

# THE GRADY TWINS (*THE SHINING*): PARADIGM OF A NEW PERSPECTIVE OF STUDY ON STANLEY KUBRICK

LAS GEMELAS GRADY (EL RESPLANDOR): PARADIGMA DE UNA NUEVA  
PERSPECTIVA DE ESTUDIO SOBRE STANLEY KUBRICK

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The iconographic decantation of the Grady Twins as characters from the film *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980), as well as their influence on mass culture, is analyzed. Its paradigmatic status of a new study perspective for Kubrick's work is determined, including his photographic corpus and the impact of the plastic arts-mechanical arts-mass culture *continuum*. **Methodology:** We proceed to divide Kubrick's work into photography and cinema, and make use of comparative aesthetics, to interrelate the contents of the three parts of the aforementioned *continuum*. The method of «shot by shot» analysis is applied to his films, based on a complete taxonomy of all the shots he shot. **Results:** The main consequences of the work are: a) verifying the need to consider photography as a relevant part of Kubrick's authorial corpus; b) demonstrate the explanatory capacity of the mentioned *continuum* with respect to its film corpus; and c) make clear the need to deepen the strong interrelationship between Kubrick's work and mass culture. **Discussion:** Given the above, it is necessary to disengage Stanley Kubrick from reductionist models (author's theory, genre theory, historicism, textual analysis) and apply the new perspective that is proposed. **Conclusions:** In the end we find a new investigative space of great fertility, which opens up the state of the question on the study of Kubrick, and which will allow us to delve without limits into his relevance and influence as a visual creator.

## Keywords:

visual arts; cinema; photography; mass culture; Stanley Kubrick; painting.

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Se analiza la decantación iconográfica de las gemelas Grady, personajes del filme *El resplandor* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980), así como su influencia en la cultura de masas.

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Se determina su estatus paradigmático de una nueva perspectiva de estudio para la obra de Kubrick, incluyendo su corpus fotográfico y el impacto del *continuum* artes plásticas-artes mecánicas-cultura de masas. **Metodología:** Se procede a dividir la obra de Kubrick en fotografía y cine, y a hacer uso de la estética comparada, para interrelacionar los contenidos de las tres partes del *continuum* mencionado. Se aplica el método del análisis «plano a plano» para su cine, a partir de una taxonomía completa de todos los planos que rodó. **Resultados:** Las principales consecuencias del trabajo son: a) constatar la necesidad de considerar la fotografía como parte relevante del corpus autoral de Kubrick; b) demostrar la capacidad explicativa del *continuum* mencionado respecto a su corpus cinematográfico; y c) dejar clara la necesidad de profundizar en la fuerte interrelación entre la obra *kubrickiana* y la cultura de masas. **Discusión:** Visto lo anterior, es obligado desencajar a Stanley Kubrick de modelos reduccionistas (teoría del autor, teoría del género, historicismo, análisis textual) y aplicarle la nueva perspectiva que se propone. **Conclusiones:** Al final encontramos un nuevo espacio investigador de gran fertilidad, que abre el estado de la cuestión sobre el estudio de Kubrick, y que nos permitirá profundizar sin límites en su relevancia e influencia como creador visual.

### **Palabras clave:**

artes visuales; cine; fotografía; cultura de masas; Stanley Kubrick; pintura.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The study of Stanley Kubrick has lacked, until now, two essential aspects for the understanding of his essence and creative scope. Firstly, the period during which he dedicated himself to photography (1945-1950), producing a considerable yet uncertain volume, estimated at 27,838 photographs (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 1525). Secondly, the integration of his photographic and cinematic works into mass culture. Concerning the first aspect, this is an unexplored subject in Spanish, and internationally, there are only four noticeable approaches (all after his passing), of which three (Crone and Graf Schaesberg, 1999; Crone, 2005; and Albrecht and Corcoran, 2018) are primarily presented as photographic catalogs, and only one (Mather, 2013) addresses the issue from its undeniable importance. Regarding the second aspect, both in Spanish and other languages, it represents an uncharted research space, as beyond specific or tangential contributions, there are no extensive and specific studies on this matter, except for some general and tangential approaches in Abrams (2012), as hinted in the introduction (Abrams, 2012, p. 7); this gap is surprising, given the obvious qualitative and quantitative importance of the subject.

The research effort to expand the horizon of his study from the perspective proposed here reveals him as more than just an important film director of the 20th century: he emerges as an interdisciplinary audiovisual artist, a fundamental creator in the evolution of contemporary Western culture.

In addition to these seemingly obvious aspects, this analysis aims to offer a new and abundant perspective that not only coherently structures these aspects but also sheds a new light on Kubrick's work: his integration into the continuum of visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture. This approach introduces visual arts as a source of Kubrickian inspiration (particularly painting), mechanical arts (photography and film, in this case) not only as the scope of his work but also as an influence on his own creations, and mass

culture not only as the origin of many of his ideas or as a social space clearly encompassing his entire body of work but also as the final receptacle of that very work, which ultimately exerts enormous influence across all aspects of contemporary hegemonic culture. The state of the issue regarding the importance of visual arts also lacked specific, rigorous, and comprehensive references until barely five years ago. Very recently, the works of Pramaggiore (2015) emerged, a serious and ambitious work, albeit limited to painting and the film *Barry Lyndon* (1975), and López Velasco (2019), broader yet almost limited to a reference catalog. As for the aforementioned continuum, it represents an innovative theoretical proposal, albeit indebted to the multidisciplinary approaches of Colorado-Castellary (1997, 2009, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, and 2019); when applied to cinema, specifically, it is an entirely new contribution.

Therefore, the objectives of this work can be summarized as follows: a) introduce the continuum of visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture as a fundamental context to situate Stanley Kubrick's body of work and as a new and fertile analytical perspective for studying his creations; b) draw attention to the necessity of considering the filmmaker's photographic work in the analysis of his corpus, not only as part of the aforementioned continuum but also due to its intrinsic significance and strong interrelation with his films; and c) demonstrate that the process of iconographic refinement involving the Grady twins from *The Shining* can be seen as an explanatory paradigm for the two aforementioned matters.

This article provides the first comprehensive analysis of the iconographic refinement of the Grady twins from *The Shining*, spanning from visual arts to mechanical arts (photography), and onwards to the subsequent influence of Kubrick's creation in mass culture. It's the first time that the mentioned continuum is proposed to deeply comprehend Kubrick's work. These issues were jointly addressed in an inaugural manner in Pérez-Romero (2022), but here they are specifically applied to a prime example in popular culture, allowing for a focused demonstration of the effectiveness of this type of analysis.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

Regarding the introduction of the continuum of visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture, we should confine ourselves to its establishment as a theoretical framework, summarizing what was extensively developed in Pérez-Romero (2022, pp. 69-78). The primary goal is to demonstrate its theoretical and methodological capacity to analyze Kubrick's work, using the chosen case as an example.

As for emphasizing the value of the filmmaker's photographic corpus in the analysis of his work, the objective is to draw attention to this by providing an example chosen as part of the iconographic refinement of the Grady twins. Considering photography is important due to it being one of the historically significant mechanical arts and thus a structural part of the aforementioned continuum. Lastly, as a secondary objective, the aim is to highlight the intrinsic value of Kubrick's photographic work, deserving of a much deeper research exploration than what exists currently, despite the substantial and commendable efforts by Mather.

Regarding the analysis of iconographic refinement in the Grady twins, which is central here, we are interested in it as a paradigmatic example that will allow us to achieve the rest of the objectives. However, not only for that reason, but also because, at the same

time, it will present the creative development of one of the key Kubrickian symbols in mass culture, with intrinsic interest, as it reveals dynamics of the filmmaker's work, unknown textual interconnections, and a complex network of mutual influences (within Kubrick and from Kubrick) that is largely unexplored and intimately linked to the heuristic perspective of this article.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Theory**

The fundamental theoretical foundation is provided by the set of works by Colorado-Castellary mentioned earlier, particularly those from 2013a, 2013b, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, and most notably, 2019. These are the only works that bring us closer to the innovative proposal presented here, regarding the existence of the continuum of visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture, which is then applied to the works of Stanley Kubrick.

The second theoretical foundation is comparative aesthetics. Although only implicitly, it was already present in the inaugural text of cinema as an art (Canudo, 1923) and in the original concept of "integral cinematography" (Romaguera-i-Ramio and Alsina-Thevenet, 1998, p. 89) by Charlotte Elisabeth Germaine Saisset-Schneider (1882-1942), known as Germaine Dulac through her husband's last name. These initial references have been taken into account because the only valuable text that formalizes comparative aesthetics (Souriau, 1965), which has undoubtedly been considered, doesn't attribute excessive importance to cinema.

Related to the two previous foundations and chronologically midway, the advancements of André Bazin (1918-1958) have been deemed important. On one hand, Bazin connected painting, photography, and cinema (Bazin, 1990, pp. 24-25), and on the other, he defined the "mummy complex" (Casetti, 2000, p. 41), a tendency towards "embalmmment" shared by visual and mechanical arts. Bazin's work is also of interest because he gave special importance to the technique of perspective, which is one of the most relevant stylistic features of Kubrick (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 84).

The third theoretical foundation is formed by specific studies on mass culture. Paradoxically, as highlighted in Romaguera-i-Ramio and Alsina Thevenet (1998, p. 188), following the words of Drew-Egbert (1981), the first direct reflection on the relationship between cinematic form and mass culture can be found in Soviet or socialist realism. The term "spectacle," fundamental in the theoretical development of mass culture, was part of the foundational text of neorealism, a crucial theoretical and practical movement in the history of cinema (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 83), and was further elaborated in 1967 by the essential work of Debord (1999). The contribution of French philosopher Edgar Morin (born in 1921, 101 years old at the time of writing) is indispensable; he was particularly concerned with the cinematic phenomenon (Cinema or the Imaginary Man, 1956). His fundamental work (The Spirit of the Age, 1962) is crucial for understanding the phenomenon and serves as one of the cornerstones of the study presented here. In fact, I have already analyzed some not coincidental points of contact between Morin and Kubrick (Pérez-Romero, 2022, pp. 1130-1165).

I also presented an idea there that can serve as an initial synthetic approach to a theory about the integration of Kubrick's work into mass culture:

[...] he not only didn't reject the mass culture into which his films had to be inserted, but also enthusiastically embraced all the industrial mechanisms that would benefit the economic functioning of his movies, as his concept of cinematic authorship relied on achieving the highest possible independence as a producer of his own films [...] (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 84).

### 3.2. Methodology

The centerpiece of this work is a case study, specifically the most fertile one in Stanley Kubrick's filmography from the perspective we propose: the birth and iconographic evolution of the Grady twins from *The Shining* (1980). This choice necessitates placing the implications of comparative aesthetics at the forefront of the necessary methodological framework, understood here in an exceptionally extensive manner that goes beyond Souriau's approaches, as it includes literature, painting, sculpture, photography, film, and up to eight manifestations of mass culture.

As cinema is the original raw material of this work, it was necessary to apply a rigorous methodology of film analysis. The optimal, and I would say the only, approach when dissecting all the elements of a film is the "shot-by-shot analysis." This methodology has hardly any structured formulations, with the exception of the Pérez-Morán model (2015), upon which I have already established an innovative proposal for systematically analyzing the 8,945 shots that make up Kubrick's filmography (Pérez-Romero, 2022, pp. 24-26; 52-61; 1449 and 1506-1524). In our context here, it was necessary to explore shots between 7,210 and 7,775, which correspond to *The Shining* and are denoted by unique codes, ranging from TSH001\_P7210 to TSH566\_P7775, where "TSH" is the chosen abbreviation for the film based on its original title (*The Shining*). The concept of a shot, which forms the basis of the methodology, is adopted from Sánchez-Escalonilla (2003, p. 233).

Subsequently, a methodology for photographic analysis has also been necessary. After evaluating his photographic corpus—an intricate and ongoing task—I already highlighted the need to employ the method proposed by Marzal-Felici (2009), due to its rigor, comprehensiveness, and, above all, its great flexibility, which allows adaptation to research needs (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 49). The application of this method and the analysis of 15,874 photographs taken by Kubrick have led to the findings presented in the results of this work. For a comprehensive application of this method to Kubrick's filmography, refer to Pérez-Romero (2022, pp. 51 and 396-398).

The multidisciplinary nature of the approach we propose here necessitated the use of a methodology for approaching visual arts, particularly painting. The significance of Colorado-Castellary's theoretical framework in the foundation of this work, which connects visual arts with mechanical arts and mass culture, was taken into account. Two of his works (2013a and 2019) are especially useful for our purposes, as they are particularly applicable to painting—used here within the realm of comparative aesthetics. These works are applicable due to the insertion of their model into the artistic-cultural continuum that forms the backbone of this article, as well as their synthesis, simplicity, and flexibility.



## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1. Creative Context and Precedent of the Grady Twins

"*The Shining*" (1980) is the fourteenth and penultimate film by Stanley Kubrick (eleventh feature film). As is the case in the majority of his work (69%, eleven out of sixteen films; 85%, eleven out of thirteen when considering only feature films), it is based on a pre-existing literary text. In Pérez-Romero (2022, p. 1453), I provide a novel synthesis of all the literary interrelations.

A careful prior reading of the adapted text is essential to refine the object of study to the maximum. "*The Shining*" is based on the novel of the same name by Stephen King (born 1947), published in 1977, just a year before the start of filming the movie (May 31, 1978).

It is absolutely crucial to understand that the Grady twins do not exist as such in the novel. There are three instances in which the writer alludes to the "two daughters" of Delbert Grady, the caretaker of the Overlook Hotel who preceded the protagonist, Jack Torrance:

A) In the words of Stuart Ullman, the manager responsible for interviewing Torrance for his employment at the Overlook: "He had a wife and two daughters" (King, 1977, p. 20).

B) In the words of Richard "Dick" Hallorann, the cook: "A few years ago, there was another fella, Delbert Grady, who had a wife and two daughters and he killed them and then himself" (King, 1977, p. 447).

C) In the conversation between Delbert Grady and Jack Torrance:

—Jack: But your wife... and your daughters...

—Grady: My wife is a cook, sir. And the girls are already asleep, by the way. [...]

—Grady: [...] My daughters, sir, at first, didn't care about the Overlook (King, 1977, pp. 469-470).

Neither "two daughters," "his two daughters," "his daughters," "the girls," nor "my daughters" presuppose or suggest in any way that they are twins. In this regard, the statements of Leon Vitali (1948-2022) —one of Kubrick's closest collaborators from 1975 until his death— in the documentary "Filmworker" provide significant insights. In the documentary, Vitali reveals:

In the script, they didn't even say they were twins. I was just looking for someone who was good... But I was desperate. And then, on the last day, a woman brought those two girls, and they were twins. The first thing that came to my mind was that famous photo by Diane Arbus, those two twins with weird faces. So I took ten shots of them and ran to the set: 'I got it, I got it, the Arbus twins!' And [Kubrick] looked at it and said, 'No doubt, it's done' (Zierra, 2017, 17:40-18:06).

#### **4.2. The Grady twins as a creation of Stanley Kubrick**

Having established, therefore, that the Grady twins do not appear in King's novel or in the film's script (co-written between Kubrick and Diane Johnson), but rather resulted from the casting process, we must conclude that they are a creation of Kubrick.

It might be worth noting that this creation isn't "strictly Kubrickian," given the crucial involvement of Vitali. This leads us to an important aside that aids in understanding the object of study. The "auteur theory" in cinema—an art that is objectively and undeniably collective—is often attributed to the article "Une certaine tendance du cinéma français" [A Certain Tendency of French Cinema] published in *Cahiers du cinéma* (Truffaut, 1954), but it was actually defined by Alexandre Astruc (1923-2016): "This implies, of course, that the scriptwriter makes his films. Or rather, that the scriptwriter disappears, for in a cinema of such characteristics, the distinction between author and director is meaningless" (Romaguera-i-Ramio and Alsina-Thevenet, 1998, p. 224). Of Kubrick's fourteen films with screenplay credits, only in three (21%) is he listed as the sole author, in four of them other authors are credited without him (29%), and in the remaining seven (50%) he shares authorship. Additionally, Kubrick extensively explored the so-called "genre cinema"—taking here the theoretical and methodological concepts used by Altman (1999) and Muñoz (2018)—with all his films fitting into one of the nine genres he engaged with (documentary, war, noir, peplum, drama, comedy, science fiction, historical cinema, and horror) (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 105). Thus, on one hand, neither the genuine definition of "auteur cinema" (Astruc) nor the counterposition of that idea with that of "genre cinema" are useful for defining Kubrick. On the other hand, two of the characteristics often attributed to "auteur cinema" (thematic continuity and stylistic coherence) are indeed solid aspects of Kubrick's body of work. This contradiction, beyond contributing to the serious theoretical and methodological critique that the "auteur theory" deserves, should prompt careful caution when analyzing Kubrick's cinema from these perspectives.

Therefore, the creation of the Grady twins must be attributed in two phases: their discovery and ideation (Leon Vitali) and their staging (Stanley Kubrick). And it is in this sense, the one that interests us here, where we can affirm that the iconography of the twins is a Kubrickian creation.

#### **4.3. The iconography of the Grady twins in Kubrick's staging**

Building upon the taxonomy defined in the methodology section, it is important to establish that the twins only appear in fourteen shots in "The Shining" (2.5% of the film) and for 50 seconds (0.7% of the total runtime). To better comprehend this matter, which holds significance both qualitatively and quantitatively, we will refer to Figure 1.

**Figure 1.**

Visual synthesis of the shots featuring the Grady twins.



**Source:** Kubrick (1980).

Those fourteen shots correspond to only two distinct settings:

1. The predominant setting, the hallway of the Overlook Hotel where Room 237 is located, features five different shots:

- a) An orthodox medium shot (A), repeated three times (TSH049\_P7258, TSH138\_P7347, and TSH186\_P7395).
- b) The only shot with Danny Torrance, the main child character, where the twins appear farther away (C), also repeated three times (TSH175\_P7384, TSH177\_P7386, TSH179\_P7388).
- c) The shot of the murdered and bloodied girls (D), the most repeated, appearing four times (TSH180\_P7389, TSH182\_P7391, TSH185\_P7394, and TSH187\_P7396).
- d) The wide shot where they are alone, distant (E), a single occurrence (TSH181\_P7390).
- e) An "intermediate" shot between wide and medium (F), also a single occurrence (TSH184\_P7393).

2. The less frequent setting, the playroom, only has two shots (subjective shots from Danny). One where the girls appear (TSH061\_P7270) (B) and another where they are leaving (TSH063\_P7272), which only differ by a slight and unsettling change in the arrangement of the furniture.

The fourteen shots, therefore, boil down to six different frames, discounting insignificant variations. This fact serves two purposes: first, it highlights the great narrative economy with which one of the visual myths of 20th-century horror was constructed; second, it



underscores the importance of each of these images, particularly one of them (A), for the following reasons:

- a) It belongs to the more frequent setting of the two described.
- b) It is the first shot that appears (TSH049\_P7258).
- c) Excluding D, which is unique in the scene with a singular and identically repeated frame, with an equally identical duration (one second), it is the most repeated along with C (three times).
- d) Excluding D, it is the shortest (1.33 seconds, average of its repetitions).
- e) It appears in the most distinct sequences (three), as deduced from its coding: TSH049\_P7258 (Danny, in front of the bathroom mirror, experiences his first "shining" moment), TSH138\_P7347 (a "shining" moment when the child, playing with the tricycle, stops at Room 237), and TSH186\_P7395 (hallway sequence, where most of the shots of the twins belong).
- f) It's the shot where the camera is closest to the twins, making it easier to recognize their features as characters.

Due to these six characteristics, we must establish that this shot (Figure 2) is the one that best represents the iconic nature of the Grady twins in *The Shining*. The reader, whether knowledgeable about Kubrick's cinema or not, will likely recognize in it the mental image they had of the twins before delving into this analysis.

**Figure 2.**

The "key" shot of the Grady twins. (TSH049\_P7258).



**Source:** Kubrick (1980).

#### **4.4. The iconographic evolution of the Grady twins**

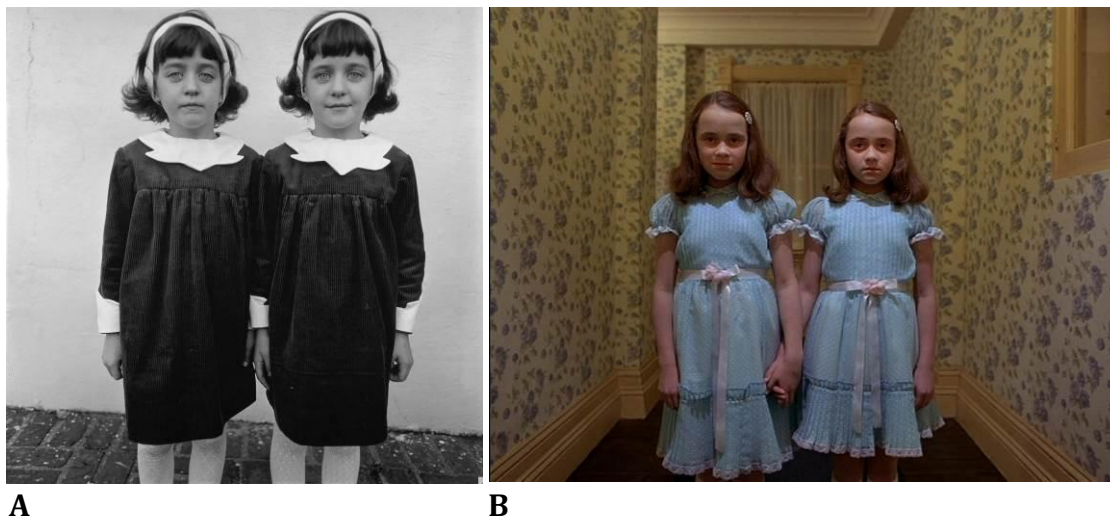
##### **4.4.1. Mechanical arts: photography**

One of the most relevant keys to understanding that Kubrick's staging of the Grady twins is part of an iconographic refinement process can be found in the aforementioned words

of Leon Vitali: "The first thing that crossed my mind was the famous Diane Arbus photograph of those two twin girls with strange faces." He is referring to the photograph "Identical Twins, Roselle, New Jersey" (1966) (Figure 3, A).

**Figure 3.**

The Arbus/Wade twins (A) and the Kubrick/Grady twins (B).



**Source:** Calvo-Santos (2019) (A) and Kubrick (1980) (B).

New Yorker Diane Arbus (1923-1971) was known as "the photographer of the freaks" (Zaiter, 2016), due to her interest in individuals outside of the norm. She shared much in common with Kubrick: their city of birth, their generation (she born in 1923, he in 1928), their Jewish family origins in the region now occupied by Poland and Ukraine, and both having begun their photography journey with a Graflex camera gifted by a loved one (Kubrick's father, Arbus's husband). The photograph in Figure 3 (A) was the second of thirty-two images she displayed at the "New Documents" exhibition (February 28 to May 7, 1967), curated by John Szarkowski (1925-2007) at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MoMA), a place Kubrick had frequented for years, even at the age of 39 (LoBrutto, 1997, p. 73); in fact, Kubrick's definitive biographer noted that Arbus was familiar with Kubrick's cinema (LoBrutto, 1997, p. 53). The photograph features seven-year-old twins Cathleen and Colleen Wade, whom Arbus met at a Christmas party for twins, identical twins, and triplets (Maher, 2016). A comparative analysis of Arbus's photograph and Kubrick's shot reveals similarities that go beyond mere chance or inspiration.

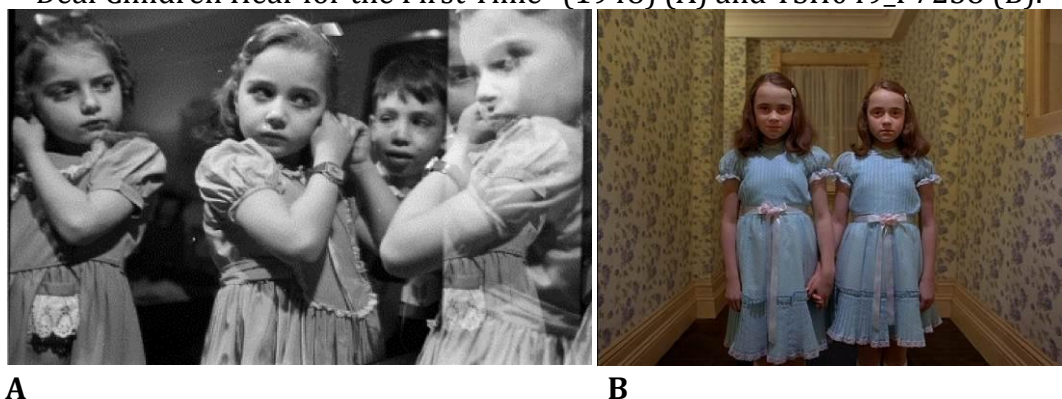
1. The twins in each pair have a strong physical resemblance to each other, including the hairstyle (bangs in the Wade twins, hair completely pulled back from the forehead in the Grady twins) and the light-colored hair adornment (ribbons in Arbus's twins and hairpins in Kubrick's).
2. In both cases, one of the two presents a more serious expression while the other has a subtle, almost concealed smile, although visually inverted (serious on the left and smiling on the right for the Wade twins, vice versa for the Grady twins, depending on the viewer's perspective).
3. The dresses, identical in both pairs of girls, also share some similarities between the pairs, such as the white trim on cuffs and collar, and the light-colored stockings.

4. The girls in both pairs gaze unwaveringly at the camera, with their arms hanging down and touching each other, almost as if they are connected.
5. Both pairs seem confined within the frame, more so in the case of the Grady twins due to being positioned in a linear perspective hallway. For the Wade twins, the close proximity to the lens, the absence of other elements in the shot, and the short distance to the background wall are significant factors.
6. In both cases, there are three elements that deviate from the norm. In the Arbus photograph: the cold gaze of their large, light-colored eyes that conveys an adult-like depth, the dark corduroy dresses not typically associated with children's clothing, and the appearance of being connected by a single arm, as tightly bonded as they are depicted. In Kubrick's depiction: the clear and broad foreheads, the seemingly sunken eyes due to lighting, and the filmic context that informs us they are ghosts.

The photographic origin of the Grady/Kubrick twins is enriched when we focus on the largely unknown collection of tens of thousands of photographs left by the filmmaker, most of which are preserved at the Museum of the City of New York (MCNY) (to a lesser extent, at the Library of Congress and scattered in private collections). This connection was suggested by the world's foremost expert on Kubrick's photography, Canadian Philippe Mather (2013), when he pointed out the possible influence on "The Shining" of a photo essay about twins Betty and Virginia Baker, written by one of Kubrick's colleagues at *Look* magazine, as well as Kubrick's own photo essay titled "Deaf Children Hear for the First Time" or "Stevens, Rise & Deaf Children in NY" (2013, p. 242). As I analyzed previously (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 315), Mather is mistaken regarding the work of the *Look* colleague, but he leaves a suggestive lead to follow with the photo essay about deaf children, for which Kubrick took 170 photographs and submitted them to *Look* on January 26, 1948. Eight of these were published in the May 25, 1948 issue (2013, p. 279). One specific photo (M3Y32588, a unique code in the MCNY collection), which Mather doesn't mention, is very revealing, as seen in Figure 4 (A).

**Figure 4.**

"Deaf Children Hear for the First Time" (1948) (A) and TSH049\_P7258 (B).



**Source:** MCNY (2021) (A) and Kubrick (1980) (B).

If we apply comparative aesthetics, we will find, as in the case of Arbus's work, interesting similarities:

1. The distortion of the image at its right edge, whether intentional or accidental—Kubrick and/or Look decided not to discard it; I explain in Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 357, how the filmmaker liked to preserve this type of distortion in his films—underscores the "idea of the double," intrinsic to both the mirror and the concept of "twins" itself. The multiplying effect of identities is as unsettling as the image of the Grady twins in the Overlook hallway, even though in this case, we are dealing with something as realistic as a photo report.
2. The deaf girl reflected in the mirror, thus returning her "twin" image, is of a similar age range as the Wade and Grady twins.
3. The physical resemblance to the Grady twins is undeniable, highlighted by the clear forehead.
4. In their attire, we find the hair gathered with an ornamental element, here a bow and in the Grady twins' case, a hairpin, both of light color. The gathers and/or trimmings on the neckline, sleeves, and waist of the dress are also comparable.
5. The girl in the photograph is non-normative—she is deaf—and, above all, she is not portrayed as a normative child—she is putting on her hearing aid—connecting her to the Grady twins, just as they were connected to the Wade twins.

Therefore, the photographic work of Kubrick on one hand (1948) and that of Diane Arbus on the other (1966) present significant precedents concerning the Grady twins in *The Shining*. In the first case, it holds the importance of being part of the filmmaker's lesser-known photographic body of work, with echoes that are not only formal but also semantic. In the second case, without a doubt, it is the iconic reference without which Kubrick's twins wouldn't exist as we know them.

#### **4.4.2. Visual arts: painting**

To approach the pictorial influence on the iconographic refinement of the Grady twins, a brief introduction about the impact of the Italian artist Amedeo Clemente Modigliani (1884-1920) on Kubrick's cinema is necessary. In Figure 5, we can observe the two fundamental references that, curiously, occur at the extremes of Kubrick's career: his second short film, "Flying Padre" (1951) (A), and his final feature film, "Eyes Wide Shut" (C). In the first case, there is a clear example of a global and especially formal influence (subject, central figure, attire, hairstyle, neutral background, transversal lines of force, and point of view) from the painting "Zingara con bambino" [Gypsy Woman with Child] (1919) (B) in a significant shot of the film. The second case shows the incorporation of two of Modigliani's works into one of the main spaces associated with the protagonist: "Nudo in piedi" [Elvira] (1918) (D) and "Donna con i capelli rossi o Siedi donna" [Woman with Red Hair or Seated Woman] (1917) (E). Further context and analysis can be found in Pérez-Romero (2022, pp. 875 and 953). Now, we are interested in exploring the potential relationship between Modigliani and the Grady twins.

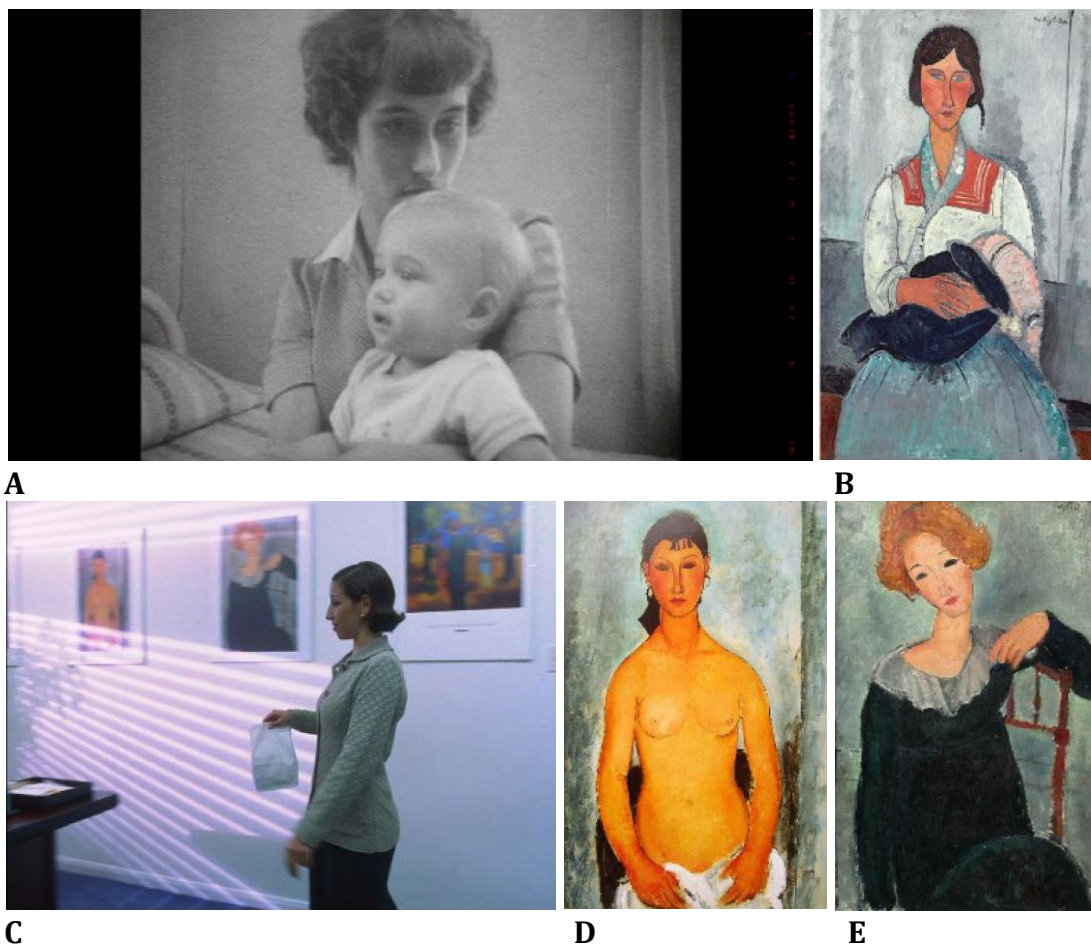
If we carefully examine Figure 6 and proceed to apply comparative aesthetics, similar to what was done with Arbus and Kubrick's photographs, we can gather the necessary information to understand the integration of visual arts into the continuum and the



iconographic refinement under study. The paintings are "Alice" (A) (Wikipedia, 2021c) and "Ragazza blu" [Blue Girl] (B) (Meisterdrucke, 2021), both from 1918. Below, we analyze and enumerate the points of contact:

**Figure 5.**

Influence of Modigliani in Stanley Kubrick's Cinema.



**Fuente:** Kubrick (1951) (A), Wikipedia (2021a<sup>2</sup>) (B), Kubrick (1999) (C), Wikipedia (2021b<sup>3</sup>) (D) y Secret Modigliani (2021) (E).

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<sup>2</sup> Wikipedia (2021a). *Amedeo Modigliani - Gypsy Woman with Baby* <https://acortar.link/uwnybo>

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia (2021b). *Amedeo Modigliani 062*.

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nudo\\_in\\_piedi\\_\(Elvira\)#/media/File:Amedeo\\_Modigliani\\_062.jpg](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nudo_in_piedi_(Elvira)#/media/File:Amedeo_Modigliani_062.jpg)



**Figure 6.**

Amedeo Modigliani and las gemelas Grady.



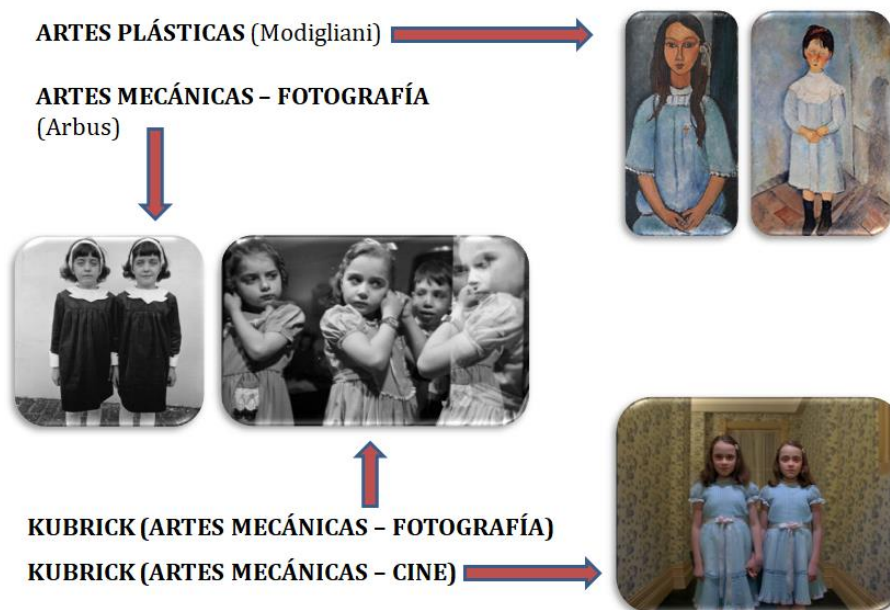
**Source** Wikipedia (2021c) (A), Meisterdrucke (2021) (B) and Kubrick (1980).

1. The striking coincidence of the sky blue color in the dresses of both artistic works and the Grady twins.
2. Similarities in the clothing: white trim on sleeves and collars, waistline gathering, identical dress length in the case of Ragazza blu.
3. The length of the Grady twins' hair seems to be a sort of "average" between the girls in both paintings.
4. Once again, age is a clear element of similarity.
5. Frontality as a common characteristic in all three compositions, particularly evident in Alice, with direct eye contact with the viewer in all cases.
6. The sense of confinement to which the characters are subjected in all three instances is of vital importance, especially as it's a fundamental aspect of *mise-en-scène*, meaning Kubrick's decision in *The Shining*; the mere fact that the scene is set in a hallway is already crucial, but the feeling of oppression is significantly intensified by the use of Renaissance perspective and the close distances of the twins both to the camera and to the background wall. In Alice, the character is so confined that the dress sleeves are even cut off by the frame boundaries, leaving barely anything else in the image besides the girl and a faint reference to a neutral background that appears merged with her, as if Alice is glued to the painter/viewer. In Ragazza blu, the confinement is primarily determined by the high-angle perspective that presses the girl against the corner, very close to her, well-defined by the simplicity of the lines.

At this point, we can now summarize schematically (Figure 7) the journey that spans from the visual arts (Modigliani, 1918) to the Grady twins (Kubrick, 1980), passing through the mechanical arts (photography) (Kubrick, 1948 and Arbus, 1966).

**Figure 7.**

Iconographic Decantation of the Grady Twins.



**Source:** Author's own work

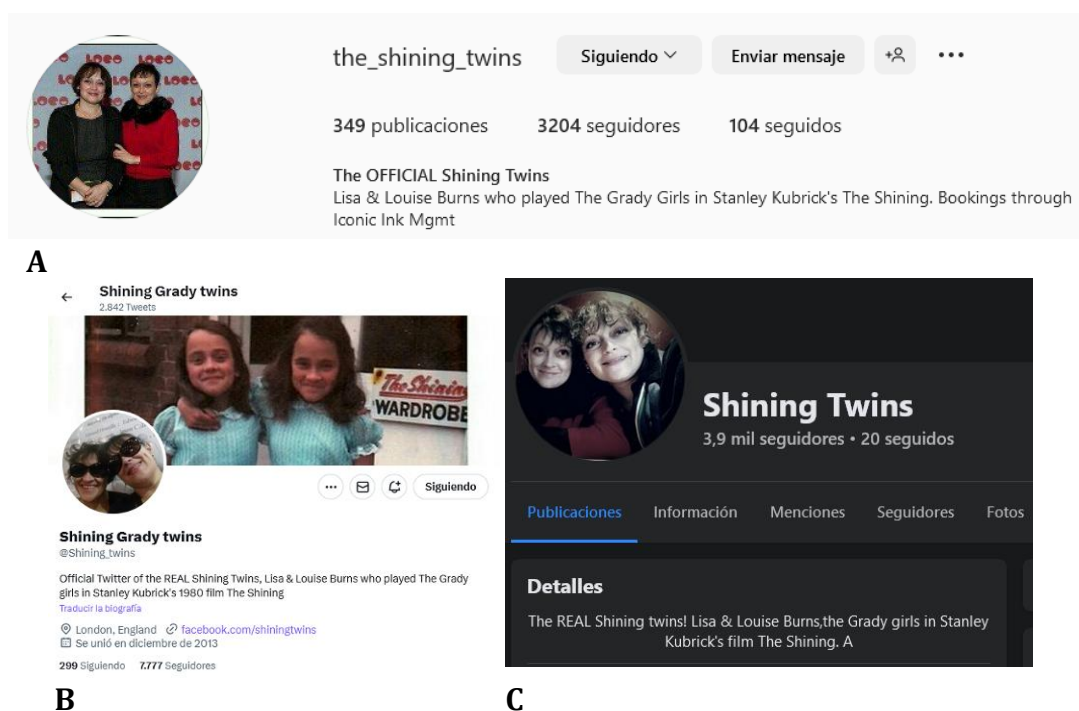
#### 4.5. The Grady Twins and Popular Culture

The backbone of the new perspective of analysis on Kubrick's work proposed here is based on the significance of the *continuum*: visual arts, mechanical arts (photography), and popular culture. We are left with the final part of the journey.

The Grady Twins play a paradigmatic explanatory role here, starting with the evolution of the two selected actresses, Louise and Lisa Burns (born 1968), who were twelve years old when they worked on the film. I won't delve into their entire pre or post-career for the sake of brevity—you can refer to Pérez-Romero, 2022, pp. 1422-1423 for that. What matters here is that prior to "The Shining," they had no artistic career, and after the film, they haven't worked in any audiovisual format unrelated to the movie. This becomes relevant because the film's influence has significantly impacted their private lives, blurring the line between the individuals and the characters, as inferred from research on their social media profiles (Figure 8). It is plausible to assert that the Burns twins, in their present real lives, are the first and unique product of the mass culture derived from the Grady Twins. This uniqueness lies in the molding of a part of the private lives of those who portrayed them and their subsequent presence on the internet.

**Figure 8.**

Presentation of the Burns twins on the three main social media platforms: Instagram (A), Twitter (B), and Facebook (C).



**Source:** The\_shining\_twins (2023) (A), Shining Grady twins (2023) (B) and Shining Twins (2023) (C).

Let's synthesize the common and main elements of these presentations:

- 1) In all three, they are presented together as part of the same identity, using their real names.
- 2) Also in all three, the presentation is entirely linked to their roles as actresses in "The Shining."
- 3) In all three, they mention not only the movie but also the name of the director, Stanley Kubrick.
- 4) Also in all three, they refer to themselves as "Grady girls," the main form of self-presentation, although in two of them, they also define themselves as "The Shining twins."

To these strong repetitions, it's worth adding that in two of the presentations, they emphasize the authenticity of their profiles in different ways ("Official Twitter," "REAL twins," "The REAL Shining twins!"). This underscores the popularity of the film on social media, nearly half a century after its release, where profiles associated with the Grady twins abound. On their Instagram account, they provide the name of their representative, which implies that they are hired for their presence as what they advertise.

To succinctly understand what we mean by "mass culture" in the context of this work, let's start with three concepts: that consumer society could be defined as "the global form in which individuals and society live in a 'collective imaginary'" (Alonso, 2009, p. XLVIII), that mass society imposes a "logic of maximum consumption" (Morin, 1966, p. 45), and that this society brings with it a "new type of cultural consumption" (Muñoz, 2004, p. 17).

Using the lives of the Burns twins as a pivot point, what do we find when delving into the appropriation of the Grady twins by mass culture? We'll have to explore this in a necessarily summarized manner. Visually, refer to Figure 9.

Let's start with a cinematic example. In *\*Ready Player One\** (2018), Steven Spielberg employs four types of image fusion with *\*The Shining\**: replication, emulation, integration, adaptation, and modification (Pérez-Romero, 2022, pp. 1361-1362). In the case of the Grady twins, it's a clear integration, combining one of the repeated shots of the Overlook elevators (A, TSH061\_P7270) with one of the shots of the Grady twins in the playroom (A, TSH048\_P7257), resulting in a scene where the twins interact with one of Spielberg's protagonists (A, 01:05:28).

Television is the quintessential mass culture medium of the 20th century. Let's choose as an example the most popular series in its history, *\*The Simpsons\** (Pérez-Romero, 2022, p. 1381), which shows direct influence in a discarded shot from the 6th episode of the 6th season, *\*Treehouse of Horror V\** (1994) (B).

In the realm of music, an area where Kubrick's influence has been more significant than studied (Pérez-Romero, 2022, pp. 1391-1398), particularly in music visuals, the music video created by Matt Eastin and Corey Fox for the song *\*On Top Of The World\** by the American band Imagine Dragons (2013) is particularly notable. It features a male-oriented homage to the Grady twins (C). The entire piece is of great interest, as it combines influences from *\*2001: A Space Odyssey\** and *\*The Shining\**, referencing the myth surrounding Kubrick's supposed faked moon landing footage in 1969 (Pérez-Romero, 2022, pp. 1347-1348, 1395-1398, 1408), a paradigm of Kubrick's permeation into mass culture. In the realm of commercials, we've chosen the one made by Jordan Lavi Quellman (2014) to promote the Ikea brand in Singapore. It emulates Danny Torrance's walk down the hotel corridor (here, a department store), culminating in the encounter with the twins, who, in this case, are the boy's menacing parents imagined by him (D). The example in E is particularly intriguing because it represents a mix of genres (film, video game, and advertising). It visually emulates a classic 8-bit video game while simultaneously functioning as a short film, a simulated video game, and a trailer for Kubrick's film.



Figure 9.

Influence of the Grady Twins in Mass Culture.



TSH061\_P7270

TSH048\_P7257

01:05:28

A



B (23:56)

C (01:54)

D (00:55)



E (01:03)



F



G



H



I



J

**Source:** Kubrick (1980) (A, TSH061\_P7270 y TSH048\_P7257); Spielberg (2018) (A, 01:05:28); Metal Scar (2020) (B); Imagine Dragons (2013) (C); Quellman (2014) (D), Cinefix y Dutton (2013) (E); Etermax (2023) (F); Rivera-Linares (2021) (G); Santamaría (2016) (H); Somerset House (2016) (I); y Kulkarni (2021) (J).



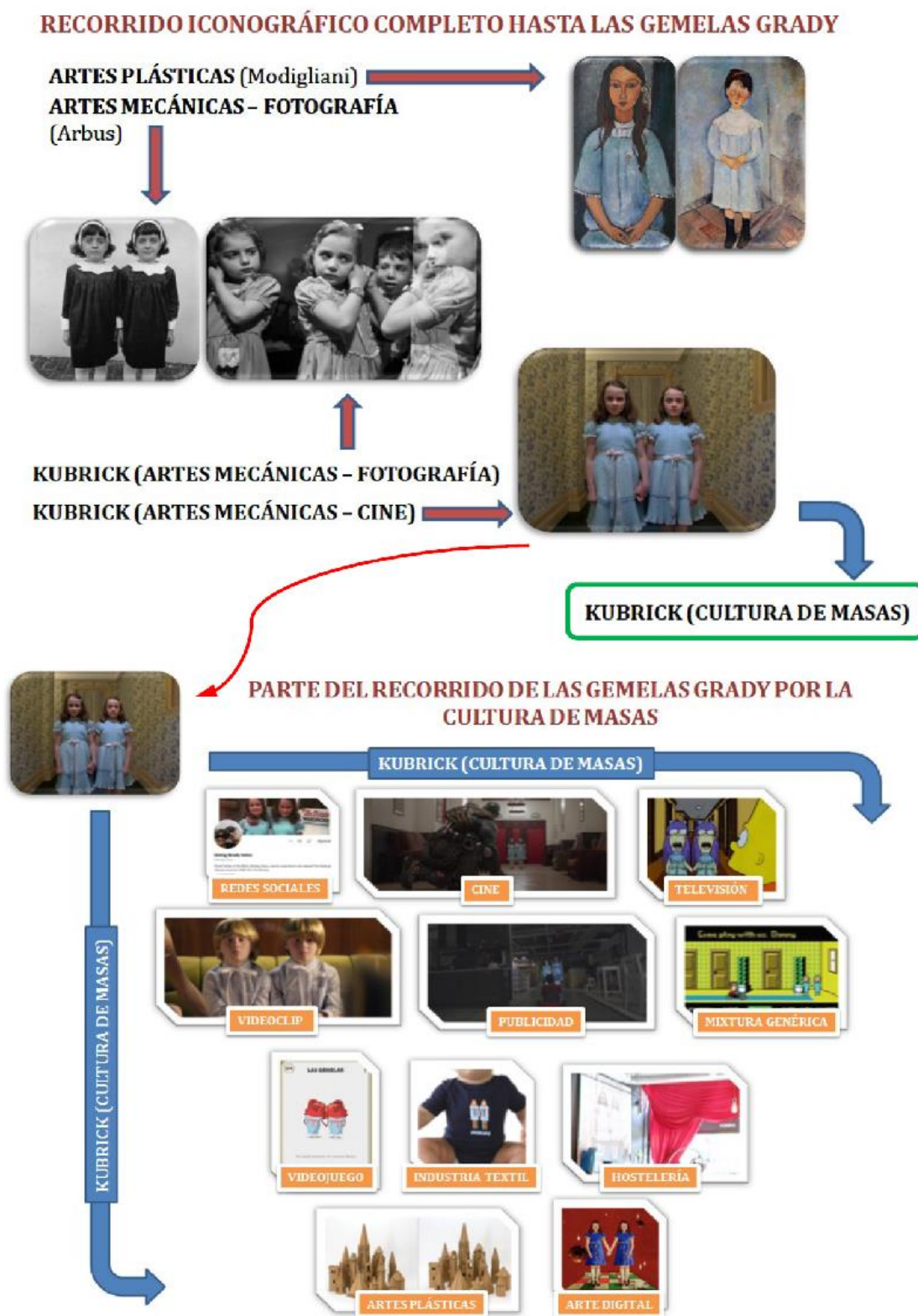
The multi-platform video game, specifically oriented towards mobile applications, provides us with an example in the Gold Card S79 from the game "Trivia Crack" (F), where "The Twins" are recreated, a portrayal of the Grady Twins, incorporating some of their iconic elements. The game assigns a descriptive comment to each card, which here is "Come and ask for candy with us, Danny," an adaptation of "Come and Play With Us, Danny" to Halloween traditions. Beyond the audiovisual realm, we also encounter various manifestations more directly related to consumption in different commercial sectors (textile industry, household items, entertainment). Only two examples have been selected: a baby onesie by the brand Gamba Taronja with an illustration based on the Grady Twins (G) and part of the interior decoration of Kubrick Bar, with a large image of the relevant iconography, located at 2 Villarías Street, Bilbao (H). Finally, two examples have been chosen to complete the circle of the continuum of visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture. The penetration of Kubrick's films into contemporary culture has been of such magnitude that the iconography of his films, once absorbed by mass culture, has spread across all branches of art and knowledge, including visual arts. We see this, for instance, in "The Grady Twins" by Nathan Coley (2004-2016) (I), which was part of an exhibition of artworks based on Kubrick, held at London's Somerset House between 06/07/2016 and 24/08/2016, titled "Daydreaming with Stanley Kubrick." Lastly, the recreation of the letter "M" by Indian artist Kiran Kulkarni, published on the Instagram social network on 17/04/2021, as part of a series of works aimed at constructing an alphabet from A to Z and a numeric series from 0 to 9, all based on Stanley Kubrick's film iconography (J).

## 5. DISCUSSION

Having seen the above, and recognizing the absence of approaches to Stanley Kubrick's work from the proposed perspective — not even considering the obvious relationship between his work and mass culture — we are now in a position to resume the flow presented in Figure 7 and give it continuity, coherently closing it with our theoretical and methodological proposal, as shown in Figure 10. We observe how the iconographic decantation of the Grady Twins, originating from visual arts (painting) and mechanical arts (photography), crystallizes in "The Shining" and, from there, in a second phase, spreads through all kinds of manifestations related to mass culture. In this way, we demonstrate how one of the iconographic paradigms in Stanley Kubrick's cinema gains significant explanatory power within the perspective outlined in this article. Despite this, the Grady Twins are just one example within this viewpoint. There are other cases of study that may lack such extensive comprehensiveness but possess other elements of interest, such as, for instance, the significance of "Lolita" (1961) in the convergence between the concept of "lolita" itself and the commercial brand Coca-Cola (Pérez-Romero, 2022, pp. 1295-1297).

**Figure 10.**

The Grady Twins in the continuum of visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture-visual arts.



Source: Author's own work

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Addressing the two primary objectives outlined in this work, the existence of a new perspective to structure the study of Stanley Kubrick's oeuvre becomes clear, along with its explanatory power.

Regarding the first objective, the relationship between Kubrick's work (photography and film) and the continuum of visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture is evident, as established within the theoretical framework.

As for the second objective, concerning the subject of study, an obligatory expansion takes place, now encompassing the filmmaker's photographic work; this broadening of the subject introduces a research space in the Spanish language as I previously proposed in Pérez-Romero (2022). The use of one of his photographs to elucidate the iconographic decantation of the chosen example serves a threefold purpose: to demonstrate the importance of considering Kubrick's photographic work to analyze his filmography, to highlight in a specific case the more or less direct (formal and semantic) link between his photography and his filmmaking, and to enrich the iconographic study that forms the central core of the article.

Regarding the third objective of the work, the article has focused on the study of a case of particular significance. This is not only due to it being one of the most popular iconographies (and thus more deeply intertwined with mass culture) within Kubrick's body of work, but also because it encompasses, in its process of development, elements of interest related to all the terms of the mentioned continuum. The study of this case sheds light on the initial approach and, simultaneously, allows for several specific conclusions of interest:

- a) The relevance of other individuals and events, outside the concept of authorship, in the iconographic development of the Grady twins.
- b) The influence of the visual arts, in this case through the painter Modigliani, on this iconography.
- c) The existing relationship between Kubrick's photographic work and his films.
- d) The enormous influence that Kubrick's iconography has had on post-Kubrick mass culture, not only in the audiovisual realm but also in many other diverse domains.
- e) The circular closure of the continuum encompassing visual arts-mechanical arts-mass culture-visual arts, which lends even greater consistency to the initial hypothesis.

The significance of these conclusions lies not only in their intrinsic interest but also in the fact that, as with the object of study and the research framework, they represent a relevant expansion of the current state of the field. Firstly, it's the first time that the process of iconographic decantation of one of the most important elements in Kubrick's filmography has been thoroughly analyzed with a theoretical and methodological foundation. Secondly, it's also the first time that the chosen methodology has been employed, which entails deconstructing Kubrick's entire cinema frame by frame in order to precisely identify, as we have seen, the relationships between images. Furthermore, it's the first time that a part of Kubrick's iconography is examined through the lens of the potential

influence of the visual arts and his own photographic work, given the innovative theoretical and methodological framework. The aspects related to mass culture are innovative since systematic approaches did not exist until now; this aspect introduces innovation in the theoretical and methodological framework, conceptual approach, demonstration of Kubrick's influence on mass culture, and the study of this specific case.

This work contributes, as a specific case study that extends the foundations established in Pérez-Romero (2022), to the establishment of a new analytical perspective for the oeuvre (photography and film) of Stanley Kubrick. It also demonstrates the relevance of the Grady twins' iconography in "The Shining" as a concrete example of the same perspective.

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