, each character shows their interest in leaving this place, but they all remain vague concerning this issue. Kassem would like to go to Argentina, Manzon negotiates his departure "out of this country," Nilo mentions a transit to Managua when he arrives in Porvenir; while Scanlon does not say anything as he is the poorest character. Unfortunately, due to the fact that all the protagonists are broke and that the price range for an exit is too expensive for them, elsewhere remains an ideal, a desired place though unreachable.

As we do not have any visual representation of any desired place, those places can be classified as oneiric as they evoke a dream. This sudden emergence of an imaginary space within the diegetic space creates an opposition between the hither and the elsewhere that is mentioned by Gardies.[47] The diegetic space in *The Wages of Fear* has been analyzed by Gardies. It is more or less similar to the diegetic space in *Sorcerer* as it is composed of a waiting situation, a wish for elsewhere and an ordeal situation. He considers that the diegetic space has a "modalisante"[48] function, meaning that it divides the space in different aspects. Indeed, the diegetic space assembles different characteristics inherent to the character's condition. There is an opposition between what they want, what they can choose and achieve in the village and during the ordeal situation.[49] In the village (in *The Wages of Fear*), the

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[47] See note 1
[48] Gardies. 1993. 83 (Not translated, but explained.)
[49] Gardies. 1993. 83

protagonists are all jobless, except for Luigi (Mario's roommate) thus their only hope can be summarized to how they can get out of this place and, logically, live in a different manner. But the lack of money, and the unemployment that is hitting this underdeveloped country ruins their hopes. In *Sorcerer*, they do all dream about something else, though they are all working, the money they are earning does not allow them to achieve this dream. In both adaptations of Arnaud's novel, there is a clear absence of doing something so as to change the situation. Those characters who had power previously, notably a decisive power, cannot even display this skill in this hostile and foreign country, because they do not master the environment and also because they do not own any money. Once the opportunity of this suicide mission comes to them, their know-how turns out efficient for the continuation. Also, the characters have to team up, which was not the case in the village. The spectator was dealing with individual figures taken separately, and now, teams are composed in order to reach the finish line and get their money. The socialization intervenes here as a means to success within a team. They were used to work by themselves and for themselves; they need to change in order to manage. They are going from solitude to teamwork. It is risky, as trust is needed to complete the task and to work in the best conditions.

The organization of space being different in the village and during the trip, the sudden emergence of the elsewhere within the hitherto can be perceived differently. In the village, it is seen as an unreachable goal (Argentina, Managua, "out of this country") while during the trip, the conversation between Manzon and Kassem about Paris brings a sense of a lost diegetic elsewhere.[50] They talk about Paris with nostalgia (especially Manzon) giving genuine details of it (Manzon's neighborhood, the fact that Paris is expensive). Besides, this scene is an allusion to Clouzot's version. Mario and Jo in the truck come to talk about Paris because of the subway ticket Mario has, this small object encapsulates remembrances and nostalgia. In *Sorcerer*, nostalgia is conveyed by the watch Manzon's wife gives him in the beginning of the movie. Each movie has its own symbolic object.

The opportunity that is given to the characters to transport boxes of nitroglycerin through the jungle appears as the solution and the escape from this village. The wage is substantial, which would facilitate their way out of this place. Nevertheless, just like their runaways from their respective countries it appears as an irrational belief that escape will solve their problems. This irrational belief is depicted in numerous movies that belong to the

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[50] Gardies. 1993. 50

road movie genre. *Easy Rider* directed by Dennis Hopper (1969) is a good example of the superstitious aspect of the road movie genre. The characters in this movie are running away for various reasons. Wyatt and Billy are two hippies travelling from Los Angeles to New Orleans looking for America. This movie depicts the opposition between the counter and the dominant culture that are not blending well. Those characters initially looking for America, will find it, but not the way they wanted it. Their escape is doomed with hostile encounters throughout their trip.[51]

3) The Ordeal Situation

The ordeal situation includes different elements. The characters follow an itinerary from the village to the oil well. Throughout their way, they encounter several hazards and pitfalls until they can reach the "Grail."

The landscape plays an important role in this part of the movie. It englobes the whole situation, from the sound effects of the jungle but also with the strong presence of the green motif. When the characters leave the village, they are only surrounded by Nature and its green features. The sound effects added to the diegetic sound and the green motif trigger a sense of entrapment felt by both the characters and the spectators. No escape is given except reaching the end of the mission. Those elements contribute to the construction of a diegetic world, emphasizing the idea that the protagonists do not belong to this place, due to the fact that Nature seems overwhelming.

The overwhelming dimension of Nature is analyzed by Antoine Gaudin. To him, the off-screen landscape is "a hidden part which involves the spectator's imagination and has a spiritual dimension."[52] Indeed, even if the spectators are aware of the surroundings thanks to previous shots, the act of filming Nature and reality is a means to increase their awareness of space and of the overwhelming dimension of Nature.

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[51] Cohan, Steven. Ina Rae Hark. *The road movie book*. London : Routeledge. 1997. 9
[52] Gaudin. 2015. 6
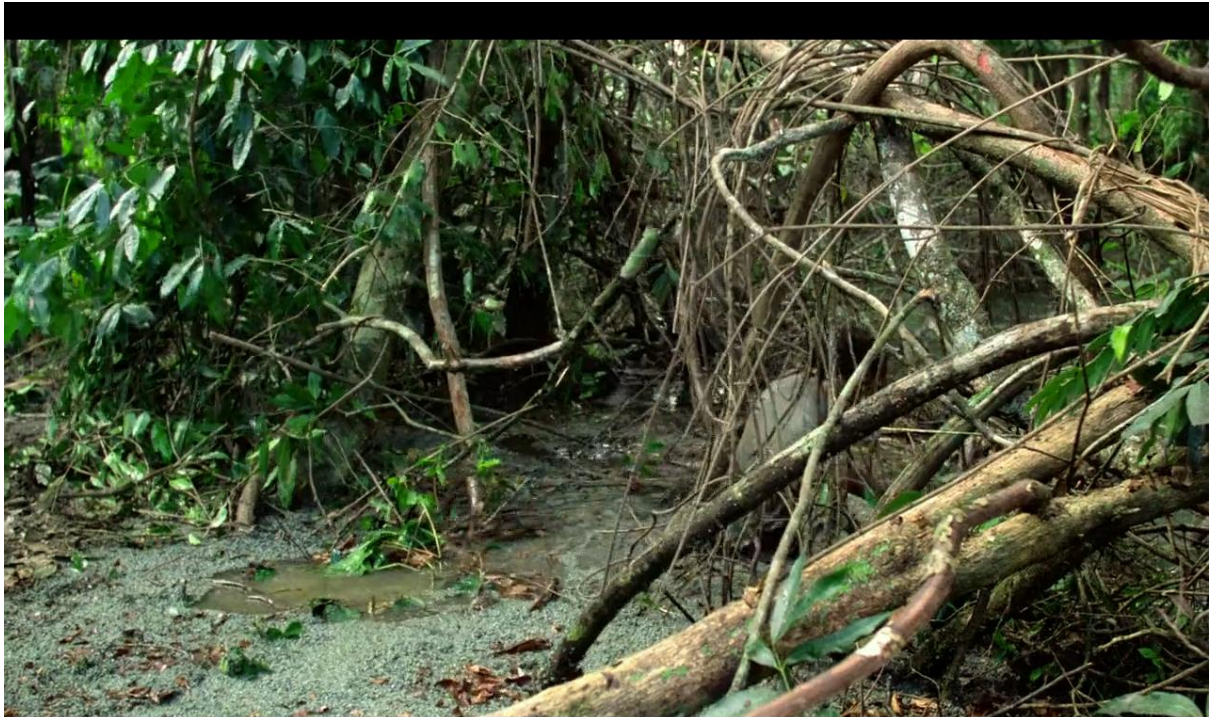
The sound effects reinforce this idea of a persistent Nature previously shown and now relegated to the off-screen. It gives a spiritual dimension to Nature that does not need to be filmed in its whole.

In this part of the movie, spiritual but also oneiric elements are present. The natural bluish light used by Friedkin (and which slowed down the shooting of the movie,[53] because this light appears only in the morning) brings this effect of awakened dream.

This oneiric space is seen through a mental representation, which, according to Gaudin, can be called a visualization of the mind.[54] The spectator becomes familiar with it when Scanlon enters in a stage of trance. It is shown with superimpositions of both landscape and Scanlon while he is driving. It brings confusion, as the spectator cannot tell what is real from what is not. The presence of the rain reinforces this idea of oneiric space, especially when the characters are crossing the jungle. The bluish light added to the rain provokes an unrealistic ambiance.

As we mentioned just above, the oneiric space is at work during the rain scenes in the movie. The dreamlike atmosphere cast by the bluish lighting and the apparition of very strange characters along the trip, emphasize this idea of an awakened dream. Looking for their way in the rainy jungle, Scanlon and Nilo meet a man who is hidden underneath the branches of a palm tree. As soon as they spot him, Scanlon asks him for their way, and this man answers "Quieres regresar a casa?" (Do you want to go home?), which can be

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[53] Friedkin. 2014. 339
[54] Gaudin. 2015. 19

understood as a reference to the predicament in which the characters are. Strangely, this man taking shelter under a tree knows about their situation. The way they are all being filmed is also interesting indeed it emphasizes the oneiric dimension of this scene. Scanlon and Nilo appear in medium shot slightly on their right profile. The old man under the tree is shown in close-up as he totally belongs to the space that surrounds him. Nilo asks him twice for the way to Poza Rica, the place they are supposed to drop off the nitroglycerin. The old man replies that this place is dead. Just like in a nightmare, nothing happens, as we want it to it is almost impossible to reach what we run after. Nilo, surprised by the answer of this man, calls him crazy. A last close-up of the old man enables the viewer to spot him adopting an angry face by frowning. Both Scanlon and Nilo get back to the truck and take over the trip. The sound of a car honk can be heard it is Manzon and Kassem preceding them. Manzon and Scanlon meet exactly where Scanlon met the old man, but he has disappeared. It is not obvious to the spectator as there is no shot of the disappearing man. Manzon does not see him, as if this man had never been there before. Even Scanlon does not look back to where he had this strange conversation. This old man appears as a strange character along the character's trip. The old man comes close to the oneiric dimension of this scene; it is supported by the sudden appearance and absence of this character. The spectator can wonder if this scene really happened.

Gaudin considers oneiric spaces as a visualization of the mind and/or as trance states. He gives as an example the series of traveling in *Spellbound* by Alfred Hitchcock (1945), or the superimposition of images in Luis Buñuel's movies. Those devices carry the "visualization of the mind"[55] or the trance state of conscious, and it had been used by Friedkin in *Sorcerer.* Robert P. Kolker analyses this superimposition technique in Buñuel's *Los Olvidados* (1950). By this means of "(...) (to) merg(ing) the dream the character has in the narrative with the narrative itself and to evoke out of the images he creates a range of disturbing realities."[56] Disturbing realities for the spectator, who does not know what is real and what is imaginary as both spaces meet in the diegetic space of the character (reality and oneiric). In the last scenes showing Scanlon driving the truck in a moonlike landscape, Friedkin superimposes an extreme close-up of Scanlon driving and the landscape Scanlon is crossing with his truck. Once both spaces meet, Friedkin displays several scenes that

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[55] Gaudin. 2015. 19
[56] Kolker, Robert Philipp. *The Altering Eye: Contemporary International Cinema*. Cambridge : Open Book Publisher,. 2009. 71

preceded the current action, such as Scanlon's car accident, his meeting with his friend in order to leave the United States of America, the crossing of the suspended bridge, And shots of his nightmare when he is found in the village.[57]

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[57] see screenshot p 32

This technique may have originated in the Surrealism movement.[58] The birth of this movement is assigned to André Breton and his 1924 *Manifeste du Surréalisme. (*"Actually, other schools of thought preceded this birth like Fauvism, Cubism, Dadaism. The Dada movement influenced the most Surrealism.")[59] The wishes were different depending on the type of art concerned by Surrealism (for example in literature break of the boundaries between the genres: autobiography, novel, short story…) In Buñuel's work, Surrealism is implemented by irrational juxtapositions of images it enabled him to mix two different levels of space, the imaginary and the real one. This device tends to disrupt the audience since two different spaces are at work.

We can ask ourselves if Friedkin was influenced by Buñuel's work, especially in this case by using this superimposition technique in order to represent his character's awakened dream. Moreover, according to Kolker,[60] Buñuel was obsessed by chicken, and as we mentioned in the first part of this dissertation, there is a shot of a rooster during Scanlon's nightmare. Maybe, Friedkin wanted to pay a tribute to Buñuel as to thank him for the influence he had on him.

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[58] Kolker. 2009. 71

[59] Klinger, Sophie and Philippe Guignard. Analyse de document; manuscrit du Traité des Vertus Démocratiques, collection Jean-Marie Queneau, Raymond Queneau. Website Bibliothèque nationale de France. Web 31st of May 2016

[60] Kolker. 2009. 71

Conclusion

Friedkin directed a movie that is full of contradictions. His wish to mix several styles and genres can be one of the reasons for this gigantic commercial failure. At this time, when he decided to focus on this adaptation of Georges Arnaud's novel *Le Salaire de la Peur*, New Hollywood was the main movement, meaning that almost all movies having success in theaters belonged to this movement The fact that *Sorcerer*, among many other movies, had experienced a huge failure can be explained by Peter Biskind. According to him, Georges Lucas and Steven Spielberg "returned the '70s audience, grown sophisticated on a diet of European and New Hollywood films, to the simplicities of the pre-60's Golden Age of movies.... They marched backward through the looking glass, producing pictures that were the mirror opposite of the New Hollywood films of their peers."[61] The way Spielberg and Lucas built up their stories was based on a classical narrative, easy enough for the spectators to be transported away from their seats. Those stories, well constructed for the understanding of the movie, challenged completely the episodic construction of stories told in the New Hollywood movement. This switch back to classical narration destroyed the credibility and the appeal that American auteurs had slowly manufactured for a small decade. It paved the way for other blockbusters, the aim of which was to earn as much money as possible. In this context, it was almost impossible for Friedkin's movie to emerge. The paradox of this movie lies on the fact that *Sorcerer* required more than twenty million dollars to be produced.[62] Financially speaking, it is close to a blockbuster. Also, Friedkin wanted stars such as Lino Ventura and Steve McQueen; this wish of having famous actors in a movie is another aspect of a blockbuster. Indeed, having stars in a movie is supposed to attract the spectators in the theaters. Unfortunately, McQueen and Ventura refused to perform in the movie. Friedkin had to hire "second-hand" actors for his movie, even though Roy Scheider was famous but not Friedkin's first choice. What is paradoxical is enormous amount of money added to the wish of stars performing in this movie are elements of what define a blockbuster.[63] On the contrary, Friedkin's style and his authorial presence throughout the movie contradict this idea that Sorcerer is a blockbuster. His style, the hand-held camera, is a way of showing immediacy in order to give a feeling of realism. "I would make it grittier than Clouzot's film, with the 'documentary feel' for which I had become known."[64] His wish was clear, give an

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[61] Biskind, Peter. *Easy Rider and Raging Bulls*. New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks. 1998. 364
[62] Friedkin. 2008. 328
[63] Stringer. 2003. 114
[64] Friedkin. 2008. 320

authentic aspect to his movie, in order to involve the spectators in the vicious spiral that is leading the characters towards death.

It is hard today to understand the cause of *Sorcerer*'s failure; the wants and hopes of the spectators shifted all the time and we can wonder if the New Hollywood movement was only a tendency.

On the other hand, what can explain this disinterest is the way Friedkin constructed his movie, narratively speaking and also how he constructed this environment in which the characters live. An environment that is both familiar and oneiric. Indeed, the mix of styles and genres generates an ambiguity in the understanding of the movie. The first part of the movie reminds us of a "normal" movie, which respects a classical narration without any surprise in a familiar environment, despite an unusual rhythm. The spectator can witness a growing rhythm that is suddenly stopped at its paroxysm. On the contrary, the "irrational cut" at the beginning of the second part, is the start of the general incomprehension of the spectator. This world in which Friedkin brings us in is not familiar. It exudes poverty, malaise, death, and confusion, whereas in the first part, only the link between the vignettes is unfamiliar.

Confusion is the key word of *Sorcerer* and it starts at the very beginning of the movie when Serrano's wife tells him "No one is just anything." This sentence, full of ambiguity, questions the entire meaning of the movie by putting into perspective the character's life and even the spectator's one. This sentence brings the notion of inanity, the characters are doomed to keep on trying to survive, despite their past acts, and they will always be caught up by death. Whatever we do, we never master the consequences of our deeds. Would it be the core of existence?

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