

**Video Production.**  
**Mr. Stiles, Fall 2020**

**PLP Lesson 8 – Cinematic Concepts**

**Due Wednesday 11/11, Value 30 Points**

**Objective**

You will explain a minimum of three main concepts of early film.

**Early Film Concepts**

Read the below description of an early horror film, Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

Identify three concepts—characters, ideas, themes, or plot devices—that have been incorporated into the horror film genre. Explain each trope (concept) in at least one full sentence.

**Description of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*:**

*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* seems to purposely alienate viewers. The film follows the character of Francis as he recounts his past in the dark, mysterious, small town of Holstenwall. He tells an elderly visitor of a trip to a town fair, during which he and a friend encounter the eccentric Dr. Caligari and the doctor's psychic somnambulist (who resembles an emotionless Frankenstein's monster). His friend taunts the monster, disbelieving his psychic abilities, and asks when he will die. The monster replies, still deep in his trance, that the friend will die by the next morning. When this comes to pass, Francis suspects that the doctor may have murdered his friend and may be responsible for the mysterious murders in his town.

Francis observes the doctor and his monster all night, but finds the next morning that his fiancée, Jane, has been kidnapped. Luckily, Jane's servants pursued the abductor and rescued her. It is revealed that the monster is the culprit, and that Dr. Caligari (who controlled the beast) had placed a wax dummy in the monster's bed to distract Francis. Francis and the police investigate and find that Dr. Caligari is head of the local mental hospital and has been conducting experiments in hypnotism on the inmates. The doctor breaks down and is hauled away by the police to become an inmate in his own asylum.

The screen play, written by Hans Janowitz and Carl Meyer, keeps the audience at arms' length by retelling the plot almost entirely in flashback, before catching them off guard with one of cinema's first twist endings.

The actors move in awkward and unnatural ways, some stalking the sets numbly, some lurching uncomfortably through scenes, as if in pain. The sets are flat and unreal. Long camera shots show the jagged, black edges of the scenery. The actors' unnatural movements combine with the stylized visuals of the sets to highlight the harsh, violent, unpredictable elements in the script.

## Rubric

Refer to the attached rubric to see how you will be assessed:

Answers will vary, but all must satisfy the grading criteria below:

- You identified three tropes that have become common in the horror film genre
- The tropes are found in the provided film summary
- You wrote a full sentence for each factor
- You used correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation

## Sample Response

Possible tropes or concepts named will include the following:

- A Frankenstein's monster character
- A twist ending
- A damsel in distress
- A hero who rescues the damsel in distress
- A mad doctor
- Flashbacks
- A mental asylum
- Off-kilter visuals