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**Imagining Proust.**  
A Case Study of  
**Film Adaptation as a Cultural Practice**

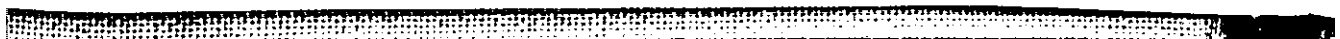
by  
Karen Diehl

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to obtaining the  
Degree of a Doctor of the European University Institute

June 2004

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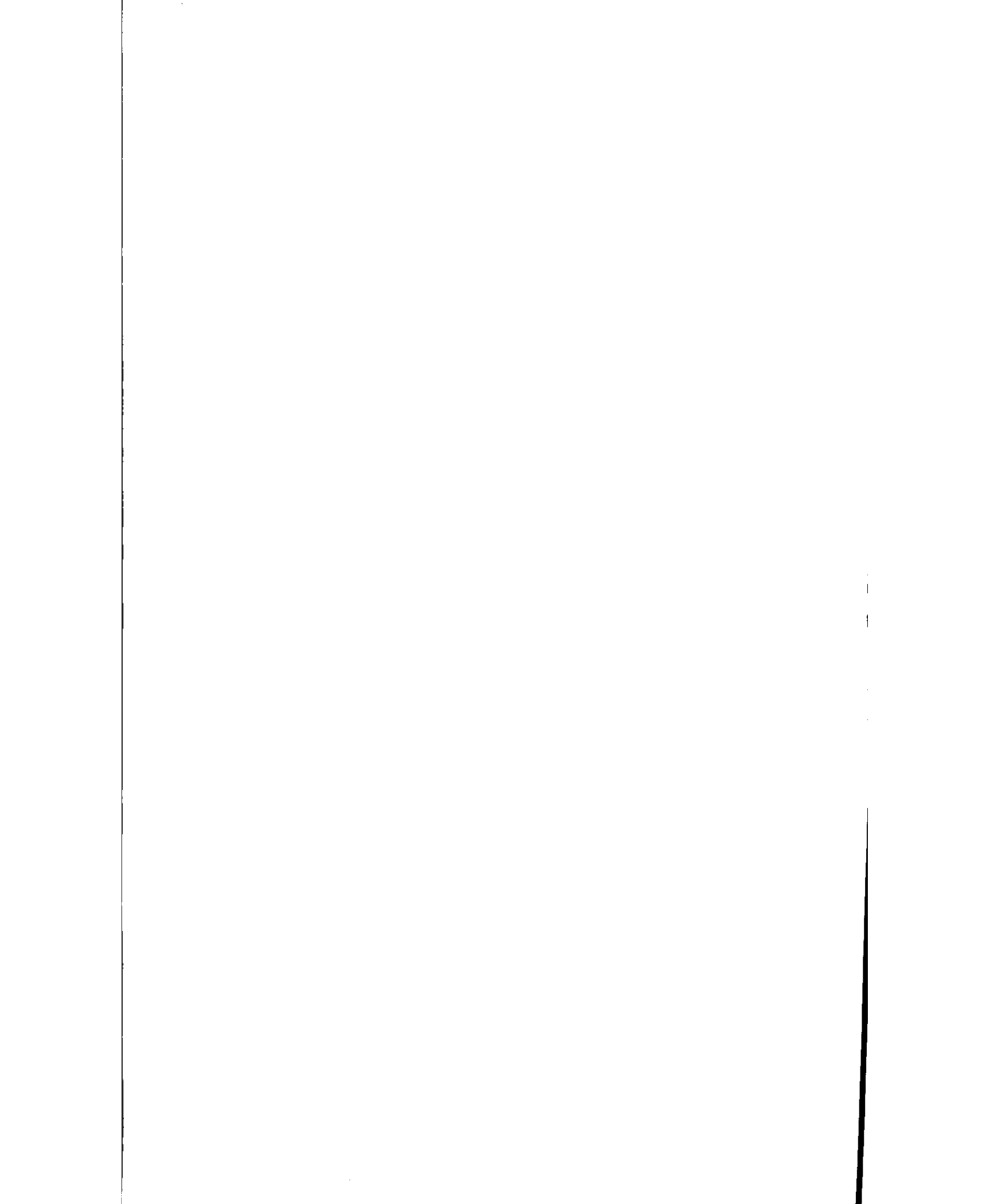
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*für meine Schwester,  
die am Anfang ihrer Dissertation steht -  
Mut, Zuversicht und Freude*





## Danke, Grazie, Merci, Thank You and All the Rest

*Adieu, je vous ai à peine parlé, c'est comme ça dans le monde, on ne se voit pas, on ne dit pas les choses qu'on voudrait se dire; du reste, partout, c'est la même chose dans la vie. Espérons qu'après la mort ce sera mieux arrangé.*

Marcel Proust, *Sodome et Gomorrhe*

My thank yous for frame conditions go first to places: to Italy for being impossibly beautiful, to California for being thus but differently so, and to the old Bar Fiasco on its former premises for being a security liability and a non-sanitised space that represents (or rather represented, I must sadly add) many of those things that are (or I again must sadly add, that were) so good about and unique to the EUI.

As a researcher, my first thank you goes to the library for providing me with a space to work in and the library staff for providing me with books and other resources needed. As a person who was puzzled at the workings of this Institute and who has a habit of eating daily, I also want to thank the portieri and the mensa and cafeteria staff for providing indispensable basics and getting me used to being greeted with a smile. To staff of all three, my thanks for making life and work possible and enjoyable. In the Academic Services I want in particular to thank Nancy Altobelli, Ursula Brose, Ken Hulley, Helen Lubertacci, and Françoise Thauvin, for doing their job so well and in addition for doing it with such grace and helpfulness. In the History department I thank Sergio Amadei, Rita Peero, and Angela Schenk for the friendliest of welcomes, and for undying support - especially when I once more breathlessly charged into their offices with question marks written all over my face.

As Olympian presence, I want to thank former President Patrick Masterson and spouse for understanding presidency as unpretentious, hospitable, and inspiring - and for leaving a Tuscan olive tree in a grove rather than putting it in an esplanade pot.

In an inspirational and stimulating space located between the professional and the personal, I thank my supervisor Luisa for seminars I consider one of the highlights both of my stay here and of my academic vita, and for her work, which was mine to discover. I furthermore want to thank her for her engagement with and advice on this thesis, for telling others about it, for support in my projects for a post-EUI life, and for being a supervisor present when needed and absent when that, too, was needed. Lastly, I want to thank her for encouraging me to be more openly personal.

For generosity of means I thank first of all my parents, my sister, and Annette. For generosity of space I thank again my parents, and then Bhakti and her whole family for inviting me into their homes, and Luitgard, a true fairy godmother, and also a friend called Bruno, fully deserving of the appellation Mylord if not by birth then by character.

As for any EUlee who gets his/her priorities in life right, my thanks must also go to many, many other EUlees for the party and for making this place so interesting. Among the numerous projects dreamed up on these hills, special mention goes to the Evil Empire for being such a formidable escapist reality.

Last but despite geographic dispersion hopefully for keeps, there are the following friends made in these EU years whom I thank for being there both in the days of parties and in those days when we actually had to face the thesis: Alison, Ana, Annalisa, Beatrijs, Bruno, Christina, Clara, Davide, Grace, Irma, James K., James T., Jose, Katarina, Kira, Klaus, Matthias, Morakot, Pablo, Raquel, Sejal, Tanja, Valérie, and Søren.

For aesthetic reasons, I wished to fit all of this onto one page, but then six years are six years are six years. And despite the saying that *After all is said and done, a lot more is said than done*, I can now not only say that having tired of the Renaissance museum, the importance of aesthetics cedes into the distance, and that to say this simply took more than a page. Furthermore, getting to the point of writing and thereby saying all of this means that, at least, a thesis has been done. I also am fairly sure that although a lot still remains to be said (and that is a good thing, too, *because il ne faut pas faire comme Proust*), the most important things I did say - between me and the thesis and between me and you mentioned here. Finally, to get the priorities right, with Proust once more, but from *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*:

*Mais qu'importe? En ce moment, c'était la saison des fleurs.*

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## Introduction

### or Why Proust plus Adaptation?

'I have decided to give it all up. I've decided I don't want to be a postmodern literary theorist.'

'We should drink to that,' said Ormerod Goode. 'Come into my office.'

A.S. Byatt, *The Biographer's Tale* ✓

This study concerns itself with adaptations of Marcel Proust's novel(s) *A la recherche du temps perdu* made in the 1980s and 1990s and with three projects of filmic Proust adaptations attempted in the 1960s and early 1970s, respectively. The question what a study on the film adaptations of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* may accomplish has several answers. First of all, there is the empirical one. A number of articles on the topic suggest that there is not only an interest, but that there is material for such a monograph. This has been confirmed by the recent publication of a monograph entitled *Proust à l'écran*.<sup>1</sup> Like that monograph, this study also presents the filmic material on Proust I could find in the course of my research. This first catalogue of what there is can be found in Appendix I. Like similar catalogues on, e.g. Shakespeare adaptations, it does not lay claim to absolute completeness. Apart from the three feature films and the two film projects that form the nucleus of my study, I have also searched for documentaries on Marcel Proust and his work to use as material that furnishes further images and imaginings of the writer and his work. My searches have yielded a list of 28 documentary films which I could see only in part. In some cases of the unseen films, I have doubts whether they actually can be seen—either because like many other films they are unavailable, lost, or because they might truly be phantoms, i.e. non-existent.<sup>2</sup> Even the feature film *Un amour de Swann* (made

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Kravanja, *Proust à l'écran*. Brussels (La Lettre Volée) 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Yet, I have also come across other instances of adaptation, such as exhibitions and radio plays, and some theatre. These then are integrated into the study as supporting materials for the films

only two decades ago) could not be purchased and had to be copied in a legally-speaking grey zone. While it is quite possible that other researchers may have seen documentaries I have not but that I list (to the best of my knowledge) in Appendix I, a final line as regards time-consuming searches had to be drawn, if I wanted to complete this study within a reasonable time. I thus have to confess to incompleteness in this area but also defend the overall study as complete since the documentaries are not the main focus of my thesis but represent merely one of many types of sources I used.

Then, there is the issue of is the renewed interest in the study of adaptation. Recent years have seen a prolific production of writing on the topic of adaptation in various areas. For one, there are the review pages of newspapers and journals, the chat rooms, and the viewer ratings placed on the world wide web, and then there is the academic writing on the topic. The increased production of text on adaptations is linked to an increased awareness of certain films as adaptations. This is not to say that adaptation is a new form of film. On the contrary, the percentage of films that are based on literary texts has always been high. But the renewed academic interest in film adaptations is, I argue, due to the recent success of a number of films that share certain features: based on literary classics, standing for uncontroversial entertainment, and for the visual preservation of a national and cultural heritage. On the strength of numbers (here both the total number of films as well as their commercial and/or critical success), these period adaptations have created a momentum, that has had an impact both on the production and on the reception of all adaptations. For not only is the latest adaptation of George Eliot debated as adaptation, also films such as *Trainspotting* or *The Horse-Whisperer* are marketed and viewed as adaptations. However, this study does not aim to explore the full scope of the phenomenon of adaptation. In focusing on one author, it explores specific how adaptation as a cultural practice is both a process of imagining an author and his work, and an instrument of critique. The kind of images of Proust provided by adaptation and their reception

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and film projects this PhD is primarily concerned with.



reveals how this author and his work are imagined. Then, this study uses the adaptations of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* as a starting point for an analysis what heuristic uses may be drawn from the study in adaptation as a general cultural practice.

Here, the numerous other adaptations of authors such as Jane Austen, George Eliot, E.M. Forster et al. done in the interim between the first finished Proust adaptation and the second one, will be linked to the reception of images of Marcel Proust through the term of genre. The concept of genre here is helpful because with it, the relationship between a film and its literary source material is not restricted to one of narrative exchange and art, but re-located into a context of (mass) production and reception. It also is helpful, however, because adherence to a genre makes a film classifiable, recognisable, but the awareness of the conventions also offers the opportunity for digression. As this study argues, it is then in those instances of adaptive transgression, that new meanings and new understandings of cultural artefacts are generated in a specific context. Genres contain a historical component in that they move through phases of novelty, consolidation, and classicism, which makes the specific moment of a film's appearance a crucial determining factor of its success as a cultural event. Adaptation is not an obvious example of genre because even less than other types of films, adaptation is capable of establishing selection criteria for genre-inclusion. It is, in fact, a term applicable to a vast number of films. However, if one uses it as a secondary genre category, then adaptation becomes a highly useful analytical tool. In this study, adaptation is set as a secondary genre category to the heritage genre. It can, thus, be used to show how the generic conventions imputed to a group of films permit the assessment of the films as spaces for cultural imaginings. The study argues that in processes of Proust adaptation (the making of these adaptations and the reception of them) filmmakers and spectators articulate their imaginings of Marcel Proust, the *Recherche*, and what they expect from such adaptations. These desires are either fulfilled or not. Whether a heritage adaptation is read as fulfilment or thwarting of such desires, reveals how the adapted writer is perceived as author-figure. The study of how such a film is »made« as a cultural

event, consists of complex processes of establishing relevance and of ascribing value in the domain of culture (across the debates on canon, canonisation, high vs. low culture).

Marcel Proust, furthermore, offers himself as an opportune case study for adaptation because of the timing. First of all, he is a fairly recent author. Unlike Austen, his reception trajectory can be retraced and presented summarily—even though the body of texts on him which contributed to making him a so-called modern classic is enormous. Additionally, Marcel Proust and his work have been turned into a literary classic not once but twice in its first century. Thus, this author and his work serve as apt example that the reasons for being ascribed cultural capital are subject to change and what now appears obvious was not always so. Rather than to represent a cumulative process over time, this is a disjunctive and even conflictual process. The processes of such canonisation and reevaluation are campaigns of cultural mobilisation. What is mobilised here is Proust and his work as a *Kulturgut*, as a cultural good for various agendas. In relation to film, Marcel Proust and his work are alternately presented as unfilmable (like some authors, e.g. Malcolm Lowry, James Joyce) and as the filmic narrative par excellence (like other authors, e.g. Balzac, Ernest Hemingway). The *Recherche* is regarded as unfilmable because of its vastness and its complex strategies of subject construction through memory processes. Especially those parties interested in keeping him a monument to French intellect and as a writer immortalising the Parisian *fin-de-siècle* in the XVIème, have vehemently argued against the trivialisation that film adaptation allegedly must imply. His work is, on the other hand, regarded as a forerunner of film, i.e. of a narrative camera in its exhaustive treatment of detail, expressed in the term *Proustian Camera Eye*.<sup>3</sup> In Chapter 1, I trace the development of the early Proust reception. It is these imaginings of Proust that then crucially configure the parameters of evaluation for the first adaptation *Un amour de Swann* in particular, as will be shown in the second chapter. The different reception

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<sup>3</sup> A term coined in 1935 by John Goodman, *The Proustian Camera-Eye*. Reprinted IN: *American Film Criticism. From the Beginnings to "Citizen Kane"*. Ed. by Stanley Kauffman & Bruce Henstel. New York (Liveright) 1972.

of the film adaptations and projects, thus, not only bear testimony to the changing practice of film adaptation and the changing attitudes in the evaluation of such images over time, but also to the changing attitudes towards the question of cultural ownership and meaning(s) of Marcel Proust.

A second significant timing is that the work chronology of Marcel Proust strikingly coincides with the chronology of the medium film. His first literary work was published in 1896, a year after the first film was screened in Paris. He started to work on the *Recherche* in 1908, a year after the advent of narrative cinema as propagated by film historiography. He published the first two parts of the *Recherche* in the teens of the century, when narrative film was establishing its stronghold over the art form. He gained national recognition and fame at the end of that decade, and the following parts of the *Recherche* were published (partly after his death in 1922) in the twenties. This is the decade in which the US-studio system consolidated itself as the most successful national industry in global terms asserting narrative film as a standard against which other types of films were measured. It is also the period when film first sought to establish itself as an art form, and where particular attention was granted to film's »narrative twin«, the older art form literature. Like other studies that point out parallel histories between film and other narratives starting at the turn of the last century,<sup>4</sup> this study on the adaptations of Marcel Proust does not present its case as a stringently causal relationship, but rather as one of historic coincidence. This coinciding here brings together two objects of study that enrich each other in parallelisation. Chapter 2 retraces some of this parallel history. It gives particular attention to the history of adaptation study, the ways in which film and literature were interrelated in a period when the former was struggling to establish itself as art form. It shows that both processes, the conceptualisation of adaptation as object of study and the elevation of film to »high art« in multiple ways have subordinated film to literature. It is only recent studies of adaptation, then, that counteract this by

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Endless Night. Cinema and Psychoanalysis. Parallel Histories*. Ed. by Janet Staiger. Los Angeles, Berkeley & London (University of California Press) 1999; Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks. The Railroad and Silent Cinema*. Durham (Duke University Press) 1997.

analysing adaptations beyond literature. Marcel Proust's work started to be re-evaluated in the 60s and 70s in the field of literary studies, just as he and his work made a transition into the medium film as an object of documentaries, and by the time of the first Proust adaptation projects, film had not only established itself as art form, but also as the more influential one in terms of circulation. Thus, adaptation both as a practice and now as an object of study is finally about to achieve independence. Wishing to add my study to those that have contributed to this independence, I also studiously avoid any line of argument that may be construed as subjecting the films once more to the book. This then entailed that could not use the writings of Marcel Proust on photography and film. Neither did I engage in an analysis of what in his work is specifically filmic or visual as other studies have done. I fully concur that this eliminates highly interesting fields of enquiry from this study, but I maintain that for now, this is the right decision because the thesis is about Proust as a case study for a theoretical argument in support of new approaches to adaptation.

It is then the peculiar nature of the text at the centre of this case study, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, which makes it interesting as a case study. The undecidability contained in the term *fictional autobiography* and the central character remaining unnamed, configure the reception both of Marcel Proust and provide a connection to adaptation as a cultural practice. Adaptation can on the one hand deliver uncontroversial heritage images of the author, but also serves as an instrument of critique of the idea of heritage with those same images. One can and has read the *Recherche* either as a novel with striking parallels to the life of Marcel Proust or as an autobiography that masks its referential nature.<sup>5</sup> Biographical writing, in the case of Marcel Proust, frequently resorts to bipartitioning his life into two phases and

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<sup>5</sup> Confer here: Philip Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique*, Paris (Éditions du Seuil) 1975, this revised edition 1996. When the central character of the text does not have a name, nor has a *pacte biographique* been concluded between the reader and the narrator (in the form of the narrator explicitly confirming the referentiality of the writing), then the genre of the text cannot be ascertained as either autobiography or as novel.

In the case of Marcel Proust, there are two references to the name Marcel. However, these appear in the posthumously published parts which had not been completely revised—and in the previous parts he had taken out all instances where the *je* is named as Marcel.

separates life and work by a distinction between a Before and an After. This implies that he became a writer, i.e. the »true« Marcel Proust at a certain point in his life, and then ceased to live his former life. The idea is that in the Before his life was lived more on the exterior, and in the After it was lived more on the interior—regardless whether the watershed is ideated as a liberation (death of mother) or as self-imposed sacrifice (renouncement of the world). Whereas before he sought out society and travelled for reasons of health or artistic interest, in the second phase of his life he is regarded as remaining within the four walls of his apartment and dedicating himself to the writing of a novel that would use his biography as a reservoir of stories. His real and imagined absence from society then made others provide the stories to fill that gap. It is precisely because the *œuvre* is in large parts a fictionalised autobiography, that the effect of such testimonial claims in the case of Marcel Proust was not only to produce multiple imaginings of Marcel Proust, but to add the lives of others to the reception narrative. Frequently these narratives then displace the central figure, the »I« of the autobiography with another »I«: that of a person telling his/her share of Marcel Proust's biography.

I counterbalance the Before-After-narrative, by a different kind of splitting: Marcel Proust (1 & 2) and Proust (1 & 2). By »Marcel Proust, the historical person« I refer to his life which is regarded as shaping a person. By »Proust, the phenomenon« I refer to the process of writing that shapes an author-figure. Through the term author-figure I want to establish a term in addition to the terms writer and author/auteur. Whereas writer refers to a person who writes, regardless of the text produced, author/auteur refers to a person who is perceived as producing literature through writing or a film through writing and directing, and thus the text is ascribed special properties through discourse. Author/auteur, then also is the Foucaultian figure that is constructed as such through discourse. The term author-figure, re-integrates the historical author into the term author or auteur after his/her literary or filmic production has acquired cultural capital, while also maintaining a clearcut division (for interpretative purposes) between the text and the person who produced it. An author-figure, thus is a writer or a director who through a reception process is

invested with a cultural value that enables him/her (or, more frequently, enables self-appointed advocates of his/hers) to incite cultural imaginings in reception, in a similar way that the dresses of the heritage film incite spectatorial desires.

This splitting into Marcel Proust/Proust disentangles—if only tentatively—some of the biographical-fictitious stories that have been woven around this particular writer and his work. As will be shown, the affinity between life and work make a clear-cut division impossible. Marcel Proust and Proust thus come close to the definition of an event as written by Hayden White in an essay:<sup>6</sup> here the boundaries between fiction and reality not only become blurred but part of the event. In the case of Marcel Proust/Proust this means that the opposition drawn between the phases of his life is not only informed by his biography but by the retrospective image of him as a writer, offset with his fictional autobiography. The central question, thus, is not to draw the boundaries between biography and fiction but to see how and where they interrelate and to which end. The intervention of various parties within and outside of France that seek to claim »their« version of the writer and his work through (auto)biographical affinities, is a legacy that finds its continuation in the reception of the films made about Marcel Proust, Proust and his work. More than other writers, Marcel Proust is an imagined writer. The chapter argues that Marcel Proust/Proust should not be conceived either as a solely biographical or an exclusively artistic narrative, but through their interaction as a contested space of culture. This becomes apparent in what I have termed loops in the study. The peculiar relationship between the life of this particular writer, his ways of writing, and the book(s) of *A la recherche du temps perdu* (perceived as his masterpiece) has the effect that episodes travel to and fro between life and fiction: episodes of his life travel into the novel or conversely

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<sup>6</sup> *What happens in the postmodernist docu-drama or historical metafiction is not so much the reversal of this relationship (such that the real events are given the marks of the imaginary ones while the imaginary events are endowed with reality) as, rather, the placing in abeyance of the distinction between the real and the imaginary. Everything is presented as if it were of the same ontological order, both real and imaginary - realistically imaginary or imaginarily realistical, with the result that the referential function of the images of the events is etiolated.* (p.19). Hayden White, *The Modernist Event*, IN: Vivian Sobchack (ed) *The Persistence of History - Cinema, Television and the Modern Event*. New York & London (Routledge) 1996. pp.17-38, here p. 19.

episodes from the novel are perceived as being part of his life. The inability to distinguish clearly between life and fiction becomes a loop when third parties interpret these contradictory intersections. The first chapter looks at various instances of loops in his biography where different parties stake their claim, i.e. where the cultural good Marcel Proust/Proust is negotiated. In the transition of the book to film, some of these loops resurface in the reception of the film as spaces of further conflict. I term these spaces arenas. In these arenas, various parties stake their claim to the »proper« adaptation version of Proust, and this is done according to differing agendas.

It, therefore, becomes imperative to establish who is speaking and for what, i.e. who the respective »I« is and what motivates the specific intervention. Here the fact that the central character of the Recherche, the *je*, is unnamed is pivotal. Together with a reception trajectory that has made the reception of Proust an experience integrated into the reader's or the contemporaries' own biography, the absence of a name facilitates the insertion of other names into that central position. The biography of Marcel Proust when written as based on an autobiographical fiction, permits a shift from a third person biographical narrative to a fictionalised autobiographical narrative of other first persons—which either presume themselves in dialogue with Marcel Proust/Proust, or solicit a dialogue with the reader/spectator to whom they present the »true« version of Marcel Proust. In the film *Céleste*, the character of Céleste Albaret takes the central place of the narrative. Connecting the particular case study of Marcel Proust adaptations to theory of adaptation, I argue in the second chapter that the pivotal element for some adaptations is always to be found in the implications of that one letter writ large, the »I«.<sup>7</sup> Several examples of adaptations that try to find different solutions to differently-posed questions of the »I«, here serve as my instruments to transcend what has been a definitive criterion of adaptation studies: the question of fidelity. As this study argues, »fidelity« is no longer the key to

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. here then also the multiple egos as argued by Michel Foucault in *Ou'est-ce un auteur?* Reprinted IN: Michel Foucault. *Dits et écrits 1954-1988. I 1954-1969*. [Edition établie par Daniel Defert & François Ewald]. Paris (NRF/Gallimard) 1994, pp. 789-821.

adaptation reception, but transgression. The production of adaptations and the reception of adaptations become instances where a writer and his/her writing is re-represented. Adaptation is seen as a (critical) commentary rather than a rendition of a universal, singular, or original meaning imputed to the literary text. Adaptation defined as secondary genre category to the genre of the heritage film, as proposed here in the case of Proust, renders possible a critical analysis of heritage, canon, and a universalist concept of (European) art.

The third chapter, thus, further explores the potential transgressiveness of adaptation by defining the relationship between the film and its literary source material as an intertextual one, i.e. where the source becomes but one intertext among many. The second chapter had approached the question as one of spectatorial desires. The heritage film that was so successful in the eighties and the nineties, was so not only because it offered escapist narratives by distracting from or glossing over unpalatable and divisive contemporary realities. The flood of images of Foster, Eliot, and Austen in the form of serialisations and feature films, then also provided the material for new imaginings of these. The need to diversify within the genre of heritage film in order to still arouse the interest of spectators, then made additions to the literary text necessary and permissible: both as regards Proust adaptation and heritage adaptation. This happens over time in relation to the specific film towards the genre of heritage film, and on the historical location the film has towards the film adaptation trajectory of Marcel Proust. The return of the author as in the film *Le temps retrouvé* through the biographising of the novel's *je*, represents not an affirmation of the status of Marcel Proust as author of his work, but abrogates the very idea of such cultural power by putting the filmically-represented author and work into relation with other intertexts that relativise literature as the »original« and as the only source of meaning for the film. However, while such intertextually-transgressive films arguably are more interesting (if only for study purposes, but in most cases also as viewing pleasures), they raise the problematic issue of cultural literacy through their modes of cultural recycling. As the third chapter shows, they are both more open, in that a spectator can connect them to many more intertexts, but the functioning of the



open-ness hinges upon spectatorial knowledgeability, an ability to recognise and a confidence to make references. The fourth chapter approaches this issue through the reception of *The Proust Screenplay*'s stage production. The play was re-named *Remembrance of Things Past*, the title deftly included the double-act of remembering: that of the novel and then of the film adaptation project. Whereas earlier, i.e. in the 70s at the script's publication and then also with the film *Un amour de Swann*, the omissions of the adaptation had been lamented, here the abridged version made available to a theatre audience was welcomed precisely because it saved the individual viewer the labour of reading the »original«. The fourth chapter, analyses how Proust and his work are contradictorily mobilised to give the stamp of approval to this adaptation through a chain of transfer processes, where cultural value of an adaptation grows with each further adaptive passage—in the absence of a critical interrogation of such chains.

Then, this study also analyses this adaptation by returning to one of the its central questions: the question of the author. The second chapter had mapped out how the objects represented in heritage films become indicators of its fake-ness, and how despite the inherent contradictions in that argument, the writer was vehemently defended against an adaptor perceived as aggressor and threat. Both the third and the fourth chapter show how through adaptation, the literary author-figure is displaced and thus also disempowered. Adaptation is, thus, can be a process of displacement. In certain respects, the fifth Chapter which remaps the reception narrative of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, is an enterprise similar to that of Giuliana Bruno<sup>8</sup> who tries to recover the work of Elvira Notari, an early Neapolitan filmmaker whose films have survived only in fragments. Differences would be that I am not dealing with destroyed film material that once existed. In the history of the medium, many other films (just like Notari's) have fallen victim to an attitude of carelessness in the handling or to treacherous disintegration of the material and the belated

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<sup>8</sup> Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map. Cultural Theory and the Films of Elvira Notari*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1993.

realisation that films, too, may be worthy of preservation efforts and archives. Next to these vanished films, film history has another shadow history: those of films that were never made, but which exist in other traces: manuscripts, press conference articles, interviews, photography, published screenplays and their manuscript variations etc. The study is not concerned primarily with establishing a »true« narrative from these traces. Rather it uses these traces to point out various versions of a story and then deduce from such multiple narratives what is read into the film project *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*. As the fifth chapter argues, more than any of the other adaptations, this one was configured by imaginings of Proust, that desired a perfect heritage rendition of the Recherche, and Luchino Visconti was here seen as the ideal adaptor. A close analysis of his work as oeuvre shows, that here too, the imagining of Proust as author and of Visconti as auteur, is a process riddled with contradictions. Whereas before the national borders between the book, the writer, and the screenwriter and/or director had opened up divisively across Europe, here it was drawn affirmatively. However, neither argument relinquished an imagining of Proust that questioned the idea of canon. The contextualisation of the directors/writers as author-figures in the international context of Europe's postwar film production, then, repeatedly challenges how national borders have been supposed to define film—practically and theoretically. In the final subchapter *Progetto Proust*, this study argues for an understanding of an author's adaptation as an ongoing, refracted and disjunctive project. Such projects then, however, leave space for the individual spectator to inscribe his/her imaginings onto Proust and the Recherche and also allow for a critical distance from them. Here adaptation can, as theory and as practice, provide affirmative images of heritage that may imagine »European art« in other ways other than as an either universalist or protectionist Kulturgut.

## Abbreviations

The seven parts of *A la recherche du temps perdu* are abbreviated as follows:

AD	<i>Albertine disparue / La fugitive</i> (Part XI)
CS	<i>Du côté de chez Swann</i> (Part I)
CGI	<i>Du côté de Guermantes I</i> (Part IIIa)
CGII	<i>Du côté de Guermantes II</i> (Part IIIb)
JFF	<i>A l'ombre de jeunes filles en fleurs</i> (Part II)
LP	<i>La prisonnière</i> (Part V)
SG	<i>Sodome et gomorrhe</i> (Part IV)
TR	<i>Le temps retrouvé</i> (Part VII)

The different parts of *A la recherche du temps perdu* are cited giving first the abbreviation of the specific part, then the volume number of the second Pléiade edition (1987-1989, in three volumes) and then the relevant page number(s). A footnote giving, e.g. CS-I, 45 would refer to page 45 in the first volume of this edition and also indicates that the forms part of *Du côté de chez Swann*.

Films referred to in the text are in footnotes specified by year of first release and the name of the director in brackets in order to avoid confusion with films of similar or the same title. Television series referred to are specified by year of release and production company.



## Chapter 1

### *Céleste* or Authorial Profusion

*Ich bin nicht Stiller*  
Max Frisch, *Stiller*

#### 1. *Le mot fin*

The *mot fin* is a recurring element in the narrative of Proust. It can be read on the bottom of a page in the *Cahier XX* of Marcel Proust. This is probably one of the most photographed pages of Proust's manuscripts. It appears in the documentary films *Portrait Souvenir* (1962), *Lire Proust* (1988), *The Modern World. Ten great Writers. Marcel Proust* (1988). It seems that the idea of such a definite symbol of an end is necessary when confronted with not only the interminable length of the work but also when thinking of the ways it continually expanded and to continually was transformed, because its author never came to the end of writing. Both in the *Monsieur Proust*,<sup>1</sup> the Proust biography by Céleste Albaret as in the film *Céleste* the *mot fin* is connected to the end of writing and the death of the author. Proust is narrated as saying that now he can give up his struggle against illness and finally die. But neither does he die immediately in either of the two narratives, nor did he when he wrote *le mot fin* in 1922. Instead, he went on revising his manuscripts. The *mot fin* in its recurrence, therefore, is a fiction of closure postponed.

But if the *Recherche* is indeed the fictional autobiography of Marcel Proust and has in many ways displaced the actual biography then it could also be read as dictating the death of the author, of Proust. The end of writing, therefore, pre-figures

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<sup>1</sup> Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*. Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont. Paris (Laffont) 1973.

physical death. Thus, before the death of Marcel Proust, there appears another death: as *Monsieur Proust* and other publications narrate, the last episode of the *Recherche* that Proust was revising the night before his death, was the death of Bergotte—who is the fictional writer and who dies in *Le temps retrouvé*, the last part of the *Recherche*, while looking at Vermeer's *View of Delft*. This painting was one of the paintings valued most by Marcel Proust. He had already seen it once in 1902 in Amsterdam and declared it to be *le plus beau tableau du monde*.<sup>2</sup> In May 1921 he visited the exhibition of Dutch painting at the *Jeu de paumes* to once more see this painting in front of which his fictional creation, the writer Bergotte, was to die. It not only suffices to have written the *mot fin* at the end of a manuscript page, death is represented three times here, before Proust dies: once in the *mot fin*, the second time in writing the death of Bergotte as his last act as a writer, and in the last photo of Proust visiting an exhibition where he sees the painting Bergotte dies in front of.

It was on this day that the last photo of Marcel Proust alive was taken. It is also this photo that is on the slipcase of the fourth (and last) volume of the second Pléiade edition. The three previous volumes feature him as a child on the first, an adolescent on the second and as a young man on the third. Since Proust wrote the entire *Recherche* from the age of thirty onwards, the photos do not relate to the writer's age at the time of writing, but to the age of the *je* in the various stages of the novel. The fictional life-story of the *je* is here juxtaposed with photographic images of the author, mirroring life stages. As the *je* goes through successive stages, so the photos illustrate this by representing Marcel Proust at various stages of his life. In the *Recherche*, Proust had developed a theory of successive identities of the

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<sup>2</sup> Marcel Proust quoted in George Painter, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol. I:1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse & II:1904-1922. Les années de maturité*]. Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Published first in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd., London (1959 & 1965). Here II, 381.

individual: as the subject undergoes emotional upheavals or experiences social changes, it transforms itself to a degree where the emerging »I« has so little in common with its previous self, that these are experienced as two different persons. The chronologically-caused diversity of the images here become a visual expression of Proust's theory of identity laid out in his fiction. There, the central character is unable to recognise old acquaintances when he meets them again after several years. Here, it is difficult to recognise the adult in the image of the child.<sup>3</sup>

The role of photography in the context of autobiography is delineated by Linda Haverty Rugg as follows:<sup>4</sup>

*But it may be more accurate to say that photographs, which can display many views and variant versions of the same person, simply supply a visual metaphor for the divided and multiple ("decentred") self, a self-image that gained momentum from Kierkegaard to Nietzsche to Freud and beyond. Photography did not create the disturbance; photographic technology like other human inventions, offers an extension and realization of already-imagined images. At the same time, however, photographs as physical evidence re-anchor the subject in the physical world, insist on the verifiable presence of an embodied and solid individual.*

In her chapters on Walter Benjamin and Christa Wolf, she outlines how the referential nature of the photo poses a threat to the individual. Thus, photos were banished from these autobiographies.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. also: Leah D. Hewitt, *Autobiographical Tightropes*. Lincoln & London (University of Nebraska Press) 1990.

On p. 3: *The traditional view of autobiography—through and against which the autobiographical texts studied here articulate themselves—grounds itself in the metaphysics of the conscious, coherent, individual subject. Language in this perspective is a tool to represent faithfully the already extant self and the past life. In the second half of the twentieth century, this conception of autobiography has, of course, radically changed (and was, no doubt, always already being challenged in practice): the "individual's" autonomy, with its concomitant social and linguistic authority, has been seriously eroded. The text now creates the fictions of a "self" rather than the reverse. Jaques Derrida's philosophical critiques of presence, of origins and the "full subject," meticulously deconstruct many of the premises of conventional autobiographical forms, as do Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic writings on the predominant role of intersubjectivity in the constitution of the subject. With the Cartesian subject put "on trial/in process," as Julia Kristeva puts it, and Roland Barthes well-known proclamation of the "death of the author" as supreme controller of the text, the possibilities for the formation of an autobiographical "I" (or its very desirability) have to be rethought. For some, these radical alterations in our understanding of the subject in language have turned autobiography into a model for writing in general, a self-reflexive mode with its subject dispossessed, if not eliminated.*

<sup>4</sup> Linda Haverty Rugg, *Picturing Ourselves. Photography and Autobiography*. Chicago & London (Chicago University Press) 1997, pp. 1f.

In the editing of the *Recherche* the photos have been added in order to show (parallel to the development of its textual, fictional, autobiographical narrative) the visual, historical, biographical narrative of Marcel Proust. They point not only to the existence of the various life-stages of the *je*, they also determine who the *je* is: Marcel Proust. Yet, in the novel the *je* has no name and the author offers no *pacte autobiographique*. It is an act of biographical recognition that is inferred on the fictional self *a posteriori*, and yet, that very act of recognition then infers not a *pacte autobiographique* between the »I« of the narrative and the reader, but rather, a »pacte biographique« between the readers and those persons (writers, directors, scriptwriters, etc.) who present the fiction as (auto)biography. As the following will show, acts of (non)identification between the writer and his work, acts of recognition, are precisely the arena where Marcel Proust/Proust is negotiated amongst the many *already-imagined* representations of him.

## 2. Marcel Proust 1: Childhood, Youth, Young Man

### The Goodnight Kiss & The Missing Brother

Marcel Valentin Eugène Georges Proust was born in Auteuil on the July 10th, 1871 to the married couple Adrien Proust (1834 - 26th November, 1903) and Jeanne-Clémence Proust (née Weil, 1849 - 26th September, 1905). Barely two years later, on the May 24th, 1873, another son was born in Auteuil who was named Robert Sigismond Léon. The marriage of the parents was mixed: a catholic paternal side, a Jewish maternal side. The parents are regarded as representing different interests and characters: the father was regarded as the scientific spirit who provided his first-born son with a model of discipline and rigorous research, the mother providing



him with sentiment and literature. This distinction featured in works written on him, in the documentary films and in the exhibitions.<sup>5</sup> The younger brother was to follow the footsteps of the father becoming, like him, an eminent doctor, whereas *le petit Marcel* (as he was called by family and friends even on his deathbed) remained closer to his mother and became first the »artistic spirit« and then the artist of the family.

In the first standard-reference biography of Marcel Proust by George Painter,<sup>6</sup> the divisions between his parents were not done on the grounds of personality but of locale. The oppositional argument is made between the two villages they came from (Autueil and Illiers, respectively). The parents here are represented as a happy union.<sup>7</sup> Like Painter and other biographers, the most recent academic biographer of Marcel Proust (William Carter), also resorts to the novel as biographical material.<sup>8</sup> I would like to focus, however, on Painter' books and a recent French biography of Tadié because they are engaged in a dialogue of sorts.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Charlotte Haldane, *Marcel Proust*. London (Arthur Baker) 1951, p. 94.

Haldane sees the *Recherche* as a *great novel but even greater autobiography*. She describes the relation of Marcel Proust to his parents as: *So for his mother he feels a passionate love, often however overshadowed by bitter criticism; for his father a cold, almost glacial, respect. These are the rationalisations of guilt-feelings towards his parents, guilt-feelings largely due to a deep repressed resentment against them both; against the creators of his poor weak body, which is his life-long handicap, and sets him apart from his lucky, healthy fellow creatures.*

Cf. the section of the exhibition *L'écriture et les arts* (1999/2000) where this opposition is present in attributing the parents to two different sections of the exhibition.

<sup>6</sup> George Painter, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol. I:1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse* & II:1904-1922. *Les années de maturité*]. Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Published first in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd., London (1959 & 1965).

Though there do exist quite a number of biographical studies on Marcel Proust, it is noteworthy that what was to become the first standard reference biography was an English publication. After several publications covering different periods of his life, there was a proliferation of Proust biographies in the nineties. Starting with Ghislain de Diesbach's *Proust* (Paris, Perrin) in 1991, French writing culminated in the weighty biography *Marcel Proust* by Jean-Yves Tadié in 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. George Painter, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol. I:1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse* & II:1904-1922. *Les années de maturité*]. Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Published first in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd., London (1959 & 1965).

Here I, p. 34: *Ce devait être pour tous les deux un mariage extrêmement heureux.*

<sup>8</sup> Cf. William C. Carter, *Marcel Proust. A Life*. New Haven & London (Yale University Press) 2000. William C. Carter has also collaborated on a recent documentary film on Proust.

The later biography of Jean-Yves Tadié, does take up the oppositional differences in the relation of Marcel Proust with his father. It reproduces the dualistic structure of the *Recherche* (which splits the childhood days of the *je* at the fictional Combray into the two sides of Swann and the Guermantes) by insistently repeating similar oppositions in the first chapter: Auteuil-Illiers, mother-father. This can be related back to the ways in which the *Recherche* enters into the two different biographies: in the former it is the hypotext,<sup>9</sup> on which and along whose narrative Painter constructs his biography, in the latter, Tadié to a certain extent tries to formulate his biography in opposition to it. The more reconciliatory stance in Painter as regards defining different influences in Marcel Proust's life is the result of repeating a fictional wholeness of autobiography in the biography, whereas the oppositional narrative structure of Tadié is caused by the friction between his writing in opposition to a hypotext. In most biographies of Marcel Proust, childhood scenes of the fictional *je* are taken to be scenes of the childhood of Marcel Proust. These two make no exception. A biography that differs in this respect is the one by Richard Hindry Barker and this is because it has used primarily the letters as its source material.<sup>10</sup>

The very close relationship between him and his mother is exemplified in the story of the goodnight kiss. In the first part of *Du côté de chez Swann*, Proust has created the archetype of a little boy's bedtime agony. The boy then refuses to go to sleep because he needs the goodnight kiss of his mother.

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<sup>9</sup> This terminus is taken from Gérard Genette, designating a text upon which a second text models itself, e.g. like James Joyce's *Ulysses* on Homer's *Odyssee*.

Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*. Paris (Éditions du Seuil) 1982.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Hindry Barker, *Marcel Proust. A Biography*. London (Faber and Faber) 1958.

This biography, therefore, does not fall into the trap of mistaking *À la recherche du temps perdu* for the life of the author, but in the other hand it also represents the relations Marcel Proust had with others from a highly subjective point of view, i.e. as Marcel Proust saw them.

The plotline is as follows: while the family is having dinner with guests the child is sent to bed early and is not allowed to kiss his mother goodnight in front of the guests because the father considers this an effeminate overindulgence. Nor is the mother allowed to accompany it to bed or slip away during the dinner (despite the dramatic notes passed on to her during the dinner via the servant Françoise). The child decides do stay up, to wait till its parents come upstairs and then—daring the father's wrath—demands its kiss. As the parents come up and he emerges from his bedroom, the mother tries to shoo him back before the father catches sight of him. But then, the unexpected happens. The father not only does not reprimand both overindulgent mother and anxious, petulant child, but tells her that she may spend the night in the spare bed in the child's room, and even suggests she should read him a goodnight story.

The very close relationship between Jeanne Proust and her older son Marcel has according to Tadié not only given Marcel the impetus to become a writer: this emotional dependence of the son also bred suppression which would find its way into the *Recherche*. Mother and son were inordinately interested in questioning each other on what they did, had done, felt etc. This enters into the *Recherche*:<sup>11</sup>

*Swann, le Narrateur hériteront cette manie des interrogations, Odette, Albertine, des réponses évasives ou mensongères. Elle d'abord présente dans le dialogue entre Marcel et sa mère. L'interrogation maternelle pèse sans cesse sur le fils, qui à son tour, questionne des amis, conclut, comme avec Reynaldo Hahn ou Antoine Bibesco, d'étranges pactes selon lesquels on doit tout dire.*

Biography here is represented as entering into the fiction both as discrete episodes as well as the emotional balances between individuals. The fictional autobiography is, in turn, read as a source for writing the biography to the point where it is sometimes difficult to ascertain which came first or which (elements of)

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<sup>11</sup> Jean-Yves Tadié: *Marcel Proust*. Paris (Gallimard) 1999, 2 vol. [1st published 1996 in a one volume edition]. Here I, 65.

It is also to be noted, that Tadié here refers to the central figure of the *Recherche* not as Marcel but as *narrateur*, but in the course of his study frequently uses the fictional work as an explanation for the biography. My underlining, KD.

episodes are the work of fiction, and which are, indeed, biographical. The interrelation of fiction and autobiography informs the writing of the biographies, and in the act of biography the fiction is at times historicized.

In the film *The Modern World. Ten Great Writers. Marcel Proust* the goodnight-kiss scene is re-enacted. The film is constructed along the frame narrative of *Le temps retrouvé*, where the central figure has to wait in the Guermantes' library for the matinée concert to finish. While doing so, he is shown as remembering several scenes from his life. One of these is the goodnight kiss. Here mother and child are shown as reading a book together while a voice-over informs the viewer that *A la recherche du temps perdu* is a fictional autobiography with a central character who has a life similar to Proust's own. The film, however, does not point out that this episode as such does not appear in any other document (letter, journal etc.) of Marcel Proust or his family.<sup>12</sup> Suddenly, the father's voice is heard in the film, summoning the mother down to greet the guests. When she asks through the open door whether she may still kiss the boy goodnight, she receives a negative reply. Not only does the filmic father here demand obedience but from his narrative representation as voice only two things follow. For one, he becomes omniscient: like the previous voice-over, his paternal power is greatly enhanced. Yet, in the same movement, he is more immaterial because he is physically absent. What the spectator sees is a close mother-son relationship disturbed by an immaterial father. What the father-as-voice here can be read as, is first the absolute power and secondly as abstract power, i.e. an opposition to the mother-as-body.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Jean-Yves Tadié: *Marcel Proust*. Paris (Gallimard) 1999, 2 vol. [1st published 1996 in a one volume edition]. Here pp. 92f.

Here is an instance where Tadié despite the lack of documentary evidence insists on telling the story as part of his biography using the literary material (of the early novel by Proust, *Jean Santeuil*) as proof.

This scene contains not only the oedipal pair of mother and son, but also the necessary third, the stern father.<sup>13</sup> The bond between the child and its parents is depicted as marked by fear and obedience on the paternal side, and by affection, emotional dependence and shared literary pleasures on the maternal side. It is in the film that the relationship between the mother and the child is constructed as more important than that to his father. In the case of Marcel Proust, however, that which is desired and represented as such in biographical narratives, is not so much to take the place of the father but to be loved and to keep the own sexuality hidden from the parents. The tenderness towards the mother serves to deflect from a potentially destructive oedipal scenario.

Another important aspect in this context is the omission of a real-life brother in the autobiographical fiction together with an comparative absence of of comments on this omission. While in real-life the presence of the younger brother arguably defuses the potentially oedipal situation between Marcel Proust and his parents, his absence in the fiction reinforces the oedipal of the family constellations—especially when the parents are constructed as oppositions.

The figure of Marcel Proust's brother is completely omitted from the fictional works. The *je* of *À la recherche du temps perdu* is an only child. This then is, however, ostensibly not read as a sign of fraternal jealousy by his biographers. On the contrary, in accordance with the testimony of the brother himself, most biographers

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<sup>13</sup> As first set out in *Die Traumdeutung* (1900). Reprinted IN: Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* Vol.II/III; Frankfurt a.M. (Fischer) 1987 (1st 1940). Here pp. 264ff. Cf. also *Der Untergang des Ödipuskomplexes* (1924). Reprinted IN: Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke* Vol.XIII, Frankfurt a.M. (Fischer) 1987 [1st 1940], pp. 395-402).

In this later essay, Freud distributed the attributes active/passive to the child caught in such constellation: *Der Ödipuskomplex bot dem Kinde zwei Möglichkeiten der Befriedigung, eine aktive und eine passive. Es konnte sich in männlicher Weise an die Stelle des Vaters setzen und wie er mit der Mutter verkehren, wobei der Vater bald als Hindernis empfunden wurde, oder es wollte die Mutter ersetzen und sich vom Vater lieben lassen, wobei die Mutter überflüssig wurde.* (p.398) It is the realisation of possible castration together with the narcissistic interest in the own genitals that leads to a disappearance of the oedipal complex through sublimation of the libidinous denotation of the parental genitals. This will result in a more tender and affectionate relationship between child and parents.

do not dispute the tender and protective affection the older had for the younger sibling. This behaviour would fit in with other reports on Marcel Proust's later behaviour regarding friends and guests: the extreme lengths he would go to just to do them a favour or to make them feel more comfortable. However, several instances point to a fissure in the fabric of this idyll.

Even though the tantrums of jealousy and possessiveness the child Marcel had regarding his mother are according to Painter due to the shock of the arrival of a younger brother, Marcel Proust is not represented as being jealous of Robert. Instead, according to Painter,<sup>14</sup> Marcel Proust concludes if anybody should be jealous, it is Robert:

*Dans une première ébauche de son roman, il nous montre Robert dans sa chaise d'enfant se plaignant, avec les cris perçants: «Marcel a eu plus de crème au chocolat que moi!» [quote from Proust's *Contre Saint-Beuve*] Dans *À la recherche du temps perdu*—mais sans doute pour des raisons purement esthétiques—il préfère supprimer entièrement le personnage de son frère.*

It is interesting that Painter uses the work of the writer first in order to prove how Marcel Proust saw his family relations, but then refuses to even allow for speculation on the total omission of the brother from the later work. It is a biography written in 1990 for a general rather than an academic public which did interpret the displays of affection towards the brother as a suppressed jealousy. The younger brother being called *mon autre loup* by the mother (Marcel being *mon petit loup*) is not only in second position because being born as second, but by familial naming located in the relationship space between the mother and the older brother, rather than having a direct relationship with her:<sup>15</sup>

*Marcel's jealousy was the more deadly, though repressed and compensated by a protectiveness towards his younger brother modelled on his mother's toward him. Recalling life at the age of three, Robert wrote: "I find constantly the image of my brother, watching over me with a gentleness that was infinite, enveloping and almost maternal." But Robert, instinctively realising he'd lost his mother to his rival, went out to win all the love from his father.*

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<sup>14</sup> George Painter, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol. I:1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse* & II:1904-1922. *Les années de maturité*]. Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Published first in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd., London (1959 & 1965). Here I, 37.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald Hayman, *Marcel Proust. A Biography*. New York (Carroll & Graf) 1992 (1st 1990). Here p. 6.

Jean-Yves Tadié, the French scholar who wrote numerous books on Proust including several biographical studies, however, also insists on the absence of such jealousy. He argues that since there is no evidence to confirm such ideas, one should also refrain from putting them into words in a biography. However, in other instances, i.e. on questions that project Proust in a favourable light, similar lack of evidence does not prevent him from making assumptions for biography. Furthermore, he imputes wrong judgement and incompetence to those biographies which take a different stance:<sup>16</sup>

*Rien n'exprime, chez eux [Marcel and Robert Proust], cette jalousie, qui existe que chez les biographes et chez les psychanalystes posthumes de Proust (ils ne sont pas forcément psychanalystes de profession) qui croient retrouver en Marcel l'hostilité que Freud a prêtée à Goethe à l'égard de son frère.*

It is in this loop between a biographically existing and fictionally non-existent brother that an attempt is made to picture Marcel Proust in a positive light while disregarding more critical implications intimated by the »omissive« narrative structure of the fictional autobiography.

## Sex 1: Transferal

In a very similar way, the guilt that Marcel Proust supposedly felt in relation to his mother because of his homosexuality, is integrated into his biography heterogeneously. Marcel Proust himself had written about such filial guilt in early works but marginalized it in the *Recherche*. Both stories narrate heterosexual relationships: in his early short story *La confession d'une jeune fille* the central figure is female and she has an affair with a male cousin, and in the *Recherche* the protagonist is male and intends to marry a woman. The difference lies in the involvement of the mother in the drama. In this story, the protagonist's immoral acts are watched by her

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<sup>16</sup> Jean-Yves Tadié: *Marcel Proust*. Paris (Gallimard) 1999, 2 vol. [1st published 1996 in a one volume edition]. Here p. I, 66.

mother who subsequently dies of the shock.<sup>17</sup> In the *Recherche*, the mother does not witness pre-marital intimacy and she is pacified by the honourable intentions of her son.

Furthermore, in the *Recherche* the guilty secret of homosexuality is transferred to other characters.<sup>18</sup> The mother's anxieties merely relate to the intentions of her son towards Albertine, and his fears are centred around the question whether his mother approves of his choice. On the other hand, the grandmother of the *je* dies of the shock caused by overhearing a conversation at the public on the Champs-Élysées, which reveals the homosexual nature of their acquaintance the Baron de Charlus, as well as the sordid practicalities of his meetings. So, here not only is the discovery of the guilty secret removed to a generation before—instead of the mother it is the grandmother who dies of the shock—the guilty secret itself is transferred to another person, leaving the *je* an innocent adolescent accompanying his grandmother on a walk.<sup>19</sup> From the point of view of narrative structuring it is interesting that both of these episodes are placed at the very end of a part of the *Recherche*: the former at the end of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* the latter at the end of *Du côté de Guermantes I*, where at the beginning of *Du côté de Guermantes II*, the narrative is continued virtually the same minute it had been left. This suggests a parallel reading of these two moments as decisive turning points from which onwards things are different. Awareness of homosexuality as well as awareness of one's desires for a woman and articulating this to the mother are set on the brink of the last page. The end of a book here becomes a narrative expression for the abyss.

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<sup>17</sup> Marcel Proust, *La confession d'une jeune fille* (1896).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. the climactic last sentence of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* said by *je* to his mother (SG-III, 515): *Il faut absolument, et décidons-le tout de suite, parce que je me rends bien compte maintenant, parce que je ne changerai plus, et que je ne pourrais pas vivre sans cela, il faut absolument que j'épouse Albertine.*

<sup>19</sup> CG-II, 605.



Testimonies which tell of the tenderness and affection Marcel Proust displayed not only towards his brother but others as well, in their omission of anything contradicting this image, represent a movement of »beatification«. This cannot be the whole picture, however, since the biography written by Céleste Albaret differs from these accounts. This is a story of a very demanding and mistrustful employer.<sup>20</sup> I shall come back to this question later.

### **Proust Country : Illiers - Combray ( - Auteuil)**

The origins of the parents are located in different geographical places: the mother's side in Auteuil which was then on the outskirts of Paris; the father's side in Illiers, or rather Combray, near by Chartres. In the 130 years intervening between Marcel Proust's childhood and today, Auteuil has been swallowed up into greater Paris, and the house in which Marcel Proust was born no longer exists. A plaque to mark this locality so important for French literary life is attached to the house which now stands in its place. Illiers has ceased to exist independently in a different way: on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of Marcel Proust's birth it chose to rename itself Illiers-Combray, after the fictional name *Combray* that Proust had assigned to it in the *Recherche*.

As Fritz Nies points out,<sup>21</sup> writers feature in the public spaces of Paris more prominently than in German cities, simply by the fact that most streets and squares are named after them. In this case an even greater tribute is paid to literature, because the village chose to change its name into a composite of its old one and the fictional name given to it by Marcel Proust. One could ask, as Shakespeare's Juliet did, *What's in a name?* And, indeed, alighting from the small train that chugs across

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<sup>20</sup> Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*. Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont. Paris (Laffont) 1973. Here esp. Chapter XVIII *Tyrannique et méfiant*, pp.253-266.

<sup>21</sup> Fritz Nies, *Drei Musketiere und ein kleiner Prinz? Französische Literatur in der Bundesrepublik*. IN: *Interferenzen. Deutschland und Frankreich. Literatur - Wissenschaft - Sprache*. Ed. by idem, Lothar Jordan & Bernd Kortländer. Düsseldorf (Droste Verlag) 1983, pp. 138-152.

the very flat plain of central France between Chartres and this village, one cannot help but think that this is as provincial a French town as any other that one has seen before. The addition of *Combray* to *Illiers* can do little to alter the nature of the village. Just as *a rose by any other name would smell as sweet*, a French provincial town by any other name still is a French provincial town and the contrast with Paris is, as always, blatant. It is in the smallness of the village that Proust appears even larger, because he is ubiquitous. Illiers-Combray is permeated by the fame of its native son: in the name of the hospital Adrien Proust, in the bakeries selling *madeleines proustiennes*, in the little stationers shop on the central market place that displays an unusually academic and expensive range of books by and on Marcel Proust, in the house of the *Tante Léonie* (now the Musée Marcel Proust), in the little park called Pré Catalan (where Marcel Proust played), in the *promenade des aubepines* (thus named after the walks the *je* took in the *Recherche*), postcards showing the *clocher de Combray*, or *Tansonville* the name for the estate of the fictional *Swann* which is (actually) the name of a local estate. The Musée Marcel Proust itself is a rather intimate affair. Not only in the sense that it is a fairly small house, but also intimate in that one recognises it from other sources. The descriptions of the kitchen given in *A la recherche du temps perdu* or the recycled versions of it in various documentary films. I shall come back to this later.

Even though nowadays the children in the schools of Illiers-Combray are probably reminded from early on,<sup>22</sup> it is doubtful whether the child Marcel Proust left any lasting impression on the inhabitants of Illiers. Especially since his visits ceased at the age of ten when the onset of asthma made further Easter visits to the blossoming countryside of Illiers impossible for him. Besides, the provincial town already had found its eccentric in that family: the husband of Aunt Elisabeth, Jules Amiot.<sup>23</sup> In the last room of the Museum which displayed a collection of articles and memorabilia, a photo was displayed of Uncle Jules in Arabian garments.

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. here the film *L'art et la douleur*, episode titled *Proust et la posterité*, where a session on Proust of a class of school children at the Lycée Marcel Proust is filmed.

<sup>23</sup> While she makes an appearance in *A la recherche du temps perdu* as Tante Léonie, Jules Amiot did not enter the fictional world.

Apparently, he not only donned them for a session with a photographer, but Uncle Jules frequently wore this complete Arabian outfit when walking through the village.<sup>24</sup> Even in January 2000, this was a kind of behaviour that bewildered and alienated (rather than amused) the guide—who was a native of Illiers. Its effect in the second half of the nineteenth century, can be imagined. This uncle had such a passion for things from northern Africa (where he frequently was for business reasons) that not only did he bring back household utensils and furniture from there and furnished the interior of his home with them, he also had the façade of the house decorated with coloured tiles in what was then termed »Arabian style«. The half timbering which is typical for houses of that region was covered up. These tiles had been removed at a later stage to be replaced with the said timbering, but were put back again in the 1980s when the Musée Marcel Proust decided to recreate the house as it had been at the time when the child Marcel Proust was visiting there with his family.

Thus, the village had changed its name in order to claim its stake in the biography of Marcel Proust and the museum has changed its façade in order to be more Proust-authentic as opposed to authentic regarding the local architectural style. The dilemma of authenticity and availing a public with it, appears when representation of locales »as they were then« is at stake. Numerous houses of poets or authors have been changed to accommodate the inhabitants' later fame and its tourists. Likewise, tourists have to come to terms with a difference between a locale represented on film and its real-life location. In the case of Goethe's *Gartenhaus*, an entire new *Gartenhaus* has been built in order to be able to spare the original the burden of innumerable visitors. Visitors to Stamford, UK, experience bewilderment that the town does not look like its TV-representation in the series *Middlemarch*, which was shot there. As Jenny Rice and Pamela Saunders point out, tourists question the residents when the town had changed its name from Middlemarch to Stamford, and try vainly to book rooms at the »White Hart Hotel« which is now an

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<sup>24</sup> All of this, I could learn when visiting the Musée Proust in January 2000. The guide had not volunteered this information when we passed the photographs by himself, but told the story behind

arts centre. The article inscribes the blurred question of authenticity into the politics of nostalgia:<sup>25</sup>

*Overall the contrivance of Stamford as Middlemarch problematises the distinction between authenticity and fake: a postmodern experience which is fundamental in creating nostalgia. Furthermore it sets an agenda for a range of production and consumption relationships which are central to the intertextual consumption of nostalgia.*

The guide in the Musée Proust then also pointed out which of the rooms had been changed since the time when Marcel Proust had been there, and which of the rooms had been then again restored to their »original« state. Nevertheless, just as he expressed his bewilderment at the Arabian Garments of Jules Amiot, he expressed his regrets at the fact that the exterior had been changed to something more outlandish. He also assured me that neither of Jules Amiot's two brothers had ever displayed a similarly eccentric behaviour. It seemed to be debatable how much and which Marcel Proust is allowed, or which kind of Jules Amiot. Whereas in the case argued by Rice and Saunders, Stamford is supposed to change into Middlemarch, in the case of Illiers-Combray the blurring between historical reality and fiction, is even more complex, since what is longed for, is not the visual appearance of the house as it was during the childhood of Proust and as described in the novel, but the more »normal« one it had become between an unknown childhood and the famous writer, i.e. a less exotic appearance that would fit better with the French village as imagined by the guide. It is here both the historical fact and the fiction that appear as intruders in the nostalgic imagining what the house should look like. This occurred even though the guide owed his living to the maintenance of that very fiction.

The homosexuality of Marcel Proust is another point in question. Though the guide pointed out the portrait and those photos that seemingly betrayed this side of

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the garments when I asked him.

<sup>25</sup> Jenny Rice & Pamela Saunders, *Consuming Middlemarch: the Construction and Consumption of Nostalgia*. IN *Pulping Fictions. Consuming Literature Across the Literature/Media Divide*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell, I.Q. Hunter, Heidi Kaye & Imelda Whelehan. London (Pluto Press) 1999, pp. 85-98. Here p. 91.

Marcel Proust, he in the same breath also said he believed such things were better left private and not spoken about. It seems that some »foreign« things are approved of while others aren't. This kind of selective behaviour represents another example of a loop. Some elements of Marcel Proust's family history are approved whereas others are rejected. While willingly relinquishing its name, the inhabitant of that village did not want to give up its traditional appearances or have its street life disturbed by persons in exotic raiment.

In some instances of biographical writing the fictional paradise of childhood enters through stylistics: either through the imitation of Proust's style or by choosing a particular narrative mode. And this seems to me to be a post-WWII phenomenon. It is certainly present in the biography of George Painter, and in others. Philip Larcher here serves as an example. Larcher knew Marcel Proust as a child, and helped found the Musée Marcel Proust. In 1945 he wrote:<sup>26</sup>

*Quand, vous éloignant de ce lieu privilégié d'Illiers, vous sentirez encore l'odeur d'invisibles et persistants lilas, quand le vent vous accompagnera emportant le parfum des aubépines comme le rire des jeunes filles en fleurs, quand vous verrez peu à peu se fondre dans une brume légère les nymphéas de la Vivonne, les bonnes gens du village et leurs petits logis et l'église et tout Combray et ses environs, vous penserez que c'est par des yeux fermés à jamais au fond du tombeau que des générations que ne sont pas encore nées, verront ce petit coin de nature vers lequel elles devront s'acheminer comme en un pèlerinage, vers cette nouvelle «Délös fleurie»*

In this passage he imitates the elaborate, long Proustian sentence structure as well as the Proustian device of linking a place with the sensory stimulation it provides (*l'odeur, le parfum* etc.). In doing so, he not only imitates but also conjures the hypotext, i.e. the *Recherche*, that this text is modelled on. The *nymphéas* of the

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<sup>26</sup> Philip L. Larcher, *Le parfum de Combray. Pèlerinage Proustien à Illiers*. Paris (Mercure de France) 1945, here p.118f. My underlining, KD.

Some examples of other contemporaries who produced their version of Marcel Proust: the portraitist Jaques Emile Blanche *Mes modèles: Souvenirs littéraires, Barrès, Hardy, Proust, James, Gide, Moore*. Paris (Stock) 1984 (1st 1928); Princesse Marta Lucia Bibesco *Au bal avec Marcel Proust*. Paris (Gallimard) 1928; the mémoires of Proust's friend Robert Comte de Montesquiou-Fézenac, *Les pas effacés*. Paris (Emile-Paul, frères) 1923; the journal of Reynaldo Hahn (a lover of Marcel Proust), *Notes. Journal d'un musicien*. Paris (Plon) 1933; Jean Cocteau, *Portrait-Souvenirs 1900-1914*. Paris (Grasset) 1935; Elisabeth de Gramont, *Les marronniers en fleurs, Mémoires II*. Paris (Grasset) 1929; Mme Scheikevitch *Souvenirs d'un temps disparu* Paris (Plon) 1935.

*Vivonne* are a long episode in the novel as well as the *aubépines*. The *jeunes filles en fleurs* are a direct quote, the title of the second novel of the *Recherche*. Finally, the term *pèlerinage* refers both to epiphanic moments of the novel itself (the hawthorne, *aubépine*, in bloom e.g.), to its theme of paradises lost and regained, and to the sacral aura the text is endowed with, making disciples of its readers—here Philip Larcher.

François Maurois, as another example, uses the narrative mode of the fairy tale to describe Illiers:<sup>27</sup>

*Au commencement était Illiers, petite ville voisine de Chartres, aux confins de la Beauce et du Peche, siège provisoire et personnel du Paradis Terrestre. Là vivait depuis des siècles une bonne et ancienne famille du pays, les Proust, solidement enracinée dans ce terroir. Un enfant qui passait ses vacances à Illiers y trouvait l'antique bourgade française, la vieille église encapuchonnée sous son clocher. Le riche parler des provinces, un code mystérieux des manières, et les vertus des «Français de Saint-André des Champs» dont les faces, sculptées au Moyen Age sur les porches et chapiteaux, apparaissent encore, toutes semblables, sur les pas des boutiques, sur les marchés et dans les champs.*

The style of both texts suggests a wonderworld rather than a reality. With its fairytale elements of the *bonne famille* it also conjures the telling of the story of Geneviève de Brabant to the child Marcel Proust and the child *je*. Since this was written after having read *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and after the (premature) death of Marcel Proust, imitation and mourning enter into this narrative. Thus, the passing of time which distances from the historical person and leaves only the fictional autobiography, here relocates his biography in a historically diffusely located garden of Eden, a mythical France.

### **Proust Society : Swann, Guermantes & Cie**

But *A la recherche du temps perdu* uses not only the village Illiers with its church and bell tower as places for its plot, the whole area surrounding it is given new names and becomes the location for the childhood of the *je*. In the descriptions of the

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<sup>27</sup> François Maurois, *À la recherche de Marcel Proust*. Paris (Hachette) 1949, here p. 8.

two possible Sunday strolls along the Guermantes' or Swann's way, one is introduced to the two parts of society (aristocratic and haute bourgeoisie) of the *je's* life.

Read against the biography of Marcel Proust, the Guermantes and the Swanns are in part fictionalizations of aristocrats, musicians, actors/actresses, artists which he got to know in Paris. But it is not a straightforward *roman à clef*, where one historical person corresponds to one fictional character. While one can say that the *baron de Charlus* was inspired by Robert de Montesquiou, *Charles Swann* by Charles Haas, *Albertine* by Alfred Agostinelli etc., it is also the case that each of these fictional characters is a composite being: in most cases there are several historical figures that inspired them, they are invested with features (behavioural idiosyncrasies, actions, houses, social and geographical origins, relations etc.) that place them in a different context. This may seem to be stating the obvious, but in exhibitions at the Bibliothèque Nationale as well as at the Musée Marcel Proust<sup>28</sup> just as in several publications on him, attempts have been made to present this as a case of *roman à clef*.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, the houses and castles in the vicinity of Illiers he renamed, and which he made the homes of these characters, do not correlate to the historic persons. While the contemporaries and acquaintances of Marcel Proust are able to point out that this character is composed of these persons, the locations around Illiers, too, may lay claim to being the *château de Guermantes* or *Tansonville*,<sup>30</sup> the

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<sup>28</sup> Paul Nadar, *Le monde de Proust. Avec 85 photographies, portraits, et notices biographiques. Présentation: Anne Marie Bernard.* [Catalogue of an exhibition]. Paris (Musée Marcel Proust Illiers-Combray) 1977; *L'écriture et les arts* [Catalogue of exhibition 1999-2000], Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Tolbiac) 1999.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Elisabeth de Clermont-Tonnerre, *Robert de Montesquiou et Marcel Proust.* Paris (Flammarion) 1925; Marie Scheikevitch, *Souvenirs d'un temps disparu.* Paris (Plon) 1935; William Howard Adams, *En souvenir de Marcel Proust.* Paris/Lausanne (edita) 1985 (1st *A Proust Souvenir.* New York [The Vendome Press] 1984.).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. here as an early example: André Ferré, *Géographie de Marcel Proust. Avec index des noms de lieux et des termes géographiques.* Paris (Sagittaire) 1939.

country estate of Swann. However, the geographical side of the *roman à clef* does not tally with the social *roman à clef*. All these people of Marcel Proust's biography and all these locations of his biography converge truly harmoniously only on the pages of his fictional autobiography. The *Recherche*, in certain respects, is thus a society's dream come true: it is idealised. The frequent usage of Proustian phrases as idioms testifies to this, e.g., *A la recherche de or Du côté de*.<sup>31</sup> When they say that their lives were lived either on this *côté* or the other, it offers the possibility for Marcel Proust's contemporaries to slip into the perfect world of fiction. They are able to reject the negative characteristics of the fictional characters. They can use both the fictionality of the society narrated in the *Recherche* as well as its referentiality to the life and times of Marcel Proust: it becomes possible to identify with the characters and the beauty of the writing in pointing out that the dress described in *Du côté de Guermantes* is a dress that Madame so-and-so wore at such and such an event while at the same time one is able to claim that this is fiction and therefore the cruel *duchesse de Guermantes* was not really cruel nor that shallow.<sup>32</sup>

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Ferré opposes the categories time and space insisting on the equal importance of the latter in the *Recherche*.

Cf. also, the film *La Normandie de Marcel Proust* which by terming itself *un voyage dans la Normandie proustienne* is a filmic example of inscribing Proust onto a landscape.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. François Mauriac, *Du côté de chez Proust*. Paris (Le table ronde) 1947; & idem, *À la recherche de Marcel Proust*, Paris (Hachette) 1949.

Or cf. the chapter headings in William Howard Adams, *En souvenir de Marcel Proust*. Paris/Lausanne (edita) 1985 (orig. *A Proust Souvenir*. New York (The Vendome Press) 1984): *Du côté de chez Swann*, *Du côté de Guermantes*, *Du côté des artistes et des écrivains*.

<sup>32</sup> Princesse Bibesco, *La duchesse de Guermantes. Laure de Sade. Comtesse de Chevigné*, Paris (Plon) 1950.

Here on p. II: *Une race considère comme le réservoir des forces créatrices d'une nation — et quelle nation! — une souche noble bien définie, a produit à la cime de la forêt, le rameau d'or, l'archetype de la duchesse de Guermantes. Tel qu'en adoration de cette personne en son essence parfaite, l'a divinisée le génie de Marcel Proust.*

In the following she, ironically, also shows the disregard that the historic figure of the Comtesse de Chevigné had for the writing of Marcel by throwing his letters away, on p.137: *Toutes les lettres que Marcel Proust écrit à la comtesse de Chevigné n'ont pas été conservées par elle, soit par indifférence ou par ennui, ou parce qu'elles étaient trop longues et encombraient ses tiroirs, ce qui est la raison la plus probable.*

There are instances, however, where acquaintances or friends of Marcel Proust voiced anger at the way they were depicted, e.g. Robert de Montesquiou on reading about himself as *baron de Charlus*.

Cf. Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust. Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont*. Paris (Laffont) 1973, pp. 303ff.



In the earlier reception of Proust, i.e. the period from 1920 up till 1971, a substantial part of the books and articles written on him were written by either his contemporaries who knew him or by contemporaries or followers who wished they had known him or had lived in his day. That the *Recherche* is a novel not only of his times, but also couched in terms of trying to regain that past, facilitates a permanent mode of nostalgic quotation by his contemporary and his peers.

### 3. Proust 1

#### Salons

In this sub-chapter I want to map out the ways in which Marcel Proust became a known figure, i.e. in which ways the first »reputation« of Proust is put together. This is the fama as Proust the socialite dandy, which finds its pictorial alter-ego in the portrait of Jacques Émile Blanche showing a young (almost effeminate) Proust in evening dress with a camelia in his button hole.<sup>33</sup>

Arthur D. Trottenberg describes the art scene of that period as particularly vibrant:<sup>34</sup>

*Fin-de-siècle Paris denotes more than the end of a century in a particular city. The year 1900 was the midway point of a remarkable thirty year epoch that began with Victor Hugo's death in 1885 and ended with World War I. Legend and nostalgia have blurred the realities of this period, which actually began as a period of bitterness for France: The Third Republic was in its infancy, but there still remained the sour taste of the false security of the second empire and the deep defeatism resulting from the outcome of the Franco-Prussian War. For the aged writer Renan, it was no longer a world of hope. "France is dying; do not disturb her agony," he exclaimed to the poet Paul Déroulède.*

*He could not have been more wrong. Had he lived, Renan would have witnessed a France and a Paris bursting with vigour and accomplishment. Instead of a national funeral, it was the beginning of la belle*

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<sup>33</sup> Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust. Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont*. Paris (Laffont) 1973. On pp. 181ff., Céleste Albaret termed this part of his life (at which she did not yet know Marcel Proust) *le temps au camélia*. Both her biography of Proust as well as the very recent one by William C. Carter have chosen this image of Proust as cover. The portrait was also used for the cover of the published stage play in 2000. This is discussed in chapter four.

<sup>34</sup>Eugène Atget, *A Vision of Paris. The Photographs of Eugène Atget. The Words of Marcel Proust*. [Ed. by and with an Introduction by Arthur D. Trottenberg]. New York (Macmillan) 1963. Here p. 12. This publication links the work of Atget with quotes from Marcel Proust, despite the fact that Atget did not know the work of Proust—as Trottenberg himself points out.

*époque. Instead of becoming the corpse predicted by Renan, France, for almost four decades after the founding of the Third Republic, was a fecund and lively leader in science, engineering, painting, drama, music, literature, philosophy and medicine.*

In the reception of Marcel Proust, however, the years when France was supposedly bursting with artistic vitality are the years regarded as wasted time, *temps perdu*, when he only frequented salons and produced dilettante literature. In two films on him, the same documentary material is chosen to represent the vitality of that period: in both *Proust — Remembrance of Tastes Past* (1995) and *The Modern World. Ten Great Writers: Marcel Proust* (1988) the painter Monet is shown as producing his impressionist masterpieces. Significantly, the scene takes place in his garden, outside, far away from the sophisticated interiors of the salons. The perception of those years of Proust's life as wasted, is very predominant in the last part of the *Recherche, Le temps retrouvé*, where the *je* refers to his former life as a *vie gaché*,<sup>35</sup> i.e. a period when he but dabbled in literature.

Writing for *révues* dates back to as early as 1888, when Marcel Proust was still going to school. At the Lycée Condorcet he contributed to the journals founded by his fellow pupils. At about the same time Proust started frequenting the salon of Mme. Strauss, the mother of his friend from school, Daniél Halévy. Though he is perceived by his fellow students as an intellectual and an extraordinarily capable mind, he also alienates them by his obvious obsession with society. This leads to a refusal to print texts he wrote because, to others, he appears too frivolous. As is well-known, such refusal was repeated when Marcel Proust tried to find a publisher for *Du côté de chez Swann* and the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and other publishers turned his book down.

At the age of twenty-three, in 1895, he entered into a career as a librarian at the Bibliothèque Mazarine, handing in a request for leave immediately after taking up work. Five years later, in 1900, he quit his post after a virtually uninterrupted

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<sup>35</sup> TR-IV, 433ff.

absence. In those years he continued writing articles, reviews and chronicles of the Paris salons for journals such as the *Revue Blanche*, the *Révue encyclopédique*, the *Journal*, the *Révue de Paris* etc. and for newspapers such as *Le Figaro*. A lot of this writing was circulated within closed circles only. Thus, Proust was pursuing both a select society (in the salons of Madame Strauss, Princesse Mathilde et. al.) in artistic circles, the haute bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, but also a select readership. And the social circles he had moved in, later sought to foreground their connection to this young man, by publishing mémoires of their times with him, or the letters exchanged with him.<sup>36</sup> One of the probably first conferences on Proust was given under the patronage of the Prince Pierre of Monaco.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, in the very early film *Portrait Souvenir*, the spectator is presented with aristocrats, writers, intellectuals as interviewees who all tell of their encounters with Proust, and who aspire to fame not least by claiming an acquaintance with him.<sup>38</sup>

In those years Proust acquired the reputation of a socialite dandy and the even more incriminating one of a snob.<sup>39</sup> One scholar who gives a value judgement on the *je* is André Germain,<sup>40</sup> who compares the *je* unfavourably with Proust, claiming that the latter was a much better person. This implicitly passes a negative judgement on

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. e.g. Princesse Marta Lucia Bibesco, *Au bal avec Marcel Proust*. Paris (Gallimard) 1928; Jacques-Émile Blanche, *Mes modèles: Souvenirs littéraires, Barrès, Hardy, Proust, James, Gide, Moore*. Paris (Stock) 1984 (1st 1928); Elisabeth de Gramont, *Les marronniers en fleurs, Mémoires II*. Paris (Grasset) 1929; Daniél Halévy, *Pays parisiens*. Paris (Grasset) 1932.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques Rivière, *Marcel Proust (Conférence)*. Monaco (Imprimerie de Monaco) 1924.

The conference was held 01.03.1924 at Monaco. The book proceeding from this contained only one contribution.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. here also Baron Ernest Antoine Aimé Léon Seillière, *Marcel Proust*, Paris (Editions de la Nouvelle) 1931.

In this book, the author merely nine years after Proust's death claims that now the time has come to re-assess Proust more dispassionately as was possible a few years ago. Because as his contemporaries continually fêted him then, an objective (dispassionate) assessment had not been possible.

<sup>39</sup> Margaret Goodell, *Three Satirists of Snobbery. Thackeray, Meredith, Proust*. Hamburg (Friedrichsen, de Gruyter & Co.) 1939.

<sup>40</sup> André Germain, *Les clés de Marcel Proust. Suivis de portraits*. Paris (Editions Sun) 1953.

Proust, the socialite, since the *je* is in large parts his fictional alter-ego. A rather amusing study on the *Recherche* is Louis de Beauchamp's *Marcel et le Jockey Club*.<sup>41</sup> The text itself is preceded by a *lettre-préface*. This has been done in other earlier studies on Proust and primarily seems to serve the purpose of mutually enhancing each other's importance through the reminiscing on a past shared by the author and the preface-writer. Beauchamp tries on the one hand to give a history of the Club, to defend it as not élitist but, rather, egalitarian (sic!), and then also analyses those characters of the *Recherche* who were members of it.<sup>42</sup>

Proust's work then, becomes not only the literary fixation of the circles he had moved in by becoming the subject-matter of his novel, but it was also mobilised as a defence of it. Another author's name that frequently crops up when Proust's work is read as a social novel, depicting French society of the *belle époque*, is Balzac and his *Comédie Humaine*. Clive Bell<sup>43</sup> sees the socialite Proust and the parallels between the *Recherche* and the *Comédie Humaine* as follows:<sup>44</sup>

*It is odd to remember that throughout his youth this devoted seroant of truth posed as a slightly frivolous aesthete and as such was accepted. There was something of an Oscar Wilde about him. If he never walked down the rue de la Paix with a lily in his hand, habitually he went out to dinner with a camelia in his buttonhole, and in society affected a manner so exaggeratedly polite, sympathetic and ingratiating that his friends to define his peculiar attack coined the verb "proustifier". Had he died before the publication of Swann, he would have left the reputation of a drawing-room decadent.*

And also:

*By 1925 Proust meant for me what seventy-five years earlier I suppose Balzac must have meant for people of my sort. Here was a contemporary possessing imaginatively and giving form to the vague, half-conscious experience of two generations; here was a path that cut into an unexplored shrubbery of that back-*

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<sup>41</sup> Louis de Beauchamp *Marcel et le Jockey Club*. Paris (Éditions Émile-Paul) 1973.

In the novel, the Jockey Club is an exclusive club. Especially the scramble both to be elected into it and to be elected its president are ways in which the fictional characters enhance their social cache or by which social acceptance is denied.

<sup>42</sup> Mme de Cheigné (a model for the duchesse de Guermantes) who did not read the *Recherche* is reported to have said that to expect her to read it, would be like asking insects to read zoological books written on them. The utilitarian nature of the relationship here works both ways.

<sup>43</sup> Clive Bell, *Proust*. London (Hogarth Press) 1928. Here, pp. 38 and 6f., respectively.

<sup>44</sup> Clive Bell here draws the parallel to the English writer Oscar Wilde who at the turn of the century came to live in Parisian exile and at the end of that century is another author whose life has been filmed several times and where the representation of homosexuality has been a contested issue.

## Chapter 1: *Céleste* or Authorial Profusion

*garden men call life; and here were the memoirs of my age. Also, it will be, I surmise, with Proust's contribution to experience as it has been with Balzac's: something will remain, something will be discarded, much will be lost. Today, only the historically minded appreciate the shades by which Balzac differentiates "restoration" from "Louis-Philippe", and our grandchildren will hardly feel as we feel the delicate touches by which Odette is made to represent one epoch and Albertine is to announce another. The most variegated periods tend, at a distance, to appear monochrome; wherefore one of Proust's most delicious gifts for us, his gift of rendering temporal colour, inevitably will cease to charm as the age of which he is the memorialist loses its bloom.*

To Clive Bell, Proust is writing about himself (Bell) and his own time. Proust is a *memorialist* of the age. What I would like to point out from these quotes is the following: when in retrospect Clive Bell foresees as a possible option that Proust might not have written anything of impact before dying because he was wasting his creative life away in the salons, the socialite phase is judged harshly. Paradoxically, Bell then reneges on this in the socio-historical reading of the *Recherche*: because here he manifests incredible satisfaction by knowing that this part of history—the changes of the social circles of Proust (and Bell's own, in fact)—is preserved. On the one hand he regards that part of life of Proust that was spent in the society of men like himself as potentially wasted, on the other hand he expresses satisfaction that that society, i.e. his society, has been transfixed into literature.

Another writer, Fernand Gregh, insists on the affinity with Balzac. Yet here the reading becomes both nationalist and dubiously pro-Semitic. Proust in his understanding and depiction becomes both the chronicler of a vanished past as well as the confirmation of the greatness of French literature:<sup>45</sup>

*Il faut finalement remercier le sort d'avoir en mêlant dans les veines de Marcel le plus authentique sang français au sangs d'un des plus intelligents et courageux peuples du monde [i.e. the Jews] continué en lui la tradition qui fait de notre pays le grand pays pilote de la littérature et donné à la France, en cet autre Balzac, ce Balzac-Pétronie, le dernier grand romancier et l'interprète le plus représentatif dans son œuvre composite et génial, de l'Europe à la veille du déclin.*

In the later documentary films, contemporaries no longer appear as interviewees—probably due to the fact that they had died in the interim. However, in several films as well as in the exhibitions the photos of these contemporaries are a

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<sup>45</sup> Fernand Gregh, *Mon amitié avec Marcel Proust. Souvenirs et lettres inédits*. Paris (Grasset) 1958. Here p. 159.

recurring feature, as well as letters exchanged between them, or the articles they wrote for each other and printed for private distribution. The first exhibition of the Bibliothèque Nationale on Marcel Proust was divided into two parts. The first concerned itself with the biography of Marcel Proust and was titled *Le temps perdu*, whereas the second one that concerned itself with the writing and publishing from 1906 onwards, was called *Le temps retrouvé*. Implicit, here too, was the qualitative subordination of the life to the art, which perpetuates the perception of the socialite years as the wasted or the lost years in the life of Marcel Proust.<sup>46</sup> His writing about society could, therefore, only be redeemed by becoming remembered in art. Thus, society and memory are the themes which condition, define, and justify each other in the novel. While I do think, one can observe a certain preponderance towards either of the two themes, both in episodes of the novel and in any of the adaptations, the crucial point is to see them as at work synchronously. The themes are not defined as exclusory camps, to either of which a narrative (or narrative segment) may be assigned. Rather, I would chose the metaphor of a magnetic field to describe the thematic space into which these readings of Proust can be inscribed: the two themes then are magnetic poles which are not in the field itself, but structure all the particles that fall within its range. Individual particles then might be closer to either of the poles but to maintain any position pre-necessitates the existence (and the particle's relation to) the other pole. Also, according to the logic of the magnetic field neither pole can exist on its own, they condition each other.

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<sup>46</sup> This is expressed by the *je* itself in the last part of the *Recherche*, *Le temps retrouvé*.

## Writing 1

The second exhibition on Proust at the Bibliothèque Nationale,<sup>47</sup> had not split the biography from the writing, because it was not the later recluse-writer who was predominant, but rather the ways in which he interconnected with the external world: society, arts, family, etc. For the contemporaries and friends it was important to stress the social side of Marcel Proust, because (besides their alter-egos in the novel) this was the part of his life that they shared with him. They persisted in memorabilia traces in the more recent exhibition. But even though present in many forms (photos, portraits, letters, books), they have been reduced to one system of reference among many. The final section of the exhibition focussed exclusively on the writer Marcel Proust: both in the ways in which he worked as well as in relation to other writers.

The space of the exhibition was one big room of the Bibliothèque Nationale Tolbiac. This space was subdivided into several areas by either through long drapes hung from the ceiling or by moveable partitions. The exhibits were mostly hung except for the manuscripts and early editions of books. These were all placed in glass showcases in their respective areas. In most cases these were small glass cases at waist level, where the visitor had to bend down to look at the exhibits or the notes explaining them. But the last glass case (containing the manuscripts of *À la recherche du temps perdu*) was set up vertically (like a wall) flanked by a small surrounding »rim« of horizontal glass cases containing editions of books with dedications to Marcel Proust that had been given to him by their authors. This suggests that a plethora of authors surrounded this one author whose work literally looms over them in a glass case—the only glass case the visitor has to look up to rather than

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<sup>47</sup> The second exhibition *L'écriture et les arts* (1999/2000) was held at the Bibliothèque Nationale Tolbiac. The first was titled *Marcel Proust* (1965) and took place in the former site of the Bibliothèque

look down at. Also, the positioning of the case which stood surrounded by the areas of parts 11, 12, 13 and the part of 14 on the fictional artists suggests several things: The first parts on cars, planes, theatre, ballet, society were more or less positioned to one side of it, and the three artists on the other side which suggests that the *Recherche* is the boundary between the life and the fiction. The central glass case turns into a (looking) glass through which one perceives the Other both ways: look from the side of the historical context to the fiction, i.e. see what was made of it and also look from the side of the fiction to the historical situation, i.e. where this originated. The glass-case-wall of the *Recherche* separated, dominated and connected the two.

But back at the end of the nineteenth century, since he seemed to confine his artistic dabblings to living in the works and the aesthetics of another. His work as a translator of John Ruskin, seemed yet more proof that nothing original was going to be written by Marcel Proust. His first book, *Les Plaisirs et les jours*, had drawn little enthusiasm. It was a rather elaborate affair. Not only had Marcel Proust prevailed upon Anatole France to write an introduction for it, he had also illustrated it with drawings by his friend Madeleine Lemaire and beyond that furnished it with musical scores of his close friend (and then lover) the composer Reynaldo Hahn. *Les plaisirs et les jours* did not find favour with the critics and hardly promised to be the first work of one who later became a most famous writer. The way in which Marcel Proust set about »equipping« his first book revealed all too much of his own life: of a young man frequenting salons with a passion and dedication that his friends from school<sup>48</sup> found hard to understand or interpreted to his disadvantage. To them it seemed a rather shallow pursuit for one whom they had thought of as singled out by his intellectual prowess. And this publication only seemed to prove that suspicion. It

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Nationale, i.e. in what is now referred to as Bibliothèque Nationale Richelieu.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. e.g. Robert Dreyfus, *Marcel Proust à dix-sept ans*, Paris (Simon Kra) 1926, p 54.

Marcel Proust's school friend describes him as one of the few writers who went from the *salon* to literature rather than from literature to *salon*. Dreyfus describes the self-chosen immersion of Proust in the *salons* of his school friend's mothers as *excessif et prématuré*.



was too close to the life of its writer both in the way Proust had it published, as well as in its choice of subject-matter.

After this rather unsuccessful first publication, Marcel Proust's next published work was not a fictional work of his own but a translation (with the help of his mother and Marie Nordlinger, since Proust's English was not as fluent as required) of the work of John Ruskin. These works, *La Bible d'Amiens* and *Sésame et les Lys*, occupied him in the years 1899 to 1906, during which he undertook long travels to French cathedrals and Venice following a Ruskinian route. In Paris, those were the socially most dazzling years of Marcel Proust, in which he befriended the Princes Bibescu, Bertrand de Fénelon, the Duc de Guiche, Prince Radziwill.

Another peculiarity of the reception trajectory of Marcel Proust was rooted in the initial discrepancy between his early works and the *Recherche*. Marcel Proust at the time he had written *Les Plaisirs et les jours* had not yet found his own particular, unique style, which was later to take the public unawares and by complete surprise. The difference in style and treatment of subject-matter between *Les plaisirs et les jours* from 1896 and *Du côté de chez Swann* from 1913 fostered the belief that Proust's style—with its probing, sinuous, phrase that approaches its subject surreptitiously, from various angles, drawing out all the details—had evolved out of nowhere. It was then mythologized as having come out of that cork-lined room filled with the smoke of the fumigations where Proust the Recluse reigned supreme over his previous socialite life by fictionalising it. These years came to be read as a profound caesura in the life of Marcel Proust.

## 4. Marcel Proust 2: Death, Sex, Sickness

### Death of Parents

The sixteen years between 1896 and 1912 indeed represent almost a third of Marcel Proust's life. As a writer he went from writing short unconvincing stories to embarking on one of the biggest literary projects of the nineteenth century. In his personal life, significant events are located in those years. The death of both of his parents<sup>49</sup> left Marcel Proust for the first time in his life living on his own. In 1903 his brother Robert had married and left the home of his parents, but Marcel Proust lived with his mother until the day she died.

The close relationship between mother and son has been commented upon already. Their affinity was also ascribed to their physical resemblance, Marcel Proust's most distinctive physical feature, his eyes,<sup>50</sup> are said to be

<sup>49</sup> His father died 26.11.1903 and his mother 26.11.1905.

<sup>50</sup> Charles Briand, *Le secret de Marcel Proust*. Paris (Lefebvre) 1950.

On entering his room for the first time, Briand writes: *De M.Proust, je ne distinguais que la chemise blanche sous un gros tricot et le haut du corps adossé à deux oreillers. La figure était perdue dans l'ombre et dans la fumigation, complètement invisible, à part des yeux qui me regardaient — je les sentais plus que je ne les voyais.* (p.30)

Cf. also the descriptions of Marcel Proust by Céleste Albaret in her biography *Monsieur Proust*. [Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont]. Paris (Laffont) 1973.

For a description of this room and its atmosphere, cf. Jacques Benoit Méchin, *Retour à Marcel Proust*, Paris (Pierre Amiot) 1957.

Here pp. 191f.: *Je me le représentais sous les traits d'un de ces élégants cavaliers de Van Dyck, dont la silhouette élancée se détache sur quelque colonnade du XVIIe siècle, empruntée aux châteaux de Blenheim ou de Buckingham. J'entrais dans une pièce où régnait une obscurité qui évoquait celle des profondeurs sous-marines et qui eût été totale, si une petite lampe de chevet n'eût brûlé dans un coin. Pour ajouter encore à mon dépaysment, l'air était imprégné d'une odeur fade et suffocante. Cela sentait le benjoin, l'eucalyptus et l'essence de niaouli. Mes yeux mirent quelques secondes à s'accoutumer à cette pénombre. J'aperçus alors l'auteur d'Albertine disparue. Allongé sur une sorte de lit de repos, les jambes recouvertes par un plaid écossais, il portait un smoking dont l'échancrure laissait voir un plastron blanc empesé. Les joues disparaissaient sous une barbe de trois jours et la main qu'il me tendit était gantée de coton noir.*

*Ma déception était immense. Où était l'atmosphère glorieuse et mordorée dont mon imagination avait entouré le Saint-Simon de notre époque? Il y avait loin du cavalier élégant que je m'étais apprêté à voir, à ce mage oriental, aux paupières lourdes, qui s'adressait à moi d'une voix chantante et étouffée. Mais, soudain, je découvris ses yeux. Deux yeux de velours sombre, profonds et pénétrants, deux yeux lumineux, resplendissants d'intelligence et qui sont restés gravés dans ma mémoire comme s'ils me regardaient encore. J'en fus fasciné, et je compris à l'instant même que l'homme que j'avais devant moi, cette ombre dont la vie paraissait suspendue à un fil, avait tout sacrifié à son œuvre et s'était littéralement laissé dévorer par elle. Toute sa personne exprimait une sorte de renoncement pathétique.*

Note that *Albertine Disparue* had not been published during Marcel Proust's lifetime, and the author is here projecting the work back onto a prior event.

inherited from her; they both shared an enthusiasm and passion for literature; they were emotionally very attached to each other. The exhibition in Paris 1999/2000 chose to exhibit letters of the grief-stricken Marcel Proust to friends.<sup>51</sup> Entering the exhibition one saw at first reproductions and photos of Illiers-Combray etc. The next part of the exhibition was titled *Du côté de la mère - premières lectures*. Here the portrait of the mother is shown alongside letters, editions of books they had read together,<sup>52</sup> as well as the *laterna magica* with which she told Marcel Proust stories.

The death of Jeanne Proust, however, was configured by how homosexuality was narrated in the writing on Marcel Proust. As John Cocking in his introduction to Marcel Proust<sup>53</sup> points out, Proust (unlike Baudelaire) did not blame his homosexuality on his mother, the death of the mother has been read as a liberation of Marcel Proust. However, Raphael Cor by fusing biography with the novel, makes use of the *Recherche* to draw a picture of Marcel Proust as a morally dubious character.<sup>54</sup> In several instances of French criticism of the interwar period and of the first decades after the Second World War this liberation is related to his writing rather than to his sexuality or sexual

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Cf. also: Richard Hindry Barker, *Marcel Proust. A Biography*. London (Faber and Faber) 1958. This is re-used in the film *Céleste* where at their first meeting the eyes are the focal point of the close-up of Marcel Proust.

<sup>51</sup> Thus, six months after her death, his grief was still painfully acute, and over a year after her death he informs a friend that he will have to move his mother's portrait to the salon because he cannot bear to have it in his own room, so the information plates. This is just when he had already left the flat in rue de Courcelles where they had lived together and was to move into an apartment on the boulevard Haussmann.

<sup>52</sup> The books in this and in other sections were chosen according to their date of publication, or were even owned by Marcel Proust. At the very least, the exhibits would be of the same editions that Proust, his mother and his contemporaries would have read.

<sup>53</sup> John Cocking, *Proust*. London (Bowes and Bowes) 1956.

<sup>54</sup> Raphael Cor, *Un romancier de la vertu et un peintre du vice. Charles Dickens — Marcel Proust*. Paris (Éditions du Capitole) 1928.

Cor confers title of »wholesome author« onto Dickens versus the depraved author Marcel Proust.

Cf also, Harold March, *The Two Worlds of Marcel Proust*, London (Geoffrey Cumberlege & Oxford University Press) 1948.

On p. 243: *His prestige of the twenties had unsound foundations, and when the new decadence was succeeded by the inevitable new moral earnestness, it went into a long decline. True, Proust was now much better understood, as several well-informed and intelligent studies testify; but to offset this advantage came new attacks on his character and his personality. How could so evil a tree bring forth good fruit?*

life.<sup>55</sup> Henry Massis<sup>56</sup> contends that Marcel Proust felt alone and alienated because of his homosexuality. This is expressed in the manipulation of a photo: originally a photo of the entire school class at the Lycée Condorcet, in the book it becomes the cut-out form of Marcel Proust alone against a drab grey background. This manipulation of the visual document presents him as cut-off from his class mates. Massis regards the death of the mother as a liberation, but one that would leave Marcel Proust to fight his last battles, i.e. the battle against his sexual inclinations:

*Quand elle [mother] le quitta tout à coup, son chagrin fut immense; mais dans la mesure même où être heureux n'avait plus de sens pour lui, cette grande douleur fut la libératrice de son esprit.*

Marcel Proust's battle here consists of exploring this side of his nature in the most minute detail possible in his fiction. Massis depicts Marcel Proust as writer of a dying worlds who longs for the better *mœurs* and *humanité irréprochable* of his ancestors, who is actually fighting his homosexuality and uses the writing of fiction as an outlet. The writing of a fictional autobiography, therefore, not only offers the possibility of dissimulation for the autobiographer as discussed previously, but also the writing itself come to be read both as a moral healing process—getting rid of homosexuality—and as a coming out of the closet.

## Sex 2

Georges Painter in his biography from 1959 and 1965, respectively, wrote that from 1906 onwards Marcel Proust picked his objects of homosexual love/lust from other social spheres: amongst economical dependants. A succession of secretaries, chauffeurs etc. lived with him during the next few

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. Charles Briand, *Le secret de Marcel Proust*. Paris (Editions Henri Lefebvre) 1950. He summarizes the effect of his mother's death as: *Il est libre*. (p. 497)

<sup>56</sup>Henry Massis, *Le drame de Marcel Proust*. [*Lettre-préface de Bernard Grasset*]. Paris (Grasset) 1937, pp. 145f.

years.<sup>57</sup> Prior to 1906 he had had several covert relationships with members of his own social sphere<sup>58</sup> while simultaneously developing infatuations for women of his circles who were either engaged, married to others or for other reasons unattainable. The conversion to homosexuality is described as a gradual process. In his book,<sup>59</sup> William Sansom describes Marcel Proust as an excluded person because of his Jewishness, his health, the arrival of a brother etc. Interestingly, he connects Marcel Proust's turning to homosexuality with his social ascent:

*Now, as he climbed the social ladder, he was also to climb away from women into the arms of men. What precisely decided this change cannot be known; possibly it was gradual, since it began with a few platonic but possessive friendships. But now the first known male lover takes the scene, Reynaldo Hahn, a nineteen-year-old composer and singer from Venezuela, pale brown, handsome, gifted, jewish, moustached. He performed with fashionable success for Society, and occupied Proust's love-life for the next two years. How much sexual and how much romantic any such association can be is again, only to be guessed at: intercourse can have eunuchoid or ascetic or primarily spiritual qualities - it has been said that Proust was 'virile', but only hearsay suggests this and only definitive letters would prove it.*

When Jean-Yves Tadié was writing his Proust biography, he still had to cope with the lack of documents. The letters between Marcel Proust and Agostinelli had almost all been destroyed and the only surviving one gave away nothing. Similarly, though the correspondence of Marcel Proust with men he had previously been very close to, displayed a very intense emotional bond, for all one can deduce from them, these relationships might well have been platonic. However, one cannot help but notice the decided distaste of Tadié at attempts to pinpoint Marcel Proust as homosexual. These are directed in

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<sup>57</sup> George Painter, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol. I:1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse* & II:1904-1922. *Les années de maturité*]. Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Published first in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd., London (1959 & 1965). Here, II 88-89.

The most important of these was Alfred Agostinelli, whom Marcel Proust met first in Cabourg in 1907 when Agostinelli (and Odilon Albaret) worked for him as a hired drivers. Later he came to Paris to work for Proust full-time.

<sup>58</sup> That the parents knew about or at least strongly suspected his homosexuality, becomes evident in their antagonism to certain pictorial representations of their son: one is the already-mentioned portrait by Jacques-Emile Blanche that portrays him as too effeminate, the other is the photo taken of Marcel Proust together with his friends Robert de Flers and Lucien Daudet (with whom he had a very close relationship). While Marcel Proust is smiling into the camera Lucien Daudet is looking down at him with a hand placed lightly but possessively across Marcel Proust's shoulder.

<sup>59</sup> William Sansom, *Proust and His World*. London (Thames and Hudson) 1973, p. 57.

particular against George Painter's biography, whom he accuses of writing a novel rather than a serious biography.<sup>60</sup>

*D'autres auteurs, au contraire, s'expriment sur ces sujets avec une brutalité, une manque de nuance, des convictions non vérifiées qui surprennent. Nous ne nions pas non plus l'importance de la vie amoureuse, ou simplement sexuelle; nous l'avons ramenée à l'essentiel, aux quelques misères qui ont donné la grandeur de Sodome et Gomorrhe.*

The biography of Painter had certainly provoked reactions with its detailed inquiries into the sexuality of Marcel Proust, e.g. his visits to gay brothels which according to Painter involved the strangling of rats and swearing on the photographic image of his mother.<sup>61</sup> This offered quite a different perspective on the sexual life of Marcel Proust and how he related to his mother. Whereas the contemporaries writing on him knew about his homosexuality but very rarely spoke of it let alone went into detail,<sup>62</sup> here a line had been crossed. The biographer Tadié uses the close interrelation between biography and fictional work to deflect from the historic person and a »deviant« sexuality.

This biography by Painter had been translated into French in 1966, and it is quite likely that in her biography<sup>63</sup> Céleste Albaret and Georges Belmont were referring to it:<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Tadié, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol.] Paris (Gallimard) 1999 (1st 1996). Here I, 14.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. also Ronald Hayman, *Proust. A Life*. New York (Caroll & Graf) 1992 (1st 1990).

This US-American biography makes explicit reference to the deviant sexual practices of Marcel Proust. Hayman mentions as source for his biography here in particular the study by Henri Bonnet, *Les amours et la sexualité de Marcel Proust*. Paris (Nizet) 1985.

<sup>62</sup> The film *Portrait Souvenir* features an interview with Danièle Halévy, a school friend to whom Marcel Proust had been attracted. In it he refers obliquely to Marcel Proust's desire, saying he felt uncomfortable with the close attention bestowed on him by Marcel Proust.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*. [*Souvenirs recueillis de Georges Belmont*]. Paris (Laffont) 1973.

Cf. also Louis de Beauchamp, *Marcel et le Jockey Club*. Paris (Éditions Émile-Paul) 1973, p. 10.

The author of this study would have preferred the *Recherche* to have less gay characters, even giving a preferred number of 9-15 (sic!).

<sup>64</sup> Here Céleste Albaret (and Georges Belfont) assure the reader that this narrative is, unlike others, a true one. She can do that since she has lived that life with Proust. Here, she is revealing the autobiographical nature of her enterprise in offering the reader a *pacte autobiographique*. While ostensibly writing a biography, this turns out to be her autobiography, as the analysis of the feature film *Céleste* will show in the following.

Cf. Philip Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique*, Paris (Éditions du Seuil) 1975, this revised edition 1996, p. 36.

*Si, à quatre-vingt ans, elle a changé d'avis, c'est qu'elle a jugé, précisément, que d'autres, moins scrupuleux, avaient trop trahi Marcel Proust soit faute de disposer de ses ressources de vérité, soit excès d'ingéniosité ou tentation d'échafauder en thèse leur petites hypothèses «intéressantes» (ou intéressées).*

*Ici, l'on m'excusera [Georges Belmont] d'intervenir personnellement. Mais je dois à ma propre vérité de dire que je n'aurais pas accepté de me faire l'écho de Mme Albaret, si, après quelques semaines — sur les cinq mois que durèrent nos entretiens — je n'avais été convaincu de l'exactitude absolue de sa franchise.*

In the biography *Monsieur Proust*, like Tadié twenty years later, the attempt is made to keep the details of Marcel Proust's sexual life relegated to a back row, or to present a purified version of it. Here, contemporaries and scholars fight each other with »true versions« of the same incidents.<sup>65</sup> In the light of psychoanalysis, feminist literary theory and gender studies, it is no longer possible to omit this part of a life. More specifically, an omission is no longer possible in biographical writing, whereas in autobiographical writing this remains at the discretion of the central writing subject. Whereas the decisions taken by Marcel Proust on how and whether to include his homosexuality in the *Recherche* is one of personal choice, the transformation of the autobiographical into a biographical narrative, in the course of reception this question becomes a loop filled out according to the agenda of the new writing subject.

Several documentary films dealing with textual criticism of Marcel Proust's chose episodes of the *Recherche* that, significantly, have to do with sex. It would have been very easy to pick any other kind of episode rather than, e.g. in *Lire Proust* the episode of early childhood masturbation; or comparing the similarities between letters to Agostinelli and a fictional letter to Albertine; or, in *Lire et écrire* to choose the significance of the cattleya orchids for the sexual relationship between Swann and Odette. It seems that, on film, scholars feel more willing to approach the sexuality of Proust but under the guise of

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<sup>65</sup> Regarding the biography by Céleste Albaret, one must additionally take into account that her story was written down by someone else.

Cf. Philip Lejeune's essay *L'autobiographie de ceux qui n'écrivent pas*. IN: idem, *Le je est un autre*, Paris (Seuil) 1980.

discussing the *Recherche*. So, not only do the biographies like the ones of Painter and Tadié model the structure of their writing on the *Recherche*, and use the novel in diverse ways as source material for writing about Marcel Proust. In their choice of topic by narrative framing, the films try to confine the homosexuality of the writer's life to his writing. Similarly, the exhibition in Paris 1999/2000 frames the relationship of Agostinelli and Marcel Proust in the context of motor cars and aviation, i.e. modernity. Agostinelli has been the driver of Marcel Proust and he did fly planes and did die in a plane crash, but he was also a man Marcel Proust has clearly been emotionally and sexually obsessed with. While not denying the homosexual nature of the relationship between Marcel Proust and Alfred Agostinelli, this is yet another way of avoiding explicit labelling. To use the screen of cars and planes is to hark back to what is written in the *Recherche*, where cars and planes play a pivotal role in several key sequences between the *je* and Agostinelli's fictional alter-ego Albertine. Thus, a direct confrontation with an aspect of the writer's life considered inappropriate for the public sphere is avoided.

Also, the usage of the *Recherche* to draw conclusions about Marcel Proust is not always consistent. There are, obviously, disagreements amongst scholars and contemporaries when they represent Proust, but more revealingly, the scholarly work and the *mémoires* of contemporaries are not consistent in themselves. So, on the one hand it is refused by literary criticism and contemporaries to interpret the omission of the brother from the novel as a jealous reaction, because it is just done for reasons of artistic interest, while in other contexts the novel is liberally used as proof what Marcel Proust was, and what he felt or thought. The fact that *A la recherche du temps perdu* is a fictional biography, puts the biographical subject Marcel Proust at the discretion of those (re)writing his story and thus also reveals what is at stake, or rather, what the interest of those writing these stories are.



## *Céleste* (Albaret)

Nowhere is this more evident than in the biography of Céleste Albaret. The filmic adaptation of this book functions as a filter for these interests, i.e. a filter that puts back what was previously screened out. And this filter works both via the fact that the writing, or rather, its narrative framing in a feature film turns from autobiographical to biographical as well as via the time that has elapsed between the writing of that biography and its adaptation. The figure Céleste Albaret, both in the documentary film *L'Art et la douleur* as in her biography of him, feels very possessive about Marcel Proust. In her biography of him, she appears anxious to preserve his image for posterity, as well as jealous of others who may lay claim to having been close to him. She not only vies for the position of the biographer who has been literally closest to him but also for the position of having been his best servant.

In December 1906 Marcel Proust had moved into the apartment of boulevard Haussmann where Céleste Albaret came to live with him from 1914 onwards. During the eight years between 1914 and 1922, Céleste Albaret was a live-in employee of Marcel Proust and took care of his every daily need. She vicariously took part in his outings through his subsequent narration of these and then played an important role in his writing by helping him to keep his papers in order and by devising the elaborate system of the famous paperoles. Céleste Albaret as a servant, housekeeper and secretary-assistant had a unique insight into his everyday life and his work. When she came to work for him, Alfred Agostinelli had already deserted Marcel Proust. Whereas in the book *Monsieur Proust*, the descriptions of Agostinelli do not reveal Céleste Albaret's feelings, in the film *L'art et la douleur* her body language reveals her tension as she is telling her interviewer, the *Narrateur*, of Agostinelli and his companion Anna. She appears almost spiteful.

(Asked about) Impression of Agostinelli:

[not smiling with lowered eyes] *Aucune.* [pause] *D'un gros garçon.* [pause] *Insignifiant.* [cut] *De quelqu'un que vous rencontrez sans vous y arrêter.*

[Here she looks up briefly, looks away, purses lips as if in disapproval, turns her head.]

Of his looks

*Quelconque. Il avait des cheveux frisés. Un teint mat. Un regard qui ne me plaisait pas. Il était marié à une femme horrible* [pause, starts to smile] *Laide.* [even laughs, is about to speak but stops] ... *je ne peux pas dire ça.*

Voice of *Visiteur* (offscreen): *Si, si.*

Céleste Albaret: *Mon mari, il l'appelait "pou volant", la petite femme. Oh, il me disait ce petit pou volant... Elle avait un vilain visage. Elle n'avait rien.*

Agostinelli, who by other accounts is described as an attractive young man, had died in a plane crash above the Atlantic 1915 leaving Marcel Proust devastated and desperately wanting to find the body. Yet, when Céleste in the film goes on to describe how the body was finally found, half-eaten by fish, her voice is flat not displaying any emotion, she only briefly and very furtively looks up and into the camera.

Several variations of the Proustian motif of the *prisonnière*<sup>66</sup> appear in this domestic constellation. It seems difficult to ascertain who is whose prisoner. For one, Agostinelli is described as Marcel Proust's prisoner by Painter.<sup>67</sup> Then, Céleste Albaret describes herself as the prisoner of Marcel Proust.<sup>68</sup> But then, in her biography<sup>69</sup> she also ascertains her complete control over Marcel Proust:

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<sup>66</sup> This refers to the fifth part of the *Recherche*, *La prisonnière*, where the *je* lives together with his lover Albertine in the family's flat. Apart from the servant Françoise they are alone, but she is practically kept there as his prisoner because of his extreme jealousy. Albertine is regarded as a fictional alter-ego of Agostinelli.

<sup>67</sup> George Painter, *Marcel Proust*. (2 vol.: 1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse* and 1904-1922. *Les années de maturité*). Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Original published in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd. (London 1959 & 1965). II, 240ff & II, 258ff.

<sup>68</sup> Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*. [Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont] Paris (Éditions

*D'autre part, personne n'est jamais entré, boulevard Haussmann, ni, plus tard, rue Hamelin, sans que ce soit moi qui ouvre la porte et qui reconduise ensuite le visiteur; non seulement, je l'ai dit, M. Proust n'avait pas de clés et ignorait où elles étaient, mais jamais il n'en eût prêté une à personne. En outre, comme j'étais perpétuellement à l'affût du moindre signe de lui, aucun mouvement dans l'appartement ne pouvait m'échapper, même dans mon sommeil — j'ai eu très vite une sorte de sixième sens pour cela, et jamais je n'ai été prise en défaut. Au plus léger bruit, j'étais en éveil et debout. Enfin, encore une fois, après chaque visite, j'avais droit au récit.*

Even when Marcel Proust is out, she controlled him through the fact that it was her husband who accompanied him as a driver.<sup>70</sup> Not only did she do everything for Marcel Proust, she controlled the access to him and also regarded it as her right to know everything about him. On the one hand this relationship emerges as one of caring and education,<sup>71</sup> on the other hand as one of jealousy and control.

In the film *Céleste* both of these sides are absent. In fact, the sequence where Marcel Proust tells Céleste of his visit to a brothel involving chains and whippings the film is not only clearly using the material of the *Recherche*— because these details are not mentioned in the biography— but in making Céleste his confidant it shows Marcel Proust as the homosexual that he was. Her horror, however, relates only to the cruelty of his story not to the fact that Marcel Proust is homosexual.<sup>72</sup>

In its very first scene the film shows her as sitting quietly in a chair waiting for Marcel Proust to ring. Unlike the book, the film therefore does not

Robert Laffont) 1973, p.184.

<sup>69</sup> Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*. [Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont] Paris (Éditions Robert Laffont) 1973, p.228.

<sup>70</sup> Céleste Albaret is at the same time called *gouvernante* and *servante* of Marcel Proust by Painter.

<sup>71</sup> Jean-Yves Tadié. *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol.] Paris (Gallimard) 1999 (1st 1996).

On p. 224f: *Mais personne n'a joué auprès de lui, ni dans son œuvre où elle figure sous son nom de jeune fille, comme sa sœur, Gineste, sous les traits des courrières à l'hôtel de Balbec, un rôle égal à celui de Céleste Albaret. La compréhension affectueuse qui a uni deux êtres que tout aurait pu séparer a quelque chose d'unique. Marcel a pénétré, avec son intuition et sa gentillesse habituelles, l'intelligence, la fidélité, la solitude exilée de Céleste. Elle-même très peu lettrée, ne sachant guère qu'un poème par cœur, «Ici-bas tous les lilas meurent», que Proust lui a transcrit de sa main, a pris conscience qu'elle vivait auprès d'un homme de génie, dont la différence essentielle devait être protégée, servie, aimée, avant et après la mort: aucune biographie, aucun essai critique n'est plus émouvant que Monsieur Proust, où cette femme du peuple, qui a gardé la même fraîcheur, la même simplicité, a été le Boswell ou l'Eckermann d'un autre grand homme.*

<sup>72</sup> It is the only scene where Céleste's display of distress is directed against something Marcel Proust does. In other scenes such as the one at the very beginning of the film her anxiety is for Marcel Proust.

start at the very beginning of her narrative, i.e. with her marriage to Odilon, or the move to Paris this meant, or at her first meeting with Marcel Proust, but when she is already well-established in the household. The first meeting with Marcel Proust is narrated later. She explains into the camera, how everything had begun with the waiting. She is shown as the first person not only on screen but as the first person, the »I« of the narrative: she tells the story in the first person and she is telling it in retrospect, establishing her mastery over it. Moreover, in having her look directly into the camera the film destroys the narrative illusion of a separate fictional world. She breaks out of her place in the apartment in Paris and on the other hand is thereby also making the viewer her accomplice and drawing him/her into her world. At the same time, however, the narrative device of looking into the camera refers to the biographical referentiality of the film: the narrative device of talking directly to the audience is used with greater ease in documentaries than in fiction films. It is also a device that is linked to pre-narrative cinema, to what Tom Gunning has termed the cinema of attractions:<sup>73</sup>

*This action, which is later perceived as spoiling the realistic illusion of the cinema, is here undertaken with brio, establishing contact with the audience. From comedians smirking at the camera, to the constant bowing and gesturing of conjurors in magic films, this is a cinema that displays its visibility, willing to rupture a self-enclosed fictional world for a chance to solicit the attention of the spectator.*

Here, the film uses it to show Céleste as telling the audience her true story of what happened in the years 1913 to 1922. It is in-between documentary style and a cinema of attractions that the figure of Céleste is located. Here, narrative is not suspended but established on another level. The narrative is between the filmic character, which through that look at the camera, claims the reality-status of her historical signified (Céleste Albaret, the housekeeper of Marcel Proust) and then de-places the focal points of historiography (the »I« of Marcel Proust) in making herself the central narrative attraction of the film's narrative. In the narrative movements of that look into the camera, she is asserted as the »I« of narrative, as the autobiographical subject. This is her

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<sup>73</sup> Tom Gunning, *The Cinema of Attractions. Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde*. (1986) Reprinted IN: *Early Cinema: Time - Frame - Narrative*. Ed. by Thomas Elsaesser & Adam Barker. London (bfi) 1990, pp. 56-62, here p. 57.

(true) story and not the biography of Marcel Proust.<sup>74</sup> What was already incipiently configured in the book *Marcel Proust* here takes over. The film's visualization of her as autobiographical subject, endows her with a representational realism not at the disposition of written text. Céleste is the driving narrative force and also the dominant character of the two, which is amply demonstrated in the first depiction of the two together. Her waiting in silence is abruptly ended by frantic ringing, Céleste jumps up races through the flat to Marcel Proust's room knocking over things in her anxiety to reach it. This is filmed partly in slow motion and with partial shots of her flailing legs and arms while the only sound heard is the insistent, loud ringing of the bell. While Gunning refers also to the vaudeville acts, the slapsticks that surrounded early films at their presentations, here the body of Céleste is staged as a »spectacle« of bodily extremities, distorted motion and precipitous flight. In the room of Marcel Proust, she is reassembled into a character of control: he is the physically incapable asthmatic gasping for air, the passive part, while she saves him, the decisive, the active part.

Where in the book Céleste Albaret starts by pointing out her own youth and ignorance as a simple country girl that was gradually educated by Proust to be a good servant but who was then led into his enchanted world, in the film she is shown as the stronger subject both by the narrative devices used as well as in the depiction of her interaction with Marcel Proust. She is asserted as the central subject that has thrown Marcel Proust from his autobiographical/biographical centre-place. Yet, she has not taken up that

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<sup>74</sup> Cf. also Mieke Bal, *Images littéraires. Ou comment lire visuellement Proust*. Montréal & Toulouse (XYZ Editeur & Presses Universitaires du Mirail) 1997.

On p. 12f.: *Si La Recherche est pour moi, avant tout, un roman visuel, c'est aussi un roman où le sujet est mis en échec. La variabilité, la pluralisation, le morcellement de la subjectivité font que, comme le dirait Hubert Damisch, « le sujet ne tient qu'à une fil\* ». Ce fil est celui auquel sont attachés les membres des marionnettes que sont les personnages proustiens. Ce roman est écrit à la première personne, mais on sait que « je est un autre ».*

Bal here argues from a text internal position. In the following I argue, that the unnamed central figure of the *Recherche* allows for others to fill that central space with their own narratives.

position completely herself. The film indicates this in the way her past preceding the phase at boulevard Haussmann is presented. As Céleste tells Marcel Proust about her childhood, the film does visualise her narrative but only through still images (of a farmhouse or the street leading to the church). This could be read on the one hand as expressing that her past has a different quality for her, it is less real than the life with Marcel Proust. On the other hand it also negates her past: as a filmic figure she is denied the right to inhabit that past by acting within its filmic location. For the film, her life prior to 1913 is not relevant, only the life in the apartment is.

Since the episodes in Cabourg and in the streets of Paris are narratively restricted in the same way, this in a way reinforces the impression that nothing took place outside of the flat, or beyond the relationship between the two. The lives of the two are not represented as the lives of recluses, but in declining to show them outside of the apartment the film foregrounds the proximity (literal and figurative) of their relationship above all others. Both have here become the prisoners of a third party, of the film narrating their story. Because Céleste is constructed as the stronger of the two subjects in the film, the veneration and subordination of the written biography or of the documentary films do no longer work. The supposed *de facto* control of the historical Céleste Albaret over Proust is reproduced as a narrative supremacy, but both have also become figures of yet another narrative. This narrative is not shaped by the sentiments of his contemporaries or friends but by persons making a film from a position of personal and historical difference.

## The Death of Marcel Proust

One of the recurring stories in Proust reception is that towards of the end of his life the writer either spent years in a sanatorium or in his bed writing his book. Regarding the first, the longest stay of Marcel Proust in a sanatorium was a period of ca. six weeks. Once more, the writer is confused with the *je*.<sup>75</sup> In the *Recherche* the central figure turns up at the last matinée of the new Princesse de Guermantes (the former bourgeoisie, Mme Verdurin) after a long absence of several years which he claims to have spent in a sanatorium.<sup>76</sup>

This is interesting, because at the point when Proust's fictional alter-ego tells this in the *Recherche*, the *Recherche*—the great work this *je* has been wanting to write—has not been written yet. Returning home after that final matinée in the last part of the *Recherche* (i.e. *Le temps retrouvé*), the *je* finally starts to write. But the entire book has de facto already been written by the author Proust. And it was in large parts written in those very years that the *je* is narrated as having passed in a sanatorium. Not only does the *Recherche* therefore pose the time puzzle of having being written, when it is said to be about to be written, in this loop it also juxtaposes the time Marcel Proust spent writing it in his room with the long sojourn of the *je* in a sanatorium.

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<sup>75</sup> Cf. Frederick Charles Green, *The Mind of Proust. A Detailed Interpretation of À la recherche du temps perdu*. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 1949.

In this early book on Marcel Proust, the *je* and Marcel Proust are fused. This leads the author to equate the letters with the fictional writing of Proust when trying to set up a psychogramm of the person. Also, the later Proust, i.e. the author writing his masterpiece, is the true Proust. The person worrying about daily trivia is regarded as a fake.

Cf. also Jean René Jacob, *Marcel Proust, son œuvre*. Paris (Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Critique) 1930.

Just three years after Marcel Proust's death, this book on his work (which is taken to be his biography) is published in a series titled *Héros d'aujourd'hui*.

Cf. also Léon Pierre-Quint, *Marcel Proust, sa vie, son œuvre*. Paris (Éditions du Sagittaire) 1936.

Last sentence but one, on pp. 264-265: *Sans sortir de sa chambre, un homme peut par l'activité de son cerveau, égalier n'importe quel conducteur de peuples. Pour Proust comme pour Goethe, le plaisir intéressé conduit au néant. Seul l'oubli de soi nous fait connaître un moment de bonheur. Faust le trouve dans la vie, Proust dans l'art*. Here, the writer despite his reclusion is represented as capable of moving peoples as are other leaders. But what I find interesting is that not only does Pierre-Quint work on the assumption that the work of Proust equals his life, in the quote he extends this to others by juxtaposing Goethe and Faust.

<sup>76</sup> TR-IV, 301.

Maybe this partly triggers the conception of Marcel Proust the writer who never went out, but spent his writing life away from society, because in his fictional autobiography this is replaced by a sanatorium. The diffuse chronology of the *Recherche* here (one cannot date the years in the sanatorium precisely) evokes the unnoticed passing of years in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*. For Marcel Proust's contemporaries, the illness even becomes an increasingly imaginary one, or is read as a metaphor for his turning away from life towards art. The illness then surprised them by its »reality« when Marcel Proust indeed did die.<sup>77</sup> In *Monsieur Proust* this is described as follows:<sup>78</sup>

—*N'éteignez pas, Céleste... Il y a dans la chambre une grosse femme... une grosse femme en noir, horrible... Je veux voir clair...*

—*Attendez un peu, Monsieur, ne vous tourmentez pas, j'aurai tôt fait de vous la chasser, cette vilaine femme! Est-ce qu'elle vous fait peur?*

*Il a dit:*

—*Un peu, oui. Mais il ne faut pas y toucher..*

*Il m'avait souvent parlé de la mort à travers les années, mais jamais sous l'aspect de la hideuse femme en noir dont on a prétendu qu'elle venait le visiter et le hanter, notamment pour l'anniversaire de la mort de sa mère — quel roman, je l'ai dit, que ce genre d'invention!*

This woman is likened to Marcel Proust's mother by Helmut Uhlig<sup>79</sup> and to Françoise by Jean Frelet<sup>80</sup> who writes about the fictional servant figure Françoise as if she were real, no doubt confusing her with Céleste Albaret. In the film *Céleste*, Céleste Albaret also assumes a maternal position. This is depicted clearly in the very last sequence, the sequence of Marcel Proust's death. Here Céleste is the one to cut off a lock of hair for the brother and herself. She thereby »jumps the queue« of blood affinity, asserting herself closer to Marcel Proust than his brother. Furthermore, in placing her lock in the hands of Odilon her husband and closing her hand above it, she asserts them as the bereaved parents. The »unnatural« side of this however then finds its narrative retribution in that moment: the moment her »offspring« dies, is also

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Charles Briand, *Le secret de Marcel Proust*. Paris (Lefèbvre) 1950; Léon Pierre-Quint, *Marcel Proust, sa vie, son œuvre*. Paris (Editions du Sagittaire) 1936, p. 69ff.

<sup>78</sup> Céleste Albaret, *Monsieur Proust*. [*Souvenirs recueillis par Georges Belmont*]. Paris (Editions Robert Laffont) 1973, p.425.

<sup>79</sup> Helmut Uhlig, *Marcel Proust* [Series: Köpfe des Jahrhunderts]. Berlin (Colloquium Verlag) 1971.

<sup>80</sup> Jean Frelet, *L'aliénation poétique. Rimbaud - Mallarmé - Proust*. Paris (J.B. Janin) 1946.



the moment where the feature film ends, where Céleste's story ends. Where previously the death of the parents signified the beginning of a different life for Marcel Proust, here in the doubling of the maternal figure, the death of the »child« leads to the annihilation of the mother-figure. The moment the mortal man died and left the immortal writer behind, that is also the moment where he re-asserts his (narrative) control over a mother figure, where he is liberated. For the mother figure Céleste, slow extinction and oblivion as an individual in her own right is expressed in a gradual fade-out.

When Marcel Proust died of a bout of pneumonia on November 19th, 1922, the reaction of many was disbelief. Because Marcel Proust had been sick for so long it seemed to his contemporaries that his dying was more imaginary than real. That he did die, that he was mortal, came as a surprise.

In her essay *Identity's Body*,<sup>81</sup> Sidonie Smith points out:

*The body is our most material site of potential homelessness.*

*The palpable play of discomforts, of an experience of homelessness inside the body, forces us to ask about the relationship of the body to culture's body and body politic. Although bodies provide us, as individuals, the boundaries of our isolated being; they are obviously and critically communal and discursive bodies; and community creates a superfluity of "body" that marks us in practices, discourses, and temporalities. For communities surrounding us normalize certain bodies and render abnormal or grotesque other bodies, thereby situating our body somewhere in the field of bodies.*

Not only could the physical death of Marcel Proust be thus read as a liberation from his abnormal (because sick and inadequate) body. Writing, cultural production, here has been read as a way of escaping one's physical's confines, those of a body lacking physical stamina. In the case of Marcel Proust, however this goes further: it is the narrative of a eternally ailing writer who races death, physical extinction, in the endeavour to produce his masterpiece about an autobiographically-configured *je*. This figure inhabits the very same body. As it appears in reception, the Proustian body is inhabited by its fictions.

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<sup>81</sup> Sidonie Smith, *Identity's Body*. IN: *Autobiography and Postmodernism*. Ed. by Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore & Gerald Peters. Amherst (University of Massachusetts Press) 1994, pp. 266-292. Here, p. 267.

The life of Marcel Proust did not become complex or multi-layered merely after he started working on *À la recherche du temps perdu*, but rather, his entire life came under revision after he became famous. He is imagined a posteriori through the prism of his work and, in particular, through the proliferation of testimonies given by his contemporaries. The problem when writing a basic story of Marcel Proust's *Werdegang*, is to provide a basic story, a factual skeleton, which takes into consideration of the narratives growing out of his reception trajectory, which (with varying insistence) lay claim to veracity and where the blurring between fact and fiction is a constitutive element.<sup>82</sup> The historical figure of Marcel Proust lying in his bed, a skeletal fact, becomes the proverbial skeleton in the cupboard of reception where everything that is established or presented as a »fact« is turned into a space whose meaning and value is fabricated at a certain point in time and then evolves over time.

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<sup>82</sup> Cf. James Eakin: Narrative and Chronology as Structures of Reference and the New Model Biographer. IN: *Studies in Autobiography*. Ed. by James Olney. New York & Oxford (Oxford University Press) 1988, pp. 32-41.

Here, narrative is attributed to autobiography and chronology to biography. However, while it may be useful to term a biography an act of chronologically retracing a life, the resulting text (book or film) will necessarily be a narrative.

## 5. Proust 2

### The Recluse ... of the Ritz

When Proust had published *Les plaisirs et les jours*, almost half of his life was over already. When he had *Du côté de chez Swann* published more than three quarters of his life were over. Between those two publications almost a third of his life had elapsed, and he then spent nearly ten years time re-writing *À la recherche du temps perdu*, including the already published part. These nine years he is said to have dedicated all of his energies to the revision and expansion of what he had already written but could not be published because of the First World War. And this he did in his rooms at boulevard Haussmann and rue Hamelin,<sup>83</sup> respectively.

While it is true that Proust in the period between 1914 until his death lived a rather eccentric life, the ways in which he worked on this novel took various forms. And it is these forms that enter into the image of Proust as the recluse and as the Proust of the Ritz, respectively. On the one hand he is described or depicted as the ailing writer endlessly revising his works cut off from the world he used to be a part of, entering into that world only by means of the memory-bond of the creative genius. On the other hand he is narrated as the night-owl (clad in clothes that had gone out of fashion in 1906 and seemed to escape his control by coming undone<sup>84</sup>) who attended and organised elaborate parties at the Ritz Hotel,<sup>85</sup> but remains a visitor in the outer world because he is only there to research some detail for his book.

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<sup>83</sup> Where he and Céleste and Odilon Albaret had moved to 01.10.1919 because the lease of the apartment boulevard Haussmann had run out. Marcel died in this apartment 19.11.1922, and the Odilons stayed on until April 1923.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Paul Morand in the film *Portrait Souvenir* (1962).

<sup>85</sup> In 1985, the Ritz Hotel, which had opened in 1898 *sous les yeux de tout Paris* to rapidly become *le point de raillissement du Gotha*, has since profited from the presence of writers at its tables by founding several literary prizes: the Ritz Hemingway Prize and the Prix Marcel Proust. The latter has very frequently been awarded to authors writing on Proust.

It is this period of his life which gained Marcel Proust his second reputation: as the writer who lived for his art. Either because he was at home writing his masterpiece or he was out researching details for his work. However, one must keep in mind that this period only became an object of public discussion after he had published *Du côté de chez Swann*. When it was published it was handed around within his circles by being recommended from one to the other. In 1919, he achieved wider notoriety when he received the Prix Goncourt for the second part, i.e. for *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*.<sup>86</sup> It was his writing that had both taken him away from society, from the *monde-monde*, but in various ways also led him back to it by turning him into a society attraction.<sup>87</sup>

The biography *Monsieur Proust* and the film *Céleste* both concern themselves with that period of his life and both narrate the experience gathered within those spaces. The former also writes about Céleste Albaret's biography prior to knowing and prior to working for Marcel Proust, and of her life after his death as owner of a hotel in the Quartier Latin of Paris and guide to the

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<sup>86</sup> The story surrounding the award that year only enhanced Marcel Proust's image: there was strong opposition to his work, because there was great support for the novel *Les croix de bois* by Roland Dorgelès. This was a novel that not only had the very recent war as its subject matter but whose author had actively fought for his country. Proust was here seen as decadent remnant of a dying culture. Later, however, this took a turn when Proust (like his father for his medical research and his brother for his participation as a soldier before him) received the *légion d'honneur*.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. here Clive Bell, *Proust*, London (Hogarth Press) 1928.

On page 9, he describes the meeting with Proust in a letter home: *too sleek and dank and plastered, his eyes were glorious however*. Bell, thus, is not too impressed but is only too happy to have this titbit of news to write home about.

Cf. also the interview with François Mauriac in the film *Portrait-Souvenir*.

Here he claims to have been struck by the genius of Marcel Proust from the moment he read the introduction to the Ruskin translation *Sésame et les Lys* by Proust, and had been talking to everybody about this writer. When Mauriac saw *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* in a book shop window, he rushed in to buy it. François Mauriac also wrote a personal memoir: idem, *Du côté de chez Proust*, Paris (La Table Ronde) 1947.

Cf. also Paul Morand in the film *Portrait Souvenir* (1962). He says there that he came to hear of Proust's first novel *Du côté de chez Swann* in 1914 when he was in London and friends were discussing it.

Musée Ravel at Montfort l'Auméry. The film *Céleste*, does not do this. Here, the story of *Céleste* ends with the death of Proust.

In accordance with the idea of Proust as never leaving the house, a concert they both »go to« is actually a concert where the musicians come to their apartment. In the film, when both are sitting in their salon they look as if playing the bourgeois couple. That this is role-playing is indicated in a frame where *Céleste* is shown from behind peeking through the partially open door. She is shot over the shoulder and one of the musician's represents her pictorial double. Not only is she a woman (which would have been unusual around 1920<sup>88</sup>) but her hairstyle (also shot over her back) closely resembles that of *Céleste*. Like the musician playing the musical role assigned to her, *Céleste* is playing the role of the bourgeoisie, the social equal of Marcel Proust. Even more playing goes on in the film: when the figure of Proust comes home to tell *Céleste* about his evening, she acts the roles of the people he had been out dining with in the dining-room of the apartment. They are playing the society which by the narrative framing of the film is not represented on screen.

As already pointed out, the narrative in the film is much more confined, turning both characters into the prisoners of a third party who is telling their stories, both the biographical story of Marcel Proust, as well as the autobiographical story of *Céleste*. But it also implies that the roles they play transcend the socio-economical employer-employee structure as well as the inherently hierarchical relationship of teacher and adept. The film is, therefore, also more liberated in the sense that it refashions the relationship between

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<sup>88</sup> In the biography *Monsieur Proust* this concert takes place as well, but *Céleste* Albaret stays outside the salon in the hall, waiting to be summoned. So far, I have been unable to find other references to a concert that took place in the home of Marcel Proust. I could only find a reference to a planned private soirée with music at the Ritz Hotel 18 March 1914 (Tadié, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol.] Paris (Gallimard) 1999 (1st 1996)., II, 290 & Painter, *Marcel Proust*. (2 vol.: 1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse* and 1904-1922. *Les années de maturité*). Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Original published in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd. (London 1959 & 1965). II, 303ff). Proust had proposed to Hélène Soutzo that the quatuor Poulet should play the César Franck to them. When Proust arrived, however, the violincellist of the quatuor was ill and the concert did not take place. In Painter this is only recounted in connection to the Vintueil Sonata, i.e. the fictional piece of music that plays an important part in the *Recherche*.

Marcel Proust and Céleste Albaret along different lines. As stated previously, the veneration and adoration of the book by Céleste Albaret is no longer present in the film. Also, she has become empowered within the relationship between her and Proust through her construction as the narrative centre. The fact that the biographical period covered in this film is absent from the fictional, autobiographical narrative (i.e. in the *Recherche* it is replaced with the fiction of years in a sanatorium), implies that Proust's text, the autobiography *À la recherche du temps perdu*, has no say in how this space is to be filled. That is at the discretion of the biographer (here Céleste Albaret and Georges Belmont) and the persons involved in bringing it to the screen.

This period of Proust's life is also touched upon in the films *Portrait-Souvenir*; *L'art et la douleur*; *Marcel Proust: naissance d'une phrase*; *Lire Proust*; *The Modern World: Ten Great Writers. Marcel Proust*; *Marcel Proust. Lire et écrire*, and *How Proust can change your life*. Yet only the last one actually restages episodes from Proust's life.<sup>89</sup> Where in the first two this part of Proust's life enters into the film through eye witnesses (i.e. in the stories that the contemporaries tell of Proust/Marcel Proust), the other four narrate this phase through studying the manuscripts of Proust. I will come back to the manuscripts later. For now, I would like to look at how Proust is depicted in *How Proust can change your life*.

This film is based on the bestselling book of the young British author Alain de Botton.<sup>90</sup> In the book, the »self-help-manual« character of the film is not yet as pronounced as in the film made from it. In the film, a narrator figure initiates the viewer into the life and the work of Marcel Proust. Quotes from letters and the fiction as well as scenes from his social life at restaurants or

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<sup>89</sup> The film *The Modern World. Ten Great Writers. Marcel Proust*, restages episodes from *À la recherche du temps perdu*. As does the recording of the ballet, *Les intermittences du cœur*.

<sup>90</sup> Alain de Botton, *How Proust Can Change Your Life*. London (Picador) 1997.

Among the illustrations of this book, it also features a photo of the manuscript page on which Marcel Proust had written *Fin*.

In 2000, he published another »help-manual« titled *The Consolations of Philosophy* which was promptly turned into a television series.

elsewhere and his life alone in bed are used to give Proustian answers to questions such as *How to be a good friend?*, *How to suffer successfully?* Or for advice on dating etc.

The film not only consists of restaged episodes of Proust's life, but also of several interview-like situations where writers like Alain de Botton, Louis de Bernières, Doris Lessing and Simon Barnes,<sup>91</sup> or the director of the Louvre Pierre Rosenberg, explain aspects of Proust's work or voice their opinions of him. In episodes set in a restaurant, the film stages the meeting of Proust with his friends but also the meeting between James Joyce and Proust. This meeting did indeed take place on May 18th 1922 at the Ritz Hotel but the film does not content itself with just retelling the story as it is told in the biography of George Painter. Painter comes to the (banal) conclusion that two geniuses must not necessarily turn out to be kindred spirits.<sup>92</sup> In the film *How Proust Can Change Your Life*, Proust asks Joyce at the dinner table whether he likes Strawinski. To this and other questions he gets a sullen negative reply. As for the questions the filmic Joyce then puts to him, he must also answer in the negative. They have nothing to say to each other. But not enough that the film here as changed the internal nature of the anecdote completely, it then goes on to show what else might have been possible, if their answers to each others questions had not been no but yes: it shows them in an imagined animated conversation.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Introduced as *writer and sports journalist*.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Painter, *Marcel Proust*. (2 vol.: 1871-1903. *Les années de jeunesse* and 1904-1922. *Les années de maturité*). Paris (Mercure de France) 1966. Original published in English by Chatto and Windus Ltd. (London 1959 & 1965). II, 422-426. Here Marcel Proust is narrated as first having a conversation with Strawinski about music and only came to talk with Joyce in the taxi (about truffles and whether he knew countess soandso). Then Sydney Schiff, the Englishman who was a translator into English of the *Recherche* and who was hosting that dinner, is narrated as having had to ask James Joyce to close the window and refrain from smoking in the car because of Proust. As the story is told by Tadié (who terms Painter's rendition as *un récit un peu trop beau*) it is shortened to a meeting in the taxi.

Cf. also Jean-Yves Tadié, *Marcel Proust*. [2 Vol.] Paris (Gallimard) 1999 (1st 1996), II, 357.

Taking the taxi after the dinner, Proust quarrelled with Joyce over the fact that he tried to open the window, thereby exposing the fragile Proust to a draught.

<sup>93</sup> The dialogue, however, is not heard. Only the music and the comments of the narrator figure addressed to the audience are heard.

Another distortion regards the film's interviews of authors. Alongside the above mentioned writers, there is also an appearance of Virginia Woolf as interviewee giving her opinion on what was so special about *A la recherche du temps perdu*. However, the film does nothing to distinguish her from the contemporary interviewees. Having died nearly sixty years prior to the production of this film, Virginia Woolf of course is not Virginia Woolf, but played by an actress (Phyllida Law). This actress playing Woolf is introduced by a subtitle as the writer. Not only is this film making up conversations between Proust and Joyce (using the historic event as narrative framework for a fiction) it is also faking its testimonies. To a spectator who does not know Virginia Woolf, or that Virginia Woolf died in 1941, nor bothers to read the credits of the film, this sort of documentary can be dangerous indeed.<sup>94</sup> While in the case of the conversation it is clear that this is a speculation on what might have been, in the case of the false interview—regardless of whether the opinion given by the Phyllida-Law-Woolf is something Woolf said or wrote—this film clearly misinforms its audience. And this it does from the very first sentence onwards which said that Proust spent the last 14 years, i.e. from 1908 onwards, in his bed.

But from this it not only emerges that the film is using the recluse myth and the writings of Proust to fashion its own popular image of him, to update him as it were, making him more accessible for today's readers or viewers. The primary goal is to make Proust useful for today—gone the veneration of Philip Larcher who religiously used Proust to describe Illiers and in fact helped turn Illiers into Proust-Combray. Extensive liberties are taken with biography. Besides the inaccurate details and embellished anecdotes of Proust's life, the film fakes its testimonies by presenting Virginia Woolf as interviewee. The life and the writing of Proust here has become infotainment.

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<sup>94</sup> It is certainly no coincidence that in comparison to other documentary films on Marcel Proust this one use extremely little documentary material such as photos of Marcel Proust, or his manuscripts. Here, the historical figure has been replaced by the character in the script.



## Writing 2: The paperoles

In terms of publication, the *Recherche* has been singled out: not only was *À la recherche du temps perdu* published by Gallimard thirty years after his death as the 100th, 101st and 102nd volume of the prestigious *Bibliothèque de la Pléiade*. Also, the rest of his literary works was published there in 1971 to mark the centennial of his birth. Then, not even forty years after the first publication, *À la recherche du temps perdu* has been re-edited in an entirely new edition making use of the newly available manuscripts, *cahiers*, and documents finally became part of the holdings at the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1962—and not part of a US-archive.<sup>95</sup>

*A la recherche du temps perdu* was begun before the First World War, and was re-written<sup>96</sup> in large parts during and after the war, because paper shortage made immediate publication of the other two parts impossible. Also, it continued to be published after his death. Thus, when one finally could read the last parts of this fictional autobiography, the world described therein had already vanished for good, and the author had died. The mass of manuscripts

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<sup>95</sup> Like the *Recherche* itself, the second Pléiade edition increased in size but only by one volume. However, it now includes a vast mass of *esquisses* and text variants. Together with the annotations on the text, these now make up half of the edition whereas in the first Pléiade edition this relation is one of approximately 1:3.

<sup>96</sup> Gérard Genette, *La question de la écriture*. IN: *Recherche de Proust*. Paris (Éditions du Seuil) 1980, pp. 7-12.

This is termed *gonflement* by Gérard Genette, to describe the process of a work that has expanded from the *inside* rather than having parts added to it. The first, the middle (*Du côté de Guermantes*), and the last (*Le temps retrouvé*) part of the *Recherche* had been written early on—even though Marcel Proust continued to revise them. What was added to these three parts, were the parts 2 and 4-6, i.e. *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, *La prisonnière*, *Albertine disparue/La fugitive*.

The fascination with how Proust wrote the *Recherche*, has been of interest from early on.

Cf. Albert Feuillerat, *Comment Marcel Proust a composé son roman*. New Haven & Paris (Yale University Press) 1934.

The author, funnily enough however, does not regard the additions as an improvement. According to him, *Du côté de chez Swann* was much more coherent in its first version of the first edition.

Another book creates a mythical origin by narrating only the entire day of November 27th, 1909, allegedly the day on which Marcel Proust started writing the *Recherche*. Alain Buisine, *Proust, Samedi 27 nov. 1909*. Paris (Lattès) 1991.

kept growing under the hands of the author, and out of these manuscripts yet more instalments of the author's life were produced posthumously by several editors, who thus become in a sense not only editors of a book but were administering the estate of the fictional autobiography of Marcel Proust.

In 1951 yet another anecdote added itself to the rich history of Proust's manuscripts: in the attic of the family Mante-Proust, André Maurois found the lost manuscript of *Jean Santeuil*, a precursor-novel to the *Recherche* that Proust had been working on from 1896 to 1908, just before he started to work on the *Recherche*. When this novel was then published by Gallimard in 1952 it filled the gap in the œuvre between *Les plaisirs et les jours* and *A la recherche du temps perdu*. On the one hand this resulted in a demystification of the *Recherche* as a work that had emerged out of a void. On the other hand, however, it added to the fascination of the manuscripts. They became the tangible testimony to the stories surrounding the already famous writer.

In the film *Céleste* as well as in the documentary films, the story of the manuscripts feature prominently in various contexts. The most prominent story of these are the form the additions took, i.e. the *paperoles*. Gluing additional paper to the notebooks' text was a means of providing space for the extensive changes and additions. More often than not Proust scribbled sentences onto mere scraps of paper, which were then glued together and pasted into either the handwritten *cahiers* or the typed dactylographies made of these texts in the *cahiers*, or the printed proofs coming back from the publisher. The most famous one that also featured in the 1999/2000 exhibition at Paris, could be drawn out to a length of 140 centimetres.<sup>97</sup> Examples of such a *paperole* are also shown in several of the documentary films: *Portrait Souvenir* (1962); *Lire Proust* (1988); *The Modern World. Ten great Writers. Marcel Proust* (1988). Such »growths« become the tangible symbol of the ever-expanding work of the author.

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<sup>97</sup> For the presentation of the manuscripts at this exhibition as centre-piece, cf. also Appendix II.

The *paperoles* here also serve as a metaphor for the additions made to the story of Marcel Proust/Proust by other persons. Whether they did this in a written form, or by giving testimony in documentaries, or by making a film, the result is an authorial profusion, i.e. Marcel Proust is not the only author-figure involved in this process. Several factors contributed to such profusion: that his major work had autobiographical references and the undecidability inherent in the term autobiographical fiction; the un-named central character of the *Recherche* enabling others to insert themselves as narrative centre; the first establishment of Proust's literary reputation by persons that were not only his contemporaries and peers but also claimed his acquaintance if not friendship; the subsequent writing of his biography with the help of his fiction. As the following chapters show, two different things follow from the *Recherche* having an un-named central character. For one, because of the biographical referentiality of the work the idea that this is the biography of Marcel Proust/Proust is underscored. Secondly, in the reception of the writer and his work, others can insert themselves or can be inserted as central »I«. Because of this, the biographical relation of the adapting »I« to Marcel Proust and his work becomes a central and recurring issue in the films and film projects especially when authorial power is at stake.

## Chapter 2

### *Un amour de Swann*

### or the Trappings of Heritage

*Her hair is soft and her eyes are oh so blue,  
She's all the things a girl should be, but she's not  
you.*

Pornis, Stoller & Leiber, *She's Not You*  
sung by Elvis

#### 1. Film Adaptation I: Capitalising (on) Literature

Just a year before Marcel Proust published his first collection of stories, *Les plaisirs et les jours* (1896), the Parisian public could for the first time attend a screening of films given December 28th 1895 at the Grand Café on the Boulevard des Capucines. While Marcel Proust clearly favoured photography, the *Recherche* includes several references to this new medium. Cinema became a means of preserving memories and seemed to promise the capture of time itself:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt K. Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern*. Oxford & New York (Oxford University Press) 1996, p. 172.

Cf. also p. 166: *The invention of the cinema camera was the invention of a memory machine, a technology for witnessing and preserving both great events and daily rituals.*

In the chapter devoted to film, Matsuda argues that technological possibilities and exhibition practices in effect contributed to modernity as a period of accelerated experience—which runs contrary to the consummatory celebration of relived experience in the *Recherche*. Nonetheless, it could be argued that the advent of narrative cinema represents a slowing down of that very experience by reducing the number of films viewed per visit and gradually eliminating all non-filmic elements of early cinema exhibition, i.e. vaudeville, songs etc.

*Cinematic images in turn further revolutionized the possibilities of the meanings of a "modern memory." The idea of capturing lost time through the moving image resonates strongly in press accounts detailing the reception of the very first cinematographic images.*

The year 1907, the year before the publication of the *Recherche's* first part, *Du côté de chez Swann*, is in film historiography largely agreed upon as being the beginning of narrative cinema. Film in the years after early cinema, post-1907, has been called the seventh art.<sup>2</sup> It is the only art form whose centenary could be celebrated, as it was in 1995. Together with popular music, it is also the art form which has had and still has most mass appeal before all others and which has undergone the most rapid technological and artistic changes.<sup>3</sup> Starting from very short films showing workers leaving a factory, or fantastic voyages to the moon, the products of the soon-industrialised film production sector developed into complex entities already in the first thirty years of the medium. After the novelty appeal of the medium wore off, film producers had to come up with other »attraction-characteristics« to keep audiences paying that nickel at the odeon. One of these new features, made possible by technological progress, was to make longer films of two or three reels. Films had become *abendfüllend*, a form of entertainment filling an entire evening. One of the first US-directors to be hailed as a master<sup>4</sup> of this new narrative film, was D.W. Griffith. In the decade when

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<sup>2</sup> A term coined by the early theorist Ricciotto Canudo, an Italian based in France. Cf. Joël Magny, 1896-1930. *Premiers écrits. Canudo, Delluc, Epstein, Dulac*. IN: *Cinémation* (July 1991) No. 60, pp. 14-25; Gian Piero Brunetta, *Intelettuali, cinema e propaganda tra le due guerre: I pionieri Canudo, Luciani, Pirandello, Barbaro, Chiarini, il film fascista*. Bologna (Patron) 1972.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Miriam Bratu Hansen, *America, Paris, the Alps: Kracauer (and Benjamin) on Cinema and Modernity*. IN: *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Ed. by Vanessa Schwartz, & Leo Charney. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California Press) 1995, pp. 362-402.

<sup>4</sup> Tom Gunning, *Weaving a Narrative. Style and Economic Background in D.W. Griffith's Biograph Films* (1981). Reprinted IN: *Early Cinema. Space -Frame - Narrative*. Ed. by Thomas Elsaesser & Adam Barker. London (bfi) 1990, pp. 336-347.

On p. 336, Tom Gunning points out that the reasons for creating such myths might be to *relieve film scholars of the burden and anxiety of wading into the morass of anonymous or little-known films that mark the early years of the cinema*. And when the myth could not be maintained *Griffith was seen as the man who first gave these techniques meaning, or used them in an artistic context*. A radical inversion of this myth has also appeared. In this counter-myth, *Griffith is seen as the betrayer of a purer idea of film found in the work of Méliès and Lumière, as the man who introduced the fatal element of bourgeois narrative, the Adam from whose fall film is yet to recover*.

the first volumes of *A la recherche du temps perdu* were published, Griffith achieved this reputation through his films *Birth of a Nation*, and *Intolerance*, released in 1915 and 1916, in particular. The former film which was originally three hours in length and cost the then exorbitant sum of two dollars to view, has in cinema historiography been read alternately as the beginning of narrative film or as the film that was to »summarize« all that was at that moment technologically and narratively possible. It is in the shared characteristic of narrativity that the relations between film and literature have repeatedly been drawn, both in the affirmative and as differential gulf.<sup>5</sup> Speaking about the early twentieth century, Tom Gunning points out the economic motivations behind the rise of narrative cinema:

*All of this defines the years 1908-9 as the origin of a unified effort to attract the middle class to motion pictures, an effort that extends over the whole span of Griffith's work at Biograph (1908-1913). As Russell Merritt has pointed out, these are transition years, when film was still catering to the working class, while wooing the bourgeois. This is the context within which Griffith's Biograph work must be seen: a period of, on the one hand, the economic stabilization of a large industry reaching a mass audience, and on the other hand, the decision of that industry that its ultimate stability lay in its attaining social respectability.*

In the period that Marcel Proust was writing and publishing the *Recherche*, the medium film was searching for a respectability to be granted by middle-class audiences in order to ensure its economic survival. The beginnings of narrative cinema are here connected to winning the interest of the middle classes and later

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For publications arguing that narrative film was imported into the US from Europe, on the basis of the vigorous commercial viability of European Cinema before WWI in the USA, cf. Franz-Josef Albersmeier, *Theater, Film und Literatur in Frankreich: Medienwechsel und Intermedialität*. Darmstadt (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft) 1992; Gerben Bakker, *America's Master: The Decline and Fall of the European Film Industry in the United States (1907-1920)*. IN: *Across the Atlantic. Cultural Exchanges between Europe and the United States*. Ed. by Luisa Passerini. Bruxelles, Bern Berlin et al. (Peter Lang) 2000, pp. 213-240; Richard Abel, *The Perils of Pathé or the Americanization of American Cinema*. IN: *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Ed. by Vanessa Schwartz, & Leo Charney. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California Press) 1995, pp. 183-223.

<sup>5</sup> For a further interesting article on narrative as a key feature shaping experiences of modernity cf. Mark B. Sandberg, *Effigy and Narrative. Looking into the Nineteenth-Century Folk Museum*. IN: *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Ed. by Vanessa Schwartz, & Leo Charney. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California Press) 1995, pp. 320-361.

would be connected to literature. This was done for reasons of economy, and it also has had an effect on the practice of adaptation.

The Russian filmmaker Sergej Eisenstein was one of the first to point out the parallels in narrative technique between the films of D.W. Griffith and the novels of Charles Dickens.<sup>6</sup> Though a larger academic discussion on literary adaptation can be said to have begun with the publication of George Bluestone's *Novel into Film* in 1957,<sup>7</sup> the production practice of using literature as source material for films (and the awareness of filmmakers and novelists, dramatists, journalists of such a connection) dates back to early cinema of the late nineteenth and nascent twentieth century. The uses of well-known literary sources did, indeed, even start before 1900: the earliest adaptation of William Shakespeare dates back to 1899 and works of his continued to be adapted to the screen in regular intervals throughout the first decade and the teens of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup> That this was not always an amicable relationship is evident, e.g., in the United States where in the teens of the century numerous court cases are testimony that contemporary authors (also from across the Atlantic) fought to have their rights protected against a rapidly expanding film industry, or, the

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. here Michel Serceau, *L'Adaptation cinématographique des textes littéraires. Textes et lectures.* Liège (Editions du Céfal) 1999.

Serceau sees adaptation in cinema as the locus where narrativity is preserved: *Mais elle [adaptation] ne met pas le cinéma dans la dépendance de la littérature. Elle confirme la relation privilégié qu'il entretient avec le genre romanesque et montre que, loin d'être un simple relais de la littérature, le cinéma en est un mode de réception privilégié, voire aujourd'hui le mode privilégié.*

*L'adaptation ne témoigne pas seulement, donc, de la persistance des structures narratives dans l'art cinématographique. Elle témoigne de la persistance - ou de la revivification - de l'art même du récit.* (p. 173)

<sup>7</sup> George Bluestone, *Novels into Film.* Los Angeles & Berkeley (University of California Press) 1957.

<sup>8</sup> However, quite a number of these films were merely filmed theatre productions. The static camera of these films differs from the camera and editing of narrative cinema.

(more frequent) instances where film companies sued each other repeatedly for the rights to dramatise certain stories.<sup>9</sup>

Starting in the same period, one can look to the debate in the last years of the Kaiserreich and in the Weimar Republic between exponents of both arts as another example of such ambiguous relations between the art forms. Here, film is on the one hand supposed to be art by its affinity with literature thus fashioning the relationship as an emulative one, where one art gains status by being like the older art form.<sup>10</sup> On the other hand, the relationship emerges as antagonistic where literature defends itself against the »usurper« film.<sup>11</sup> Thus, at later stages of their parallel histories in the twentieth century, film practitioners and theorists would argue against adaptation because it made the medium a handmaiden of literature. Film, instead, should maintain its independence.

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<sup>9</sup> A large number of cases were concerned with establishing the domain of authorial copyrights between writers, theatre producers and film producers. Here, US-law had to set down rules for protection and entitlement. What could be protected (books, manuscripts, photographs, photoplays) and what new reproduction rights resulted from a sale of such copyright to other parties both evolved as legal standard over time and in that period was at times handled in contradictory ways. There were, e.g., cases such as *Roe-Lawton v Hal Roach Studios* (DC-Cal), 18 F(2d) 126 from March 1927 where the litigious story was *the theme of a man, subduing wild horses* (a claim to copyright denied).

International treaties on mutual acceptance of copyright only started to be signed in the 1890s, motion pictures as such only became copyrightable in 1912 in the Act on Copyright (USA).

Cf. here also Thomas Cripps, *Hollywood's High Noon. Moviemaking and Society Before Television*. Baltimore (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1997.

In chapter 8 on the making of genre films, the example is given of New York writers who came to work in Hollywood and experienced this as an artistic demotion, i.e. from author to a worker in an assembly-line producing films (p. 168).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. here also scriptwriter manuals in the US of the teens where writing for film is endowed with the intellectual status of literary writing, despite the warning that the aspiring scriptwriter is precisely not to write like a novelist.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Anton Kaes, *Kino-Debatte. Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film 1909-1929*. Tübingen (Niemeyer) 1978.

Cf. also Franz-Josef Albersmeier, *Theater, Film und Literatur in Frankreich: Medienwechsel und Intermedialität*. Darmstadt (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft) 1992, esp. pp.181f. Albersmeier argues that the moment to liberate film, i.e. to find new narrative forms for adaptation, was instigated primarily by theatre professionals and critics but only after the advent of sound film, thus, in a sense, when the similarities between the two media became so pronounced that a border of sorts had to be drawn.



The debate in which literature defended itself against (or rather, where individuals exercising the profession either of writing or of academia defended literature) often took on the form of a high art versus low art debate. Here, literature was defended against being either taken over by film through adaptation in film production practice or being made a mere equal to it as art form.

On the subject of cinema, Virginia Woolf had written four years after the death of Marcel Proust at a time when the studio system was well under way:<sup>12</sup>

*All the famous novels of the world, with their well-known characters and their famous scenes, only asked, it seemed, to be put on the films. What could be easier and simpler? The cinema fell upon its prey with immense rapacity, and to the moment largely subsists upon the body of its unfortunate victim. But the results are disastrous to both. The alliance is unnatural. Eye and brain are torn asunder ruthlessly as they vainly try to work in couples.*

Cinema, here, was described as a predator, and literature becomes the hapless (and helpless) food for the newcomer. The practice of literary adaptation here was not regarded as self-evident let alone as a relationship of mutual enhancement. The scepticism towards cinema as an art form and towards the artistic merits of literary adaptations were shared by others and while already fifty years later, post-WWII and post-Nouvelle-Vague no-one seriously doubted that cinema was indeed an art form, what exactly the artistic merits of literary adaptation were made out to be, remained a contested area. In the theoretical debate the animosities resurfacing in various guises (and also the insecurities in the academic approach towards such hybrid art works) can be read as symptom of this unease.

As mentioned, the most influential first academic monograph on the topic is Bluestone's *Novel into Film*, which in its focus on the comparison of narratives set the tone for many subsequent publications in the field. A problematic aspect of this first monograph is also that it does not compare the finished films with the source novels but with the script on which the film is based. The analysis is,

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<sup>12</sup> Woolf, Virginia, *The Cinema* (1926). Reprinted IN: *Collected Essays, Vol.2*. London (Hogarth

therefore, not based so much on the film, i.e. in image and sound, but on the typed word.

In a complicit accordance with Eisenstein's dictum, the study of literary adaptation focussed initially on questions of narratology and/or on narrative parallels between the literary material and the finished film.<sup>13</sup> While these studies will provide essential tools of analysis in this study for close readings of the cinematic texts along with studies on narratology from the literature side,<sup>14</sup> it has to be said that quite a few<sup>15</sup> fall into what may be termed the fidelity-trap<sup>16</sup>—where they meet with a substantial portion of journalistic writing on literary adaptations.

An analysis which merely contents itself with comparing how the story of the novel or the play is re-told on the screen, is heuristically a rather tedious exercise.<sup>17</sup> When an analytical approach focuses on the narrative parallels it implicitly accepts as evaluative axiom that one of them (the film) only exists but

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Press) 1966, pp. 268-272. Here p. 296.

<sup>13</sup> Christian Metz, *Essais sur la signification au cinéma 1 & 2*. Paris (Klincksieck) 1968 & 1972; Geoffrey Wagner, *The Novel and the Cinema*. Rutherford et al. (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press) 1975; Keith Cohen, *Film and Fiction: the Dynamics of Exchange*. New Haven & London (Harvard University Press) 1979; Edward Branigan, *Point of View in the Cinema*. [Sulzburg & Berlin] [(Sulzburg Druck & Bauer)] 1984 (originally a PhD thesis Madison Wisconsin 1979); François Jost, *L'œil-caméra. Entre film et roman*. Lyon (Presses Universitaires Lyon) 1987; Joachim Paech, *Film und Literatur*. Stuttgart (Metzler) 1988; Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca (Cornell University Press) 1990; André Gaudréault & François Jost, *Le récit cinématographique*. Paris (Nathan) 1990.

I shall give a detailed criticism of these publications at a later stage.

<sup>14</sup> Most of all I here wish point out the importance of the work of Gérard Genette, but also other studies will prove invaluable such as work by Erich Auerbach, Roland Barthes, Tsvetan Todorov, Mikhael Bakhtin, et al. I shall discuss the individual studies when using them.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. here e.g. Irmela Schneider, *Der verwandelte Text. Wege zu einer Theorie der Literaturverfilmung*. Tübingen (Niemeyer) 1981.

<sup>16</sup> The term fidelity is in many writings on the topic referred to as a problem. However, not always does pointing it out as a problem also result in transcending it. By shifting the focus to narrative comparison. (as in MacFarlane) or by using the literary material as a source that explains the film (as in Boyum), the book remains the standard against which film is analysed.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Mireia Aragay, *Possessing Jane Austen: Fidelity, Authorship, and Patricia Rozema's Mansfield Park* (1999). IN: *Literature/Film Quarterly* (2003) Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 177-185.

Cf. also Imelda Whelehan, *Adaptations: The Contemporary Dilemmas*. IN: *From Text to Screen. Screen to Text*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan; London & New York (Routledge) 1999, pp. 3-19.

for the existence of the other (the book). In that exclusively source-oriented, backward glance literature provides the measuring rod for film and consequently film is not permitted the liberties any theatre production would have with a Shakespeare play. Even in articles and monographs arguing against the hierarchisation implied in the term fidelity, the issue whether the film is faithful thus enters through a back door of, e.g., narrative comparison.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, such articles are sometimes rather cursory in their theoretical foundations.

Dudley Andrew, e.g., states that besides the *fidelity of transformation* there are the two other modes of adaptation: one is *borrowing* and the other is *intersecting*.<sup>19</sup> *Fidelity of transformation*, is achieved when the film satisfactorily translates the literary source onto film. *Fidelity of transformation* is a strongly evaluative approach, where it should be made clear (but often is not) from whose perspective and on which grounds such fidelity is ascertained. The adaptations which fall under Andrew's definition of *borrowing* then also do so by a qualitative presupposition of literary hierarchies: some authors, e.g. Shakespeare, are perceived as so universal that their publications should be regarded as archetypes rather than individual works of art. Via their »universal nature« they are not adapted but *borrowed* from. This sets a universalist hierarchy of canon even before the two artistic enterprises of book and film themselves are compared—a rather problematic implication. *Intersecting*, thirdly, refers to films

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. Brian McFarlane, *A Literary Cinema? British Novels and British Films*. IN: *All Our Yesterdays. 90 Years of British Cinema*. Ed. by Charles Barr, London (British Film Institute) 1986, pp. 120-142; and Brian McFarlane, *Novel into Film. An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford (Clarendon Press) 1996.

Cf. also, Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993. Though the author does succeed in referring the various films under analysis to a number of other interesting sources, when comparing the narrative construction of e.g. *Il Gattopardo*, the narrative of the novel is the palimpsest and the deviations or additions to it by the film—even when discussed positively—significantly remain liberties taken, rather than a right of the adaptive process.

<sup>19</sup> Dudley Andrew, *The Well-Worn Muse: Adaptation in Film History and Theory*. IN: *Narrative Strategies. Original Essays in Film and Prose Fiction*. Ed. by Syndy Conger & Janice R. Welsch. Macomb, Ill. (Macomb University Press) 1980, pp. 9-17.

that foreground the text on which the film is based as such within the film, i.e. creating an extradiegetic level, where the book registers as an intrusion in the visual narrative. The film here enunciates its being based on literature. Rather than a method of adapting in itself, to me this seems to be a narrative technique at the disposal of filmic adaptation.<sup>20</sup>

Beyond that, Andrews argues that transitions from literature to opera, painting and music here also count as borrowings. One reason for the widespread practice of adaptation is that here one has a ready-made story for a film. Another reason Andrew gives for the interest in this practice are of a different motivation:<sup>21</sup>

*Doubtless in these cases the adapting artists hope to win an audience by the prestige of their borrowed titles or subjects. At the same time they seek to gain a certain respectability, if not aesthetic value, as a dividend in the transaction. Adaptations from literature to music, opera, or paintings are of this nature. There is no question of the replication of the original in Richard Strauss's Don Quixote. Instead the audience is expected to enjoy basking in a certain preestablished presence and to call up new or especially powerful aspects of a cherished work.*

Another aspect of adaptation is, thus, the preservation or perpetuation of a cultural heritage exercised through the practice of such films or of film adaptation in general. That added cultural value is here termed a *dividend*, which makes it a surplus accrued to the film solely by virtue of being established as »based on« prestigious literature. Adaptation is therefore inscribed in an economy of culture. This is obvious from early on,<sup>22</sup> but extends (as this thesis argues) in particular to the period films that have risen in popularity in the last three decades of the twentieth century.

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. also Geoffrey Wagner, *The Novel and the Cinema*. Rutherford, Madison, Teaneck & London (Fairleigh Dickinson University press) 1975.

Here too, the author proposes a tripartite model of adaptation classification albeit with different terms: transposition, commentary, and analogy.

<sup>21</sup> Dudley Andrew, *The Well-Worn Muse: Adaptation in Film History and Theory*. IN: *Narrative Strategies. Original Essays in Film and Prose Fiction*. Ed. by Syndy Conger & Janice R. Welsch Macomb, Ill. (Macomb University Press) 1980, pp. 9-17. Here p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. William Uricchio & Roberta E. Pearson, *Reframing Culture: The Case of the Vitagraph Quality Films*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1993.

Besides being an easy way to get ready-made narratives, adaptations then also answer demands for high culture in an easily consumable form, and become instruments to »fortify« already existing literary canons across media. Here, the numerous instances of highly successful British serial adaptations for television in general such as *The Forsyte Saga*, *I, Claudius*, *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Jewel in the Crown*,<sup>23</sup> not to mention the uses made of Austen, Dickens, Collins, Thackeray and other nineteenth-century authors guaranteed a constant and widespread recycling of so-called modern classics. To present a vision of a more or less harmonious past in costume seems to guarantee an audience even after the advent of popular contemporary TV-series such as *Coronation Street*, *East Enders* etc. The series *Upstairs, Downstairs* (1971-75, London Weekend Television) about an Edwardian family and its servants remains one of the most successful exports of British television production to this day.

Period adaptations, also can be read as the successors to the already-proven formula of the historical drama: the financial and critical success of Alexander Korda's *Henry VIII* and other history films in Britain had in the thirties guaranteed a steady production in various genres all sharing the characteristic of being in period costume, such as e.g., the Gainsborough costume drama of the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>24</sup> The increase in audience numbers at its rerun and the still large numbers at the third broadcasting of the *Forsyte Saga* demonstrate (beyond

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<sup>23</sup> *The Forsyte Saga* (1967, BBC); *I, Claudius* (1976, BBC & London Film Productions); *Brideshead Revisited* (1982, Granada); *The Jewel in the Crown* (1984, Granada).

<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that it is in the decline of these films that the success of the Ealing comedy started, a group of films rooted very much in the lives of »small« people aspiring to greater horizons.

Cf. here Sue Harper, *Studying Popular Taste. British Historical Films in the 1930s*. IN: *Popular European Cinema*. Ed. by Richard Dyer & Ginette Vincendeau. London & New York (Routledge) 1992, pp. 101-111; idem., *Picturing the Past. The Rise and Fall of British Costume Film*. London (bfi) 1994.

the growth in households that had a television set) an apparently inexhaustible audience—both in its size and its willingness to see again.<sup>25</sup>

In France the phenomenon of adapting literary classics for the cinema as an educative means had been initiated as early as 1908 when the Société Film d'Art was formed *for the express purpose of translating prestigious literary works to the screen, mostly dramas but also novels by Hugo, Balzac, and Dickens.*<sup>26</sup> Initially, this meant adaptations of theatre plays. As these were mostly just filmed with a camera running during a performance it was a rather static cinema. Its significance resided in its attracting audiences among the higher-educated. In 1912, the commercial success in the US of the Sarah Bernhardt film *Queen Elizabeth* (purchased by the studio head Adolph Zukor), led to Zukor using the same idea of high quality films based on theatre plays.<sup>27</sup> Another French institution that propagated the practice of adaptation was the *Société Cinématographique des Auteurs et des Gens de Lettres* (SCAGL), which had also been founded in 1908—the early years of narrative cinema and the year Marcel Proust started to work on the *Recherche*. The need to exploit this cultural capital can be observed from the 1930s onwards when looking at the marketing strategies of such adaptations: these products of so-called high culture, *le cinéma de qualité*, advertise their cultural pedigree on the posters, information leaflets, lobby cards etc. There, it was pointed out that this film is based on a *chef d'œuvre* of ..., or that this film is produced/directed by a *membre of the Académie Française* etc. On the posters for *The Birth of a Nation* the name and title of the literary source (*The*

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<sup>25</sup> D.L. LeMahieu, Imagined Contemporaries: Cinematic and televised Dramas about the Edwardians in Great Britain and the United States, 1967-1985. IN: *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*. Vol.10, No. 3, pp. 243-256.

Here, p. 246: *The first showing of The Forsyte Saga in 1967 drew an average audience of 700,000 viewers at a time when not all British homes could receive BBC 2. A year later, over 20 times that number—almost sixteen million viewers per episode—saw the rebroadcast of the series on BBC 1, and nine million watched a second re-broadcast in 1970.*

<sup>26</sup> Joyce Gould Boyum, *Double Exposure: Fiction into Film*. New York (Universe Books) 1985, here pp. 3-4.

*Clansman*, a play by Thomas Dixon based on his novel titled *The Leopard's Spots*) were prominently featured. The Austen book was iconically present on the poster for the 1940 US-adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*.<sup>28</sup> This form of exploiting the cultural prestige of literature continues to this day. The locus and means have shifted, however. This is most prominently now not so much in previous marketing gadgets such as the posters or information leaflets, lobby cards etc.,<sup>29</sup> but transmitted in press conferences, interviews with the directors, scriptwriters and especially actors, actresses—where the prestige of the book is aligned with the allure of the film star.

The adaptation of literature to film had found an advocate in no-one less than André Bazin. In his collected writings on cinema titled *Qu'est-ce que c'est le cinéma*, one finds adaptation referred to as *un cinéma impur*. Although the literary source material is regarded as that which renders film impure (or, reformulated, that which sullies the art form film), Bazin did not argue against adaptation in general. For one, he pointed out the affinities some forms of modern literature like the American crime novel have with film. They seemed almost written with adaptation in mind. Thus, a mixture of literature and film could both work and fail:<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Even more important, this type of film was one of the factors convincing US-studios of the viability of feature-length films—a case where European film production modes became role models for the US.

<sup>28</sup> *Pride and Prejudice* (1940, Robert Z. Leonard). Ironically, the name of the not unfamous scriptwriter (Aldous Huxley) only appears in the very small print of the poster.

<sup>29</sup> Unfortunately, due to lack of archives or limited access to those who do possess extensive materials of this kind it is very difficult to assess how far exactly this exploitation went. The different versions of film posters for different markets and the different prints (often undated) further aggravates this problem—as does, of course, the disappearance of such phenomena as the lobby card. I have based my few observations on this through reading of literature on the topic, looking at selections of posters in the Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley USA, perusal of the stock in cinema shops and especially websites dealing in memorabilia for cinephiles.

What can be deduced from contracts between writers, directors and actors/actresses and studios it is clear that the latter ascertained its legal right to make use of name, image and after sound film of voice of the former in order to market the films.

<sup>30</sup> André Bazin, *Pour un cinéma impur. Défense de l'adaptation* (1951). IN: *Qu'est-ce que c'est le cinéma? Tome 2*, Paris (Éditions du Seuil) 1959. Re-edited as one-volume selection in 1985 from which the above quote is taken. Essay is on pp. 81-106. Here p. 88.

*Le concept d'art pur (poésie pure, peinture pure, etc.) n'est pas vide de sens; il se réfère à un réalité esthétique aussi difficile à définir qu'à contester. En tout cas, si un certain mélange des genres, il ne s'ensuit pas que toute mixité soit hereuse. Il est des croisements féconds et qui additionnent les qualités des géniteurs, il est aussi des hybrides séduisants mais stériles, il est enfin des accouplements monstrueux et qui n'engendrent que chimères.*

Like in the Woolf quote, the mixture of the two art forms is described in metaphors of sexual/procreative coupling which in the bio-organic metaphor of coupling and fertility will, according to Bazin, produce new yet sterile offspring. In accordance with the devaluation of the adaptation as cinema-art, Bazin goes on to say:<sup>31</sup>

*Plus les qualités de l'œuvre sont importantes et décisives, plus l'adaptation en bouleverse l'équilibre, plus aussi elle exige de talent créateur pour reconstruire selon un équilibre nouveau, non point identique, mais équivalent à l'ancien. Tenir l'adaptation de romans pour un exercice paresseux auquel le vrai cinéma, le «cinéma pur» n'aurait rien à gagner, est donc un contresens critique démenti par toutes les adaptations de valeur. Ce sont ceux qui se soucient le moins de fidélité au nom des prétendues exigences de l'écran qui trahissent tout à la fois la littérature et le cinéma.*

Adaptation, instead, becomes for the cinema an exercise for aspiring to become high art by basing itself on the more complex and subtle characters and stories of literature. However, according to Bazin, no adaptation of *Le misanthrope* can ever hope to have the artistic value of the original masterpiece of a *cinéma pur* such as the films of Charlie Chaplin. Here, the reference to crime fiction as ideal for adaptation indicates that it is low literature—*la littérature de gare*—which has the closest affinity to film, whereas high literature is configured as the role model of film. When apparently engaged in establishing adaptation and cinema as art form in their own right, Bazin further subverts this by terming Chaplin the *Molière du cinéma*. Cinema gains its art status not only by aspiring to the allegedly more advanced complexity of literature: by being ascribed value in naming a director the Molière of cinema, film again is described as art through the literary canon. To summarise, inequality is here operative on different levels: first on the basic level of modelling its story on the literary material in the process of adaptation; then, on the level of how to draw more complex

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<sup>31</sup> André Bazin, *Pour un cinéma impur. Défense de l'adaptation* (1951). IN: *Qu'est-ce que c'est le cinéma? Tome 2*, Paris (Éditions du Serf) 1959. Re-edited as one-volume selection in 1985 from which the above quote is taken. Essay is on pp. 81-106. Here p. 97.



characters like those of literature; but finally, even on the level of describing film as an art form, *cinéma* precludes any serious threat to its artistic autonomy by letting only pulp fiction serve as source material.

The »pure cinema« Bazin spoke of was then emphatically not the popular mass entertainment of early cinema (where audiences frequently were oblivious to who directed and who starred), nor did he refer to Hollywood star vehicles, meant for an evening's entertainment, i.e. an industrialised product for adulative consumption. He is referring to films which according to his judgement of taste are masterpieces—and, ironically, among these are a number of films that are precisely such industrially produced commodities. It is important to note that the adaptation debate defers and thus perpetuates, in various ways, both a canon and canonical thinking. Refuting the old canon of literature in its adapted form in order to replace it with a new one, the directors' (the new authors, the *auteurs*) are parricidally engaged in *the fight of agon* even if this is not fought along a direct authorial chain as formulated in literary studies.<sup>32</sup>

In another article titled *Adaptation or the Cinema as Digest*, Bazin is apparently arguing against an authorially-configured reception of cinema, by pointing out that the notion of authorship is itself historically determined and by terming early cinema *the new aesthetic middle ages*, where the content of the work of art mattered more than form,<sup>33</sup> and most importantly, were one could observe *the accession of the masses to power (or at least their participation in it) and the emergence of an artistic form to complement that accession: the cinema.*<sup>34</sup> Yet, every time he discusses a specific film example of adaptation he only refers it back to

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*. New York (Oxford University Press) 1973.

<sup>33</sup> This comes close to distinctions such as *histoire/discours* and *fabula/sjuzhet* which will be discussed in the following.

<sup>34</sup> André Bazin, *Adaptation or the Cinema as Digest* (French orig. July 1948 IN *Esprit* ). Here quoted from: *Film Adaptation*. Ed. by James Naremore. New Brunswick (Rutgers University Press) 2000, pp. 19-27. This quote, p. 24. The following quotes pp. 20 and 25, respectively. *Une partie de Campagne* (1946 [deferred release], Jean Renoir); *Le diable au corps* (1947, Claude Autant-Lara).

the relation it has to its source material and the author. On the film *Une partie de campagne* he writes:

*The case of A Day in the Country is subtler: it is faithful to the spirit of Maupassant's short story at the same time that it benefits from the full extent of Renoir's genius. This is the refraction of one work in another creator's consciousness.*

And on *Le Diable au corps* he writes:

*To take another example, I suffered when I saw Devil in the Flesh (1947, directed by Claude Autant-Lara), because I know Raymond Radiguet's book; the spirit and the "style" of that book had somehow been betrayed. But it remains true that this adaptation is the best one that could be made from the novel and that, artistically it is absolutely justified. Jean Vigo would probably have been more faithful to the original, but it is reasonable to conclude that the resulting film would have been impossible to show to the public because the reality of the book would have ignited the screen.*

Adaptation studies, it seems, cannot make do without authorial-figures or without the stipulation of a subservient relation to literature, be that as direct source material, as role model or as antagonist. The underlying conceptualisation of literature thus prestructures the limits of the field of adaptation.

I shall return to the construction of the author-figure and the *cinéma des auteurs* and the Nouvelle Vague. For now, I would like to point out an example of the implications of such canonical thinking have had to this day. Such argumentation together with a notable theoretical vagueness as to what exactly constitutes adaptation as such, fails to critically establish what the selection criteria for the list of films could be. Consequently, adaptation as a rubric of film categorisation can be stretched to match heterogeneous agendas. In the Introduction of *Novel to Film. The Encyclopedia of Movies Adapted From Novels*, one finds as a definition of purpose:<sup>35</sup>

*Novels into Film is intended as a convenient reference for those seeking basic information about significant novels adapted to the screen and significant film adaptations of novels that may be of secondary importance as literature but have achieved a certain popularity on their own or as a consequence of their being filmed.*

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<sup>35</sup> John C. Tibbetts & James M. Welsh *Introduction*. IN: *Novels into Film. An Encyclopedia of Movies Adapted From Books*. Ed. by John C. Tibbetts & James M. Welsh. New York (Checkmark Books) 1999. Revised version of *The Encyclopedia of Novels into Film* (1997). Here p. 5.

The claim to being *encyclopaedic* turns out to be a rather empty promise for there are »significant« lacunae in several instances and one does find films listed whose claim to »significance« is rather debatable.<sup>36</sup> The choice of term *significance* confirms the link to the individual taste of the authors. As this is neither explicitly set out, let alone are the standards made clear how they come to pass such judgement, the selection of films and the arguments for and against them are at times even self-contradictory. The book attempts to include »filmic masterpieces« at any cost. Thus, it features an entry for *Blow-up*, but fails to problematize the very tenuous link it has to the Cortázar story acknowledged in the opening credits.<sup>37</sup> It then lists *2001: A Space Odyssey* as adaptation. The problematic nature of this inclusion is explicitly acknowledged in the comment:<sup>38</sup>

*2001 is not so much an adaptation as a Kubrick-Clarke collaborative product in which Kubrick takes the relatively straightforward prose of Clarke's tale and generates his own masterful film. (All of Kubrick's major films have been adaptations, and, with the possible exception of Lolita, have tended to move aesthetically far beyond their original sources.)*

Here, a treatment written by director and author in conjunction with the intention of making a film is defined to be a work of literature just as *The Three Musketeers*, or *Heart of Darkness* are. The point here is not only to criticise a lack of fixed definitions regarding adaptation itself, but also to point out a lack of differentiation between literature and other written material. This vagueness is in the service of a hidden agenda, i.e. to be able to include what the authors

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. here also Alan Goble, *Introduction*. IN: *The Complete Guide to Literary Sources in Film*. Ed. by Alan Goble. London (Bowker Sauer) 1999.

*Great novels, plays and stories invariably make excellent films and if they don't, the fault more likely lies with the film production company for failing to dramatise them properly. The constantly filmed authors like Shakespeare, Chekov, Dickens, de Maupassant, Poe and Zola are testimony to this, yet these days we see seven figure sums being paid for film rights for novels that have little literary merit. I hope this book will help producers to identify which great novels, plays and stories have not yet been filmed and consider filming them. Chances are the story would be more interesting and the script a lot cheaper!*

<sup>37</sup> It also fails to point out as source *I quaderni di Serafino Gubbio, Operatore* a novel by Pirandello, which was mentioned frequently by the director Michelangelo Antonioni as the actual literary source of the film.

<sup>38</sup> *Novels into Film. An Encyclopedia of Movies Adapted From Books*. Ed. by John C. Tibbetts, James M. Welsh et al., New York (Checkmark Books) 1999. Revised version of *The Encyclopedia of Novels into Film* (1997), p. 29.

consider noteworthy—to the point of actually creating a literature in order to enable inclusion of certain films.

The problem remains, in these discussions, that the criteria of how a film comes to be significant as adaptation, are caught up in the competing canons of literature and film. The choices made (both regarding the individual examples as well as the theoretical perspective taken on them), reveal not only that there are maybe too many instances of adaptations (especially when defined by such flexible criteria). This indicates also that »adaptation« is not a self-explanatory term. Like the relationship between two art forms has evolved and has been constructed heterogeneously in the course of the first cinematic century, so has the »child begotten« from that relationship. According to the historically-determined conceptualisations of literature, of film, and of their interrelation, the practice of adaptation and an analysis thereof must also be understood as historically discrete and locationally-specified.

## 2. Adaptation as a Genre?

Film adaptation does not seem to qualify to be considered a *genre*—despite the fact that it is one of the more popular topics of writings on film. This predilection for a topic that has difficulties agreeing on a body of films constituting the object of study distinguishes it from other topics like film noir, the western, melodrama, horror, hammer etc. All of these are genres agreed-upon to a large extent.<sup>39</sup> Library and film archives almost never list adaptation as a key word for catalogue searches. Very probably the omission as key word stems from that simple fact that if one were to list every film based on literary material, the list would become endlessly long—which is rather counterproductive to the purpose of such a search, i.e. narrowing down a selection.<sup>40</sup> The practice of adaptation being so widespread, one of the problems with putting together an encyclopaedia of adaptations would be that, in order to arrive at a reasonably small number of adaptations to be included, one would have to stringent selection criteria. In which case, the exclusion criteria will inevitably cause controversy. There may however be other more oblique reasons for not conceiving of adaptation as a genre.

The rise of genre studies as a field of film studies came as a reaction to the establishment of film as »high art«, as exemplified in particular in auteur studies. Being structured on the model of the high culture system literature, auteur studies—in placing the director as prime and only creative force behind

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<sup>39</sup> I here do not at all insist that film noir and the western or melodrama are not genres whose boundaries are not still constantly renegotiated. Cf. here James Naremore, *More Than Night. Film Noir In Its Contexts*. Berkeley & Los Angeles (University of California Press 1998). But in comparison with the term adaptation, it becomes clear that, in these cases, the question of defining the field is easier if only because the potential numbers involved are significantly smaller.

<sup>40</sup> Defining adaptation as adapted from literature, actually, already represents a narrowing down as some publications propose to treat even those films based on an original script as adaptation, as the script, too, is after all a written source, e.g. Patrick Cattrysse, *Pour une théorie de l'adaptation filmique. Le film noir américain*. Paris (P. Lang) 1992.

the making of a film on the production side, and in hierarchising films in the form of a canon by evaluating them through categories of middle-brow »taste«—neglected the industrial side behind (especially) US and Western European film production. It ignores not only the collaborative enterprise any film represents in terms of individuals engaged professionally in it in film production, and then on the reception side the roots film has in mass culture and consumption, but also fails to critically engage with the specificities of cinemas such as Bollywood or other »exotic« locations.

Genre studies, then attempted to remedy at least the influence of high culture models, by looking at groups of films acclaimed by popular taste, e.g. musical, western, horror, science-fiction, melodrama. It thereby went beyond individual names of auteurs. To make literary adaptation a genre category, would here have signified a return to that what was to be avoided: the classification and evaluation of films according to individual author-figures (here I include literary writers, screenwriters, directors).<sup>41</sup> It is in the dual look that genre studies have taken and still take towards film. i.e. both as a category of production and as a category of reception that its uses are to be found for this study. I would contend, literary adaptation becomes productive as a genre category only, but then very much so, if linked with other categorisations. In this study it will be linked to the genre of period/heritage film and the auteur film.<sup>42</sup> I confine the examples of films discussed mainly to the period of the last thirty years, but I shall trace precursors. These are framed in a dis/continuous film-literature history of the anterior decades, which is done in order to incorporate a more comprehensive historical axis into the study of these films understood as a

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<sup>41</sup> It is therefore, interesting to observe how the recent monograph on genre by Robert Altman derives its filmic genres more often not from literary genres—which implies the predominance of literature.

Rick Altman, *Film/Genre*. London (bfi) 1999.

<sup>42</sup> As I pointed out in the Introduction, this study tells only the story of this particular case of adaptation, and other, equally legitimate studies are imaginable, e.g. studies of pulp fiction adaptations where the different cultural value of the source material will necessarily pose other questions.

genre. For according to Gunning,<sup>43</sup> genre studies, rather than exclude film history from their field should, strive to include it. For it is it then that

*genres become dynamic, competing with rival genres for dominance as they move through a cycle of origin, canonization and eventual decay. As a genre gains popularity it loses its defamiliarizing role and moves inevitably into decadence, giving way to new forms.*

While this article of course bases its argument on the Russian Formalist definition of literary genres, this is precisely what occurred between the first and the second feature film adaptation of Marcel Proust: in the years between 1984 and 1999, one could observe an increase in popularity of a certain type of film adaptation, its canonisation, and then its demise.

What I mean by period film in this study for now, is a film set in a past while only partly or (in most cases) not at all being based on historical characters, or taking considerable liberties with them.<sup>44</sup> If the period film is also an adaptation, the characters are based in fiction rather than history. Sometimes filmic characters are based on both, e.g. the films based on *The Man in the Iron Mask* or the adaptation of Edmond Rostand's theatre play *Cyrano de Bergerac*<sup>45</sup> which itself is a liberal interpretation of the historic character. Here it is important to note not so much the absolute time gap between the time of production and the period represented, but that the period represented is

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<sup>43</sup> Tom Gunning, *Non-Continuity, Continuity, Discontinuity. A Theory of Genres in Early Film* (1984). Reprinted IN: *Early Cinema. Space, Frame, Narrative*. Ed. by Thomas Elsaesser & Adam Barker. London (bfi) 1990, pp. 86-94. Here p. 87.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. here as a prime example the case of the US-production *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1998, Randall Wallace) which like the Dumas novel takes liberties, the film both with its literary source as well as with the historical figure of Louis XIV.

One should, however, distinguish between the period film and the historical film, such as e.g. *Le retour de Martin Guerre* (1982, Daniel Vigne) which intentionally aims at a historically accurate representations of the lives of characters based on historical persons while maintaining an awareness of the fictionality involved in the narrative process. In its US-remake *Sommersby* (1993, Jon Amiel), the same filmic story, would be a period film, as it is transposed into an imagined post Civil War American South. These distinctions, however, become more complex as the characteristic of »authenticity« comes to be used as a quality label, as shall be shown in the following.

specifically represented or explicitly referred to as a past. This is done primarily by costume, set design, mise-en-scène; but can also be transported through the visual quality of the film by using filters, specific kinds of film material, by tinting the negatives; or through devices such as intertitles indicating, e.g., specific years, or reigns of kings; or a voice-over, a narrator-figure.

Here, I for the moment would like to subsume the term period film into the genre of heritage film because what comes to the fore in numerous cases of both the British heritage film and the French period films of the eighties and the nineties is a focus on the author, either as the writer who provides literary source material to base the film upon, or as a model for a filmic character. The practice of adaptation is one possible way of recycling literary classics and from the eighties onwards it was flanked by other types of films (such as biopics of the lives of authors) which also refer film back to literature. Heritage films offered de-problematized nostalgic alternatives of cultural consumption while evidently capitalising on the prestige of its source material.<sup>46</sup> This approach divests the term »heritage« of its specific national content with regard to the individual film, but the following counterbalances this by reinscribing it into another specificity. Here, the term »heritage« is understood primarily as indicator of a certain kind of relationship to literature (the book, the writer, the work) as represented on the film itself and in material surrounding its release.

The name of the literary author or the (individual) work enhances the cultural value of the adaptation and when the film fulfils the expectations ascribed to such a project of heritage (charming settings, elaborate mise-en-scène and costumes, witty dialogue, etc.) these films enter into a body of heritage films

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<sup>45</sup> *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1989, Jean Paul Rappeneau). The play by Edmond Rostand was written in 1897.

<sup>46</sup> By which I do not wish to imply that the relationship to history of the filmmakers or the audience have become insignificant because they have been replaced by inner conflicts, as Andrew Higson argues in *The Heritage Film and British Cinema*. IN: *Dissolving Views. Key Writings on British Cinema*. Ed. by Andrew Higson. London & New York (Routledge) 1996, pp.



as adaptations. It is in becoming a secondary category of genre, that literary adaptation becomes a useful tool of heuristic endeavours such as this dissertation: the ways in which the »adaptation feature« is put into play in the production and in the reception of heritage films reveals very diverse interests at stake in the recycling of literature and its proponents via film, i.e. in the field of cultural production and consumption. In accordance with genre theory, the label »adaptation« in conjunction with that of »heritage film« here then functions on the production side both as marketing ploy (the film industry or the television channels vying for an audience), as well as a recognition category on the reception side:<sup>47</sup>

*However this differentiation requires considerable nuance. It would be unwise, for instance, to speak of a "production vocabulary" of genre as opposed to a "reception vocabulary," for the ultimate goal of film production is to control and predict reception. The primary communication intended by film production takes place between the film industry (with its various strata) and the public as potential audiences (which is also articulated into various strata, including not only spectators but also — crucially for genre concerns — reviewers and other articulators of public opinion). Clearly, genres served as a major means by which the industry made its product graspable as well as desirable to a public.*

*[...] Genre functions as an important regulator in this communication, setting up terms for approval and criticism and, most obviously, expectation.*

When choosing a film or a series to watch, spectators are not only provided with categories such as comedy, drama, historical drama, biopic, western, etc. in the newspaper listings, TV programmes or through advertisements and trailers. Due to exposure to numerous previous films of the same type in the nineties (like an Ealing comedy in the thirties) and an array of pre-information available through print or other media, they also assume to know what to expect when going to see the new adaptation of *Emma* or similar films. In other words, labelling a film »an Austen« has become a recognisable category of consumption.

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232-248. Nor do I agree with his description of the genre and its features, i.e. *relatively low-budget and not interested in profit primarily; typically have a slow moving and episodic narrative* ; (p.233)

<sup>47</sup> Tom Gunning, "Those Drawn With a Very Fine Camel's Hair Brush": The Origins of Film Genres. IN: *IRIS* (August 1995) No. 20, pp. 49-61. Here, p. 51. ✓

### 3. The Country Estate

When speaking of heritage film, genre studies in most cases refer to British film more than any other national film production. In the wake of World War II, the British film industry initially was rather successful in a variety of genres such as the Ealing comedy, the Gainsborough period melodrama. It has to be added, however, that the British film industry has been dependent on foreign capital for its film productions from early in the twentieth century onwards. By the forties and fifties, the US were the major provider of foreign capital—which allowed all films produced with US money but shot in the UK, to be labelled British films and, thus, these films served to fill up the required production and distribution quotas of British films to be screened in the cinemas as stipulated by British law.<sup>48</sup>

The post-war period brought with it also an increased interest in the preservation of country houses and estates. The Evelyn Waugh novel *Brideshead Revisited* was at its initial publication in 1945 partly written as a plea to preserve the stately home that seemed doomed to disappear in the aftermath of World War II. In the interim between the publication of that novel and its TV adaptation in 1981, the fate of the country houses and other objects considered national heritage (such as the countryside coastline) had undergone considerable change: far from being something threatened by extinction (although in the rhetoric of political discourse often portrayed as such) these natural reserves, the museums and the estates open to the public, through tourism thrived as

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<sup>48</sup> Formulated another way, this means that a proportion of films labelled British were, de facto, US-films. Then again, such foreign invasions of the film production in Britain had already occurred at the beginning of the century, when French Pathé set up large production facilities in England.

Cf. here Julian Petley, *Cinema and State*, pp.31-46; Robert Murphy, *Under the Shadow of Hollywood*, pp.47-71. Both IN: *All Our Yesterdays. 90 Years of British Cinema*. Ed. by Charles Barr, London (British Film Institute) 1986.

businesses. The revenue they generated provided Britain with, in the words of Robert Hewison, one of its few growth industries. As he points out in his book, the fascination of the country house resides primarily in the fact that it is still an actual home, i.e. a past that lives on in the present.<sup>49</sup> Adaptation in conjunction with heritage served nostalgic remembrance of a greater English or even British<sup>50</sup> past that is still there.<sup>51</sup>

I would argue, that this being there when juxtaposed with the deluge of both cinematic and television images of heritage films, serialisations of Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, et al. of the past decades, takes on the double reality effect of cinema in general as argued in Metz's *Le cinéma et son spectateur*: The reality effect of cinema, psychologically creates in the viewer a confusion between the real and its realistic representation which the viewer passively seated in his/her

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Cf. also H. Mark Glancy, *When Hollywood Loved Britain. The Hollywood 'British' Film 1939-45*. Manchester & New York (Manchester University Press) 1999.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry. Britain in a Climate of Decline*. London (Methuen) 1987, pp. 36 ff. & 55 ff. The lengths gone to for the preservation of country houses and the countryside is especially poignant when Hewison parallels it with the dismal development in the national housing projects of the fifties creating the exact antithesis to the idealised country cottage or grand mansion.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. here the adaptation of the Scott Raj Quartet as the TV series *The Jewel in the Crown* (named so after the first novel of the quartet) produced by Granada in 1983, which was a chronicle of a disintegrating empire.

<sup>51</sup> For more recent figures see also Bernard Casey, Rachael Dunlop, Sara Selwood, *Culture as Commodity. The Economics of the Arts and Built Heritage in the UK*. London (Policy Studies Institute) 1996.

On pages 141 -147, the authors point out developments in visiting patterns: 1993, 68 million visits to historic properties were listed. Interestingly, of the visitors in 1991 over 50 percent were occupied as higher or intermediate managerial staff, whereas manual or lower grade workers accounted for less than 25 percent. Between December 1992 and 1993, over 400 new conservation areas were ascertained, and almost 450 ancient monuments envisaged and over 3,000 buildings were added to the listings of historic properties, whereas only 64 historic buildings were listed as being demolished in the same period. It is estimated that besides the job opportunities they offer, historic buildings in the UK generated £240 million in revenue (£192 of this in England itself). It is also to be noted that those buildings listed as heritage perform better in economic terms than those who are not officially listed: besides tourism, such buildings increasingly try to market themselves as venues for conferences, social events, cultural events etc. In 1991 the EU with the advent of *Raphael* finally institutionalised a continuous programme for the support of (amongst other things) such built heritage. In the UK 25 percent of the financial assistance for built heritage comes from this and other EU structural funds.

cinema chair consumes. The reality effect of the country house (cottage or mansion) which can be visited would then be that which—while seemingly referring to a shared historic past—de facto signifies the creation of an illusory community. The tour through the sitting rooms, the kitchen with its polished copper pans, extensive gardens and grounds surrounding the estate then, in its vicarious re-enactment of the lives of (past and present) owners, represents a similarly prescribed, confined, and thus ultimately passive experience as a film viewing from the seat in the cinema. It is an experience, moreover, that is based in illusion not in reality. The supposed comfort derived from this past living on in the present, thus would be nothing but a glossing over that diverts from architectonically, socially and economically divisive realities of contemporary Britain.

In the late fifties and sixties, the two financially and/or critically successful strands of British cinema were the films of the Angry Young Men and, bizarrely, Hammer Films—productions specialising in cheap horror. In the seventies and the early eighties, however, the film industry went into a decline. Reasons for this were the gradual withdrawal of American funding and British legislation passed in the early eighties regarding film policy. It abolished the Eady Levy,<sup>52</sup> but more important perhaps, were other changes: the National Film Finance Corporation was terminated, and in 1984 the obligatory percentage quotas of national films to be screened in cinemas were lifted, and certain tax incentives for film producers were abolished.<sup>53</sup> However, the role that television and especially the role of Channel Four took over in the period starting from 1982 as regards the production of feature films to a certain extent compensated for this.

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<sup>52</sup> A levy introduced in 1957 where a certain amount per ticket had to be paid into a fund that would then be used for the financing of films. Ironically this money could also be applied for by US firms investing in films produced in Britain.

<sup>53</sup> Ireland offering tax breaks for film production companies using Irish locations was the country who in the late eighties and the nineties profited from these developments.

It did so by procuring (domestic and foreign) funds for British film productions and, thus, also created work opportunities.<sup>54</sup>

While a national film industry was suffering from the cuts made and legislation passed by the Tory government for the support of the arts in general,<sup>55</sup> two very different modes of British cinema then once more proved themselves financially and/or artistically viable over the two last decades of the twentieth century. For one, it was the beginning of the New British Wave starting off with the critical success of *My Beautiful Launderette* (1985) directed by Stephen Frears, and then also films of the directors Ken Loach and Mike Leigh which presented (critical) portrayals of contemporary Britain, and secondly, it was the heritage film.<sup>56</sup> Whereas the New Brit Cinema of these directors remained more dependent upon its national audiences, the other strand, the cinema of heritage, proved a financially highly viable and culturally exportable on an international level. With the vested interests of a national film or television industry at stake, certain types of classical British eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors came to be adapted more often than others during the 1980s. The trend towards an increased production of heritage films<sup>57</sup> for the cinema took off again in the mid-eighties and like previous period productions for both TV and screen, these too were exported to other audiences and markets.

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. John Caughie, *Broadcasting and Cinema I: Converging Histories*. IN: *All Our Yesterdays. 90 Years of British Film* ed. by Charles Barr, London (British Film Institute) 1986, pp. 189-205.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry. Britain in a Climate of Decline*. London (Methuen) 1987, p. 108.

The total budget for arts was cut by £ 10 million especially effecting the visual and the performing arts. The increased need for finding private sponsorship, then, results in less long-term financial security.

<sup>56</sup> A cinema historiography here might conclude that the heritage film, therefore, must be the »successor« of Hammer films. The films of Ken Russell, especially his film *Gothic* about Byron, and the Shelleys (1987) where horror and heritage are twisted together, would be an interesting starting point for a critical genealogy of British film production.

Cf. here Marcia Landy who points out that the British horror film has one of its major sources in English literature (esp. J. L. Stevenson, M. Shelley, B. Stoker). Marcia Landy, *British Genres. Cinema and Society, 1930-1960*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1991, p. 389.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Sue Harper, *Picturing the Past: The Rise and Fall of British Costume Drama*. London (bfi) 1994; and idem, *Historical Pleasures: Gainsborough Costume Drama*. IN: *Home is Where the Heart Is:*

On the political usage of the term heritage itself, Robert Hewison points out its recent emergence, one of the key dates being *the designation of 1975 as European Architectural Heritage Year*, and heritage also is *a word without definition, even in two Acts of Parliament*.<sup>58</sup>

Heritage has become a label applied to architecture, nature, and industrial sites. In the heritage film evolving in the eighties, in contrast to the history films of director-producer Alexander Korda based on historical characters or the Gainsborough costume dramas just spuriously rooted in an imaginary past, the prestige of such celluloid preservation of a national past rooted in specific locales, was paired and thereby enhanced with the heritage of national literature. This is exemplified in particular in the work of the producer-director team Ismail Merchant and James Ivory which offered representations of an idyllic past. They used representations of a historical past as vehicles for telling putatively universal stories of love, adultery etc.<sup>59</sup> It is interesting to note that their first »heritage« films were not set in Great Britain itself, but rather overseas, in the US and in India, respectively. The first heritage-cum-adaptation film of Merchant-Ivory was thus the adaptation of the Henry James novel *The Europeans* (1979) and five years later they made *The Bostonians* in 1984<sup>60</sup> which was the first financially

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*Studies in Melodrama and Women's Film*. Ed. by Christine Gledhill. London (bfi) 1987.

<sup>58</sup> Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry. Britain in a Climate of Decline*. London (Methuen) 1987, pp. 31f. The two acts of Parliament were in 1980 and 1983.

Hewison goes on to point out the evolving importance of the term in the USA: *In the United States it has been appropriated by the New Right. The Heritage Foundation set up in 1973 has a twelve-million-dollar budget to fund a Washington think-tank that serves to promote conservative political philosophy on an international scale. It has had significant influence on the Reagan administration and its ideas have been favourably received by Mrs. Thatcher and Chancellor Kohl of West Germany. It helped to establish the Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies in London in 1979, and it is credited with the decision of both the United States and Britain to withdraw from UNESCO.*

<sup>59</sup> It should be noted that this is a turning point in their joint work which started in the late seventies. Before that, their films had frequently been set in contemporary India; after *A Room with a View*, they did not return to the subcontinent. Instead, they have in the interim made amongst others, a film set in the US-American fifties, a film on the life of Picasso, and their most recent film is the adaptation of *Le Divorce* set in Paris.

<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to point out here, the second film, *The Bostonians*, is also a narrative about the nineteenth-century feminist movement in Boston and New York. Contrary to the later adaptations, it thus carries an overt political marriage. Albeit it is also a film confirming anti-

comparatively successful film in a string of literary adaptations of the duo—or rather trio, as the novelist-screenwriter Ruth Praver Jhabvala wrote a large number of their scripts.

The adaptation of the E.M. Forster novel *A Passage to India* in 1984 was noted as the first film David Lean<sup>61</sup> had undertaken since *Doktor Zhivago* (1970) and singled out for numerous awards. Most important here in international popular memory are probably the nine Academy Award nominations, of which Dame Peggy Aschcroft won the Oscar for Best Supporting Actress. In the same year, David Lean also received the American Film Institute lifetime achievement award, which is not so well-known but more prestigious within the professional community of film, in that it is bestowed but once a year and on one person only. This success was followed two years later with the immense popularity of Merchant-Ivory's adaptation of Forster's *A Room with a View* (1986) which triggered a spate of E.M. Foster, Jane Austen, Henry James and Edith Wharton et al. adaptations.<sup>62</sup> The heritage film, then, succeeded not only in exporting itself

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feminist stereotypes in that it ultimately makes the attractive young heroine chose marriage, whereas the feminist battle is left to be fought by the elderly spinster.

<sup>61</sup> The director of amongst others, *Great Expectations* (1946), *Oliver Twist* (1948); *Laurence of Arabia* (1962).

<sup>62</sup> Recent films based on works of E.M. Foster: *A Passage to India* (1984, David Lean, produced by EMI Films UK et al.); *A Room With a View* (1985, James Ivory, prod. by Merchant-Ivory-Productions & Channel Four Films); *Maurice* (1987, James Ivory, prod. by Merchant-Ivory Productions & Odyssey); *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1991, Charles Sturridge, prod. by Compact Films/LWT et al.); *Howard's End* (1992, James Ivory, prod. by Merchant-Ivory Productions et al. [mostly Japanese]).

Of Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility* (1993, Ang Lee, prod. by Columbia); *Emma* (1996, Douglas McGrath, prod. by Miramax, et al. & for TV 1997 Diarmuid Lawrence, prod. by A & E Television Networks [US], et al.); *Emma* adapted also as *Clueless* by (1995, Amy Heckerling, prod. by Paramount); *Persuasion* (1995, Roger Michell, originally for TV but theatrically released, prod. by Arts & Entertainment Network [A&E], US, Chestermead Ltd; Media Broadcasting Limited, UK, and United Film and Television Productions); *Mansfield Park* (1999, Patricia Rozema, prod. by Miramax et al.).

Of Henry James: *The Portrait of a Lady* (Champion, 1997, prod. by PolyGram et al.); *The Wings of the Dove* (Iain Softley, 1997/8, prod. by Miramax); *Washington Square* (1997, Agnieszka Holland, prod. by Walt Disney Pictures et al.); *The Golden Bowl* (2000, James Ivory, prod. by Merchant-Ivory Productions et al.).

Of Edith Wharton: *Ethan Frome* (1993, John Madden, prod. by BBC & American Playhouse), *The Age of Innocence* (1993, Martin Scorsese, prod. by Cappa & Columbia Pictures); *The House of Mirth* (2002, Terence Davies, prod. by Granada Film & Film Four).

in the late eighties and the nineties in terms of distribution, but also in terms of convincing US-production companies to, again, undertake major financing by investing in up-market projects of heritage adaptation. Frequently, a British cast and crew would thus be financed by American money, later then, American actors and actresses took up a sizeable portion of the cast—and not only as the American characters but also as the European characters.<sup>63</sup>

Beyond the specific case of British cinema of the 1980s and 1990s, the term heritage has become a more widely applicable category in film production and film reception. In France, one of the big financial and then critical successes of the mid-eighties in France were the two films *Jean de la Florette* (Claude Berri, 1986) and *Manon des sources* (Claude Berri, 1986) set in the rural French region of Provence in the post-WWII period. The latter was actually a remake of a Marcel Pagnol film from 1952 of the same title. Marcel Pagnol is one of the producers-directors who is frequently advertised on the posters of his films as a member of the *Académie Française*. Also, one can notice over the same period of time a string of films<sup>64</sup> based not necessarily only on the literary works but on the lives of

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Also of Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1993, James Ivory, prod. by Columbia).

<sup>63</sup> The cast of *The Golden Bowl*, e.g., was almost equally divided: two of the four principal characters being the US-American actor and actress Nick Nolte (playing an American) and Uma Thurman (playing an Englishwoman), the other two being British actress and actor Kate Beckinsale (playing an American) and Jeremy Northam (playing an Italian). The supporting cast then included the American Angelica Huston playing the English character Fanny Assingham. The question of actors' nationalities shall become important when in the following looking at the reception of *Un Amour de Swann*.

Note here as an interesting variant on these transnational cooperations the Sissi films of the fifties which blurred national-imperial boundaries between Austria and Germany not only through the question of citizenship of the professionals involved but also through the narrative itself, where Bavaria (metonymic stand-in for the Federal Republic of Germany) is allowed to realise dreams of imperial power through marriage. A wonderful example is that the national hymn played in solemn moments of the filmic narrative had indeed been the Austrian anthem, but at film production time was the German one. The anthem is played in all three films in various locations: in Austria along the Danube when Sissi comes to marry her Emperor; in Hungary, on Sissi's accession to the Hungarian throne; and in Venice, on Sissi's state tour of the Italian parts of the Habsburg Empire.

Two years before the first Sissy film, in 1954, Romy Schneider had also played young Queen Elisabeth to great popular success in Germany.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. here the article by Ghislaine Géloin, *The Plight of Film Adaptation in France: Toward a Dialogic Process in the Auteur Film*. IN: *Film and Literature. A Comparative Approach to Adaptation*.



French authors, or on a particularly famous period of French intellectual history. In French films, literary heritage is not coupled so much with the mansion but, rather, with the intellectual history of the nation, which permits interesting deductions as to how the literary heritage of the nation is alternately-located in the case of cinematic *Selbstentwürfe* in Britain and France, respectively.<sup>65</sup> In the case of Marcel Proust, whose literary work which is held to be almost synonymous with the life of the author, an adaptation is then regarded as a national heritage on more than one level. As the following will show, the non-French origin of the director Volker Schlöndorff and of the cast of *Un amour de Swann*, were contentious elements in the reception of a film that was the first theatrically released adaptation of this particular author.

If one then takes into consideration not only films dealing with social or intellectual elites but also films who used the rural as a idealising backdrop, then the French version of rural heritage is the celluloid pendant of the urban appearances of sophisticated Paris, as the British period film is located in the spaces of the country estate or the town house of the Edwardians. Many films set in Southern France, thus, project and devise an image of the Provence that does not take into account historical detail or linguistic diversity, and as in *Manon des Sources* and *Jean de la Florette* landscape becomes not only imbued with subjective

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Ed. by Wendell Aycock & Michael Schoenecke. Lubbock, TX (Texas Tech University Press) 1988, pp.135-148.

<sup>65</sup> Examples of French films in these two groups from the eighties and nineties are: *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1990, Jean-Paul Rappeneau), *Le gloire de mon Père* (1990, Yves Robert), *Le chateau de ma mère* (1990, Yves Robert), *Germinal* (1993, Claude Berri), *Le Colonel Chabert* (1994, Yves Angelo), *Total Eclipse* (1995, Agnieszka Holland), *La reine Margot* (1995, Patrice Chéreau), *Beaumarchais* (1996, Edouard Molinaro), *Ridicule* (1996, Patrice Leconte), *Marquise* (1997, Véra Belmont).

Emile Zola's novel *Germinal* had previously been adapted twice: once in 1913, the second time in 1963—which goes to show the acceleration of adaptive recycling.

Just as Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot and other authors of the 19th century have moved from being adapted for the cinema to predominantly being adapted as TV series, also in France e.g. Zola and Balzac (already mentioned by Bazin in 1948 as the most abused author of adaptations) have increasingly become fodder for TV-serializations.

meaning (as Simon Schama has eloquently argued<sup>66</sup>) but takes over an important role in narrative. As the Edwardian-period film may divert from the problems of contemporary Britain, so these films also deliver a version of France during and after the World War II that does not tackle the historical divisions within French society, let alone present these as problematic legacy to contemporary audiences.<sup>67</sup> In the films offering representations of an enlightened France sparkling with wit, the screen makes use both of the works of authors and of the author-figure him/herself as a character. It has been pointed out<sup>68</sup> that French cinema has from the beginning been closely linked to literary life. The following focuses on the author-figure as it re-appears in various constellations. In the case of representing Proust on film, both feature film adaptations of his work and life, as well as documentaries on the author integrated the locales of his biography into filmic accounts of him and his work as heritage.

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<sup>66</sup> Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*. New York (Knopf) 1995.

On p.61: *Landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock. So goes the argument of this book. But it should also be acknowledged that once a certain idea of landscape, a myth, a vision establishes itself in an actual place, it has a peculiar way of muddling categories, of making metaphors more real than their referents; of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery.*

The representations of Provence, then, displace the historical and linguistic diversity of the entire south of France on cinema screens.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. François de la Bretèque, *Images of 'Provence'. Ethnotypes and Stereotypes of the South in French Cinema*. IN: *Popular European Cinema*. Ed. by Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau, London & New York (Routledge) 1992, 58-71. In particular pp. 59f. where the author points out how the two images of Provence originate in two strands of literature, and p. 69 where he points out the displacement of non-French languages such as the Langue d'Oc by the invented »mid-dialect« in several films.

Cf. also Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, *The Inexportable. The Case of French Cinema an Radio in the 1950s*. IN: *ibid.*, pp. 141-148.

<sup>68</sup> I here refer to in particular to Franz-Josef Albersmeier, *Theater, Film und Literatur in Frankreich: Medienwechsel und Intermedialität*. Darmstadt (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft) 1992, esp. pp. 175-185.

The author here points out that till then, there still had been no comprehensive analysis of the uses made of e.g. Balzac or Simenon, the two most popular authors of French literature as regards adaptation.

#### 4. Against Literature

While these trends in production of certain film types, link these cinemas back to the British and French cinemas of the 40s and early 50s, it represents a distinct rupture with the cinema of the late fifties, the sixties and the seventies. It was through the writings the contributors to the French film magazine *Les Cahiers du cinéma*, that adaptation (though it was continued as a practice of cultural production) lost in critical and theoretical esteem to be replaced by the original film and, ideally, by the *auteur* film.<sup>69</sup> Amongst these contributors of *Cahiers du cinéma*<sup>70</sup> were Claude Chabrol, Jaques Rivette, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer who came to film in most cases as *cinéphiles*. They were enabled to pursue this love at the newly re-founded Cinémathèque Française. The Cinémathèque had been founded in the thirties and in 1946 became part of the Centre National de la Cinématographie, with an idiosyncratic director in the person of Henri Langlois. Because of the agenda Bazin shared with the other writers of the *Cahiers du cinéma*, i.e. trying to establish cinema as an art form, and although adaptations were not disregarded as such, it is through the films based on original scripts that the artistic merit of the medium is made. This was partly a reaction against what was by then perceived as a stuffy French national cinema, the *cinéma de qualité*, marked predominantly by making adaptations of French classics where the work of the writer was valued above the work of the director.<sup>71</sup> Consequently, when specifically speaking of

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<sup>69</sup> I therefore disagree with the conclusions Ghislaine Gélain arrives at in an article on *auteur* cinema and adaptation where it is the *auteur* film that negotiates a »peace« and actually reinstates adaptation as a desirable practice of film production.

Ghislaine Gélain, The Plight of Film Adaptation in France: Toward a Dialogic Process in the *Auteur* Film. IN: *Film and Literature. A Comparative Approach to Adaptation*. Ed. by Wendell Aycock & Michael Schoenecke. Lubbock, TX (Texas Tech University Press) 1988 pp.135-148.

<sup>70</sup> Founded in 1947 as *Révue du cinéma* by André Bazin and Jacques Doniel-Valcroze, renamed 1951.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Alan Williams, *Republic of Images. A History of French Filmmaking*. Cambridge, Mass. & London (Harvard University Press) 1992.

adaptations Bazin only regarded a very limited number of films as instances that could claim »masterpiece« status.

The artistic alternative to such a strand of national cinema as the *cinéma de qualité* had arrived after World War II. After the lifting of sanctions, a sudden influx of US-films which until then had been banned was seen in French cinemas. Rather than seeing them as an American audience would have at successively-timed releases, this meant French audiences<sup>72</sup> saw films as entire groups. This had two effects: first the differences between European (here, French) and US-American cinema were seen as all the more striking; and secondly, the characteristics shared by such foreign productions became more obvious and thus seemingly more motivated by individuals rather than by an industrial studio system. From there, *auteur* theory came into being which primarily through the study of film style ascribed a unity of œuvre to certain directors (e.g. John Ford or Howard Hawks). This happened to films which theoretically had not been grouped together to such an extent previously.<sup>73</sup>

In the late fifties and early sixties, the *Cahiers* contributors and others such as Roger Vadim and Louis Malle were making films themselves. What they wanted was a less artificial cinema and an independence of the auteur-director from production restraints of upmarket films. One of the ways they set about

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Cf. also: *Theories of Authorship: A Reader*. Ed. by John Caughie. London & Boston (Routledge & Kegan Paul, in association with the British Film Institute) 1981.

The article of François Truffaut, *Une certaine tendance du cinéma français*. IN: *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1954) No. 31. The article argued for a new type of realism, which would be anti-bourgeois and pits its films against the *Tradition de la Qualité*.

<sup>72</sup> Other European audiences, too, were exposed to US-films in large numbers after the war. In what was to become West Germany, however, the influx of US-films in cinemas unhindered by any kind of quota regulation, arrived under the auspices of educative measures taken meant to counter German Fascism.

<sup>73</sup> It is interesting that *auteur* theory comes into being only when foreign films enter a domestic market. This is also argued in the case of the US by Janet Staiger but from the US side. Here, *auteur* theory registers with the American public (first with journalists, then theorists and viewers) through the entry of European art house films into the distribution circuit in the 1960s.

Cf. here Chapter Nine: With the compliments of the Auteur: Art Cinema and the Complexities of Its Reading Strategies. IN: Janet Staiger, *Interpreting Films. Studies in the Historical Perception of American Cinema*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1992, pp. 178-195.

this was to make comparatively low-budget films, by e.g. using the streets of Paris as locations rather than costly studio sets. Thus, not only have they provided the audience with a cinematic topography of Paris,<sup>74</sup> but by making the production fairly cheap and since the films, as it turned out, were also rather successful (financially and with the critics, which led to subsequent projects under their control being better-financed), they had effectively instated themselves as the authorial force in French cinema, toppling the novelist or dramatist of the *cinéma de qualité*.

The realist postulate of the Nouvelle Vague is, however, very far removed from that of the preceding Italian Neorealismo of the late forties and fifties, as well as from the engagement with social issues of the films of the subsequent British Wave of the sixties. Here realism meant to distinguish oneself by choice of location and not using sets while on the other hand making deliberate use of Brechtian *Verfremdungs*-aesthetics and other modes of self-reflexivity. In *A bout de souffle*<sup>75</sup> the central character played by Jean-Paul Belmondo is an imitator of Humphrey Bogart, and in *Le Mépris*<sup>76</sup> Fritz Lang plays himself adapting the *Odysee*.<sup>77</sup> This »realism« includes an awareness of its fictionality, but lays claim to uncovering a new reality in that process. It thus had incidentally aligned itself with the theoretical programmes of film theorist Siegfried Kracauer and literary scholar Erich Auerbach, respectively, where a new reality is arrived at through

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<sup>74</sup> Incidentally, the Paris of the 1960s very closely resembles the Paris of Marcel Proust's *Recherche*, being the Haussmann Paris that was designed and put into action in the second half of the nineteenth century.

<sup>75</sup> *A bout de souffle* (1960, Jean-Luc Godard).

<sup>76</sup> *Le mépris* (1963, Jean-Luc Godard).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. here Jefferson T. Kline, *Screening the Text. Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1992.

On p. 2: Since French cinema in particular (and cinema in general) had been tied too closely to classic forms of narration and film production, these young theorists centred their attack on the work of such filmmakers as Claude Autant-Lara and on the tradition of the "well-made" and "literary" film. Film would no longer be the handmaiden of literature, but would stand as its rival. Searching for subversive techniques to break down the "normal" discursive function of traditional film, with its apparently seamless representation of illusion, the new wavers (re)introduced the notion of rupture (borrowing from Eisenstein's theory of montage) and alienation (borrowing from Brecht).

complex artistic representation.<sup>78</sup> But while this filmic realism is also connected to a self-reflexivity and marks a departure from the *dégré zéro*, it is not regarded as a scandalon of the cinematic text. Like the »superfluous« elements of literature in Barthes's *L'effet du réel*,<sup>79</sup> it represents narrative surplus. But rather than being regarded as a disturbance of the narrative, it is seen as referring to a different narrative altogether: the narrative of film as independent art. As legitimisation of an artistic genealogy, the anterior filmic »masterpieces« were indispensable referents for the Nouvelle Vague films.

While the author-function remains undisputed in the films of the Nouvelle Vague, the perspective taken on literature is fundamentally different. What I have pointed out in the above on the deceptive reality effect of film as in Metz and its parallels in the perception of the country house, here, has become that against which one has to assert oneself through new sources. From these sources (e.g. Paris, the US film noir, the gangster movie) cinema derived its stories and a new aesthetic programme. A literary classic was regarded as something like a »pernicious veil« that shrouds the gaze of the camera with which the director wrote his (her) story.<sup>80</sup> The referentiality to the twin-narrative-art was thus cast aside and was, in several films, replaced by a self-reflexivity on the medium itself.

However, there nonetheless remains an connection to literature in the works of various directors of the French Wave. It is not against literature per se that the Nouvelle Vague revolted, but the terms of interchange were perceived

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<sup>78</sup> Cf. Siegfried Kracauer, *Theorie des Films. Die Errettung der äusseren Wirklichkeit*. Frankfurt a.M. (Suhrkamp) 1975 (orig Engl. 1960); Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. Dargestellte Wirklichkeit in der abendländischen Literatur*. Tübingen & Basel (Francke) 1994 (9th ed. 1st 1946, written 1942-45). Kracauer contends that through a representation of reality as fragmented, one arrives at a new, at an objective reality. Auerbach interprets the mosaic-like character of the description of social reality in Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, as a way of representing objective reality.

<sup>79</sup> Roland Barthes, *L'effet du réel* (1968). IN: idem, *Œuvres Complètes II. 1966-1973*. Paris (Seuil) 1994, pp. 479-484.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Alexandre Astruc, *Naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde: la caméra stylo*. (1948). Reprinted IN: idem, *Du stylo à la caméra et de la caméra au stylo*. Paris (L'Archipel) 1992, pp. 324-328.

as different. Film is no longer just a handmaiden to literature, or the art to come after it, but even has overtaken literature in a way, or, the boundaries between film and literature have become blurred.<sup>81</sup> Collaborations like that of Robbe-Grillet or Marguerite Duras with the director Alain Resnais, e.g., have produced some films that have been studied extensively—but not as adaptations. Jefferson T. Kline has summarised the role of literature in *L'année dernière à Marienbad* as follows:<sup>82</sup>

*In many cases these texts have served as screens that simultaneously hide and reveal "multiple motivations," revealing libidinous elements such as repressed sexual and/or violent desires or tendencies otherwise hidden from explicit expression. Of course, these elements are what one would expect to find hidden in unconscious structures. And yet, another look at Marienbad would reveal that just beneath the "surface" of the entire film lies, like a palimpsest, Resnais's earlier short words, lie other words - an entire library of them. If Resnais's camera proceeds along labyrinths of corridors, searching out "answers" to the question of identity and memory posed by Marienbad's characters, it is merely retracing its "steps" of another year in a castle: France's Bibliothèque Nationale. In that earlier film, the camera travels throughout the library, moving from the airy spaciousness of public rooms down into the suffocating "libido" of the Enfer. Thus, one of the elements screened in the later version of the film is revealed to be literature itself. No wonder, then, that Marienbad "hides" its "secret" in an intertextual configuration!*

The individual literary classic is here replaced with the entirety of literature that is jealously guarded at the most hallowed institutional shrine to French erudition.

Thus, two legacies of literature to film can be made out so far. One is the focus on an author-figure that persisted in the theorising of these directors and writers which represents a continuation of a literary model and fundamentally shaped the ways in which the academic discipline of film studies then approached its object of study: monographs on films of the fifties and the sixties frequently were on topics like the *œuvre* of a certain director and writer, presupposing a unity of the body of work because originating with an *auteur*;

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. the article of scriptwriter Jean-Claude Carrière, ... le cinéma à force d'influencer la littérature finit par la tuer. IN *Cinema*, (July-August 1970), no. 148, pp. 60-64. And Pierre Gay, Nouveau Roman et cinéma nouveau. IN: *ibid.*, pp.65-76. The latter article assigns this tendency also to non-French films such as films of Michelangelo Antonioni and to Pier Paolo Pasolini, who is both author and director.

<sup>82</sup> Jefferson T. Kline, *Screening the Text. Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1992, p. 223.

similarly, film history frequently was a historiography telling a narrative of masterpieces and great talents who propelled the art into maturity. Furthermore, it entailed that since the director was perceived as an elective affinity of the author, this authorial double-bind would create a theoretical category which in reception became so strong, that it blocked out other approaches to adaptation—  
{ which comes to the fore in particular when an adaptation is termed »a meeting of great original minds.«

/ The second legacy I make out here, and which is not so obvious, is that the effect of literature is regarded as something not only alien and hostile (in its overbearing patrimoniality) and stifling (with its label of *qualité* and taste), but can be interpreted as an illusion-effect which goes against the new aesthetic in much more insidious ways. Standing for the old order of arts and for an old type of cinema, the classical canon of literature is that which has to be negated at all costs because in its structure it threatens to show precisely what cinema functions upon: a reality effect. The root of the fear of literature is then not only that it stifles cinema or produces boring and anachronistic films, but that adaptation might unmask the illusory workings of it on levels where this is precisely not wanted. To adapt from literature reveals how film after all depends on other arts to tell its stories—and literature most prominently. For a cinematic programme purporting to offer a new, a fresh outlook on the world or demanding originality as its key distinction from the type of cinema that went before, the possibility of being aligned along parallel lines through even so tenuous connections had to be anathema. So, when filmmakers of the Angry Young Men or of the Nouvelle Vague did enter into either collaborations with authors of e.g. the Nouveau Roman or engaged in adaptations, these had to belong to a new kind of literature and explicitly not to a tradited body of canonical texts.

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As examples of films reffering to literature or using literature in their narrative emplotment, he gives amongst others, *Jules et Jim* (1961, Truffaut); *Ma nuit chez Maud* (1969, Eric Rohmer).



Modelling the director on the author in academic writing on film, only deferred the doing away with the cache of literature. The academic interest in literary adaptation that had started in the late fifties, continued through the sixties and seventies when interest in it began to wane. As one reason for this I propose that since the upheavals of the social, cultural and academic revolutions of the 60s and 70s attacked the very idea of canon in the field of literary studies and in film theory and thus initiated a marginalisation of any theory that implied »masterpieces« or »classics«. Film studies then turned to other approaches rooted in disciplines or theories like linguistics, psychoanalysis, marxism, semiotics.

Again modelled on literature, films were now treated like the equivalent of books: they were read. In film studies, this became the period of the *over-arching master narratives*.<sup>83</sup> While there are earlier studies trying to formulate a language of film, this found a different paradigm when in the sixties and seventies structuralist, linguistic, and semiotic models were applied to film.<sup>84</sup> Films were being read as texts, i.e. like literature. For the studies on adaptation in this period this in most cases meant a shift or interest from auctorial intention to style, modes of representation, semiotics, and narrativity. In many cases these approaches then still attributed meaning to the film by pre-supposing a (often singular) meaning of the literary source and looking for it in the film. Thus in the eighties and nineties, film studies when concerned with theoretical issues often endeavoured to assess how narratological or linguistic issues like point of view,

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Bill Nichols, *Film Theory and the Revolt Against Master Narratives*. IN: *Reinventing Film Studies*. Ed. by Christine Gledhill & Linda Williams. London (Arnold) 2000, pp. 34-52.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. e.g. Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Pictures*. New York (Macmillan) 1922 (1st 1915); Roger Spottiswoode, *A Grammar of Film*. Berkeley (University of California Press) 1950; Marcel Martin, *Le langage cinématographique*. Paris (Éditions du Cerf) 1992. (revised reprint of 4th ed. from 1985; 1st 1955); Jurij Lotman, *Probleme der Kinoästhetik. Einführung in die Semiotik des Films*. [Transl. by Christiane Böhler-Auras]. Frankfurt a.M. (Syndikat) 1977 (1st Russ. 1973); François Jost, *L'Œil-caméra. Entre film et roman*. Lyon (Presses Universitaires de Lyon) 1987; idem &

narrator-figures, metaphors etc. were expressed in the medium film.<sup>85</sup> This was frequently compared to, or put in opposition to, the techniques and narrative possibilities that literature<sup>86</sup> had at its disposal. That much of the critical work on which film theory is developed comes from literary studies is an historic irony given how hard film studies tried to assert themselves as independent of this discipline.

A second wave of interest in the topic of literary adaptations can be noted as starting in occasional articles in the early eighties, occurring intermittently over the decade and then resulting in a spatter of publications in the mid- and late nineties that continues up to now. While several of these continued along familiar narratology lines<sup>87</sup> (then being able to build on the theoretical work done on film in general in the eighties), the approaches differ from the previous wave in several respects.<sup>88</sup> These articles and books take adaptation as a phenomenon that takes place not in the exchange between literature and film, but should to be framed in other contexts. Thus, they do not undertake comparative studies of narratological or media-specific elements of the two

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André Gaudréault, *Le récit cinématographique*. Paris (Nathan) 1990; Walter Hagenbüchle, *Narrative Strukturen in Literatur und Film*. Bern (Peter Lang) 1991.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. e.g. Edward Branigan, *Point of View in the Cinema*. [Sulzburg & Berlin] (Sulzburg Druck GmbH) 1984 (rev. version of PhD 1979); Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca (Cornell University Press) 1990; Christian Metz as in *Problèmes de dénotation dans le film et la fiction: contribution à une sémiologie du cinéma* (1966); *La grande syntagmatique du film narratif* (1966); *Un problème de sémiologie au cinéma* (1967).

<sup>86</sup> Which in this period almost invariably referred to the novel, though no longer exclusively to the nineteenth-century realist or naturalist novel, but also the *nouveau roman*.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film. An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford (Clarendon Press) 1996. This book has been one of the most widely debated recent publications in adaptation. But as pointed out previously, in its exclusive focus on narrative comparison it is not entirely convincing.

A more interesting study undertaken on the topic is Joyce Gould Boyum's *Double Exposure: Fiction Into Film*. New York (Universe Books) 1985. This book groups adaptations via themes, such as point of view, metaphor, style etc.

<sup>88</sup> Collaborative examples here would be the illuminating collection of essays edited by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan *From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. London (Routledge) 1999. Or, the collection edited by Robert Giddings & Erica Sheen, *The Classic Novel. From Page to Screen*. Manchester (Manchester University Press) 2000.

media, but open up into politics,<sup>89</sup> marketing,<sup>90</sup> reception and other contexts. An article of Ken Gelder<sup>91</sup> notes how in the adaptation of the novel *Interview with a Vampire* the conflict of interests between the authorial figures involved in an adaptation results in the re-appearance of the novel's author in the public field, claiming her status as prime legitimisation for the filmic narrative. In the case of the film *Le temps retrouvé* one can note a different type of authorial return, as the third chapter argues. The renewed interest in the figure of the author in academic studies on adaptation of recent years, suggests that the practice of adaptation itself is coming under revision. Rather than expecting a satisfactory delivery of the novel's story, an adaptation is to furnish its spectator with an interpretation of both work and author. Work and author, are thus taken out of a interpretative model that regards adaptation as a narrative exchange and are re-located into a variety of contexts. The study of adaptation has shifted its focus from theory to practice: rather than developing totalizing theories of adaptation, adaptation is studied as a cultural practice.

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<sup>89</sup> Darlene J. Sadlier's article on the work of Brazilian director Pereira dos Santos explores how in his adaptation of historical sources history and is put into question and brought to bear upon the present. Darlene J. Sadlier. *How Tasty Was My Little Frenchman*. IN: *Film Adaptation*. Ed. by James Naremore. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 2000, 190-205

<sup>90</sup> Robert Giddings, Keith Selby & Chris Wensley, *Screening the Novel. The Theory and Practice of Literary Adaptations*. New York (St. Martin's Press) 1990.

This is a study on the films *Vanity Fair* and *Great Expectations* which analyses the marketing campaign for the film and the book at the time of the adaptation's release.

<sup>91</sup> Ken Gelder's, *The Vampire Writes Back: Anne Rice and the (Re)Turn of the Author in the Field of Cultural Production*. IN: *Pulping Fictions: Consuming Culture Across the Literature/Media Divide*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell, et al. London (Pluto Press) 1996, pp. 29-41. Film: *Interview With a Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* (1994, Neil Jordan).

## 5. Transgressively Yours

The previously outlined development suggested that movie audiences now know what to expect from »an Austen«, i. e. an adaptation of Jane Austen. This recognition functions, however, only within certain conventions of adaptation. The film based upon the novel must fulfil certain criteria if it is to be recognisable as a heritage adaptation. In popular (and unfortunately also critical) parlance, it is expected to be faithful to the novel. In this sense, the term fidelity, implying a closeness or an affinity between the film and the novel, works as a critical-reception term within rather narrow parameters. In the following various examples of adaptations will be analysed. Rather than being reduced to a question of »fidelity« this study argues that it is a question of the »I«. First, it will be shown how the term »fidelity« has come to bear in very different ways upon the reception or the making of the films and, thus, how the term's putative transparency reveals itself as an intended opacity; and secondly, the analysis shows that when a film says »I«, this can give other answers to the questions of identification and appropriation that have repercussions for adaptation as a cultural practice. Here, the fidelity to that one letter, the »I« is of interest for several reasons. Contrary to literature, for a film a first person narrative, i.e. to say »I« has been regarded as an impossibility. To do so was to move beyond conventional representational possibilities of the medium. Films who have attempted this, therefore, represent challenges to standard narrative cinema, and a challenge for the spectator and the reception process alike. In such films, narrator-figures insert themselves between the diegesis and the spectator, and in this rupture pose questions of authority. In an adaptation, this »I« becomes a contested space of narrative authority where not least the figure of the author and the director are subjected to a process of (re)evaluation. In the case of *A la recherche du temps perdu* where the *je*, the »I«, is taken to be Marcel Proust himself, the question of fidelity to the author is embedded at the centre of the source material itself.

In the denotations inherent in the metaphorical use of »faithful« or »fidelity«, one can note that the terms are again taken from the area of socio-sexual relationships. Like the rapacious film ravishing hapless literature in the Woolf quote or the union of film and literature producing sterile offspring in the previous Bazin quote, here, the relationship is gendered as well. But who is supposed to take vows of fidelity to whom? Since the novel is never asked to be faithful to its adaptations, it clearly is film, who has to take on the role of the faithful female trying to please the dominant male of literature. But, the duty of film is not to be faithful and thus please its partner literature. Rather, film is to please the community of »literate« (virtually everyone involved in the reception of a film: the authors, the journalists, the spectator) who here act as judges of film's »conduct«. It is fairly obvious that being at the mercy of so many with so varied interests (and many of whom are quite eager to throw the biblical first stone) leaves fairly little margin for film to become an equal partner. Not only is the choice of the metaphoric term fidelity laden with connotations that configure the relationship between novel and film as unequal, but there are two possibilities of being faithful: the film can be faithful to the letter or the spirit. I pick up this distinction of the film having at its disposal the options of being faithful either to the letter or to the spirit of the literary source and will analyse how it made out to function in various contexts.

An affectively less charged dichotomy that is used in the analysis of adaptations comes from linguistics and literary theory. Here, I refer to the writings of Émile Benveniste<sup>92</sup> with the distinction between *discours* and *histoire*, and to the Russian Formalist distinction between *fabula* and *sjuzhet*. *Discours* or *syuzhet* would be the way in which a story is told, whereas *histoire* and *fabula* describe the story told, i.e. the chain of (interlinked) events, which taken together comprise the narrative. When one brings together these two dichotomies of

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<sup>92</sup> Émile Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Paris (Gallimard) 1966.

letter/spirit and *histoire/discours* (or, *fabula/syuzhet*) one could assume that being faithful to the letter, is in most publications on adaptation not only understood as guaranteeing a faithful rendition of the narrative, and also in many cases even more precisely, the *fabula* or *histoire*—rather than the *syuzhet* or *discours*. In semiotic analyses of literature and film the distinction between the two, then, ascribed to the *histoire* those elements of a text that were (more or less) universally transferable between media, whereas the *discours* comprised those that resist transposition because they require media-specific modes of expression and, in some cases, one medium may be better adapted to transmitting them.<sup>93</sup> For adaptation studies, these distinctions are useful in so far as they permit to note, which elements of narrative become assigned to either of these levels of narration.

### Fidelity to the Letter

In the context of literary adaptation study, anything that takes on an authorial function with respect to the unfolding narrative, embeds in that film also a discourse of author-figures.<sup>94</sup> As developed in narrative theory of film, narrator figures, especially first person narrator figures or narrative functions such as the omniscient commentator, have been regarded as one of the most

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<sup>93</sup> Film, e.g. was ascribed a better form of *discours* to show things, whereas literary *discours* is perceived as better adapted to comment, »ironicalize«, give inner monologues, stream-of-consciousness etc.

<sup>94</sup> However, I emphatically do not connect this to the concept of a unified, albeit non-biographical figure that Seymour Chatman proposed. Rather, by speaking of author-figures, I underscore that these become discursive spaces for heterogeneous projections.

Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca & London (Cornell University Press) 1990.

On p. 133: *In short, for films as for novels, we would do well to distinguish between a presenter of the story, the narrator (who is a component of the discourse), and the inventor of both the story and the discourse (including the narrator: that is the implied author—not as the original cause, the original, biographical person, but rather as the principle within the text to which we assign the inventional tasks.*

problematic narrative devices to adapt to film.<sup>95</sup> The narrator figure in both literature and film is a pivotal connecting point between a book and its readers, and a film and its spectators. It is through this figure's mode of address that the spectator/reader not only grasps the *histoire* but also *discours*. In the case of films that actively propose a diegetic first-person narrator-figure, not only are the boundaries between *histoire* and *discours* dissolved, but also the boundaries of narrative cinema between film and audience. Unlike other studies, I not only contend that film can say »I«, but also that the consequences of speaking thus, entail a number of transgressive acts. As narrator I understand a figure that is introduced as such by the film, even if it may only appear only as a voice-over. The narrator may thus be indicated merely as a name among the credits, or may be a character of the diegesis, or may be a meta-diegetic character. The narrator, here, therefore is not to be confused with the concept of an implied author, the grand image-maker,<sup>96</sup> or as a bundle of enunciative functions. I shall now look first at two films which have said »I«, and have tried to solve this problem (and thus were »faithful«) in different ways, and then at a film whose narrative itself hinges on the distinctions between *discours* and *histoire*.

In the *The Age of Innocence*,<sup>97</sup> one finds a classical instance of an extradiegetic narrator, i.e. a disembodied voice that does not originate within the diegesis. This narrator-voice gives descriptions of the rituals of the New York society often taken verbatim from the novel. The voice receives a vicarious corporeality only in the credits: when it is announced along with the principal actors and actresses playing the characters, as the voice of Joanne Woodward.

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<sup>95</sup> Cf. David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film*. London (Routledge) 1985, pp. 61f. & 322ff.; Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca & London (Cornell University Press) 1990, pp. 124ff.; Edward Branigan, *Point of View the Cinema*. [Berlin & Sulzburg] (Sulzburg Druck GmbH) 1984, pp. 42ff.; André Gaudréault & François Jost, *Le récit cinématographique*. Paris (Collections Nathan Université) 1990, pp. 39ff.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. Edward Branigan, *Point of View in the Cinema*. Berlin (Sulzburg Drck GmbH) 1984.

<sup>97</sup> *The Age of Innocence* (1993, Martin Scorsese).

The film *Orlando*<sup>98</sup> also uses voice-over to indicate a narrator, but significantly digresses from the conventions of narrative cinema. In *Orlando* the off-screen voice appears far less frequently, yet it creates an irritation almost instantly: when introducing the principal character Orlando<sup>99</sup> with the voice-over words [...] *And because this is England, Orlando would therefore seem destined to have his portrait on the wall and his name in the history books. But when he—* here, the voice-over ceases, the character Orlando looks directly into the camera and says *that is, I*. Not only is the narrative device of looking directly into the camera a very disorienting one in that it breaks the illusion of the cinematic diegetic space as self-contained and spills out into the space of the spectator, the voice-over commenting on Orlando is revealed as the voice of Orlando. Here then, the expected extradiegetic narrator assumes a iuxtadiegetic quality, i.e. it is not strictly separate from the diegesis but adjacent to it. This position is not that unusual, e.g. a character posed as a narrator in frame narratives frequently is given such iuxtadiegetic voice that serves as transition device (often accompanied by visual transitions such as dissolves or a different image texture) between the framing narrative and the story then told as flashback or main narrative.<sup>100</sup> What is unusual here, is that the voice on the diegetic level and the iuxtadiegetic are staged as opposing poles within a scene, between a s/he and an »I«. The narrator-character *Orlando* transgresses into spectator-space not only in this scene but on numerous other occasions over the course of the entire film.

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<sup>98</sup> *Orlando* (1992, Sally Potter).

<sup>99</sup> Orlando at this stage of the narrative is still a man but as s/he is played by the actress Tilda Swinton throughout the film, gender becomes a deliberately confused category. And not only through Orlando-Swinton: the supporting cast also uses a man playing Queen Elizabeth, Quentin Crisp.

Quentin Crisp, in turn, had a TV-film based on his life where for the first time the biography of a homosexual trying to live his sexual inclinations openly was frankly displayed on film. *The Naked Civil Servant* (1975, Jack Gold).

<sup>100</sup> The genre of film noir seems particularly given to employing the use of voice-over, e.g. *Sunset Boulevard* (1950, Billy Wilder), *Double Indemnity* (1944, Billy Wilder); *Out of the Past* (1947, Jacques Tourneur). Here, the voice-over, however, often belongs to one of the characters, who is either narrating a story that has already occurred (then the voice-over is used to introduce a



The narrative, thus, is not presented as a narrative in the third person but as the narrative of a first person. The transgression out of the space of illusionist cinema deictically solicits a second person. Here that second person is the spectator who is looked at directly. Though this film in certain respects does fulfil the requirements of a period film, it is here that it radically departs from it. Unlike period films, this film does not produce a self-contained narrative. Furthermore, in soliciting the spectator into its narrative space, it refers to its made-ness. The film *Orlando* as an adaptation continues these self-reflexive references by adding narrative onto the end of narrative: among these not least the narrative of the character Orlando having written and now trying to publish the story of *Orlando* in the 1980s. It thereby at the end recalls the exchange that was its starting point: the process of adapting from a novel. The character Orlando has, by now, diegetically also become a »full woman«: changing her sex as a character to female in the eighteenth century, discovering sex with a romantic lover, being denied her inheritance under Victorian law, and having a daughter. When the character of *Orlando* at the end of the narrative then also becomes the author of what s/he had asserted in the opening scene as his/her own story, i.e. the film just seen, she becomes a narrative double. As a writer-character, she is a double of both Vita Sackville-West and of Virginia Woolf, and as a character living on into the 1990s, she is an authorial double of the director-screenwriter Sally Potter.

The recent adaptation of Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, also has its heroine Fanny Price look into the camera at the audience. This is done primarily at the beginning of the narrative which then reverts to the closed illusionist space of narrative cinema. As the film states it also used journals and letters of Jane Austen when assembling the story, I would argue here, that this is then not so much a referral to filmic authorial-figure, i.e. the director, but to the literary author, Jane Austen. In both *Orlando* and *Mansfield Park*, historical persons are

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flashback etc.) or in commenting on the action going on, permits the viewer to share his/her

inserted into the narrative when the films say »I« In referring to an auteur and to an author, the act of saying »I« thus inscribes either filmic or literary author-figures into a film.

In *The Lady in the Lake*<sup>101</sup> the first person narrator is represented in the film both via voice-over, a direct form of address to the spectator, and through the visual means of camera perspectives simulating a first person. This is not the conventional subjective camera in the shot-countershot or the personal point-of-view technique that implies the viewer is now looking at what the character is looking at. The camera in *The Lady in the Lake* takes the place of an »I«. This »I« is the character of the detective Philip Marlowe, who consequently for the most part of the film is perceivable primarily as voice, and then e.g. in partial shots of his hands when picking up a phone, or through cigarette smoke emanating from his mouth, or as a shadow. Only in the opening/closing sequences and during the film when facing a mirror does he appear as a visually »complete« character.

The film is invariably cited in film books<sup>102</sup> on the topics of perspective, point of view, and narrator-conceptions. as an example of an interesting experiment—which failed both in financial terms as in its critical reception. The »literal«, and thus it could be argued, very faithful transposition of the novel's first person narrator, did not meet with a positive reception by audiences nor by critics. Fidelity here, has been carried too far by trying to stay too close. In films where this has been used in brief segments, the technique was more successful. Any shot suggesting a look through binoculars or a telescope or even a mask by

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thoughts.

<sup>101</sup> *The Lady in the Lake* (1947, Robert Montgomery).

<sup>102</sup> Cf. James Monaco, *Film Verstehen*. Hamburg (Rowohlt) 1980 (Engl. 1977, rev. 1980); George Wilson, *Narration in Light: Studies in Cinematic Point of View*, Baltimore (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1986; Edward Branigan, *Point of View in the Cinema*, Sulzburg & Berlin (Sulzburg Druck GmbH) 1984.

Cf. also James Griffith, *Adaptations as Imitations*. Newark (Associated University Presses) 1997.

On p. 52, this study who speaks of *The Lady in the Lake* as a *perverse experiment* but also contends that it actually creates a second person narration rather than a first person narration, because the viewer does not identify with protagonist Marlowe.

blacking out part of the screen is an instance of this. There were also examples of films who had used this point-of-view construction through entire sequences.<sup>103</sup> In film theoretical terms, this can be explained by film as an art functioning narratively through showing, *montrer*.<sup>104</sup> One reason for the reluctance to embrace this technique throughout a film was certainly that the classical Hollywood style had created conventions of viewing in the decades prior to the release of this film that based viewer identification along different lines than those of readers. In order to identify with a protagonist in a film, the viewer expects to see him/her, as a theatre-goer would see actors on a stage.<sup>105</sup> To have forced the viewer to see the world with the »literal« eyes of a character, left no gap. Thus, identification is rendered impossible.

The visual absence of the protagonist Philip Marlowe is furthermore disturbing not only because it makes him/her disappear physically and thus inaccessible for identification, but also because the body becomes a fragmented entity: seen only as hands or as feet appearing partially in the frame, and as various »emanations« (such as the cigarette smoke rising in the foreground of

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<sup>103</sup> Another film making fairly extensive use of this technique is *Dark Passage* (1947, Delmer Daves).

There is a genre that makes frequent use of this technique: in many horror movies (esp. slasher films), the camera takes the perspective of the stalker/murderer/monster.

Cf. here Carol C. Clover, *The Eye of Horror*. IN: *Viewing Positions. Ways of Seeing Film*. Ed. by Linda Williams, New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 1995, pp. 184-230.

Here, the inability to identify the stalker is vital for the engagement of the spectator in a dynamic of horror.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. here Siegfried Kracauer, *Schriften III. Theorie des Films*. Frankfurt a.M. (Suhrkamp) 1973 (1st English as *Theory of Film*, 1970); Rudolf von Arnheim *Film as Art*. Berkeley. Los Angeles & London (University of California Press) 1957 (1st as: *Film als Kunst*, 1932); Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, Ithaca (Cornell University Press) 1990; André Gaudreault & François Jost, *Le récit cinématographique*, Paris (Nathan) 1990.

<sup>105</sup> François Truffaut in collaboration with Helen Scott, *Le cinéma selon Hitchcock*. Paris (Laffont) 1966.

In one of the interviews, both filmmakers assert the need for the protagonist to be seen by the audience, if it is to identify with him/her. In Metzian terms this refers to narrative cinema's requirement of *identification secondaire* (secondary identification). Christian Metz, *Le signifiant imaginaire*. Paris (Christian Bourgeois) 1984 (1st 1975), here p. 67. Contrary to the primary identification of the Lacanian mirror-stage, the viewer does not need a mirror-image but identifies with the character of the narrative film or with the actor of the a-fictional film. But a human shape is necessary.

the frame, or the shadow of the protagonist appearing on the ground or on walls). Since he only appears whole when a reflected in a mirror, he is a fragmented subject most of the time. The homonymity between »I« and eye, reveals the reductionism in that move: in being turned into a perspectively-eliminated character for the most part of the film, the central character of the narrative becomes a blind spot of the film. In an adaptation this is doubly disturbing, I would argue, for as a narrator figure the central character also wields auctorial power in its function as a double of other author-figures. To divest the central character of a body, to deprive the spectator of the possibility of identification, also severs the bond with any other author-figure. And as these author-figures are central to adaptation because they are present at various levels of the practice, an adaptation eliminating its »I« from the visual field also edits its author-figures out of the film.

Not only does the authorial central character (Philip Marlowe, the protagonist-cum-narrator) appear as an incomplete subject, also the remaining characters of the movie come to be perceived and defined differently. For one, when the camera remains exclusively on them in an exchange between them and Philip Marlowe, they are the only actors seen at work. As no reaction of the other dialogue partner to their actions and dialogue can be observed, the spectator is unable to fully gauge what these characters are reacting to. Then, when the camera (enacting a look around) pans a set, the audience is forced to take in random-seeming details of a set devoid of any characters (and thus devoid of action in a film that is, after all, a detective mystery) at a prescribed pace and within a simulated body movement. The spectator is then also visually removed from the *locus* of action, e.g. in scenes where dialogue with another character is going on while the camera-eye of Marlowe looks around placing his fellow character *hors-cadre*. Whereas in the first effect mentioned, the continuous and unbroken presence of the character in front of this camera-eye creates a disturbance through the absence of diegetic interaction, in the two aspects of the second effect, it is the general absence of character agency and/or the imitation



of an other's body-eye-movement superimposed on the spectator's gaze that go against the grain of identification. While the equation of the director's camera with the writer's pen as the instrument which writes a narrative by Alexandre Astruc<sup>106</sup> was over-simplistic in the neglect of other technical support used to produce a film, the comparison does point out the technological (as opposed to creative) nature of the camera. In *The Lady in the Lake* the fidelity to the letter carried out in the homonymity of »eye« and »I«, achieves the opposite of the deictic relationship of *Orlando's* »I« between the character and the spectator. Here, the ties between »I« and »you« are severed between the film and the spectator, as they are on a diegetic level between the characters where the representational mode chosen here only shows one half of the conversation. The film is disturbing because it precludes any kind of exchange at the very moment when exchange according to the structure of deixis and to the conceptualisation of adaptation is imperative.

Both cases of soliciting suggest that the construction of narrative (and the experience of a film which re-constructs that narrative) in the process of viewing, involve processes of insertion into this space of the Other. More to the point for seeing and adaptation, there can only be an active engagement with the narrative itself and with the film as an adaptation, if there are authorial enunciators soliciting this kind of reading. Such enunciators need not be narrators but may be other technical devices, or narrative techniques. I give the example of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in the following. But the narrator-figure on the case of Proust is of particular interest because, as I shall argue at later points in this thesis, it is the fact that the literary source material is a first-person narrative and a fictional autobiography that has solicited reception processes where the readers and adaptors insert their own biography into their individual readings of the *je*.

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<sup>106</sup> Alexandre Astruc, *La naissance d'une nouvelle avant-garde. La caméra-stylo*. (1948) Reprinted IN: idem, *Du stylo à la caméra et de la caméra au stylo*. Paris (L'Archipel) 1992, pp. 324-328.

In the adaptation of John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*<sup>107</sup> the narrator-figure—who ironically comments the action of the Victorian characters of the novel—is displaced onto other levels in the film by the introduction of a play within a play device: only half of the film is set in Victorian England. The other half is set in present-day England where a film crew is shooting the story of the Victorian characters. The two real actors thus play double roles which make up two couples: the filmic actor (Mike) and actress (Anne)—both with other partners elsewhere—who are having an affair and the Victorian gentleman (Charles) who is engaged to be married but falls in love with the French lieutenant's woman of the title (Sarah). While this splitting of the action facilitates the adaptation of the two alternative endings the novel offers (a reunion and a breakup), it entails shifts in narrative balance between film and literature.

For one, if one accepts the narrator-figure as having been replaced by the modern actor-couple commenting on the Victorians, then the commentary has become the main diegesis into which a Victorian metadiegesis<sup>108</sup> is embedded; whereas before the Victorian plot was that of the diegesis and the narrator-figure part of an extradiegesis, i.e. on a different level of narrative. At the same time, the narrator-figure has been taken from his extradiegetic omniscient position: The content of his commentary on the Victorians is transformed into dialogue between two modern characters and though they are (by acting out the lines) still commenting on the Victorian period their dialogue does not transcend *histoire*.<sup>109</sup> In this sense, the two historically-distinct diegetical positions in the

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<sup>107</sup> *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981, Karel Reisz).

<sup>108</sup> This is a diegesis which is told within another diegesis.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. here also Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in Film and Literature. From Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard*. Ann Arbor, MI (UMI Research Press) 1985.

On p. 160: *While Reisz' and Pinter's solutions are ingenious, and effective in their own terms, they tend to push the film in the direction of naturalism. Fowles's anachronistic references to Victorian science and political theory are largely discarded. More seriously, there is no equivalent for the authorial persona of Fowles' narrator, costumed in Victorian frock and beard, sharing a train compartment with his protagonist, comparing two eras and contrasting the conventions of Victorian fiction with those of the French New Novel, initiating us into the theoretical codes and technical secrets of his craft. The film has*

adaptation have transformed a literary *histoire-discours* pair to a filmic *histoire-histoire* pair.<sup>110</sup>

In his analysis of the film as an adaptation with special focus on the narrator-figure, Seymour Chatman<sup>111</sup> points out that the film distinguishes itself from the novel in soliciting *empathy*<sup>112</sup> for the love between the Victorian characters. While I do agree with several of his observations, I would argue that Chatman's reading of the film is riddled with his approval of the film's artistic performance through the diegetic double-structure, as well as with his spectatorial identification with the modern male protagonist. The former is revealed when Chatman describes the film in positive-evaluative terms such as *intelligent* or *excellent* or *imaginative*<sup>113</sup> and refers to the film itself as *one*

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*neither a writer reflecting on writing nor a filmmaker reflecting on filmmaking. Instead we are offered a kind of bifurcated romance, two parallel love-stories set in distinct referential time frames, which finally tend to merge in the mind of the spectator. Although the two stories beautifully play off the trendily modern against the romanticized archaic, and although the transitions between them are often brilliant, their interaction merely generates a kind of saving ambiguity, a touch of Pirandellism, rather than a more thoroughgoing subversion of referentiality.*

<sup>110</sup> The film colludes in the »equalisation« of the two positions by using technical means such as cutting and other technical devices to make the audience forget that the Victorian plot is subordinate in the sense of being played out by characters of the modern plot. It is interesting (as Seymour Chatman has pointed out) that the sound editing is in several instances the »instigator« of disruption, e.g. the ringing phone, the use of Sarah's theme in the Mike/Anne plot etc.

However by resorting to the play-within-a-play device, the filmic adaptation, I would argue, places even more stress on the role actors/actresses play in the re-creation of a character and, thereby, of the literary narrative that is being adapted. The editing of the film here, conspires to foreground the enunciative nature of the characters' double-act. By cutting from Victorian England to the present without overt visual indicators that assign special significance to the cut, the film first achieves the illusion of diegetic continuity through the bodies of the actors, but as soon as the audience realises that e.g. the actor seen as lying in bed cannot be Victorian Charles, because a phone starts ringing on the soundtrack, the use of such »editing-slippage« makes the foregrounding of discourse through the double-play (triple, if one also counts the actors Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons into this) a highly enunciative moment through its delay of spectatorial understanding.

<sup>111</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, (Press) 1990. Especially Chapter 10, pp.161-183: A New Kind of Film Adaptation.

<sup>112</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, (Press) 1990, p. 169: *The film, on the other hand, immerses the viewer in the experience of Victorian lov in way calculated to seem familiar, for all its Gothic trappings — empathy is always the cinema's long suit.*

<sup>113</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, (Press) 1990, here, pp.163f.

*particularly clever way among others through which the medium can accommodate problems of narrative transference.*<sup>114</sup>

The latter becomes evident in the way he summarises the scenes of the modern period. I think that in one particular scene, his reading does not sufficiently take into account the significance of who is speaking, i.e. who is saying »I«. It is the scene where Anne and Mike are rehearsing a scene and in which the film makes a startling transition by cutting from a slipping Anne to a Sarah caught by Mike/Charles. Chatman describes the scene as follows: <sup>115</sup>

*Sarah is supposed to slip and Charles to catch her; Anna does it poorly at first, making Mike visibly edgy. The second time she finds the right note, and in one of the film's most striking moments Mike stares at her as if she suddenly has become Sarah, right before his eyes.*

What goes unmentioned here is the change of who is reading out the scene the characters are supposed to play: in the first attempt, it is Mike who is reading, in the second it is Anne. The vocalisation shifts, and in that shift she becomes the »I« in the exchange, and more assertive as a character. That look of Charles at Anna, therefore, might actually be far removed from the passionate infatuation Chatman infers to it, but horror at realising he (as Charles) is a pawn in the hands of both Sarah (who makes him lose his reputation as gentleman and vanishes for several years with no explanation whatsoever) and he is manipulated as Mike by Anna (who takes the decision to break up with him). At the end of the scene he is not an authorial »I«, but the subordinate »you«.

Setting aside the undecidability of what that look exactly meant and the gendered identification processes motivating the diverging readings of Chatman and myself, I would like to prove another argument for my interpretation into that voice-shift and its effect on the acting of the characters Anna and Mike. The voice-shift in this scene indicates a shift in power-balance from Mike to Anne, like the shifting of the literary narrator and his contemporary *Verortung* from the

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<sup>114</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, (Press) 1990, here, p.164.

<sup>115</sup> Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms. The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, (Press) 1990, here p.176. My underlining, KD.



*discours* of the novel to the *histoire* of the adaptation: to lose one's voice as a narrator-figure may here be read as signifying more than merely becoming part of the *histoire*. It means to become subordinate in the act of narration. As Anna assumes her power over Mike and the scene, her repetition is affirmed as an assumption to narrative power by the doubling of the fall: when Mike was reading out the scene, it did not propel the narrative forwards, i.e. into the story of Charles and Sarah. But when Anna reads out the scene, her falling is smoothly doubled by cutting to the falling Sarah who is caught by Charles in the Victorian age. The transferral of power onto a fallen woman, onto Sarah, is another subtle gender irony in this particular falling.

The example of *The Lady in the Lake* trying to transpose the plot exactly as seen by Marlowe, illustrated that showing a set through a camera eye is a far from neutral action, the camera and the set as-seen-through-it appear as accomplices in the shaping of a *discours* to the (disconcerted) viewer, just as the film *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, showed that the boundaries between *discours* and *histoire* can be shifted in adaptation. Furthermore, the editing of the two stories embeds an authorial discourse onto film. Rather than being a mere transposition of what the author or the novel putatively intended, this »I« (Anna or Marlowe) becomes a locus where an author-figure is found (or not found), where identification and appropriation are enabled or made impossible.

The field in which the fidelity to the literary source material is measured in, is in the majority of academic writing under review in this sub-chapter, the field of narration: what is compared between the two media is predominantly the construction, presentation and modification of the narrative. According to reviewers of films and theorists, the letter of the literary text sets the ways in which film may approach the novel. These studies are frequently formulated as

if there were only one (right) way to do so. They assume the existence of an singular originary narrative:<sup>116</sup>

*The problem with this narrative discourse dualism is that, by speaking of a narrative shared by several texts, it posits a narrative, an Ur-narrative, if you will, which has never been articulated as such. The positing of an Ur-narrative tends not to be explanatory (as on Propp's Morphology of the Folk Tale), but evaluative, and in the case of adaptation leads one to investigate the phenomenon in much the same way as Plato described in the Phaedrus where poetry is not only seen as the representation of the moment of origin, it is condemned for its infidelity to that original event.*

The »letter« (here meaning the story as told in the literary source material), comes to be set as an absolute. However, this »letter« cannot be extrapolated from the text without reductionism. This reductionism is seen as operating mostly on the level of understanding of what constitutes narrative, i.e. in the reduction of it to *histoire* or *fabula* and omitting *discours* or *syuzhet*.

What is also omitted or tacitly accepted (and what will be analysed in the following) is that the individual enquiry into the relationship between the films and their literary source material already carries with it the baggage of an interpretation of the literary material. What the »letter« is made out to mean in each specific case, is already prescribed by on the one hand the interpretation of the reviewer (academic or journalistic or other) and on the other hand this is also influenced by the trajectory of canonisation, i.e. the cultural value bestowed on the literary source material. Fidelity to the letter, fidelity to the »I« is therefore not only fidelity to the novel but fidelity to an authorial subject and his/her work as canonised. It is a subject that is regarded as in control of the narrative and to which intentions are imputed in the process of the film's reception. It is also through the »I« that fidelity to spirit enters into the debate of adaptation.

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<sup>116</sup> Robert Arnold, Nichols Peter Humy, Ana M. Lopez, Rereading Adaptation: A Farewell to Arms. IN: *IRIS*. (1er trimestre 1983) Vol. 1, No.1, pp.101-112. Here pp. 103f.

## Fidelity to Spirit

In this case of fidelity postulations, I contend that the film is measured along the lines of a number of other elements not all of which form part of the literary text. Fidelity, then, resides in transposing to the screen what the literary source material is supposedly »really about«. This *aboutness*<sup>117</sup> can be a number of things: the intentions of the author, the atmosphere of the novel, the spirit of the period represented etc. By the term »aboutness« I refer to the diffuse quality of that which is presented as an *a priori* consensus as regards the interrelation between film and literary source material. It may be diffuse for several reasons: either because that which is agreed upon (or rather, that which is assumed to be uncontested) is not made explicit at all but introduced as a given; and/or because it cannot be presented as a logical/rational argument. Both cases, in their structure then require a leap of faith on behalf of the reader/spectator. Whereas narrative mutations can to some extent be verified, what is or is not in the spirit of a book is a question of belief.

Some aspects of such debates can be deduced from the example of a film that received recurrent mention in numerous monographs, articles and reviews over the years:<sup>118</sup> the 1956 adaptation of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Also fairly recent monographs such as Brian McFarlane's *Novel to Film. An Introduction*<sup>119</sup> use this film as a narrative case study. In an earlier article<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> This term I borrow (and slightly modify) from the article by Mette Hjort, *Themes of Nation*. IN: *Cinema & Nation*. Ed. by Mette Hjort and Scott Mackenzie. London (Routledge) 2000, pp. 103-117.

In the article, the term »aboutness« refers to strategies of coincidental reference to nation in a number of Danish films.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. George Perry, *The Great British Picture Show*. London (Granada) 1975; Richard Roud, *Cinema a Critical Dictionary, The Major Filmmakers*. London (Hodder Stoughton) 1980; Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature. The Art of Screen Adaptation*. London & Sydney (Croom Helm) 1986; Robert Giddings, Keith Selby & Chris Wensley, *Screening the Novel. The Theory and Practice of Literary Adaptation*. New York ( St. Martin's Press ) 1990.

<sup>119</sup> Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film. An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Oxford (Clarendon Press) 1996.

McFarlane had configured the relationship between the film and its source text beyond narrative:

*Like Lean, Reed [Carol Reed] seems to see his task as the visualising of a respected verbal source rather than, as with Powell and Pressburger, the creation of a wholly new work in relation to which the original author stands as a resource and a starting point. The Lean and Reed films can be more easily assimilated into the literary culture of their time, offering no major affront to the text adapted, exhibiting a British restraint in presenting relationships, and exploiting a realism that is more in line with the great tradition of the English novel. Their later careers suggest that neither had enough personal vision or visual flair to galvanise inferior material.*

Not only is the film's capacity, here explicitly narrowed down to the artistic ability of the director: here, Carol Reed is seen as too weak by himself to create a »great« film out of »inferior« literary text and thus has to rely on a classic like Dickens to guarantee quality in a film. The directors' strategies of adapting are not related to their artistic aptitude, but are related to the contexts of *the literary culture of their time, of British restraint, and of the realism... of the English novel.*<sup>121</sup> However, a few lines down the page McFarlane seems to make a volte face when evaluating Lean's film:<sup>122</sup>

*Nevertheless, the achievement of Lean's Dickens films is not negligible. If they do not feel particularly Lean-like (and one is not sure what that might mean), they frequently do feel notably dickensian, one of the qualities one might welcome in films based on Dickens. [...] Great Expectations and Oliver Twist (1948) are essentially 'faithful' adaptations, but Lean has not been afraid to excise characters or plot strands in the interest of narrative clarity. These films understand the way in which mise-en-scène in its fullest sense offers the prime cinematic equivalent of the linguistic density of Dickens's prose style. [...]*

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<sup>120</sup> Brian McFarlane, *A Literary Cinema? British Films and British Novels*. IN: *All Our Yesterdays*. Ed. by Charles Barr. London (British Film Institute) 1986, pp.120-142. Here p. 134. He is referring to the films *Great Expectations* (1946, David Lean), which he regards as the film that started the »literary cinema« and *Odd Man Out* (1947), *The Fallen Idol* (1948), and *The Third Man* (1949), all directed by Reed.

<sup>121</sup> In the year before the film's release, George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* had both been published. 1948 was to follow two years later. But it was the author Graham Greene that was the most successful contemporary writer of the time, in terms of book sales and adaptations to film. Some films based on his work adapted at the time: *Ministry of Fear* (1944, Fritz Lang; published 1943), *Confidential Agent* (1945, Herman Shumlin; 1939); *Brighton Rock* (1947, John Boulting; 1938); *The Fugitive* (1947, John Ford & Emilio Fernández; based on *The Labyrinthine Ways/The Power and the Glory* 1940); *The Heart of the Matter* (1953, George Moore O'Ferrall; 1948); *The End of the Affair* (1955, Edward Dmytryk; 1951); *Across the Bridge* (1957, Ken Annakin; 1938); *Short Cut to Hell* (1957, James Cagney; based on *This Gun for Hire*, 1936); *The Quiet American* (1958, Joseph L. Mankiewicz; 1955); *Our Man in Havana* (1959, Carol Reed; 1958).

<sup>122</sup> MacFarlane, *A Literary Cinema? British Films and British Novels*. IN: *All Our Yesterdays*. Ed. by Charles Barr. London (British Film Institute) 1986, pp.120-142. Here p.134.

*Lean has not sought to make critiques of the novels or to deconstruct their instabilities; rather, he has found a visual style that achieves an intelligent fidelity to the text.*

Here, the absence of a distinct directorial style (something ascribed to all »great« film directors in auteur theory) is welcomed, because the adaptation then becomes more *Dickensian*. This is also an opinion voiced in Giddings et al.:<sup>123</sup>

*The first is that David Lean and his fellow-authors (Ronald Neame and Anthony Havelock-Allen) do not seem to understand how a Dickens novel actually works, as their catastrophic omissions, excisions and false emphases demonstrate. The second is a matter of style. Dickens is neither a naturalistic nor a realistic writer and his art obviously works against the grain of the predominantly realistic/romantic style which dominated cinema art in America and Western Europe in the 1940s.*

McFarlane in the following extols the visual qualities of the film's opening sequence. All of which, however, cannot divert from the fact that to read the film's striking visuality as an equivalent of a Dickensian textual density is something to believe rather than to be analytically arrived at. Bazin interpreting the white snow featured in the adaptation of *La symphonie pastorale* as a transposition of the passé simple used in the novel is a similar case in question.<sup>124</sup>

Another analysis of *Great Expectations*,<sup>125</sup> claiming to not submit adaptations to the tyranny of the novel, does away with the authorial intention of Dickens. It does so by conferring the task of deciding the question what the novel's central message is, to the scriptwriter. In the particular case of *Great Expectations*, the task is conferred unquestioningly, to the director David Lean.

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<sup>123</sup> Robert Giddings, Keith Selby & Chris Wensley, *Screening the Novel. The Theory and Practice of Literary Adaptation*. New York ( St. Martin's Press ) 1990, here p. 89.

The argument then says that Lean is de facto too influenced by Noël Coward to do justice to Dickens.

<sup>124</sup> As in the above and at another place with reference to terms like the »visual narratives« of novels, I stress again the importance of making clear what we mean by such and such a term especially when comparing two media that are supposedly related. George Bluestone aptly summarised this relationship as *overtly compatible, secretly hostile* (in his monograph *Novels into Film*. Berkeley & Los Angeles (University of California Press) 1957, p. 2.) This is not to negate the possibility of such comparison, but to demand an awareness that such comparisons represent acts of subjective interpretation rather than objective observation.

<sup>125</sup> Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature. The Art of Screen Adaptation*. New York (St Martin's Press, 1986, pp. 117 ff.

This turns the director of the film into an author-figure with apparently uncontested powers as regards the shaping of the film. A more interesting conception of compound authorship was explored in an article on the film *A Farewell to Arms* where the writer of the novel, the writer of the theatre play based on that novel, the scriptwriter and the director and the producer are all authors.<sup>126</sup> The consequence of this proliferation of author-figures is that here, too, one finds loops, or rather, an arena of contested culture. The following shows how in the arena opened up by the film *Un amour de Swann*, French critics interrelated Proust, the film, and Volker Schlöndorff.

### Truer Than Thou

The criterion of fidelity leads itself ad absurdum when the adaptation purports to be or is purported to be truer than the novel itself, or truer to the book than the author him/herself. Here, fidelity reveals itself as a thoroughly subjective point of view on behalf of the commentator.

Thus, the relationships between the director, the scriptwriter and the author are used to argue for (or against) the film's fidelity towards its material. In an interview in the German Newspaper *Weltwoche* Volker Schlöndorff spoke of the late Max Frisch as »reference« when asked about his film *Homo Faber*:<sup>127</sup>

*Schlöndorff weiter: »Es ist mir schon fast peinlich, das immer wieder selbst zu zitieren: er hat sich immer so was von solidarisch und positiv zum Film geäußert, wie es kein Autor, mit dem ich je gearbeitet habe, getan hat. Aber er hat es getan wie einer, der mitgearbeitet hat. Zum Schluß war der Film irgendwie auch sein Film geworden.«*

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<sup>126</sup> Robert Arnold, Nicholas Peter Humy, Ana M. Lopez, Rereading Adaptation: A Farewell to Arms. IN: *IRIS*. (1er trimestre 1983) Vol,1, No. 1, pp. 101-113.

<sup>127</sup> Reinhard Kleber, Frisch und Schlöndorff's »Homo Faber«. IN: *Literaturverfilmung*. Ed. by Wolfgang Gast. Bamberg (C.C. Buchner) 1999 (1st 1993), pp. 204-211. Here, p. 209.

The interview was published in the newspaper *Weltwoche* (11.04.1991). Translation: *Schlöndorff continued: » I find it almost embarrassing, to continue quoting that myself: he has declared himself in solidarity and so positively throughout, as no other author has ever done, with whom I ever worked with. But he did it like somebody who took an active part in it. In the end the film had somehow also become his film.«*

Similarly, discussing the adaptation of the Michael Ondaatje novel *The English Patient*, Bronwen Thomas took great care to point out the harmonious relationship between novelist and director:<sup>128</sup>

*Certainly, the collaboration between the two men [Minghella and Ondaatje] seems to have been especially harmonious, and must be the envy of many an adaptor.*

And pointing out how faithful the film is to its source, despite departing from it as regards plot, time, point of view etc., he concludes that the film in a way has somehow improved the novel by giving it closure:

*My analysis of Minghella's adaptation has shown that some concessions are made to the need to piece together fragments of the mirage. Thus some aspects of the novel are foregrounded at the expense of others, and the film achieves a kind of closure which is denied in the novel.*

The film made from the book is argued to be even more faithful to its spirit than the book itself. An interim stage here is when the author of the book and the scriptwriter are identical. In the case of the adaptation of the Anne Rice novel *Interview with a Vampire*, the film's director Neil Jordan argued that the script he produced was more faithful to the novel than the one written by Anne Rice herself. Here, the spirit of novel is something that eludes even the author herself who, thus, is pushed out of any involvement with the film—which led Anne Rice to retaliate with full-page advertisements in US-newspapers against the adaptation.<sup>129</sup> I don't want at all to argue that Anne Rice as the author of the literary source material should have the ultimate opinion on the adaptation or even what the novel written by her is to mean. But I point out that the argument of being faithful to the text in the conferral of authorial power to another, here, reveals itself as a ploy masking other intentions, i.e. to exclude someone from the decision-making, the marketing and the interpretative process.

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<sup>128</sup> Bronwen Thomas, *Piecing Together a Mirage: Adapting *The English Patient* for the Screen*. IN: *The Classic Novel. From Text to Screen*. Ed. by Robert Giddings & Erica Sheen. Manchester (Manchester University Press) 2000, pp. 197-232. Here, pp. 198f. & 227, respectively.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. Ken Gelder, *The Vampire Writes Back: Anne Rice and the (Re)turn of the Author in the Field of Cultural Production*. IN: *Pulping Fictions: Consuming Culture across the Literature/Media Divide*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell, I.Q. Hunter, H. Kaye, Imelda Whelehan. London (Pluto Press) 1996, pp. 29-41.

Another instance where fidelity is used to justify evaluation, is the comparison between several adaptations of the same novel with each other. The 1998 adaptation of *Great Expectations*,<sup>130</sup> e.g. was compared very unfavourably with the 1942 adaptation. James Griffith's defence of the 1946 adaptation of Raymond Chandler's private-eye story *The Big Sleep*<sup>131</sup> is another example. According to Griffith, if a filmmaker follows the literary author's choices this means his/her film is limited by the aesthetic choices of the book, and therefore, in theory, there can be no good film coming from a bad novel:<sup>132</sup>

*Final judgement is a compound judgement. Obviously, filmmakers adapt many bad or mediocre novels, and if a filmmaker imitates the novelist's choices—if, that is, the adaptation remains faithful—then the film will be the novel's equal in emotional power or pleasure: equally bad, however. A happier circumstance results from an adaptation of a good novel that faithfully imitates the aesthetic choices that make the novel a success, and thereby the film also. Clearly fidelity entails fidelity to effects rather than details.*

It is not quite clear what Griffith means by *aesthetic* choices, and by *fidelity to effects*, but making »better choices« could then arguably be the way a director can take to cull a good film out of a mediocre novel. While diverging from it (or omitting what is deemed »bad«) the adaptor can improve on the novel. James Griffith considers the former adaptation of *The Big Sleep* superior to the 1978 adaptation<sup>133</sup> because the omissions the previous made regarding the novel's plot are »more faithful« to it than the second version which kept closer to the book's plotline. As it turns out, the omissions made in the first adaptation of *The Big Sleep*, were not due to any interest in being »faithful« but rather, constraints put on the film by the censorship bureau. And while I do not thereby wish to (nor could, anyway) invalidate Griffith's judgement of personal taste regarding this film, this example does show that to impute authorial power to a director and then to read a film as expression of his genius only (or the lack of it), disregards the socio-historical and the professional context of filmmaking.

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<sup>130</sup> *Great Expectations* (1998, Alfonso Cuarón).

<sup>131</sup> *The Big Sleep* (1946, Howard Hawks).

<sup>132</sup> James Griffith, *Adaptations as Imitations. Films from Novels*. Newark & London (University of Delaware Press & Associated University Press) 1997, p. 73.



To return to the period film proper, I cite as a final example of arguments proclaiming the film truer to the novel Erica Sheen on the 1995 BBC serial adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Sheen interprets the more liberated representations of the protagonists' bodies (in particular that of Mr. Darcy, or his actor Colin Firth) as perfectly faithful to the novel. Because in the moment when Elizabeth Bennett is in the novel returning an *improper look* of Darcy's portrait, Darcy himself is in the TV series plunging into the lake semi-dressed—and thus improper:<sup>134</sup>

*Adequate grounds, I think, for suggesting that making Darcy take his clothes off and dive into the pond at exactly the same moment is faithful, passionately so, to the text's concealed pleasure in its own promiscuity.*

Infidelity (in the form of added scenes) here not only is read as fidelity, but is according to Sheen a potential of the text itself. And it is *where the garment gapes* that such faithful infidelity becomes possible.<sup>135</sup> These added scenes are a corporealization of those moments of the text's gaping. They are a suggested but never fulfilled desire. The gaping garments and their implications for adaptation practice are developed with reference to Roland Barthes, who had written on the literary pleasure of a gaping shirt, of a glimpse of flesh between glove and cuff.<sup>136</sup> This »gaping« of the literary text is a blank where the reader and the spectator want to flesh out what is left to the imagination.<sup>137</sup> It is past fashions with their layers of cloth and the rows of buttons that make such gaping possible and, thus, in a way also suscite such desires of literal and diegetical fleshing-out. The

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<sup>133</sup> *The Big Sleep* (1978, Michael Winner).

<sup>134</sup> Erica Sheen, "Where the Garment Gapes": Faithfulness and Promiscuity in the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice*. IN: *The Classic Novel. From Text to Screen*. Ed. by Robert Giddings & Erica Sheen. Manchester (Manchester University Press) 2000, pp. 14-30. Here, p. 23.

<sup>135</sup> One might add here, that the TV series was also done with a female audience in mind and thus to undress the attractive male protagonist also was done with »a roving eye« on viewing quota.

<sup>136</sup> Roland Barthes, *Le plaisir du texte*. (1st Paris 1973 & London 1976). Reprinted IN: idem, *Œuvres Complètes. II 1969-1975*. Paris (Seuil) 1994, pp. 1495-1529. Here, 1498-1499.

<sup>137</sup> The scenes inserted are not the only moments feeding into a literary text's desire to be »fleshed-out,« as it were, but also, interestingly, interruptions of a programme (for serial reasons or for commercial breaks) could be read as such moments. The interruptions of serialisation itself indicates a desire for a gap in the circuits of consumption that formats the text.

heritage film offers in its *mise-en-scène* opportunities for the inscription of spectatorial desires. In adaptation, this desire furthermore encompasses the cultural good, the novel and the film, as imagined by reader/spectator.

In the film *Orlando*, the undressing ritual of Queen Elizabeth in *Orlando* is in its subversive gendering and the age gaps between Tilda-Swinton/the youth Orlando and Quentin-Crisp/the very-aged-Virgin-Queen a multi-layered commentary on whose desires are meant to be appeased in the act of undressing. In a scene of the film *The Age of Innocence* the characters Newland Archer and Countess Olenska, the ill-fated lovers, are seated in the proximity of a carriage, where he slowly unbuttons her glove to uncover and kiss her bared wrist. The entire scene inside the carriage is shot from three different camera angles (full-frontal, the corners opposite of the characters each thus primarily framing the character diagonally across) and in a multitude of cuts and fade-overs. In total, the scene includes eleven fadeovers that continuously draw out the moment of the bared wrist through partial repetition of the movements from different angles. The ensuing kiss is then split by three cuts instead of fadeovers. All together, the scene (including several exterior shots of the carriage) lasts less than a minute. Desire fulfilled (the kiss), is denied the gentle fadeover camera seduction of the desire anticipated (the bared wrist). This is underscored by Newland Archer putting his glove back on *hors-cadre*. Unbuttoning a wrist as late as 1993 is obviously not breaking any taboo of obscenity. The revealing representation of the naked flesh between cuff and glove bespeaks all sorts of desires. I have some reservations subverting the evaluation criterion of fidelity by replacing it with other terminologies of desire, i.e. with an analogy that links carnal and scopophilic appetites to describe the interrelation between literary text and film. However, to term these gaps and their new fleshing out as a justified necessity of adaptation does undo the postulate of the literary source as ultimate truth. The use of pleasure to describe a relation between film and spectator has

been used in another study: Mulvey's visual pleasure.<sup>138</sup> Here, cinema analysis thematized the dangers inherent in desires of viewership. The construction of the female body was where a masculine gaze found its satisfaction. In the case of *Pride and Prejudice* (BBC, 1995), it was the gaze of female viewers that delighted in the gazing of Mr. Darcy's garments. Since Mulvey's analysis, the necessity of both narrative and desire has, also been argued elsewhere under the proviso of socio-historical and gender specificity. Referring to Mulvey, Teresa de Lauretis argues:<sup>139</sup>

*I shall start from a marvellous sentence, in the passage just quoted, which sets out practically all the specifications—the terms, the components, and operations—of the cinematic apparatus: "Cinematic codes create a gaze, a world, and an object, thereby producing an illusion cut to the measure of desire." It is an amazingly concise and precise description of cinema, not only as a social technology, a working of the codes (a machine, institution, apparatus producing images and meanings for, and together with, a subject's vision); but also as a signifying practice, a work of semiosis, which engages desire and positions the subject in the very processes of vision, looking, and seeing.*

As has been pointed out by Claire Monk, the critique levelled at the heritage films by left writers within Britain primarily saw these films as colluding with Thatcherite politics and railed against the visual pleasure of these films. Here, the pleasure these films afforded its feminine readers (thus Monk) was read as a means of liberating spectator's from the male gaze of narrative cinema.<sup>140</sup> But, as the reception of the BBC series *Pride and Prejudice* has shown, the liberation actually might only entail a reversal of gender roles, where now female audiences consume representations of male bodies. While this substitution of narrative cinema's male gaze with that of female spectators may not represent progress in terms of gender analysis,<sup>141</sup> but the point here is not so

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<sup>138</sup> Cf. Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*. IN: *Screen*. (1975) 16: 3, pp. 6-18. ✓

<sup>139</sup> Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't. Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. London (Macmillan) 1984, here p. 59.

<sup>140</sup> Claire Monk, *The British 'Heritage Film' and Its Critics*. IN: *Critical Survey* (1995) Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 116-124; idem, *The Heritage Film and Gendered Spectatorship*. IN: *Close Up. The Electronic Journal of British Cinema*. (Winter 1996/97) No. 1.

ON:<http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lc/closeup/monk.htm> & <http://www.shu.ac.uk/services/lc/closeup/monk2.htm> (taken 7.5.2004).

<sup>141</sup> The particular BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, had sparked a »Darcy-Mania« among the female spectators, around the »exposed« body of the actor Colin Firth.

much the gender of the look's bearer but that a different look provokes a different narrative both in production and reception. Such narratives have their justification beyond a singular »original«, as they are located in the imagination of a spectator and/or a reader. Adaptation, understood as a different look is then still linked to, but independent from its literary source.

### Promiscuity

The act of dressing features in numerous other films.<sup>142</sup> The luxuriousness of period dress is a metaphor of the layers of narrative to come, or a admonition of our own senso-erotically impoverished present. As already lined out previously, the critically and economically successful adaptations of *A Passage to India* and *A Room with a View* of the early eighties were followed by a number of

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Laura Mulvey herself tried to make feminist films that would break the dominance of the male gaze, e.g. in the film *The Riddle of the Sphinx* (1976, Laura Mulvey & Peter Wollen). This was primarily achieved by employing narrative devices differently and/or in unaccustomed ways.

Cf. Esther Sonnet, Representing "Others". Postmodern Epistemology. Film and Female Spectatorship. IN: *Postmodern Subjects/ Postmodern Texts*. Ed. by Jane Dowson & Steven Earnshaw. Amsterdam & Atlanta (Rodopi) 1995, pp. 219-236.

On p. 226: *Riddles of the Sphinx is structured around the disruptive techniques of fragmented sequence shots, 360 degree pans, use of written intertitles, direct address and a self-reflexive inclusion of the film makers on screen: these are part of an aesthetic of transgressive spectatorship which attempts to break with patriarchal modes of visual language in order to shatter the illusions of unified and cohesive subject positions (male active/female passive) demanded in order that dominant cinema's representations can take place. This negatory task is understood as necessity for re-staging spectatorial desire in order to break the institutionalisation of the male gaze and break the phallogocentric function of the female image held by its look.*

Cf. also the intricate functioning of the gaze—whose capacity to undermine depends on gender as well as race—as laid out in bell hooks, Der oppositionelle Blick: Schwarze Frauen als Zuschauerinnen (Engl 1992). IN: bell hooks, *Black Looks. Popkultur - Medien - Rassismus*. Berlin (Orlanda) 1994, pp. 145-165.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. for extensive scenes of such dressing, the films *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988, Stephen Frears); *Ridicule* (1996, Patrice Leconte). Countless films have, of course, used the lacing into a corset as a metaphor for the unliberated lives of women. However, representations of corseting can transport heterogeneous messages. It does not automatically signify female oppression both on the level of diegesis and on the level of a political message. Compare here for example the character Scarlett O'Hara for whom her tiny waist is source of identity and pride, whereas for the character Rose in *Titanic* being laced up by her mother meant to get dressed for a loveless but wealthy marriage.

other adaptations of the three authors Auster, Foster and James—and later Edith Wharton and Joseph Conrad. Very different teams have set to work on novels of these authors but in the majority of cases they share the goal of depicting a past peopled by characters whose emotionality does not seem to differ much from modern day characters but whose different-ness is transported largely through their appearances and life-style, i.e. in costume and mise-en-scène.

It is not only in the adaptations of so-called classical authors that they are ascribed importance. Also, in the historical film, of course, costume and mise-en-scène play a pivotal role—especially those taking liberties with history, such as the James Cameron epic *Titanic*. The time and money spent on the reconstruction of the *Titanic*-model for the film led the German film magazine *Filmdienst* to the comment: <sup>143</sup>

*Erst die Lektüre des Presseheftes offenbart die manische Akribie, mit der bis in kleinste Ausstattungsdetails hinein ein Fetisch um eine möglichst authentische Rekonstruktion des Schiffes und seiner Intérieurs betrieben wurde.*

The German weekly *Der Spiegel* summarised this acerbically with *Dem Meer entsteigt - quicklebendiges Gespenst - das Weh der Vergangenheit. Was ewig bleibt, scheint die Nostalgie zu sein.*<sup>144</sup> Nostalgia and fetish are used to denote which kind of desires such film projects feed into. In films set in period that are moreover adaptations, the symbolic value bestowed on the proper dress and the right country house is even heightened because here not only is historical accuracy at stake but the »true« meaning of an author and/or novel as seen by critics and reviewers. The films of the producer-director duo Ismail Merchant and James Ivory have catered to these desires in their adaptations of Henry James, E.M. Forster and the contemporary Kazuo Ishiguro. Accordingly, the visual style of James-Ivory-films has been described as *a distinct retrenchment, a withdrawal from*

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<sup>143</sup> [Review of] *Titanic*. IN: *Film Dienst*. (23.12.1997), pp. 24-25. Here, p. 24f.

Translation: *Only after reading the press material does the manic exactitude become apparent and how a fetish is made of the most authentic reconstruction of the ship and its interiors.*

<sup>144</sup> Anon., *Selig auf dem Wrack der Träume*. IN: *Der Spiegel*. 13/1998, pp. 226-233. Here, p.226.

Translation: *Out of the sea rise the pains of the past - a very much alive ghost. Nostalgia seems to be that which is eternal.*

*visual hyperbole, a comparative conservatism of visual style.*<sup>145</sup> The staple ingredients of his adaptation films are given as follows:<sup>146</sup>

*... a literate, precise script, sensitive direction, scrupulous attention to period detail, a roster of impeccable performances and all on a comparatively small budget, in this case [the film Maurice, 1987] of £ 2,5 million.*

On the film *A Room with a View*:<sup>147</sup>

*All of the trademarks are present—the screenplay captures Forster's gently satiric tone. The Florentine and English locations are lovingly photographed, and the performances by both veteran actors (Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott) and newcomers (Helena Bonham-Carter, Julian Sands, Daniel Day-Lewis) are humorous and touching.*

The question of casting and acting shall be discussed in the following. For now, I will go into how the opinions on the role of costume and mise-en-scène can differ, or rather, how costume can both reveal and conceal at the same time. Mise-en-scène is, for one, only a portal to the period and cannot replace a plotline that engages intellectually or emotionally. The writer-scriptwriter Ruth Praver Jhabvala, when asked<sup>148</sup> what was interesting about the novel *The Golden Bowl*, answered: *... such grand material, wonderful scenes, great characters, such wonderful relationships between the characters.* and (in the same interview) it was *... the theme, and the feel of the characters ... the ambience and their relationships* that to her was even more important than fidelity to the letter. The director concurred with this attitude towards the relevance of the characters' dilemmas and preoccupations when discussing<sup>149</sup> the film *Maurice* and the problematic theme of homosexuality in novel and film:

*Despite the fact it was written 75 years ago, I found it a very up-to-date presentation of the state of mind of people faced with this particular dilemma. I don't care what's happened in 75 years in terms of the laws being changed and all the kinds of lib that have come and gone, people still have to face components of their personality and whatever that is, and to come to some kind of decent way to live. That's what the book is all about and that's just as valid today as it ever was.*

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<sup>145</sup> *The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers Vol. 2 Directors.* Detroit (St James Press) 1991-94, p. 420.

<sup>146</sup> Allan Hunter, *Ivory Tower*. IN: *Film and Filming*. October 1987, pp. 13-15.

<sup>147</sup> *Dialogue on Film*. IN: *American Film*. Jan/Feb 1987, pp. 13-15 & p. 45.

<sup>148</sup> In an interview with Philip Horne for *The Guardian*. Here it was taken from the website of Merchant Ivory Productions [www.merchantivory.com](http://www.merchantivory.com) (28.10. 2001).

<sup>149</sup> Allan Hunter, *Ivory Tower*. IN: *Film and Filming*. October 1987, pp. 13-15.

Though the difficulties of coming to terms with homosexuality certainly may still pose problems for individuals, the director's sweeping aside the differences between the situations of now and then—for all its possibly well-meant intentions—is a problematic gesture. Because doing so one also sweeps aside that it was precisely such changes in liberal laws that not only have made the dilemma (if it still must be termed so) of being homosexual, one that in the interim has been decriminalized in Great Britain and—for that reason alone—would be a less existential dilemma. But it was also the legal changes regarding representations of homosexuality in the larger context of pornography that have rendered such a film as *Maurice* and its visualisation of erotic scenes between the two male characters Maurice and Alex at all possible—especially within mainstream cinema. To annihilate the time gap here, is another instance of cutting the film off from social and legal conditions that made it possible.

And if the time gap does not make a difference in the main matter of the movie, the »homosexual dilemma«, then what role do the costumes still play? Rather than merely denoting the way the people dressed previously, they also serve as screens. It could be argued that it is precisely the fact that these otherwise-dressed characters are not contemporaries that allows for a distancing from the »problem«. Because the film is set in Edwardian England (visualised in the costumes and the old automobiles, trains etc.) a false distance is possible. A spectator posing as liberal can congratulate him/herself on, on the one hand, having evolved to a much more open and »civilised« society as regards tolerance. On the other hand, with the temporal distance, s/he avoids direct confrontation with the »problem« of homosexuality. Clothes do not only conceal bodies as propriety demands, at the same time they reveal the sex of the person on whose body they are. They are markers of gender par excellence. Period costume here becomes the handmaiden of processes of identification and non-identification at the same time. One finds parallels in an argument in a

psychoanalytic analysis of cinema on masochistic male identification in the viewing process itself.<sup>150</sup>

*I take this double silence—silence about masochism and silence about identification with the female—as evidence that something crucial to the system of cultural representation is at stake. That something must be the operation whereby female figures are made to stand for, and act out, a psychosexual posture that in fact knows no sex but that, for a variety of reasons that add up to male dominance, is routinely dissociated from the male. It is, in short, an operation which ensures that men can eat their psychosexual cake and have it too: experience the pain/pleasure of (say) a rape phantasy by identifying with the victim, and then disavow their personal stake on grounds that the visible victim was, after all, a woman, and that they as spectators are “naturally” represented by the visible male figures: male saviours or sadistic rapists, but manly men however you cut it.*

Just as there is no innocent picture, there are also no innocent costumes in a period film. In Clover's article, the satisfaction of desires is argued to be linked to tendencies of self-destruction and denial in the spectator. In the case of *Maurice*, the spectator can distance him/herself from homosexuality and at the same time revel in the visual representation of a narrative containing homosexuality. In period films, the costumes are never mere indicators of a historical time or instruments of innocent pleasures. In their representation on screen, they can function as screens for unpalatable debates. They furthermore can become rallying points for criticism. The adaptation of Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften*,<sup>151</sup> they create irritation rather than satisfaction:

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<sup>150</sup> Carol J. Clover, *The Eye of Horror*. IN: *Viewing Positions. Ways of Seeing Film*. Ed. by Linda Williams. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 1995, pp. 184-230. Here p. 15.

The contribution is an abridged version of Clover's monograph *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film* (Princeton, PUP, 1992).

<sup>151</sup> Rainer W. Fassbinder, Peter W. Jansen, Claude Chabrol et al., *Claude Chabrol*. München (Hanser Verlag) 1986 (rev from 1975). Here pp. 221f.

Translation: *Despite the shortening for reasons of time necessary in all adaptations of novels, Chabrol's TV movie has managed to adapt the subtle novel of Goethe's maturity quite faithfully, but has failed to maintain anything of the intellectual atmosphere of the precious literary work. Neither several rather well-chosen castings (Helmut Griem, as was to be expected, but, as was not to be expected, also Audran) nor settings which might well have inspired Goethe, alleviate the insignificance of this film, that at best reveals, what the world and the people of Goethe's era have looked like, but fails to reveal, how people interpreted their world at that time.*

The film referred to is *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1981, Claude Chabrol).

Also Richard Goodkin, *Around Proust*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1991.

The author points this out referring to the film *Un amour de Swann* (p. 89): *Volker Schlöndorff's recent film of Un Amour de Swann (1983) only underscores the difficulties of filming Proust. A meticulous costume drama of almost unremitting angst, the film is especially unsuccessful in its treatment of temporality. Not only does it persist in eliminating Proust's temporal tricks and replacing*



*Chabrols Fernsehfilm hat Goethes subtilen Altersroman Die Wahlverwandtschaften trotz der bei allen Romanverfilmungen aus Zeitgründen notwendigen Kürzungen, recht textgetreu verfilmt, von der intellektuellen Atmosphäre des kostbaren Literaturwerks jedoch nichts zu bewahren verstanden. Weder einige recht gelungene Besetzungen (Helmut Griem, wie zu erwarten war, aber, wie nicht zu erwarten war, auch die Audran) noch Schauplätze, wie sie Goethe durchaus angeregt haben könnten, mindern die Belanglosigkeit dieses Films, der allenfalls zeigt, wie Welt und Menschen zur Goethezeit ausgesehen haben, aber nicht zu zeigen vermag, wie sich die Menschen damals die Welt gedeutet haben.*

Despite the fidelity to the letter that the film is imputed to have, it falls short of expectations as to what it is supposed to transport: here ideas and feelings of Goethe's contemporaries. The (more or less) subtle ways in which a novel is given precedence over the film can also be deduced from the quote's choice of words. The novel is not only referred to as precious (*kostbar*), but also is a work of maturity (*Altersroman*). The latter implies that this is not just a novel about four people and their emotional quandaries but also the sum of the artistic and intellectual reflections of the mature Goethe. The preciousness of the work and thus its cultural value is also perpetuated in the use of the verb *bewahren*. This verb has several meanings: to preserve, to save but with the preposition *vor* it can also mean to shelter from. Using this verb the quote here reveals itself as an attempt to keep book and film separate—in the face of supposed liberal-mindedness, as regards the transposition of text. To know what people looked like (*ausgesehen haben*), to know how they dressed is not enough. If the film does not fulfil other desires the spectator has, the clothes doubly signify disappointment. They fail to transpose the source narrative and to avail modern audiences with insights into the interior lives of predecessors.

A certain saturation is observable as well. In another adaptation made fifteen years after *A Room with a View* and *Maurice*, period costume thus has become a marker of tedious and overly tasteful cinema. This is a cinema that

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*them with a coherent, straightforward narrative, but it also essentially fetishizes the time period in which the story is set; whatever little impact the film does have is based on the titillating questions of what Proust's characters might have looked like, how they would have dressed, in what sort of carriages they might have travelled around Paris, and in what style they would have been likely to decorate their homes.*

fails to engage. A German critic wrote<sup>152</sup> of James Ivory and the film *The Golden Bowl*:

*Den amerikanischen Regisseur James Ivory, der seit nunmehr fast fünfundzwanzig Jahren mit großer Standhaftigkeit Romane von E.M. Foster, Henry James und Kazuo Ishiguro verfilmt, wird niemand irgendeiner Geschmacksverirrung bezichtigen können. Viel zu raffiniert sind die Kulissen und Kostüme, viel zu gut ausgesucht die Schauspieler, mit denen er den Glanz der Bücher auf die Leinwand holt.*

The most interesting moments of the film are, according to the critic, when the characters leave the stifling period interiors of the perfect locations and act scenes outside in the open. All of which does not save the film from the final verdict of not being very *kunstvoll* (of artistic merit). And it is precisely the historical exactness of the Renaissance costumes for a costume ball and the historical locating of the central symbol (the golden bowl given as treacherous wedding present by the adulterers) that the critic objects to. For contrary to the historical film, it is not historical accurateness that is wanted from heritage adaptations but something else. Thus, the seductively gaping garment has become a mere object (*Ding*) and one with a tear (*Riß*), it is torn. Historical accuracy only conveys the exterior, but fails to convey the heart of the matter, *das Herz der Dinge*, i.e. what such objects as Renaissance bowls, top hats, button-up gloves etc. may mean. There is, of course, no one answer to this. The idea that there is one meaning of the film and the book, is an illusion—carefully sutured into the seams of the dresses.

Discontent expressed with period films that merely convey historical accuracy is one way reviewers and critics react to use of *mise-en-scène*. In other

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<sup>152</sup> Andreas Kilb, *Der Riß im Herz der Dinge, oder Wie verfilmt man Henry James*. IN: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. (25.04.02).

Translation: *Nobody will be able to pin any kind of error in taste on the American director James Ivory, who these past twenty-five years has been adapting novels of E.M. Forster, Henry James and Kazuo Ishiguro with admirable steadfastness. Far too sophisticated are the backdrops and the costumes, far too well-chosen the actors, with which he puts the luminosity of the books onto the screen.*

instances, period setting and cultural value of the literary work can also be set against each other. Above we have seen what period dress is supposed to include in the message(s) of a film. Conversely, preconceptions about the author and his/her work can entail that certain topics are expected to be excluded, i.e. within a period film they are stigmatised as undesirable. An example here is the reference made to slave trade in the adaptation of *Mansfield Park*. In her article on the reception of the film, Mireia Aragay points out that the reviewer Keith Windshuttle<sup>153</sup> while condemning the film's narrative inclusion of the role slave trade<sup>154</sup> as historically inaccurate is himself historically inaccurate, for slave trade was still practised and, indeed, forms part of the novel's story. Here, historical accuracy is regarded as offensive to the »truth« of the literary work: <sup>155</sup>

*However, Windschuttle's historical sensitivity is offended, for he claims that slavery and the "imperialist imperative" are things of the past, and that it is only the "postcolonial literary critics and the gurus from cultural studies" who perversely insist on the centrality of such concerns to current historical, cultural and literary debates at large, and to Austen's Mansfield Park in particular, thus distorting the novel's 'quintessential' meaning.*

These are arguments where the film is unjustly blamed for inaccuracy and thus is termed unfaithful to (or even abusive of) the novel. As I show in the following, such arguments are repeated in the reception of *Un amour de Swann*. Heterogeneous agendas are at work in such stipulations of inclusions not to be made or behind a critique of those which are made. As in the above-cited examples where period adaptations are expected to be inclusive because dress cannot be all it is about, here, a critic argues for excluding certain plot elements. In the case of Windshuttle vs. Rozema's *Mansfield Park* what seems to be an aesthetic judgement speaking in the name of and thereby keeping Austen in a »heritage reservation« is, in fact, a highly ideological act. Period adaptations are

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<sup>153</sup> Keith Windshuttle was writing for *The New Criterion* (May 2000). According to Aragay's article, the Australian Windshuttle is not only a writer but a historian [sic].

<sup>154</sup> The family fortune of the central characters is made by slave trade. The film not only refers to it in dialogue but also visualises it, by showing the drawings of slaves made by one of the sons who is trying to cope with the brutality of it.

<sup>155</sup> Mireia Aragay, *Adapting a Classic: Fidelity, Authorship, and Patricia Rozema's Mansfield Park* (1999). IN: *Film/Literature Quarterly*, forthcoming.

expected to be exclusive: the reputation of the author and a (putative) authenticity of historical representation can thereby be used to enforce representations of a past beautified, a doubly imaginary past—through the fictionality of the narratives and through the intentionality of makers/reviewers. The frills, laces and petticoats, those trappings of heritage, are the traps one can fall into on such journeys.

In an article of Ken Gelder on the film *The Portrait of a Lady*,<sup>156</sup> fidelity and modes of circulation of film and literature are brought together and this results in promiscuity:

*The film thus sets up a predicament for its heroine that shows her openness and independence to be compromised by tastes that, although 'exquisite' and attractive to her [i.e. those of her husband], nevertheless work to restrict her freedom and compel her faithfulness. In other words, the film speaks about its own predicament as literary adaptation. This is recognized in the partnership built into the generic term 'literary cinema', which articulates the sense that one is drawn to a form of cultural production [i.e. literature] that is itself restricted in terms of circulation ('One in 10,000 people...') but which requires one to cultivate a certain faithfulness or respect towards it - and yet, because cinema exerts its own influences and can have a much broader circulation than the literary source anyway, a certain kind of openness or unfaithfulness (or even a kind of promiscuity) is achieved at the same time. [...]*

Gelder sees the predicament of the heroine Isobel Archer married to her collector-husband Gilbert Osmond to be a mirror of the relation between the literary source material, the film and artistic expression or taste: it is the cultural capital<sup>157</sup> of the novel that at the same time attracts and binds. Yet, because the modes of circulation of the filmic medium are so pervasive, in the width of that circulation (as opposed to the small circulation the novel has at its disposal) it even suggests *promiscuity* at the heart of the matter. This promiscuity originates from the literary text itself. Like the added scenes in the adaptation of *Pride and*

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<sup>156</sup> Ken Gelder, *Jane Campion and the Limits of Literary Cinema*. IN: *Adaptations. From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan. London (Routledge) 1999, pp. 157-171. Here p. 171.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*. Paris (Seuil) 1979; idem, *Les règles d'art. Genèse et structure du champs littéraire*. Paris (Seuil) 1992. The application of Bourdieu's terms in this study is done with the caveat that they will have to be stretched slightly, when arguing in the context of popular culture, since the derivation of the terms in Bourdieu is largely bound up with academic learning.

*Prejudice* were motivated by a »gaping« in the literary text revealed through the garments, here the possibility to differ from the source text is pre-configured in that text. This understanding of the interrelation between novel and film does permit digressions.

Substituting the term promiscuity with intertextuality, I propose that the relationship between film and literature in adaptation not only expands in numeric terms from readership to audience but also in terms of reference: an adaptation need not be seen as having only literature as a point of reference. The film can acquire meaning (and cultural capital) by referring to other sources, too. Developing a model of adaptation that proposes just such a »libertine« attitude, is the topic of the third chapter. The transgressions of adaptation, there, transcribe themselves not only into the text as a narrative additions, but also into a text that is read as the work of a particular author.

## 6. Proust Heritage: Who Owns Proust?

The literary source material of the recent adaptations more often than not tell stories about a past—a past from the film's point of view, not from the novel's point of view. At the time of the writing the adaptation-heritage past was a present. Austen, James, Proust, Dickens, Forster, Wharton, Choderlos de Laclos: as different as they may be between themselves,<sup>158</sup> they all narrate fictions of a present. In the films modelled on them, however, this present is turned into a past. This past is trapped in its material manifestations which in film find their expressions in setting, *mise-en-scène*, costumes. In most of these cases, the narrative represented beautifies its subject matter.

It seems that beyond serving escapist cravings of scopophilia, heritage films are manifestations of a longing for some idealised ancestry, or attempts to preserve and enshrine a more gentle past. As David Lowenthal has argued,<sup>159</sup> this phenomenon is operative on a global scale. They can be read as feeding into a need for »cultural tranquillity«, where the audience is able to consume (and wishes to consume since being cultured is a goal of education) a cultural classic yet is sheltered from conflict. Conflict here refers both to the way in which the narratives are presented as well as to the controversial nature of the term and then the specific »cultural classic« itself. Whatever controversy may

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<sup>158</sup> For the politics embodied in the writings of Jane Austen in their historical context, as has been argued in the study of Marilyn Butler (*Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, Oxford 1975), are quite conservative and far removed from the critique that, e.g., Laclos undertook in his epistolary novel *Les liaisons dangereuses*, or for that matter, the cynical dissection of fin-de-siècle haute-bourgeoisie to be occasionally found in the *Recherche*.

<sup>159</sup> David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade or the Spoils of History*. New York (Free Press) 1996.

On page 5f., he gives as reasons for the rising demand for heritage in general: *Heritage in Britain is said to reflect nostalgia for imperial self esteem and other bygone benisons, in America to requite economic and social angst and lost community, in France to redress wartime disgrace, in Australia to replace the curse of recency to forge indigenous pride. But no explanation specific to one people can account for a trend so contagious. What is involved is a cluster of trends whose premises, promises, and problems are truly global.*

*These trends engender isolation and dislocation of self from family, family from neighbourhood, neighbourhood from nation, and even oneself from one's former selves. Such changes reflect manifold aspects of life—increasing longevity, family dissolution, the loss of familiar surroundings, quickened obsolescence, genocide and wholesale migration, and a growing fear of technology.*

have surrounded the literary material at its initial publication does not enter the film any more than do the debates waged throughout postwar Europe culminating in the late sixties/early seventies. Amongst these are the debates on the topic such as what a canon or the canon should be or what function art should fulfil in society; or the desire of newcomers trying to gain a place in cinema production and to change the way films were made and what kind of films were made.

Marcel Proust and his work here seem to be both ideal candidates as source material for such a film and an author impossible to adapt. Ideal because, Marcel Proust himself had been read as the representative and the memorialist of a past age. Here, the themes of society and memory signify first that, his novel as a narrative of fin-de-siècle Paris is material for spectacular heritage visualisations; and then, this narrative as it is remembered becomes a space where subjective imaginings inscribe themselves.

### Proust Read (Abroad)

Marcel Proust's work has never attained the celluloid popularity of Balzac or even of Flaubert. For reasons of sheer length and the preponderance of interior dialogue alone, this would be a major challenge to an adaptor—apart from the nearly sacral aura that his work now commands amongst the »disciples«. Two perceptions of Proust persist in the reading of a general public: he is on the one hand very difficult to read and on the other that he is an author describing a certain period of French (high) society and (refined) culture. Especially the latter aspect was mediated through the praise and eulogies of innumerable contemporaries in journals, books, and in interviews. This has for several decades been reinforced on film, i.e. a perception of Proust as bound to a certain period and a certain strata of society that did not survive the First World War. The self-celebratory use of Proust in numerous books written by contemporaries prior to these visualisations, could only provoke hostility in a potential readership that had lived and was living a life far-

removed from the society of that era and with no cherished memories thereof (and with filmmakers who actively sought to establish film as a modern art form). Thus, the two themes to be made out in Proust's work and his reception, society and memory, would not necessarily meet with great interest in the post-war period in France itself.

As for translation, one of the first German translators was Walter Benjamin in the 1920s and 30s, who translated *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs* and *Du côté de Guermantes*. The suicide of Benjamin when trying to avoid capture by fascists at the Spanish/French border meant the end of this labour of love. The first complete German translation in the fifties led to a German Proust renaissance. This had a parallel in Italy where the first translation into Italian began appearing in 1947 and was completed in 1951. The rising interest in Proust in Italy produced academic articles and monographs on him and his work from the late forties onwards, through to the fifties and into the sixties.<sup>160</sup>

This led to the bizarre situation that by the late sixties scholars were commenting that Proust was being read everywhere but in France.<sup>161</sup> The critique voiced from abroad pointed out that, in France, Proust was being read only as the *memorialist* but not as an author of astounding modernity through his stylistics and narrative construction. These aspects of his work had come to be the prime fascinations of foreign academic readers which, in turn, transferred »their« Proust back to France. The contested access to Marcel Proust continues to this day: the recently completed German revision of the entire translated *Recherche* was also said to be better than the French text because even though its annotations may not be that numerous, the German annotations make references omitted from the French edition and, more significantly, the German translation has corrected several errors in the literary text itself. Thus,

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<sup>160</sup> Cf. Daniela De Agostini, *Marcel Proust en Italie 1913-1975*. IN: *Bulletin d'informations proustiennes*. n° 4 (1976), pp. 19-21; Giorgi Giorgetto, *Proust en Italie*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*, n° 17 (1967), pp. 591-602.

<sup>161</sup> Cf. Helmut Uhlig *Marcel Proust*. [Series: Köpfe des Jahrhunderts]. Berlin (Colloquium Verlag) 1971; G. Debenedetti, *Rileggere Proust e altri saggi proustiani*. Milano (Mondadori) 1982.



the translation read by Germans is based on a »truer« text than those available to any other, *y compris* even French readers.<sup>162</sup>

Also, in various monographs can one note how the historic, geographical and gastronomic specificity of the *Recherche* reveals a rather dubious usability. In terms of becoming a consumable good, Proust is (ab)used for publications such as, e.g. Nadine Beauthéac: *Les Promenades de Marcel Proust*, tracing walks along picturesque Normandy, where a photographic image is provided with a matching Proust quote. The book of Anne Borrel, Alain Senderens, and Jean Bernard Nander's *Proust, la cuisine retrouvée*, gives the recipes for dishes and titbits mentioned in the *Recherche* alongside the quotes from the novel.<sup>163</sup> The specificity that makes it possible to use Proust's writings as »illustrative« quotes of books on Normandy or for recipes, may also have contributed to the fact, that the first films made on Proust were documentaries rather than feature films. However, in their approach to their historico-biographical subject, some of the documentaries repeat or re-enact the fictionalising strategies of Proust's novel. Thus, in France in the seventies and eighties the filmic medium—in picking up such themes as memory, identity reconstruction, stylistics etc.<sup>164</sup>—also contributed to a change in the reception of Proust. Another reason for this gradual shifting may be laid at the door of contemporary French film production entirely unrelated to Marcel Proust and his work. Starting in the late fifties, e.g. in the work of Alain Resnais<sup>165</sup> themes of memory and its connection to history were being explored in the cinema and thus re-configured the thematic horizon of reviewers and spectators.

It is also important to note how the reading of Marcel Proust in narratives of other people becomes interwoven with their own lives. The experience of

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<sup>162</sup> Andreas Isenschmid, *Proust, Bagdad und der Krieg*. IN: *Die Zeit* (29.01.2003).

In all modesty the article stipulates: *Die Frankfurter Ausgabe ist alles in allem die beste Proust-Ausgabe — in allen Sprachen [...]*.

<sup>163</sup> Nadine Beauthéac & François-Xavier Bouchart (photographies), *Les Promenades de Marcel Proust*. Paris (Éditions du Chêne) 1997; Anne Borrel, Alain Senderens & Jean Bernard Nander *Proust, la cuisine retrouvée*. Paris (Éditions du Chêne) 1991.

<sup>164</sup> Most notably here, *Proust et les sens* (1972), with the collaboration of Michel Butor, Jean Starobinski, Roland Barthes et al.) and *Proust, l'art et la douleur* (1971).

reading the *Recherche* for the first time, is a recurring part of the narratives told by the directors, screenwriters and producers involved in the making of the films. In various documentary films, editors, intellectuals, writers et al. commented on their initial experience of the *Recherche*. Due to the interrelation of Marcel Proust's life and work, and that the *Recherche* has a *je* at its centre, rather than a protagonist with name, the reader's appropriation of that space by inserting his/her own story is facilitated. Thus, in many of these documentary narratives, the reading of the *Recherche* is connected to coming of age (as in the case of both Volker Schlöndorff and Visconti who read the novel when they were still in their teens). In some cases, it is the book that the reader returns to over and over again in intervals, and each time it yields new meanings, or, it becomes the book that literally keeps the reader alive through his time in a concentration camp.<sup>166</sup> Joseph Czapski, a Polish painter/writer was a prisoner-of-war for a long time in a camp by Giazowietz. He told the story of *A la recherche temps perdu* to the other POWs at their meetings. It made them forget where they were. Also, he wrote a book on the story of Marcel Proust in the camp and when once questioned by a Russian guard about his »cahier« he told him it was the French lessons he was giving—and the guard was too ignorant to recognise the truth about his notes.<sup>167</sup> The narratives of reading the *Recherche* embed that experience in the lives of the readers. The »I« of the cultural process thus changes. This shifting of the »I« continues in the adaptations made (or attempted) of the *Recherche*. There, the »I« of the adapting person(s) becomes a focal point of the adaptation's reception.

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<sup>165</sup> In particular *Nuit et broillard* (1956), *Hiroshima mon amour* (1959), *L'année dernière à Marienbad* (1961), *La guerre est finie* (1966).

<sup>166</sup> Cf. esp. the narratives by Guy Schoeller, Claude Mauriac and Joseph Czapski. Schoeller reads the *Recherche* as a sort of manual, randomly picking a few pages every day which he then learns from.

The second is an example of how personal connections still matter in the reception of Proust. As the son of Proust's friend François Mauriac, Claude Mauriac was given *A la recherche du temps perdu* at age 16 by his father to read. He then married a grand-daughter of Proust's brother, and his daughter Nathalie Mauriac is an editor of Proust. Both Claude and Nathalie Mauriac work in French publishing.

The three stories are told in the documentary *Lire Proust* (1988, Pierre-André Boutang & Michel Pamart).

The figure of Proust seems to loom over the lives of even his translators. Working on and with Proust seems to necessitate an emphatic bond and/or biographical parallels. Enid G. Marantz writes of Scott Moncrieff and Stephen Hudson (translators into English) and of Pinter, respectively:<sup>168</sup>

*Charles Kenneth Scott Moncrieff (1889-1930) était, comme Proust, un enfant fragile et hypersensible, avec un gout marqué pour la nature, la rêverie, la musique, la poésie et la généalogie. [...] Né Sydney Schiff [Stephen Hudson] à Londres en 1868, fils adultérin d'une belle mondaine et d'un riche homme d'affaires d'origine juive et allemande [...], le petit Sydney tenait à la fois de Proust et de Gilberte. Comme l'enfant de Combray, il adorait sa mère, redoutait la sévérité de son père et, jusqu'à l'âge de quarante ans passés, semblait voué à une mesquine existence de parasite. [...]*

On Pinter:

*Harold Pinter, l'auteur du Proust Screenplay, ne semble pas marqué par le genre d'«affinité élective» qui rendait Scott Moncrieff et Stephen Hudson si perméables à l'influence proustienne. Enfant unique d'un obscur petit tailleur juif, Pinter naquit à Londres dans le quartier populaire de Hackney, en 1930.*

In a rather questionable way the social origins of Harold Pinter are cited as modes of cultural distancing from the work and the figure of Marcel Proust. It is debatable whether affinity to Proust desirable or not, but the insistence on an affinity is a staple feature of articles, films, documentaries, biographies of writers, directors, etc.

The translation into English was begun by Scott Moncrieff. However, it came under criticism by Sydney Schiff (birth name of Stephen Hudson). Schiff knew Proust personally (he and his wife socialised with Marcel Proust in »the days of the Ritz«) and communicated his doubts about the Moncrieff translation. It was Andreas Mayor who translated the last one of the volumes into English by 1931—which has been revised for the first time already in 1970 and a second revision has recently been undertaken. The English translation was, thus, one of the earliest complete translations of the Recherche and it was also in the England of the mid-fifties that the first exhibitions on Proust were

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<sup>167</sup> The scenes with Joseph Czapki in the film are intercut with documentary material of Catyn, the place where a mass grave of Polish officers had been discovered, who had been murdered 1939 by the Russian army.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Enid G. Marantz, *L'action de Proust sur ses traducteurs et adapteurs anglais: Scott-Moncrieff, Stephen Hudson, Harold Pinter*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel proust et des Amis de Combray*. (1981) No.31, pp. 331-338. Here quoted, pp.331 & 336.

organised in London and Manchester, respectively—ten years before the first exhibition on Proust at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.

Framed in these international cultural contexts, the »ownership« of Proust is a complex issue. Next to the question of the »I«, the problematic ways in which Proust is appropriated/defended across European borders also resurfaced in the critical reception of the first feature-length adaptation of Proust, *Un amour de Swann*.

### ***Un amour de Swann*: Schlöndorff vs. Proust**

Nicole Stéphane had acquired the rights to adapt the *Recherche* as early as 1962—except for the part *Un amour de Swann*, to which she acquired the rights in 1968. She had commissioned a script by Ennio Flaiano in the early sixties and had tried to get a film produced for 21 years: after having negotiated with (amongst others) both the Losey-Pinter as well as the Visconti-Cecchi d'Amico projects, the first adaptation to be realised was the 1984 film *Un amour de Swann* directed by the German Volker Schlöndorff, with the English actor Jeremy Irons cast as Charles Swann and the Italian actress Ornella Muti as Odette Crécy. The French reviews of the film were very critical of the finished film. In the articles written on the adaptation projects and the finished adaptations, the attitudes concerning the ownership of such a cultural good as Proust configured the evaluation of the adaptations.

When Schlöndorff started to make *Un amour de Swann*, there was initially scepticism whether he would manage Proust—even though he had adapted Robert Musil, Heinrich von Kleist, Henry James, Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass (the *Blechtrommel* winning the Palme d'Or 1979 at Cannes ex aequo with *Apocalypse Now*) and after *Swann* he adapted Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* to critical acclaim. The scepticism gave way to disappointment: *Un amour de*

*Swann* was regarded as a failure compared to his earlier work.<sup>169</sup> Volker Schlöndorff has been most of all accused of vulgarising the novel, in adding semi-pornographic scenes which were said to have been added merely to titillate.<sup>170</sup> Even though the film leaves in doubt whether the figure of Swann is, indeed, engaged in acts of anal sex, it was condemned as such by several reviewers.

Such sexual content is regarded as unworthy of Proust. It does strike one as strange that an adaptation should be reprimanded for the mere suggestion of a sexual act which is fairly often referred to in the *Recherche* itself. It may not be the characters Swann and Odette which engage in such practices, but there are plenty of other (homosexual/bisexual) figures who do or, at least, are expressively reported as doing so. Visconti, on the other hand, was not reproached for centring his adaptation on the homosexual couple Charlus-Morel, nor for detailed representation of the scenes in the Jupien's *Hôtel*.<sup>171</sup> Also, in the recent series of comics<sup>172</sup> based on the *Recherche*, one finds omitted both the masturbation scene in *Combray*, as well as the critique of lesbians and the jealousy-fuelled fantasies of the *je* with regard to the lesbian side of Albertine and Andrée in *A l'ombre des jeunes fille en fleurs*. This is done, clearly with a very young readership in mind but it has not been critically commented

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<sup>169</sup> A favourable opinion on the film was expressed in *Le Monde* (23.02.1984). Cf. Ghislaine Gélain, The Plight of Film adaptation in France: Toward a Dialogic Process in the Auteur Film. IN: *Film and Literature. A Comparative Approach to Adaptation*. Ed. by Wendell Aycock & Michael Schoenecke. Lubbock, TX (Texas Tech University Press) 1988 pp.135-148. According to Gélain, the article praised Schlöndorff for breaking the taboo of adapting Proust and in turn, asked writers (note bene not directors etc.) for opinions on how to visualize Proust.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. article of Jean Francis Held, Sodome et Gaumont. IN: *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*. (23.02.1984).

<sup>171</sup> At the time of *Un amour de Swann's* release, the some articles still voiced the opinion that Visconti would have made a better film. Cf.: [C.S.], Un amour de Swann de Volker Schlöndorff. IN: *L'Humanité*. (24.02.1984); Pierre Favre, "Un amour de Swann" - Proust en réduction. IN: *La Nouvelle République du Centre-Ouest*. (02.03.1984).

<sup>172</sup> So far, there are three volumes. The first being *Combray*, the other two *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs I & II*. Paris (Delcourt) 1998, 2000 & 2002, respectively. All three are done by Stanislaus Brézet and Stéphane Hueut, the latter the sole responsible for drawings and colours. What, so far, has then been left out is *Un amour de Swann* and *Nom de Pays: Le nom* and the first part of *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, i.e. *Nom de Pays: le pays*.

upon as a form of censorship. In order to furnish even children with high culture, a »customising« of Marcel Proust is justified.<sup>173</sup>

Another example where the cast of an adaptation and the explicit depiction of sexuality (here a lesbian relationship) is in an article of Harvey Roy Greenberg<sup>174</sup> on *The Bostonians*, a film made just two years prior to *Un amour de Swann*. After having lengthily voiced his opinions on the failed casting of Madeline Potter and Christopher Reeve<sup>175</sup>, he goes on to lament the scenes in which the female protagonist Selah Tarrant (played by Madeline Potter) and her friend Olive Channing (played by Vanessa Redgrave) are shown as a lesbian couple:

*However, serious questions must be raised about the blatancy with which Olive's profoundly latent homosexuality is trumpeted at a modern audience. Olive and Verena are constantly surprised in decorous clinches. The New York boardinghouse scene that has them languishing about in chemises is nearly situated within the convention of soft porn. James needs very few words, none of them explicit, to tell us everything we need to know about Olive's sexual preferences.*

Though the lesbianism is more than hinted at, the Ivory film can hardly be termed a soft porn. Unlike the argument made about *improper looks* and gaping garments, here the literary text is regarded as exemplary in its reticence. This is levelled as a critique against a film that through visualisation makes more explicit the sexual themes hinted at in the book. In documentary material given on the DVD, the director James Ivory claimed that he did not want to make the lesbian theme very obvious. Together with his statement that he wanted to keep the relationship platonic, while at the same opting for a very carnal representation of the heterosexual relationship, the director James Ivory is involved in contradictions: first in claiming that lesbianism is not

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<sup>173</sup> Cf. Andreas Platthaus, Hört die Signale. Im Werk Elstirs steckt die Gebrauchsanweisung: Mit Stéphane Heuets Proust-Comic entsteht ein Meisterwerk. IN: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (25.05.2001).

<sup>174</sup> Harvey Roy Greenberg, Fiction into Film—Problems of Adaptation: Improper Bostonians. IN: idem, *Screen Memories. Hollywood on the Psychoanalytic Couch*, New York (Columbia University Press) 1993, pp. 169-181. Here, p. 176.

<sup>175</sup> Reeve's casting he comments with: *Christopher Reeve is not bad playing this type. He has the looks, the gaze, and most of the accent. Reeve often brings an ingenuous intensity to his romantic roles which I found unexpectedly moving in Superman (1978) and Superman II (1980). His screen persona is so resolutely amiable as to defeat any representation of villainy, even the faintest hint of meanness.* (p.177)

represented, which it de facto is except to the most unimaginative spectator; and second, at the same time he is aware of the narrative placing the young heroine between two ways of life presented in a choice she has to make between two lovers, one female and one male, and he confirms the heterosexual matrix<sup>176</sup> by granting the male desire highly advantageous screen presence.<sup>177</sup>

In the case of Greenwood's article, what is offended are most of all the sensibilities of someone who is disappointed by the film because it fails to deliver what its author (Greenberg) had expected of an adaptation, an author who claims to speak for an entire audience. The objections towards explicit scenes, here, then uses the argument of a rather puritan »good taste«<sup>178</sup> to disqualify other readings of the literary source material.

Returning to *Un amour de Swann*, it is then furthermore interesting, that Schlöndorff is at the same time blamed for being boringly faithful to the novel. For Schlöndorff it seems, there is no way to win in a situation when some commentators insisted that he respect Proust to the point of blending out what is actually there in the novel, whereas others demanded him to assert himself against Proust. His film is, for mutually-contradictory reasons, then regarded as an anti-climax of what might have been. Thus, the film antagonised representatives of both sides, i.e. those who want the film to adhere to the canonical text in an appropriate and tasteful way (just as the plot-element of slave-trade was considered a topic inappropriate for a Jane Austen adaptation) and those who want him to depart from it, to radicalise it.

Concerning the question of being explicitly base or derogatory, the novel can easily match a film for that. As an example: the Je's description given of the figure Rahel, working in the brothel and the way he comments on her

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<sup>176</sup> Cf. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York & London (Routledge) 1990.

<sup>177</sup> In the film, the attraction of the older character Olive for the younger woman is intimated more obviously than in the novel. But at the same time the representation of Olive's desire is much less explicit (in terms of overt sexual acts such as kissing and in terms of declared intentions and desires) than that of the male protagonist for the young woman.

availability for a pitiful amount of money,<sup>179</sup> are more devastating through the contempt expressed therein for prostitutes, than any scene in the film. The accusation of »vulgarisation« then, becomes a hypocritical façade for wanting to preserve the high art and the prestige of Proust. This vented itself against the actors and actresses involved, which repeatedly implied highly discriminatory remarks on Ornella Muti, the actress playing Odette. In one article the way she is shown to be in the film was referred to as *la vulgarité rousse, sensuelle et perverse d'une Ornella Muti (Odette de Crécy) méconnaissable*.<sup>180</sup> It is the left newspaper *Libération*, however, that viciously slaughters her as *laide, et tellement pâtisserie tunisienne suintante à faire gerber le plus indulgent des proustiens*.<sup>181</sup>

### Casting as Tool of Interpretation

In choosing just the story of Charles Swann as material for a feature film Nicole Stéphane was giving in to financial constraints: over the years it had proved impossible to find the money for an overarching adaptation project and even for the Swann-project several attempts had already come to nothing. Also, the copyright on the *Recherche* was going to expire in 1987, and therefore it became pressing to make a film soon. The critical reception of the film is discussed in the subchapter below. Here, I will briefly summarize what I consider the main characteristics of the film's narrative.

The choice of *Un amour de Swann* is a fairly obvious one given the production constraints mentioned above, as it is practically the one part of the novel that can easily be read on its own. *Un amour de Swann* is, in fact, the middle part of the first volume of the *Recherche*, *Du côté de chez Swann*. It is

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<sup>178</sup> Which is highly ironic in a supposedly psychoanalytic reading concerned with revealing the repression in the characters, and in the writer Henry James himself.

<sup>179</sup> JFF, II-456-462.

<sup>180</sup> Dominique Jamet, *Un amour de Volker Schlöndorff. À la recherche du temps perdu*. IN: *Le quotidien de Paris* (24.02.1984).

<sup>181</sup> Rolan Vinteuil, *Une soirée chez les Verdurins du plantier*. IN: *Libération* (25.02.1984). My underlining, KD.



preceded by *Combray* where the *je* starts out on his remembered history with a narrative of childhood set in rural France. The third part of *Du côté de chez Swann* is titled *Nom de Pays: le nom*, where the narrative returns to the *je*, now slightly older, closing with the sighting of a magnificent Odette/Mme Swann in the bois de Boulogne. Both in the first and in the third part of *Du côté de chez Swann*, the narrative is centred around the *je*. In the second part, the *je* is absent and the narrative tells the story of Swann in the third person. Swann and Odette reappear throughout the *Recherche*, but it is significantly in *Un amour de Swann* that they are not seen through the eyes of the *je*, i.e. through a narrator present on the diegetic level. In the context of adaptation this then eliminates for *Un Amour de Swann*, the problem of the »I« on the deigetic level. However, the »I« of the *Recherche* being identified with Marcel Proust in the reception, the problem of the »I« as the question of fidelity (to letter and spirit) did pose itself: Schlöndorff came under severe attacks, and some contemporary examples of the time of release will be given later in the following.

I would now first like to turn to an aspect of film production that can have very diverse effects in the context of critical reception, i.e. the casting. Actors and actresses especially when perceived as so-called stars are in numerous articles explicitly or implicitly treated as an element of a film that produces a meaning of its own, parallel to the plotline, the directing, the artistic merit of a film. In his article on stars vs. plot, Lothar Mikos, makes an interesting hypothesis of competing narrative systems:<sup>182</sup>

*Knowledge about stars, however, does not fall into any of the three domains described here as important for the reception of a film. This knowledge represents a narrative system of its own, which competes with the narrative system of the film. Yet at the same time it is tied to the forms of narrative knowledge involved in the reception of film.*

I give two other quotes. The first is part of an interview transcription done with Volker Schlöndorff by me in October 2000, the second is taken from a review by Philip Horne of the Terence Davies Film *The House of Mirth* (an

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<sup>182</sup> Lothar Mikos, *Stars vs. Plot and Stoy: Narrative Systems in Competition*. IN: *IRIS* (autumn 1997) No 24, pp.137-153. Here, p. 143.

adaptation of Edith Wharton's eponymous novel) published in *Sight and Sound* that same month.<sup>183</sup>

*Ja, ja! Die Franzosen haben das überhaupt nicht so gesehen. Die haben das als Schändung eines Nationaldenkmals empfunden. Ich bin praktisch über Nacht ausgebürgert worden, in Frankreich. Das hat man, glaube ich, mit dem Abstand wieder etwas anders gesehen. Also, wenn der Film Schwächen hat, und die hat er sicher, ich glaube nicht, daß man das auf die Besetzung schieben kann. Aber mit der Besetzung sind die Franzosen sehr heikel. Ich habe wieder die Erfahrung gemacht, als ich Le roi des Aulnes verfilmt habe, und habe den Malkovich da genommen, das haben die Franzosen mir auch nicht verziehen. Da gibt es also, in Frankreich eine, also ... im Gegensatz zu Italien überhaupt nicht diese Flexibilität.*

Despite Davies' interest in pre-rock popular culture, *The X-Files*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Blues Brothers* seem quite off his map. [...] Here then is Gillian Anderson of *The X-Files* as Wharton's penniless, ambitious but ambivalent society beauty Lily Bart, flanked by Eric Stoltz (from the cool world of American independents such as *Pulp Fiction* and *Sleep With Me*) as her wavering admirer Lawrence Selden and Dan Ackroyd (from the worlds of *Saturday Night Live* and *Blues Brothers*) as Gus Trenor, the lecherous banker husband of a friend, who manoeuvres her into a compromising position. But as with Davies' use of Wilfrid Brambell (known as the hideous, mean-spirited dad in television's *Steptoe and Son*) in the *Death and Transfiguration* part of the *Trilogy* or of the alternative comedian Denis Leary as the father in *The Neon Bible*, the star performers here are stripped of their comforting familiarity and seem thoroughly engaged with the ruthlessly machiavellian world Davies magisterially constructs.<sup>184</sup>

In the review of *The House of Mirth*, the casting of actors that are not obvious choices for the characters they are supposed to play, is praised as a tool for »opening the eyes« of spectators. However, in the reception of the Schlöndorff film this practice came under severe attack. As analysed in detail above, it was not an instance of casting against type (or filmography, as it were) that alienated the critics, but the casting of foreigners as characters perceived to be quintessentially French prototypes. Fifteen years later, in the Ruiz film this point does not come up. For one, this film did have an Italian actor playing Marcel Proust at ca. 40 years of age, but the majority of its cast was made up by well-known French actors and actresses. Schlöndorff himself attributed this hostility to the fact that his film was intended as a mainstream film, released in

<sup>183</sup> Translation: Yes, yes! The French did not see it like that at all. They felt it was like the profanation of a national monument. I was practically sent into exile over night, in France. One has come to see that slightly differently, now, from a distance. So, if the film has its weak points, and it certainly does, I do not think one can blame it on the casting. But the French are very particular as concerns casting. I made the same experience when I adapted *Le Roi des Aulnes*, and I took Malkovich, the French did not forgive me for that either. There is no, well, in France, well ... contrary to Italy not that kind of flexibility at all.

<sup>184</sup> Philip Horne, *Beauty's Slow Fade*. IN: *Sight and Sound*. October 2000, pp. 14-18. Here, p. 15f.

multiplex cinemas, whereas the Ruiz film was meant for an arthouse circuit and therefore presented no threat to the public image of Proust. If *Un amour de Swann* had been praised, it would have been easily accessible to larger audiences, and thus it would have significantly shaped a public's perception of Proust. It therefore provoked overtly critical reviews. Disparaging comments of reviewers do not necessarily mean that a public would not still see a film, but with this type of film (as opposed to a action blockbuster) the role critics play in motivating spectators to go and see a film is more important. Thus the reception granted to the film in French papers contributed to a smaller success of the film.

In the interview Schlöndorff then used the example of *Il Gattopardo*, as an example of the supposed liberal-mindedness of Italian producers and audiences regarding the casting of actors and actresses of other nations for Italians in adaptations. But this is contradicted by the history of that film's production. At the time of release, in the mid-sixties, the nationality of Burt Lancaster as the *Principe* in Luchino Visconti's adaptation of Lampedusa's novel *Il gattopardo* had provoked a lot of comment. Though it was favourably reviewed, I would argue that the fact it was commented upon so widely, also indicates a »positive« xenophobia. Moreover, it transpires from documentary material made at the time<sup>185</sup> that neither had Luchino Visconti thought of casting him as the Prince let alone had Lancaster been the first choice, nor had Lancaster considered himself the right actor for the job. The myth that has been woven around this particular instance of casting as »congenial meeting of talent«, has been fabricated over the years after the release of the film.<sup>186</sup>

More important, what configures this approach to casting must also be rooted in the historical location of the films, *The House of Mirth* and *Le temps retrouvé* were made twenty-five years after *Un amour de Swann* and (I would

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<sup>185</sup> From miscellaneous interviews done on the film with the producer Goffredo Lombardo, the actor Burt Lancaster and Luchino Visconti himself. I had the opportunity to see these and materials relating to other films Luchino Visconti directed at special screenings of the Cineteca di Firenze, May 2002.

<sup>186</sup> Also note here the casting of Alain Delon and Terence Stamp in *Il Gattopardo* where instances of such transnational casting. The Casting of US actors had been a condition made by the US-producers distributing the film.

maintain and will discuss in the following chapter) when the practice of literary adaptation and the ways in which it is reviewed have become more flexible. But what most certainly shaped the reception was its location in the historical trajectory of Proust reception: the Schlöndorff film was the first adaptation of the *Recherche* and before it was produced much had been made already of the project of bringing the entire *Recherche* to the screen. Therefore, the narrative downscaling and the succession of directors and writers brought to the project, which ended with this partial adaptation, might have given the impression of an anti-climax even before the first scene had been shot. Expectations had been very high in the early seventies ever since Luchino Visconti was to adapt the novel—the film project surfaced in several interviews Visconti gave at the 1971 Cannes film festival where he had just presented *Death in Venice*. Also, by the late nineties, the intellectual and critical reception of Proust as a writer had most decidedly moved away from Proust-*mémorialiste* and the representative of »French heyday« to the Proust of memory, of the stylistic experimentation, of innovative narration. Both of these perceptions of Proust prevented a positive reception of the film.

While the narrative of *Swann* is a *mise-en-abyme* of the later more extensive narrative between the *je* and Albertine, here, the *je* is absent from the narration. Significantly, this exclusion is revoked in the film's last sequence set on the Champs-Élysées where one of the children playing is named Marcel, here the novel's narrator is »biographisingly inserted«. Other central characters of the *Recherche* which appear are the Baron de Charlus (played by Alain Delon) and the duchesse de Guermantes (played by Fanny Ardant). The film was shot on location in Paris, Versailles and at the chateau de Vincennes, yet one is only fed fragments of these *endroit proustiens*. In the interview done with Schlöndorff in 2000 (sixteen years after the production), he still stressed the fact that the costumes and all the jewellery of the film were originals from the time. However, such meticulous reconstruction of the past may well have cost the film dearly as regards artistic imaginativeness or credibility. The »aboutness« in the case of Proust was seen by his contemporaries to be not merely about

details of dress, but about the social and intellectual life of the period and the emotionality of its individuals in retrospect (i.e. the themes of society and memory). From the seventies onwards, the author then had been regarded as a modern classic because of his stylistic innovation.<sup>187</sup> A film like *Un amour de Swann* which focussed very much on the emotions of the duo Odette-Swann, on sexual desire, jealousy and betrayal, and represented these narratives within the conventions of narrative cinema, had to be read as a banalization and profanation of the »great« Proust. The film *Un amour de Swann* was released in the years when the heritage film just started its success on cinema circuits, but it did not participate in that success, because the idea of what kind of writer Proust is and what kind of novel the *Recherche* is, differed from the perception of the novels of E.M. Forster and of E.M. Forster. Regardless of the film's »aesthetic worth« it was the reputation of the Proust, both the *mémorialiste* and the modernist Proust, that made the first adaptation a contested arena. If the interest in an adaptation is how a film manages to transpose what the novel is »about« a perfect *mise-en-scène* and a reduction of the *Recherche* to a love story could not satisfy.

## Time Structure

The most striking thing about the film, however, is the drastically modified time structure of the narrative. Whereas in the novel, the narrative unfolds chronologically over a period of several years, here the scriptwriters (Peter Brooke, Jean-Claude Carrière & Marie-Hélène Estienne) contracted that time span to a 24-hour structure. Or rather, they attempted to do so, but the film's epilogue(s) and four flashbacks subvert this structure. While the film's main diegesis and the flashbacks are situated during the courtship of Odette

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<sup>187</sup> A reputation that, e.g., Jane Austen and E.M. Foster do not share to that degree. Whether these reputations of Proust, Austen et al. are deserved or not is beside the point (and I do not venture an opinion here), but their respective reception trajectories mark out their merits in different ways in different areas. And this influences expectations of the films.

and Swann, the two epilogues are take place at the time of their subsequent marriage.

### 1. Flashback

The film starts with Swann waking up sometime in the late morning. Before he starts to get dressed, he is shown in medium shot lying in bed and writing into a cahier. It is his voice in voice-over that tells about his infatuation for Odette. The medium shots of Swann are intercut with a flashback in four instalments, all belonging to one sequence: a close-up of Swann looking at something which by a cut is shown to be an orchid, the catleya (1st instalment); a closeup of Swann's gloved hand moving towards the catleya tucking it into Odette's bodice, her cleavage is also in the frame (2nd instalment); Swann's hand caressing breast, cut to close-up of Swann's face, taking off his hat and bending over Odette's décolleté (3rd instalment); close-up of Swann's head and hand caressing Odette's décolleté (4th instalment). After the fourth instalment, the film cuts back for the last time to the main diegesis: a long shot of Swann sitting in a chair while a hairdresser is tending to his appearance. His manservant walks through background with a clean shirt. In the following one sees various stages<sup>188</sup> of Swann's getting dressed and ready to go out—which he achieves at around three p.m.<sup>189</sup>

### 2. Flashback

Swann goes out to a musical gathering at the duchesse de Guermantes and afterwards goes to meet Odette at the Bagatelle (a restaurant). They spend the afternoon together but then Odette goes to the opera and Swann goes home. The second flashback is told as he paces his rooms. Unlike the first flashback, this one is not introduced by anything suggesting Swann is remembering: Odette appears suddenly, walking around Swann's apartment. Only because

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<sup>188</sup> Such as: putting on of shirt, final brushing of hair, waxing of moustache, plucking of eyebrow, putting on coat, picking flower for buttonhole.

<sup>189</sup> This can be read as an allusion to Marcel Proust, who woke up very late in the afternoon as well and also spent time in bed scribbling into his *cahiers*. Other such oblique references to the novel are that the manservant of Swann is called François, the male variant of Françoise, i.e. the faithful servant of the *je*; and that the waiter at the restaurant Bagatelle is called Aimée, i.e. the name of the hotel director at Balbec.

Swann is differently dressed when framed together with Odette, can one deduce that this is a flashback. It is told in two instalments, interrupted by a scene where Swann sits down and is left alone as his valet disappears. The first instalment of the flashback shows Swann and Odette moving around the various rooms of the flat, she is looking amongst other things at the picture of Zepphora he has on display. The second instalment shows them at Swann's desk. After the film cuts back to the main diegesis, Swann is shown as asleep in the armchair he sat down in prior to the second instalment. He is then woken up by his valet. Swann decides to go out and look for Odette at the Opéra Garnier.

### 3. Flashback

The third flashback is introduced when Swann, having missed Odette and her party at the exit of the Opéra Garnier, is looking for her in a café nearby. Swann hears music and then the voice of Odette singing. The flashback showing Odette singing and Swann playing the piano is told in one instalment. As the film cuts back to the main diegesis, it is a man singing the song and the café is revealed to be the Café de la Paix which still operates on the Place de l'Opéra today.

### 4. Flashback

The fourth and last flashback is introduced when Swann, after having been found Odette, attends a gathering of of Madame Verdurin's circle. Since she leaves for home with her hostess, he is left behind. Angrily he takes a walk and furiously talks to himself. The last flashback is introduced by a shot showing Swann seated in the carriage again. It is actually a repetition and variation of the first flashback where Swann caressed Odette's décolleté. In repeating the first flashback, the film also refers back to its circular time-structure: the cycle of the 24 hours in a day. At the end of the film, the first scene of Swann lying in bed and writing something into a cahier is repeated. The repetition of this first part of daily ritual, thus, completes the diurnal narrative cycle. The scene then no longer is intercut with a flashback but undergoes a narrative variation: Charlus arrives for an early morning call that will lead the main diegesis to its end and the film to its narrative conclusion.

Narrative variation also takes place within the last flashback. Here, the camera is not in extreme close-up anymore, but in a medium shot shows both of them in the carriage. Whereas in the first flashback, the character Odette was reduced to her décolleté, here her face also is in the frame. The frame reveals even more: Swann kisses not only the flower and her breasts, but also her neck mouth and a nipple that emerges from a dress pulled down. All of this is shown in one instalment: neither Swann's desire of flesh and its attainment, nor the film's revelation of flesh and desire are interrupted, i.e. they are not presented as delayed pleasures as in the first flashback.<sup>190</sup> While at the same time, remembering the first flashback with its hints at sexual pleasure, this represents the diegetic construction as having delayed, but ultimately delivered, the consummation of pleasures—confirmed by the continuation of the plot where Swann is admitted into Odette's house a second time and, for the first time in the film, into her bed for sex. The flashbacks not only counteract the temporal condensation of the main diegesis, but they also insert narratives of »original« desire, the beginning of the affair between Swann and Odette. The absence of French society in those flashbacks and their close link to desire, may have contributed to French criticism being levelled at other scenes of lust.

### Epilogues

The two epilogues are added on to the main diegesis which had ended with Charlus (played by Alain Delon) calling on Swann the morning after. There, the character Swann had declared to Charlus that Odette was not his type at all and despite having wasted the best years of his life for this love, he had overcome his infatuation with her, whereupon Charlus had asked when they were going to get married. In the first epilogue Swann is considerably

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<sup>190</sup> In the first flashback, a distance from the visual plot is also indicated by the use of voice-over. It is the dialogue spoken in the carriage, but not spoken at the moment of utterance. In the enlarged repetition of the flashback, the sound is synchronous, i.e. Swann and Odette are speaking the lines heard. This suggests immediacy, a heightened realism—which is obliquely disrupted: for the lines where Odette asks Swann why he had waited so long with this (i.e. to sexually approach her), her lips are hidden behind Swann's head, just as his lips are out of sight when he answers.



aged (compared to the Swann of the diegesis) and he is once more shown as visiting the duc and the duchesse de Guermantes (played by Jaques Boudet and Fanny Ardant). While he is in the house, his (and Odette's) daughter is condemned to wait for him in the carriage outside. From the daughter's not-specified age, one can locate this scene at about 10 years from the previous scene. In the second epilogue and final scene, Swann and Charlus sit in the Jardin de Tuileries and watch the passersby—among them the older Odette. Here, the scenario gives a date just during World War II.

All of the flashbacks narrate episodes of the affair between Swann and Odette (i.e. the story of desire remembered), whereas the epilogues show the social consequences of their marriage. As the transition between the end of the main diegesis and the first epilogue illustrates this forcefully: from the close-up of Swann who is just pondering the question of Charlus, the film cuts to the Guermantes' salon which is filled with the people present at a musical gathering all looking back at Swann and waiting. This musical gathering had previously been narrated. In its repetition it is, however, fundamentally altered. It is no longer a sequence of narrative cinema, i.e. an episode of the plot: the characters are immobile and look to the aged Swann for a cue. Just as their postures indicate that they are no longer playing at being society, their visual appearance betrays them as non-realistic. They are semitransparent: the outlines of chairs and of the piano can be seen through their hats, bodices and dresses. Then, there is a cut to a close-up of Swann, but this is the aged Swann entering the salon, followed again by a long shot of the see-through gathering. The intercutting, here, connects the main diegesis, the epilogue, and another level: a remembered and manipulated diegesis. Another long shot of the old Swann entering the salon reveals the salon to have been emptied—society fades out, scatters, after he has made a his disastrous match.

Two of the flashbacks take up references to other arts: one to music, i.e. the Vinteuil sonata which was the melody Swann and Odette listened to. The Botticelli engraving of Zephora is a copy of a painting in the Sistine Chapel, Zephora being the daughter of the priest Jethro and a wife of Moses. Neither of

these are the real thing: the picture is a copy of an original that Marcel Proust only knew via John Ruskin who had written on it; the music is a composition made for the film. The other two flashbacks refer in the wider sense to flowers. One of these, the catleya, is also part of the novel and there too, *faire catleya*, is Swann's and Odette's phrase for making love.<sup>191</sup> The other flower, the chrysanthemum that Odette picks for Swann in her garden before she leaves him for the opera appears in the novel in that episode<sup>192</sup> and in a different context: when the *je* visits Madame Swann during the time he is in love with Gilberte, there are chrysanthemums in her salon.<sup>193</sup>

Flowers have several meanings over the course of the *Recherche*:<sup>194</sup> the cherry and pear trees in splendid bloom when Saint Loup introduces his beloved Rachel to the adult *je*, who immediately in anti-climax to his rapture at the spectacle of blossoms recognises her as a common prostitute;<sup>195</sup> the seringas whose smell Albertine allegedly cannot bear and which have to be removed, while the whole scene between her, Andrée and the *je* is just made to divert the *je* from the smell of recent sexual intercourse on both Albertine and Andrée;<sup>196</sup> the complex metaphoric use of orchids in *Sodome et Gomorrhe* to explain (homo)sexual relationships. In all of these instances, flowers are in some way or another connected to sex and/or sexual relationships.<sup>197</sup> The film also makes this connection. In choosing a chrysanthemum, however, the film inserts another meaning: according to flower language, chrysanthemums can mean a variety of things, mostly being expressive of true love.<sup>198</sup> All of which meanings are contradicted by the narrative of the film. Thus, the impossible chrysanthemum signifies Odette's betrayal of Swann.

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<sup>191</sup> CS-I, 228ff.

<sup>192</sup> CS-I, 216.

<sup>193</sup> JFF-II, 585.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. Claude Meunier, *Le jardin d'hiver de Mme Swann. Proust et les fleurs*. Paris (Grasset) 1995.

<sup>195</sup> CGI-II, 455f.

<sup>196</sup> SG-III, 563ff.

<sup>197</sup> SG-III, 3ff.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. Luzian Verborgen, *Die Blumensprache*. Frankfurt a.M. (Insel) 1990, p.61.

The flashbacks' references to music and art indicate the overall art-related intertextuality of the literary source material. In the interview done in October 2000, Schlöndorff pointed out not only that Swann's apartment would have to be full of art objects such as, e.g. the engraving, to demonstrate his nature of collector, but also that the flat of Swann was a location that actually could be shaped to the filmmakers' liking. The rooms at the Château de Vincennes where the *matinée* of the *princesse de Guermantes* was shot, on the other hand, could not be changed very much. There, the filmmakers were only allowed to leave or to remove the furniture—whereas Swann's apartment could be littered with objects of their choice. When Swann in the second flashback asks Odette to have a close look at the engraving through the lens of a looking glass, this can be read as a metonymic reference for another artist looking through another lens, i.e. the cameraman, the director, looking through a camera at a set, and ultimately of a spectator watching a film projected through the apparatus. As Swann gazes through the looking glass at his imagined Odette, the spectator doubles him in this. But s/he is looking at the »bigger picture«: at the story of Swann and Odette, and at the film that is an adaptation of Proust. As the main diegesis and the flashbacks show, delay and consummate Swann's desires, thus also the audience's desires are aroused, delayed and consummated. The initial non-attraction of the character Swann to Odette's type which then admits defeat, thus signifies both a distrust of such types of films, of heritage films, and that resistance is well-nigh impossible. Swann's final disillusionment with the consequences of his passion, is a parallel to the discontent with heritage film itself.

The final image of the film confirms this: a long shot shows Odette/Madame Swann walking towards the Arc de Triomphe du Carrousel located in the Tuileries. As she progresses towards the arch, she is intercut with onlookers discussing her past profession as prostitute. However high she may have climbed socially, she is an imposter, a fake. Previously her price had been 300 Francs and one passerby remembers he was in bed with her the day MacMahon resigned. As she was formerly cheaply afforded for sex and now is expensively clad as wife, thus adaptations turned to literature for easy stories

and find themselves dearly paying for the costumes of heritage: in terms of production cost, and in terms of critical failure.

There is yet another imposter in the final image of this film: the Arc itself. Not only is it often forgot because at the other end of the Champs-Élysées there is another arch, the larger *Arc de Triomphe*.<sup>199</sup> But the Arc depicted, is a small copy of the Septimius-Severus-Arch from Rome, built in 1806-1808 by Napoleon. Moreover, the quadriga that originally crowned it, had been stolen from San Marco in Venice and was taken back after 1815. The quadriga replacing it in 1828 was yet another copy. Odette/Madame Swann significantly does not walk through the arch, as would a triumphant emperor, but vanishes into the shadow next to it. In this juxtapositioning in final frame, the character aligns herself to the other impostor. To look like the »real thing« is not to be it, and such images of *patrimoine* can be read as stolen moments.

French reviews of the film had certainly suggested that some outrageous theft had been committed. There were, however, reviews which, e.g., spoke of Ornella Muti not only favourably, but also as an Italian actress that forms part of a international project, worthy of adapting Proust. That the resulting film is not a masterpiece was beside the point. The adaptation is an end in itself that it saves Proust from those who wish to idolise him on an altar of high culture. That a culture war is being waged on the question of who has the right and who is capable of adapting Proust is made explicit in an interview-article in *France Soir*:<sup>200</sup>

*Sans peur et peut-être sans reproche, ce petit Allemand au front chauve, qui ressemble au professeur Nimbus, s'est attaqué à ce monument de la littérature française qu'est Marcel Proust.*

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<sup>199</sup> In my first viewing of the film, I had mistaken it for the Arc de triomphe of the Étoile, just like others, e.g. Sybille Penkert in her article Volker Schlöndorff's »Eine Liebe von Swann«. IN: CICIM, No. 30/31/32, pp. 297-306.

Having been to Paris and remembering the smallness of this arch as well as its insignificant location, the realisation that this is not that Arc de triomphe then somewhat undermines the grandeur of the film's final images.

On the other hand, according to Volker Schlöndorff in the interview granted to me, all the extras of the scene were actually French aristocrats who enjoyed a day of playing at Proust.

<sup>200</sup> Monique Patel, Schlöndorff: «La jalousie est le carburant de l'amour». IN: *France-Soir*. (23.02.1984). My bold marking and underlining, KD.

Cf also the title of article in *Le Point* (17.02.1984): La bataille de Swann, aura-t-elle lieu?

«Pour moi 'Un amour de Swann' est l'histoire d'amour la plus belle et la plus troublée que je connaisse. C'est ce que j'ai ressenti quand j'ai lu. Aussi j'ai été ravi quand on m'a proposé d'en faire un film. Enfin, j'allais faire sortir Proust du XVI<sup>e</sup> arrondissement pour le donner au peuple.»

La formule est audacieuse, mais on écoute Schlöndorff avec le même plaisir que ses contemporains devaient en éprouver à écouter Proust. Il poursuit sur son héroïque lancée:

«En portant 'Un amour de Swann' au cinéma, j'ai fait un acte de terrorisme international.»

International, c'est le mot. Schlöndorff est allemand, Jeremy Irons (Swann) est anglais, et Ornella Muti (Odette) est italienne.

«Mais je ne les ai choisis que pour ce que leur cocktail avait d'explosif.»

En plein guerilla

Décidément, nous sommes en plein guérilla. Explosif, terrorisme, Schlöndorff a déclaré la guerre aux intellectuels prétendant que Proust est une domaine réservé.

The imagery of war (underlined passages) dominates the interview. While at the same time there are (marked in bold) different attitudes present on what should be done to Proust and by whom.

In several articles and also in histories<sup>201</sup> of the German cinema Schlöndorff is regarded as a »non-auteur«. This is significant in a context, where he is cast in the role of the pretender, i.e. the challenger of Marcel Proust. Just as it takes all the French education and previous experience with literary adaptations of Schlöndorff to assuage the dormant fears that a German director might appropriate the »object Proust« of French culture, so the idea that he allegedly has no hallmark style of his own here is a positively connotated characteristic.<sup>202</sup> It was helpful in so far as he thereby is a less threatening author-figure. But this is a trope of marketing the film:<sup>203</sup>

*The emphasis on Schlöndorff's absence of style — an absurdity — is essential to the marketing of the film. Schlöndorff's transparency allows the supposed »truth« of the film's textual origins to spectacularize themselves.*

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<sup>201</sup> Richard Kilborn, Filming the Unfilmable: Volker Schlöndorff and the Tin Drum. IN: *Cinema and Fiction. New Modes of Adapting 1950-1990*. Ed. by John Orr & Colin Nicholson. Edinburgh (Edinburgh University Press) 1992, pp. 28-38.

On p. 30: Schlöndorff has always adopted a decidedly non-auteurist almost artisanal approach to fiction.

<sup>202</sup> Cf. also the previously cited article by Brian MacFarlane (this chapter, p. 117f.) contending that David Lean and Carol Reed had no directorial style.

Also, he appears almost as not being German because he is under foreign influences and because his breakthrough success<sup>204</sup> was made elsewhere and re-imported to Germany, as it were. In Thomas Elsaesser's account of him,<sup>205</sup> because his body of work consists of numerous adaptations:

*[...]he is the director with the closest ties to the German literary establishment. This means that, for the audience he envisages, the proven literary value of his properties is of significance. But it also implies that, compared to other German Autoren, Schlöndorff attaches unusual importance to the professionally well-made script.*

And it seems that the scriptwriters working for Schlöndorff have almost more influence on the style than he himself:

*His stories and situations are constructed along the lines of Hollywood narrative. That is, the social issues and conflicts are transformed into and dramatised as psychological ones, and the emphasis is on plotting motives, choices, decisions, actions — the very assumptions which for other directors of the New German Cinema such as Herzog oder Wenders are anathema and against which they developed their individual styles. The least linear of Schlöndorff's films is his most intriguing, because so much depends on place and atmosphere, on unresolved tensions and unstated motives, is *Coup de grace*, scripted by Margarethe von Trotta and Jutta Brückner, two film-makers quite different from Schlöndorff.*

The ways in which the figure of Schlöndorff here is read as a director without distinct style, and as a director seemingly content with being the adaptor of literary material, conspire to undermine his auteur status. While German institutions were only too happy to accept him as the winner of foreign awards, the Palme d'Or for *Die Blechtrommel* and also the Oscar for Best Foreign Film, academic and journalistic writing undermine these achievements. When read in an oeuvre context, here, literary adaptation and auteurism conspire as instruments of negative critique. This conveniently blends out, however, that

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<sup>203</sup> Phil Powrie, *Marketing History: Swann in Love*. IN: *Film Criticism*. (1988) Vol 12, No. 3 pp. 33-45. Here, p. 37.

<sup>204</sup> Interview with Heike Hurst & Daniel Sauvaget, *... um wieviel freier als in Deutschland*. IN: *CICIM* (June 1991) No. 31-32, pp. 307-312.

In this interview Volker Schlöndorff voiced the (debatable) opinion, that all successful German directors had to go through other countries and then return to Germany. On p. 311: *Unsere Filme werden fast immer auf dem Festival von Cannes entdeckt, durchgesetzt und bestätigt.*

Cf. also Sybille Penkert, *Volker Schlöndorff's »Eine Liebe von Swann«*. IN: *CICIM* (June 1991) No. 31-32, pp. 297-306.

It is only five years after *Un amour de Swann* was released and when he no longer is engaged in »marketing« this film nor has it yet become history (as at our interview in 2000), that Schlöndorff can put his finger on what did not work, and also voice it. According to the director in this article, the fault lay in an obfuscation of plot.

<sup>205</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema. A History*. London (Macmillan & bfi) 1989, pp. 123 & 124 respectively.

quite a number of films Volker Schlöndorff made not only used literary narratives, but foregrounded a political argument through that narrative. They were what in German is termed *engagiertes Kino*—e.g. *The Tin Drum*, *Die verlorene Ehre der Katarina Blum*, *Der Zögling Törless*, *Deutschland im Herbst* (a collaboration with others).<sup>206</sup>

Analysing the critical and popular reception of *Un amour de Swann*, one can summarise that it did not do too well. As an adaptation it aroused adverse comments in the French media. The comments in film journals or non-French reviews voiced their discontent in less hostile and xenophobic terms. From the reviews on the projects one can not only deduce what is expected of an adaptation, but as in the case of such a famous work of literature also what attitudes exist concerning the ownership of objects regarded and guarded as national cultural capital. The adaptors are measured against Proust in terms of nationality and socio-cultural background in ways that could well be termed discriminatory. The ownership of a Kulturgut such as Proust becomes an arena where everybody involved not only stakes his claim but is required to justify this. The access to these goods is kept restricted, and it seems that the modalities of right of passage, prior to and at the time of this film's production, still worked along socio-biographical lines: because Nicole Stéphane's mother knew the niece of Proust, Nicole Stéphane got the film rights;<sup>207</sup> because Scott Moncrieff and Stephen Hudson had biographical parallels to Proust, they were regarded as ideal translators; because Luchino Visconti belonged to the same

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<sup>206</sup> Another review expresses the hope that the adapting process here works as a liberating process for an author like Proust, whose work threatens to become enshrined as an untouchable cultural good. In adapting it, it becomes part of a present cultural context. This refers to a film industry that has to reconcile its commercial and artistic side, and beyond that to newspapers, reviews, journals, film studies, etc. who criticise such projects, and an audience who goes to see the film maybe because it is based on the book.

Gilles Morvau, *La cocotte et le dandy*. IN: *L'Humanité* (22.02.1984).

<sup>207</sup> Cf. here also the inferral of motive to the producer by the article *Le cinéma à la recherche de Proust*. IN: *Le Point* (18.07.1983).

On the »democratising« role of the producer Nicole Stéphane: 1962, *sans doute aidée par l'amitié qui lie sa mère à Suzy Mante-Proust, la nièce et héritière de l'écrivain, elle achète les droits de «La Recherche», convaincue que «l'œuvre n'est pas élitiste et qu'elle doit exister pour le plus large des publics».*

time and an upper (yet not bourgeois but aristocratic) class and because of his cultured education he was regarded as ideal adaptor of the *Recherche*; because Volker Schlöndorff was partly educated in France he was considered (barely) capable of adapting the *Recherche*; and at the same time, because he and Harold Pinter did not belong to the same class (or at least the German and English equivalent of Proust's French social strata) they were considered as »handicapped« in this competition of adaptation.

Phil Powrie read this film<sup>208</sup> as a »sellout« in utilising the materiality of history to promote itself:

*Just as the adaptations of the 1950s were a throwback to pre-war ideologies of vigorous nationalisms, so [Swann in Love] is a throwback to the 1950s when the Common Market seemed about to resolve European conflict and absorb the nationalism of nation-states into a European nationalism. [Swann in Love] is a vacation from (old) economic conflicts which have arisen in new forms (the European Parliament), a fantasy of European solidarity.*

Here, it is the reality of the European Market and its making that have become the fantasy, it seems. Rather than read the film itself as a throwback to a time of nationalism, I would like to argue that in the production history and the international cooperation it should be read as the opposite. It was an international collaboration and was hounded down for being so.<sup>209</sup> When marketing or reviewing a picture, the national provenance of its makers and of the material contribute to its mythologizing in complex interactions. Amongst many other factors as, e.g., the authenticity of the costumes and the jewellery, there is the idea of the author and the supposed un-adaptability of his work. In a way, these factors serve to heighten an adaptation's worth or even absolve it of failure and confer merit on it simply for its having been attempted.

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<sup>208</sup> Phil Powrie, *Marketing History: Swann in Love*. IN: *Film Criticism*. (1988) Vol. 12, No 3, pp.33-45. Here, p. 36.

<sup>209</sup> Let it be understood that I do not wish to mythologize the international factor. Let alone do I wish to imply that a director's foreign citizenship is automatically a guarantee for non-nationalist films.



## Chapter 3

### *Le temps retrouvé*

#### or Open and Shut Art House

*And remember lads,  
this is a place where people drive on the wrong side of the road.  
Getaway instructions for the AngloSaxon crooks  
in the film *The Italian Job**

The recent film adaptation of Marcel Proust, *Le temps retrouvé* in many respects is the opposite of its predecessor *Un amour de Swann*. First of all, by the choice of which part of *A la recherche du temps perdu* it purports to adapt. Although this film also chose but a segment of the entire *Recherche*, it chose the last of the seven parts. It is, therefore, located at the other end, the »deep end« of the literary source material: *Un amour de Swann* tells the story of Swann and Odette, a love story; *Le temps retrouvé* tells the story of finding one's vocation, an artistic calling. Then, it uses narrative techniques and visual devices that alienate and potentially confuse the viewer, whereas the film *Un amour de Swann* was a film firmly located in the illusionist aesthetics of narrative cinema. The compressed time-structure of the Swann film is contrasted, in *Le temps retrouvé*, with an extensive, meandering narrative. Whereas the story of the central character going to a *matinée* might have permitted a similar compression, the main diegesis is constantly disrupted by extensive flashbacks and different time levels are interwoven in ways that render it difficult to establish chronology.

A further point of difference between the two films is the reception granted to them in newspapers, journals and internet-fora: In the case of *Le temps retrouvé* there are instances of criticism against the individual actors because of their nationality, but these are far and between. More often than not, if the nationality is mentioned, it is read affirmatively. A positive reception of the French actors and actresses of the cast of *Le temps retrouvé*,

would re-confirm the xenophobia of reviews in French papers regarding the non-French cast of *Un amour de Swann*: this would be but the affirmative flipside of a xenophobic reading. However, not only does the nationality of the French actors and actresses not raise comments either way, the instances where the nationality of the few non-French actors (here especially the Italian actor Marcello Mazzarello playing Marcel Proust as a young man and the US-actor John Malkovich playing Charlus) is commented upon, it was done favourably. Nationality in the majority of cases was not read as »negative pedigree«, barring the actor from being able to comprehend the »Frenchness« of Proust. One can argue that the cast now being predominantly French, nationality has become a blind spot of reception in the sense that not only are the outnumbered non-French actors no longer perceived as a threat in the act of filmic appropriation of Proust, they are subsumed into a cultural product that is perceived as French above anything else. The fact that the Chilean nationality of the director, Raúl Ruiz, did not surface in a rhetoric of anxiety or hostility as in the case of Volker Schlöndorff can be read in diverse ways. On the one hand, it implies that nationality no longer is an issue when adapting a classic. On the other hand, it could mean that a director living in French exile since 1974 is perceived as assimilated into French culture and he is thereby divested of this mark of difference.

In the case of *Le temps retrouvé* (the film), the reasons for the absence of the national criterion may, however, neither be related in a sudden revision of xenophobia in the field of cultural production, nor may they be interpreted as heralds of a discourse on culture beyond nationalist rhetoric. It is instead, I would argue, linked to a changed perception of the practice of adaptation itself, and to the fact that this film is not the first adaptation of Marcel Proust. The changes may have many sources. For one, the number of films that are based on literary source material might not make up a higher proportion, but over the course of the cinematic century a higher awareness of adaptations is solicited through high-profile marketing strategies, TV-reruns, the availability of films through VHS and DVD. Beyond an increased awareness of the phenomenon this also contributes to a diversity within the medium.

For in order, to still attract an audience, films strive not only be similar to the successful cinematic precursors but also to find their niche.<sup>1</sup> Heritage film is not the monolithic block as one could perceive it. This is exemplified by films like *Orlando* and *Le Temps retrouvé*. These are films that keep up the (heritage) appearances but not the conventions of representation. Adaptations of the so-called classics do result in a standard heritage films, but also in other types of films. Arguably, these new »heritage films« contribute to a dilution of the genre. Their success may be the result of a growing discontentment with, e.g., the continued heritage re-production of Ivory & Cie. By the late 1990s adaptations which remain within the conventions of heritage films, are by now perceived as no longer interesting by critics—even though audiences may continue to make them successful through box-office returns. The genre has gone through a classic stage and now, for critical reception and analysis, is seen as heading towards its demise.

Heritage film, with the secondary genre of adaptation, is not the only genre which has diversified. While traditional genres of film classification are still extant (but numerous genres have also disappeared, or rather persist in fragments in other genres), sub-genres, neo-genres and new genres proliferate (e.g. neo-noir, neo-western, docudrama, the dumb-white-guy-movie<sup>2</sup>). This is done through film industries searching for ways of interesting audiences and thereby gaining market segments. Reviews and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. here the article on the adaptation of *Jane Eyre* in 1942. Jeffrey Sconce, Narrative Authority and Social Narrativity: The Cinematic Reconstitution of Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. IN: *The Studio System*. Ed by Janet Staiger. New Brunswick (Rutgers University Press) 1995, pp. 140-162.

According to the article, the producer Selznick did research on the circulation figures of the book in public libraries to assess whether there would be an audience for the film, and at the same time tried to distinguish the film from *Rebecca*, with a very similar plotline of the year before.

Cf. also Lesley Stern, *Emma* in Los Angeles: Remaking the Book and the City. IN: *Film Adaptation*. Ed. by James Naremore. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 2000, pp. 221-238.

<sup>2</sup> This generic term can be found in the article of I.Q. Hunter, Capitalism's Most Triumphant: Bill and Ted's Excellent History Lesson. IN: *Pulping Fictions: Consuming Literature Across the English-Media Divide*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell, I.Q. Hunter, Heidi Kaye & Imelda Whelehan. London (Pluto Press) 1996, pp. 111-123.

The author lists as examples *Wayne's World* (1992, Penelope Spheeris), *Dumb and Dumber* (1994, Peter & Bob Farelly), and *Airheads* (1994, Michael Lehmann).

academic writing categorise the multitudes of films in order to have a reference and evaluation system. In a parallel move, the breadth of how adaptations are received both by a spectators and by putative specialists working in media and/or academia has changed: the literary source material becomes one source of reference among many. In the example of this adaptation of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, there are several other systems of reference. The reception of the film *Le temps retrouvé* thus features other parameters of debate than the citizenship of the cast and the director. As the film has named its central character Marcel Proust, there is most prominently a reference to the historical figure Marcel Proust and to Proust, the mythical author.

## 1. The Return of (Marcel) Proust

The close reading of the film that I now propose, gives special attention of how the author (life and work), the book and the film produce a new author-figure. Just as I engaged with the difference between Marcel Proust, the historical figure, and Proust, the mythologized author, in the first Chapter, here I intend to engage with the difference between the *je*, the central character of *A la recherche du temps perdu* and Marcel, the central character of the film *Le temps retrouvé*. Furthermore, particular attention will be given to the use of documentary materials in the film and the use of a complex narrative. This chapter will show how the film through that naming, the use of documentary material, and the employment of several other devices, in certain respects puts its literary source material into a subordinate position.

The figure Marcel is played by four different actors at four different ages: as a sick old man of ca. 50 years (André Engel), as an adult in his mid-thirties (Marcello Mazzarella, an Italian actor cast above all because of his resemblance to Proust), as a child of ca. 8 (Georges du Fresne), and finally as a youth (Pierre Mignard). The character they play is always called Marcel in the script of the film. The script then gives as name, or as the origin of the

voice-over, the name of Marcel Proust (spoken by Patrice Chereau). The directions to the scenes where the André Engel plays the character, give the location as *Chambre de Marcel Proust rue Hamelin*.

The narrative of the *Recherche* is thereby enlarged by the biographical narrative of Proust. The film, nonetheless, does not start at a biographical beginning in childhood. The different Marceles (child, youth, adult, old man) do not appear in chronological order. The film first shows the old man, then the adult (but in the background of a society gathering) then the child, the adult at length, and the youth. In the final sequence they intermingle when three<sup>3</sup> of the different Marceles converge in one frame. The chronology and also the conventions of biographical narrative are thus thoroughly subverted. The ultimate defiance of any kind of chronology is to be observed in the last scene, where historical locating has become impossible. The film *Le temps retrouvé* thus is a film in period costume, but like the film *Orlando* it uses *mise-en-scène* for other ends. In the first ten minutes of the film, in its two first sequences, the audience is introduced to virtually every major figure of the film, by portrait and then »in the flesh«, by the actors and actresses playing them. In the first scene they are shown as photographs that the old Marcel lying in his bed is looking at. In the next scene they make their entrance at a party as characters: Morel, Monsieur and Madame Verdurin, Odette, Gilberte, Marcel's mother, Rachel, Cottard etc. The baron de Charlus is the only major character referred to merely by dialogue.

As said, the very first image of the film is the bell tower of the church of Illiers-Combray. But the film does not start with the beginning of the novel *Le temps retrouvé*: although the image of the bell tower of Combray is the first image of the film. The interior monologue opening the novel appears as voice-over only about ten minutes into the film. Instead, there first is a cut to running water and the credit sequence follows. Here, the film superimposes the names of the producers, actors, actresses, camera director, director etc. over image of the running water of a brook (impersonating the Vivonne at

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<sup>3</sup> The youth is omitted.

Proustian Combray). The image of the bell tower returns ten minutes later to the voice-over with an image of the moving hedges. The text of the voice-over is actually reading a slightly abbreviated version of the opening lines of the novel *Le temps retrouvé*. In this voice-over, it instrumentalises the novel's opening lines to establish an omnipotent source of narrative.

As already lined out in the first chapter, Combray is a fictive name, but Illiers is the name of a village near Chartres where the paternal ancestors of Proust came from. Visitors to Illiers-Combray will probably recognise the tower not only because of its individual shape but also because, it does indeed dominate the horizon. Being extremely flat, the area has no higher structure to compete with the church tower as a skyline.<sup>4</sup> Here, Marcel Proust spent several Whitsuntide vacations with his parents at the house of his aunt in the 1870s and 1890s. The film in the following also alludes to (and in a later scene visualises in part) the first dramatic episode of the novel, i.e. the goodnight kiss his mother could not give him one evening together with the subsequent consolation when his mother gives him his birthday present books before his birthday. This episode, however forms part of the first novel of the *Recherche*, i.e. it is not only located in Combray but in *Combray*, the first part of *Du côté de chez Swann*, just before *Un Amour de Swann*.<sup>5</sup> The film, therefore, chooses to visually render episodes that are remembered in the novel *Le temps retrouvé*, but were first given as »full« narratives in previous parts of the *Recherche*.

The action of the film then opens with the sick author (1871-1922) who is dictating his novel to Celeste Albaret (1891-1984). This period of Marcel

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<sup>4</sup> Note that in later stages of writing, however, Combray was not located near Chartres but between Loan and Reims because this was closer to the WWI front which was important in plot construction, because thus, the childhood spaces of the *je* came under threat of destruction or, rather, suffered the ignominy of German occupation. The film, thus prefers to locate the bell-tower in biographical space at the beginning of the *Recherche* (*Un amour de Swann*) rather than the final space allocated to it by *Le temps retrouvé*.

<sup>5</sup> From a biographical and historical point of view this episode has, however, actually, occurred in Auteuil, a suburb of Paris, where the maternal side of the family had a house. The house of the family no longer exists, and Auteuil has now been swallowed up into the city of Paris.

Proust's life is not fictionalised in the novel, since the cycle of novels ends with the beginning of writing. The historical period for this scene could be anywhere in the years from 1908 when Proust started work on the *Recherche* until his death in 1922.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the character Céleste in the film (if correctly located historically) would then set the film at the earliest in 1913 when she started working for Marcel Proust. As she here is depicted already as a servant with access to his bedroom and the scene shows the author Proust to be dictating his novel to her because he felt too exhausted to write himself, the scene would have to be located in the last years of his life. The published script of the film<sup>7</sup> further specifies the period. The scene is located in the last two years of Marcel Proust's life by giving a precise address: he lived at rue Hamelin from October 1st 1919 to his death on November 18th 1922. In this scene, the film is making use of the perception of Proust as the recluse. The film then shows the middle-aged Marcel go out to the *matinée* of the duchesse de Guermantes which locates the beginning of the remembered life—as the film tells it—in the salon of Mme Verdurin in Paris at the time when she had not yet married the prince de Guermantes but already had advanced to a hostess of a famous salon. If one verifies this via the novel, the social gathering takes place some time in 1916.

The director Raúl Ruiz thus deliberately chose to include the genesis and the writing of the novel in the film that is supposedly just an adaptation of the last part of the *Recherche*. It also insists on naming its central character Marcel Proust, and thereby turns him into a historical figure. This is interesting, since that is avoided almost completely in the novels. Where the novel disavows the biographical affiliation between author and central figure by withholding the name of the *je*, the film reverses this and gives him the name Marcel Proust. This is a form of »return of the author« that Luigi Cazzato sees represented in what he terms hard metafiction, i.e. fiction that expressively foregrounds its own fictionality by positing the author within

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<sup>6</sup> In the novel *À la recherche du temps perdu*, the beginning of writing is positioned after the first World War, about 1919.

the text—with the difference that here it furthermore refers the fiction back to the historic.<sup>8</sup> Such a move has several consequences:

*By overdoing the author's presence, hard metafiction denounces the framing process, that is, its author's position as ideological subject. It also limits the dangerous fictionalisation of reality by straightforwardly pointing to the responsible source of the message. By directly addressing the reader and by destroying any passive enjoyment the reader might have in the fictional illusion, it urges the reader to suspend his/her belief, rather than his/her disbelief, in order to be aware of the functioning of the literary communicative game, and to be alert because of the possibility of cultural manipulation.*

The film has posited the figure of Marcel Proust within its text, and made him such an author-within-the-text who works against the fictionalisation of the *je* as merely a character in a novel, and points to the origin of the *Recherche* in the historical life of Marcel Proust. But that move also reveals the reality behind the fiction, i.e. the historical person and the writer, to have fallen prey to fictionalisation. As shown in Chapter One, the historical subject Marcel Proust had become the fiction of Proust.

The film *Le temps retrouvé* adds another turn of the screw, as it were, by using these biographical materials to adapt the literary narrative. The addition of the character of the servant Céleste<sup>9</sup> is another instance of the film's »biographising« *Le temps retrouvé*: The part of the dialogue in the film

<sup>7</sup> Gilles Taurand & Raúl Ruiz, *Le temps retrouvé*. IN: *L'Avant-Scène Cinéma*, No. 482 Mai 1999.

<sup>8</sup> Luigi Cazzato, *Hard Metafiction and the Return of the Author-Subject*. IN: *Postmodern Subjects/Postmodern Texts*. Ed. by Jane Dowson & Steven Earnshaw. Amsterdam & Atlanta (Rodopi) 1995, pp.25-41. Here p. 35.

Examples of such hard metafiction are Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse 5*; Salman Rushdie, *Shame*; John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*; David Lodge, *Nice Work & Changing Places*; Italo Calvino, *Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore*. Referring to the last example:

*He [Calvino] not only actualises the strategy we are talking about, he also thematises the discourse of the novelist as God-like creator, by claiming that not even the most extreme avant-garde novel has been able to eradicate its author. What has changed is the leading principle: freedom instead of authority [...].* (p. 29)

However, the phenomenon of having author-figures within the text is, of course, not restricted to books or films post-Barthes, i.e. post-Death-of-the-Author. Cf. here e.g. Gary L. Green, *The Author Behind the Author: George Cukor and the Adaptation of The Philadelphia Story*. IN: *Film and Literature. A Comparative Approach to Adaptation*. Lubbock, TX (Texas Tech University Press) 1988, pp. 69-79.

Referring to the film directed by George Cukor in 1940 the article points out how the figure of Dexter Haven (played by Cary Grant) is a stand-in for the film director himself, controlling the action.

<sup>9</sup> Because although she does appear in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, it is at a different stage and as one of the many secondary characters. In the novel *Le temps retrouvé*, it is actually a figure called Françoise who takes care of the narrator. This figure appears in the film *Le temps retrouvé* in later sequences.



between Marcel and Céleste about the hot milk he would drink only to please her not because he wanted to, is taken from biography. This not only marks the return of the author but in this return also points to the author as fiction.

### Laterna magica, top hats and a dead horse

In the film, the doors of the Guermantes' salon open up into the childhood of Marcel: Odette opens a door and in the room the gathering guests observe the child Marcel handling a *laterna magica*. This *laterna magica*, too, forms part of work and life: in the first part of *Du côté de chez Swann*, the *je* listens to its grandmother telling him the stories of Geneviève de Brabant. The historical child Marcel Proust, too, possessed a *laterna magica* at Illiers and was told that very same story. Usually, the historical lantern forms part of the permanent exhibition of the Musée Proust at Illiers-Combray. In 1999, however, it was lent to the organisers of the exhibition *Proust. L'écriture et les arts* at the new French National Library Tolbiac in Paris. As in the film sequence, one could there see the paintings of the story of Geneviève de Brabant while listening to the quote of *Du côté de chez Swann*. Done at an estimated cost of two million Francs, this was the second exhibition organised by the Bibliothèque Nationale. Here, too, the biography of Marcel Proust, entered into the genealogical narrative of his *œuvre*. The exhibits were biography's material manifestations: letters addressed to and received from his parents, friends, admirers; original editions of the books he read as child, adolescent, adult; the works of painters, authors, musicians Proust favoured and used as models for certain characters in his novels; paintings he knew; copies of revues in which he collaborated; portraits, photos of his family, his friends and contemporaries; the technicalities of his writing (manuscripts, cahiers, paperoles, dactylographies etc.). Here, fiction was used to enhance the life of the writer. Entering the first part, the visitor

was introduced to Combray, and not to Illiers-Combray. However, as the historical photographs showed a specific beautiful scenery and/or the family of Proust, the visitor was de facto looking at images of Illiers-Combray. This overlap of fiction and biography, was underscored by passages read out from the *Recherche* over a speaker system. In the film, at the first party-scene the child Marcel projects images from the *laterna magica* onto whitened faces of the guests, with their eyes shut.<sup>10</sup> The story of Geneviève de Brabant is projected onto the white, mask-like face of an actress and onto the walls of the room. Here, the film *Le temps retrouvé* projects another story onto the narrative of the *Recherche*. The *laterna magica* remembered as exhibit of the exhibition that same year, inserts the historical Marcel Proust into the film's scene. The little boy playing Marcel is the returned author projecting his biography onto the narrative of the *Recherche* with the aid of an apparatus that is doubly historical: it is an object that formed part of the writer's biography and it is a technological precursor of the medium film.

This »projecting narration« becomes even more evident in the following scene, where the child enters another room which is covered in top hats with gloves and where it meets St Loup the soldier. The top hats can possibly be explained by referring to another episode of the *Recherche*. In *Du côté de Guermantes*, a gathering in the salon of Madame de Villeparisis of the 1890s is

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<sup>10</sup> This gives a passage from the novel, where the *je* is pondering his difficulties in recognising the aged Argencourt, an entirely different level of meaning.

TR-IV, 503: *Des poupées, mais que pour les identifier à celui qu'on avait connu, il fallait lire sur plusieurs plans à la fois, situés derrière elles et qui leur donnaient de la profondeur et forçaient à faire un travail d'esprit quand on était obligé de les regarder en même temps qu'avec les yeux avec la mémoire, des poupées extériorisant le Temps, le Temps qui d'habitude n'est pas visible, pour le devenir cherche des corps et, partout où il les rencontre, s'en empare pour montrer sur eux sa lanterne magique. Aussi immatériel que jadis Golo sur le bouton de porte de ma chambre de Combray, ainsi le nouveau et si méconnaissable Argencourt était comme la révélation du Temps, qu'il rendait partiellement visible.*

Comparing the images travelling over the faces of the actors in *Le temps retrouvé* (film), cf. also the pivotal role of a camera movement and depth of visual field in the conceptualisation of the time-image in Gilles Deleuze, *Le Cinéma II. L'image-mouvement*. Paris (Editions de Minuit) 1985.

On p. 56: *Combien le flash-back semble dérisoire à côté d'explorations du temps si puissantes, telle la marche silencieuse sur le tapis épais de l'hôtel qui met chaque fois l'image au passé, dans « L'Année dernière à Marienbad ». Les travellings de Resnais et de Visconti, la profondeur du champ de Welles, opèrent une temporalisation de l'image ou forment une image-temps directe, qui accomplit le principe : l'image cinématographique n'est au présent que dans les mauvais films.*

featured. At the time, so the novel, it was customary for aristocrats to deposit their hats on the floor rather than leaving them at the door.<sup>11</sup> Reading the passage, one can then imagine a salon filled with groups of people sitting on chairs, sofas, standing and admiring the stillife the hostess is just painting, or just circulating, all the while the floor is dotted with top hats. In the film *Le temps retrouvé*, however, in a space devoid of circulating guests, the hat-covered floor demands other explanations.

The soldier Saint-Loup stands in the middle of all this. After the hats have (via editing) mysteriously vanished as the scene progresses, he speaks of the war and lets the child Marcel look into the stereoscope. The child sees documentary material of a dying horse. This alludes to World War I. The absent owners of the hats could then be a metonymy for a generation of young men, who disappeared in that war. The depicted objects, abandoned hats and the dying horse, are intimation and documentation of the war.<sup>12</sup>

The film *Le temps retrouvé* does not attempt an exclusively biographising approach. While the fictional characters of the novel are given a historical dimension in the act of naming, they also are de-historicised in various ways. Thus, the figure of the writer here also becomes a character, just like the narrator, about whose life the *je* is supposedly writing about, i.e. controlling. By including the biography of Proust the writer in the story of the *je*, the film must be regarded not only as a literary adaptation but also as a reinvention of new relations between the two poles biography and work. That *œuvre* and life both become source material that is used together is not so unusual, as it had been used before in the biographical writing on Marcel Proust and in documentary films made on him. What is noteworthy, is how the relationship

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. also the epilogue of the film *Un amour de Swann*: as Swann sits down to wait for the duchesse de Guermantes, he deposits the hat briefly on the floor next to his chair. This one hat, is then, however immediately taken up again by the owner as the duchesse and duc arrive—prefiguring the image of the later adaptation, it also instantly reneges on the image of an abandoned hat.

<sup>12</sup> However, this reading is dependent on a fairly intimate knowledge of the *Recherche*. I doubt that the hat-reference in it would be recognised by many viewers. In fact, reading through reviews of articles, I found no instance where this connection has been pointed out.

between the two acquires an entirely different complexity in the deciphering of this interrelation. No longer is fiction merely instrumentalised as historical source without much critical reflection on the heuristic implications of this process. Nor does the historicising narrative emulate the textual strategies of the *Recherche* to create a filmic narrative as. e.g. in the documentary film *L'art et la douleur*. In the film *Le temps retrouvé*, they are »staged« in relation to each other.

### Sexual Portraiture

Another instance where the film points to the author behind the work is in the sequence at the brothel. Proust was homosexual but made the *je* of his novels a heterosexual and transferred the homosexuality onto other figures in the novel, most notably baron de Charlus and Saint-Loup. While the film maintains the heterosexuality of the central figure Marcel, various round framings in the sequence at Jupien's Hôtel function as narrative devices that indicate otherwise. Not only does his room at the hotel Jupien feature a round portrait, an alter-ego to the window in the wall, but Marcel is seen by the audience through the same window as he perceives Charlus. The character Charlus acts out a repetition of this gaze, by looking at himself in another round frame, into a little round mirror—and hanging next to the mirror are the accessories of sado-masochistic sex, chains with round manacles.

The following extreme close-up of an eye with blood running down the camera-lense in front of it is yet another moment where the narrative signals multiple meanings. It intertextualises into the narrative the opening sequence of *Un chien andalou*:<sup>13</sup> a close-up of an eye that is then slit open with a razor. This film's director, Luis Buñuel, reportedly used this moment of shock because he wanted make spectators aware that one must see differently, and among the »things« to be seen thus, sexuality featured prominently.

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<sup>13</sup> *Un chien andalou* (1928, Luis Buñuel)

Consequently, in *Le temps retrouvé*: Marcel not only does see different sex, i.e. sado-masochistic homosexual practices, but the spectator is asked to see him differently, i.e. both as Marcel Proust the homosexual and Marcel the heterosexual. The film has here managed to project the sexual inclinations of the author Proust onto the figure Marcel without representing him as a homosexual character on screen. The view of the homosexual, in the words of Proust *l'inverti*, permits heterosexual fiction and homosexual biography to coexist in the perspectively inverted framing.

The more conventional sex scenes (both in what they depicted as well as how they depicted it) of the film *Un amour de Swann* caused great controversy. This response had two levels: for one sex scenes *per se* were regarded as not worthy of Proust (yet no disparaging comments were given as regards the sex scenes in *Le temps retrouvé*) and the commentators read (anal) double meanings into the scenes of *Un Amour de Swann*. The more artful, or oblique form of mentioning Marcel Proust's homosexuality here went unnoticed, or, if it was noticed, it went uncommented.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the representation of Marcel Proust's homosexuality is permitted, provided it is done as a screened, a hidden representation. Paraphrasing Oscar Wilde: in Proust reception and its parameters of permissivity, it became *the love that has no image*.

## Narrative Tangents

In the following, I move from interpretations of individual scenes or sequences and comment on the film's overall narrative structure. As mentioned in the analysis of the first ten minutes of the film, it uses doors and windows as passages between different situations: a door shutting on one thing will, if re-opened not necessarily return to that scene; a window not

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. here in particular the comments on the UK 18-rating in the review *Time Regained* by "The Wolf" ON: [www.insideout.co.uk](http://www.insideout.co.uk). Taken 03.07.2000: *Take no notice of the 18-certificate. There isn't anything here to make a scullery maid blush.*

only grants the central character looking out of it a view of a well-kept garden, but also of himself engaged in conversation with others.

Various other elements of film are used in a similarly alienating ways. One example is costume: the sequence at the beginning of the film narrates not one but several social gatherings. The scene with piano-playing Morel belongs to a soirée given by Madame Verdurin during the war, but when Odette passes into the light she re-emerges in a different costume. In later sequences she is wearing this costume at the final matinée set after the war. Another element used for spectatorial alienation is editing. Not only did the above-mentioned top hats vanish through the editing of that scene, editing also results in narrative doubling: in the first sequence Mme Verdurin had enquired after Odette's second husband, M. de Forcheville, locating this in the chronology of the novel in the early years of this century, whereas in the second, the matinée sequence, the once-again-widowed Odette, still wearing the same dress, has become the lover of the duc de Guermantes. Between these two scenes, united by the costume of Odette, located at beginning and end of the film, the film actually repeats the sequence of Morel playing piano and the arrival of Odette in the middle-section, only to then go off on another narrative tangent. Odette does not leave Mme Verdurin to cross over to and open the above-mentioned door (like the first time this scene was shown), but the film cuts to Odette and Marcel in a carriage driving to the Ritz.

## Family

Another source of alienating images are the framings of the character Marcel with his various family members. It is interesting to see, which thespian incarnations of Marcel appears with whom: with his mother Marcel appears only as a child, with his grandmother only as a youth, and when he has reached maturity, these two women no longer appear in a frame with him at all. Obviously, this has no correlation to the novel, as the child frequently appears with the grandmother, and the *je* as a youth and adult still

knew its mother—as did the historical figure Marcel Proust. The sequence set in Venice if connected to the novel or the biography, is a filmic rendering of the journey of the *je*/Marcel Proust in the company of his mother undertaken just after 1900, when he was ca. 30 years old. However, in the film, the adult Marcel is frozen against a Paris backdrop on the screen and it is the child Marcel who accompanies his mother through the streets and past the adult Marcel. Again, two of the Marceles appear in a frame, as at the childhood-scene at Tansonville earlier in the film where one saw the adult Marcel being photographed through the legs of the child Marcel.

The film almost entirely omits the father of Marcel and thereby presents the adult Marcel and the old Marcel as the primary male figure of identification. The representational relation to the female characters of his family also changed. It is as if with progressing age and as the writer comes nearer, the family recedes. This is expressed visually in the growing distance in years, generations, and blood ties from mother-son to grandmother-youth. By increasing the age gap between the two actors (playing Marcel as child and as youth) and the two actresses in relation to the matriarchal age-axis of mother and grandmother, the film makes the adult man an even lonelier figure of patriarchy. The adult, who is on the verge of becoming a writer has no family anymore. As a character, he seems to be rather vague. He is not represented as a full-fledged character, but as someone who is merely a recipient of the life of others. The distance of the figure to his surroundings is expressed, e.g., in a dinner sequence where he does not take part in the conversation at all or at the concert sequence. In both scenes, the actor deliberately imitates a gesture of the historical Marcel Proust.<sup>15</sup> The film here

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<sup>15</sup> Remember, the actor Marcello Mazarrella was picked by Raúl Ruiz precisely because of his resemblance to Proust. The gesture of holding his hand pensively to his cheek is known from several photographs of Marcel Proust.

In the casting of two actors for the same character at different ages, one could also see a way of saying one represents the writer and the other the central character of his opus magnus, the *je*. This would, to a certain extent explain the passivity of the adult Marcel. Having no real purpose to his life except to gather the stories which later will become his material, he is under the shadow of the old Marcel, the writer. Adult Marcel does not really come into his own as the socialite but is designed as the writer-to-be, who observes, reflects, ponders. At times, he is even deprived of his own voice, since the quotes are read by yet another actor's

again, pushes its figure Marcel out of the narrative of the novel towards the biography of the writer. Yet, this writer is not the powerful figure that literary theory has tried to do away with by declaring it dead or by developing alternative models of author-figures, e.g. when writing individual histories of female writers.<sup>16</sup> The character of Marcel marks the return of the (historical) author, but at the same divests him of power: he is represented as lonely because devoid of family ties, he is also represented as a non-participant in the action of the film. The figure who supposedly is the centre of the film both as the mythologized author who wrote the book and as the central character, is marked by absence.

### Makeup and Casting as Interpretative Tools

In the second sequence featuring the *matinée*, the ageing of the characters is achieved in various ways: three of them—Gilberte, Madame Verdurin (now Princesse de Guermantes) and Rachel—have older doubles that represent them at an advanced age.<sup>17</sup> Some actors have aged through makeup, e.g. Morel and Bloch, whereas Odette has not aged at all. The figure played by the actress Catherine Deneuve is (in the dialogue words of Marcel) an allegory of eternal youth. Also, the Marcel-figure of this scene is the same one as in the episodes with the younger Gilberte and the younger Madame Verdurin, i.e. the adult Marcel.

As the continuity of the actress Deneuve for Odette expresses a defiance against ageing and puts the (eroding) forces of time out of order, her

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voice. The disappearance of the youth in the final sequence of the film fits in with this: there is room for the child, since that can be depicted as playing games oblivious to the future. But the adolescent cannot be kept in the state of »innocence« nor can he already be the writer-to-be since that place is already occupied by the adult Marcel.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*. (1st in *Aspen Magazine* Nos 5-6, 1967; French 1968). Reprinted IN: *Theories of Authorship. A Reader*. Ed. by John Caughie. London (Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1981, pp. 208-213.

Cf. also Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman-Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven & London (Yale University Press) 1984 (1st 1979).

<sup>17</sup> Besides the quadrupled central character Marcel Proust, the characters which have double-castings are Gilberte, Rachel, and Madame Verdurin.



daughter Gilberte, in contrast, has three actresses to represent her as child, as an adult, and as an old woman. In the sequences located at the end of the narrative, she thus looks older than her mother but at the same time is supposedly resembling her. As pointed out, the film contradicts chronology by letting Odette appear in a costume belonging to a different scene and time and by narrative doublings with variations. It also connects impossible spaces by putting the child Marcel on display in his room at Combray during the soirée sequence. In ageing (by doubling or makeup) one figure of the narrative while keeping another at the same age, the film also represents time and its the passing as a personal measurement, that has different effects on different characters—or, that can be expressed differently by film.<sup>18</sup>

By using different ways of ageing characters or rather not ageing them at all, casting as a tool of adaptation here, has been refined further than the possibilities elaborated upon in the previous chapter. The figure of Catherine Deneuve permits several readings. Her body is not only a physical body but has become a »mythic« body through the actress' filmography-trajectory inscribed in film history.<sup>19</sup> This body is caught between its present real state and what it is meant to signify: as Odette she supposedly defies age, but as Cathérine Deneuve she has aged. This contradiction refers back to the previous films the specific body has been seen in, when it was the body of a young woman: from the very young singing Deneuve in *Les parapluies de Cherbourg*, across films, where troubled sexuality or male fantasies are a powerful subtexts such as *Belle de jour*, and *Repulsion*. This contradictorily-cast aged body recalls the thrall of beauty it had cast over co-characters and audiences alike over decades. It has become an emblem of beauty itself, and

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<sup>18</sup> Also to be noted is that while the actress Emmanuelle Béart playing Gilberte (the daughter of Odette) is only related to Odette by casting, the actress Chiara Mastroianni playing Albertine actually is Catherine Deneuve's daughter. The film, here, plays out real blood ties against casting.

<sup>19</sup> From the eighties onwards, if a town wanted to have an effigy of the French Marianne installed at their town hall it could chose between a Marianne modelled on either Brigitte Bardot or Catherine Deneuve.

was celebrated as such in the film *Indochine*.<sup>20</sup> It is in *Le temps retrouvé* where she (as sign and body) becomes memory and symbol of desire, what Teresa de Lauretis described as:<sup>21</sup>

*Again and again narrative film has been exposed as the production of a drama of vision, a memory spectacle, an image of woman as beauty—desired and untouchable, desired as remembered.*

Here, then the contradiction between the real body and the body-as-cast solicits film history as a third location of that body to bridge the gap between its representing youth and the real age of that body. In order to grasp the diegetically-postulated sexual fascination of Odette, the viewer bridges the gap between the body's real age and the celluloid postulate of eternal beauty by entering the actress's filmography and thereby, her trajectory through European film history. Representing Odette as non-ageing at all stages of the narrative, whereas others are played by several actors/actresses or aged by makeup she represents Kracauer's diva: a mythical creature of the twentieth century. The diva is eternally recognisable as a diva by anyone cine-literate for she is made up of certain elements and gestures: the long eyelashes, the backwards-tilted head, the dress, the pose struck on a flight of stairs. The person in the photo of Kracauer, however, is also the grandmother to some. But she is no longer recognisable as the grandmother, because those looking at the picture only remember Grandmother as the old woman, and this woman does not resemble the photo's diva at all. The casting of Deneuve as the one and only Odette, the character who stays the same and is always recognisable because everybody remembers her that way, i.e. as young and ravishingly beautiful in her spectacular representation—this casting permits further readings into Kracauer's text: it brings back and negates family through the unrecognisable grandmother. Deneuve/Odette is family: she is part of the lived-through history of the character (scenes of walks in the childhood neighbourhood and the scene at Uncle Gustave's); and she is the grandmother of Mlle de Saint-Loup. Deneuve/Odette is not family but diva:

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<sup>20</sup> *Les parapluies de Cherbourg* (1964, Jaques Demy), *Repulsion* (1965, Roman Polanski), *Belle de jour* (1967, Luis Buñuel), *Indochine* (1992, Régis Wargnier).

<sup>21</sup> Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't. Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema*. Southampton (Macmillan) 1984, p. 27.

when a character who never lost the bloom of youth is played by an actress whose emblematic beauty is now a thing primarily remembered, the body of the actress inserts its past representations into the film.

## The End

In the last sequence, one sees the old Marcel walking down a hallway alone and turning right. Then the film cuts to the old Marcel's room and from there to the child Marcel reading in his room. When it gets up and turns towards the mirror, it perceives itself in the mirror. But this is a self at the end of its life: the old Marcel looks back from the mirror. One could read this as a variation of Lacan's mirror stage.<sup>22</sup> In the dialogue the film quotes a line of Hugo: *Il faut que les herbes poussent et les enfants meurent*. Marcel child sees himself in the mirror and affirms not only himself as a subject but as a writer, but this immediately entails the death of the child. The child will die not only in the sense that it will cease being a child or that it will one day inevitably die as all human beings must. Here, it is also expressed that at the beginning of the author Proust also lies the death, or rather, the obliteration of the historical person Proust. In making his own life the subject matter of his book to the point where one is read as the other, the clear-cut distinction between the author and his alter-ego, the narrator, had become diffuse. In a film that once more makes the fictional historical again, by insistently naming the *je* Marcel and including the writing of the novel in the film, the historical figure is ultimately no longer directly accessible. He is only accessible through the imaginings one obtains in the re-narrating of the relationship between his life

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<sup>22</sup> Lacan, Jacques, *Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je*. (1949) IN: Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits I*. Paris (Seuil) 1970, pp. 89-97.

Such a mirror-scene occurs in another film of Raúl Ruiz, *Le toit de la baleine* (1981). The plot of an anthropologist trying to learn the language of an obscure tribe features a scene where the child of the anthropologist *a creature of indeterminate gender—becomes pregnant after gazing into a mirror*. Cf. Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Mapping the Territory of Raúl Ruiz* (1990). IN: idem, *Placing Movies. The Practice of Film Criticism*. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California Press) 1995, pp. 222-237. Here p. 231.

and work: his work as representing his entire life; his life as dedicated to his work; his life and work as interchangeable.

The film that comes after the novel it adapted, puts the relation between the life and the *œuvre* into play that has been part of Marcel Proust and Proust's reception over the course of the 20th century. In the mirror-scene, the old Marcel tells the child Marcel that he is about to write a book but is afraid to die before he can finish it. The child Marcel asks him whether he can have it to read, blissfully oblivious to the fact that he is asking to read his own life which, to himself, has not even started. The child has looked into the mirror but has not recognised the old Marcel as a later persona of itself. The moment of recognition in the mirror is therefore, an identification that works not for the character but for the viewer. The film's way of interrelating between Proust and Marcel, the figure modelled on the author and the figure modelled on the *je* of the novel, shows that in the case of Proust and his *œuvre* one can only achieve a picture of the author Marcel Proust in joining the two together, as it has been done in the biographies, in the reception of Proust and in this film. And this happens only for the audience, which in turn, is rendered incapable of untangling the duality of Marcel/*je* or of Proust/Marcel Proust.

This adaptation has done what the previous adaptation did not do. By using narrative techniques and devices that are not part and parcel of classic narrative cinema, it made the complicated social connections between a multitude of characters even harder to grasp. It distorts those parts of the novel's narrative that might interest a general audience who (not knowing Proust and/or his work) would, as it were, like to get a quick rundown of what it is »about«. These spectators must have left the cinema rather bewildered, and presumably only the most intrepid would follow a course of action such as resorting to read the book. Neither is the film likely to succeed through story-line or depictions of a glorious France—even though it features muddled love affairs, sex, and betrayal as well as costumes, rich Parisian interiors and country estates.

Whereas in a mainstream film one would expect the film to deliver a coherent plotline of sorts, here the »aboutness« turns out to be something entirely different. The significance of Ruiz' film as an adaptation of Marcel Proust<sup>23</sup> can only be fully understood, by spectators who not only have a pre-knowledge of the entire novel but also know of the peculiar relation the *œuvre* of Proust has with his autobiography. Without such knowledge(s) the film becomes rather hard to grasp. While this film (in terms of *mise-en-scène*, as an adaptation of a literary classic, as a representation of a brilliant past remembered) still could be termed a heritage film, there obviously are reasons for discounting it as one. It clearly is not a representation of a British past and thus cannot claim to inscribe itself in that heritage's narrative of preservation. Nor does its diegesis represent historical lives as one might imagine they had been lived in Paris 1900. The imaginary past, is foregrounded as imaginary (as a nostalgic fiction), in the narrative devices the film employs. But by complementing the literary narrative with the narratives of Marcel Proust/Proust, it beyond that incorporates into the film also the literary heritage as handed down in writings on biography of and in the mythologies woven around the writer. The film's location may not be the country house of British heritage, but it is the »Proust country« of Illiers-Combray which has become part of a French literary heritage, and thus also partakes of the fictionally-real character of the country estate as represented in the heritage film. The film *Le temps retrouvé* furthermore includes cinema heritage, by inserting film histories of *Deneuve* and *Le chien andalou*.

In order to comprehend the film, to be Proust-literate is not sufficient. The film requires a certain amount of film-literacy. This film-literacy, on the one hand, would consist of knowing, e.g., the film *Un chien andalou* and the history of its genesis. This knowledge would be a precondition for the interpretation I developed of the sequence in the brothel and the use of mirrors. On the other hand, it also requires film-literacy of another kind, i.e. a certain knowledge of and willingness to engage in narrative that challenged

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<sup>23</sup> Again I point out that adaptation is to be understood as a secondary category.

linearity. Finally, it also requires historical literacy,<sup>24</sup> as the character of filmic Marcel in part originates with the historical figure Marcel Proust and the mythical author Proust.<sup>25</sup>

All of these are forms of what I shall term cultural literacy. In the strict sense, it may seem counter-productive in the context of genre analysis to subsume this film in the genre of heritage or period film, because it thoroughly subverts the conventions of the genre. The recognition label ascribed to this film would most likely be art house. However, the reading of the film as heritage film permits to show how certain elements of the genre can be used for other ends. Finally, the label »heritage« is justifiable in the sense, that the film *Le Temps retrouvé* uses these elements not to distance itself from a literary source, but quite on the contrary, to draw attendant narratives (authorial and biographical) into the narrative of the novel. In enlarging the field of narration it however restricts its reception potential. The film necessitates certain forms of cultural knowledge, a cultural competence, of its audiences. While it may fascinate because it breaks the genre boundaries of the heritage film, it restricts itself in terms of readability. As an adaptation offering itself to a spectator, it is thus both more free and more closed: in referring to other texts than the literary source material, it has opened some doors, but in requiring pre-knowledges it has shut others. This open-and-shut

<sup>24</sup> This cultural literacy, for some film studies, includes literacy about historical period as well. Cf. Paul Simpson & Marcus Montgomery, Language, Literature and Film. The Stylistics of Bernard Maclaverty's Cal. IN: *Twentieth-Century Fiction from Text to Context*. Ed. by Peter Verdonl & Jean-Jacques Weber. London (Routledge) 1995, pp. 138-164.

The film *Cal* (1984, Pat O'Connor) is an adaptation of Bernard MacLaverty's novel of the same title (1983), and it requires the ability to decode the particular social and political codes referring to modern Irish history.

<sup>25</sup> The film *Un amour de Swann* which had been made for a mainstream audience as entertainment, thus, also drew the criticism that it contained too few cultural references in comparison with its literary source.

Cf. Rosario Prudentem, L'impossibile traduzione della « Ricerca » di Proust. IN: *Cinema Nuovo*. Marzo-Aprile 1986, pp. 22-27.

On p. 27: *Manca altresì nella riduzione cinematografica quella ricchezza di riferimenti culturali che fa del testo letterario un'opera di straordinaria complessità. In sostanza, L'operazione compiuta dal regista tedesco denuncia un prevalente interesse per la storia, per la vicenda amorosa vista nella sua concretezza. Il resto è accessorio. Per "riempire" i vuoti della narrazione si sono introdotti elementi comici o erotici (spesso originali), di facile presa sul pubblico. Lo spessore del capolavoro letterario sparisce in una realizzazione che riduce i personaggi a semplici "macchiette" (esemplare è il caso del*

effect relates it to cultural knowledges of heterogeneous orders and relegates <sup>1</sup>  
the source material to a position of one intertext among others.

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*barone di Charlus) e pecca di compiaciuto oleografismo. Il film pertanto denuncia L'"intraducibilità"  
di una opera alla quale ci si sarebbe dovuti accostare con ben altra umiltà.*

## 2. Cultural Literacy

### The Culture of Proust

The second Pléiade edition, which comprises four volumes (i.e. one more than the previous Pléiade edition), paid particular attention to editing (besides a definitive text) the various *esquisses* which Proust had written but which had been omitted from the final text, i.e. the parts he edited in his lifetime. At the time of his death, he had not finished this labour. Given the fact that he was still revising the already published, already revised parts, he seemed unlikely to ever finish it. Thus, the reader can not only look up numerous versions of individual episodes but also gain insights into the genesis of individual passages.

The final novel was much longer than Proust had intended it. Initially it was planned as a novel in three parts. The additional volumes, however, were not added to the three parts at their end. Rather, Marcel Proust kept writing more and more into the work. The beginning and the end remained (more or less) the same as regards temporal expansion. What was added, then, were the interior parts of the *Recherche*. While the finished work spanned the same time period, from approximately 1870 to 1921, it was enlarged by more and more events, and/or the events were narrated in more and more detail. This interior expanding, the *gonflement*,<sup>26</sup> can be read as an allegory of all interior writing, i.e. a further elaborating of an interior life within the already set limits of a work. The ever-expanding Proustian sentence (with its endless sequence of descriptions, formulations of thoughts, emotions) has been regarded as a literary expression of the Zenonian idea that each moment tends towards infinity. The

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<sup>26</sup> This term is employed by Gérard Genette in his article *La question de l'écriture*. IN: *Recherche de Proust*. Ed. by Roland Barthes. Paris (Ed du Seuil) 1980, pp. 7-12.



length of the sentences conveys the passage of time yet also the duration of every moment. The work contains its own infinity and the infinity of time.<sup>27</sup>

*A la recherche du temps perdu*, refers to various other art forms besides literature. Not only has it intertextually used literature—i.e. quoted, recited, mentioned Racine, Voltaire, Shakespeare, et al.—but has also moved beyond the literary medium in making extensive reference to and use of music (Wagner, Gounod, Bizet, et al.) and painting (Vermeer, Greco, et al.). In several instances, other authors or painters are cited to explain the thoughts or the emotions of characters, e.g. Swann explaining his infatuation with Odette by her likeliness to a woman in a Botticelli painting.<sup>28</sup> In others, they are used as a modes to let one character explain his intentions and feeling for another or of gaining intimacy with each other, e.g. the conversations Swann and Odette have on painting and on the art essay Swann is trying to write;<sup>29</sup> Charlus calling on the *je* late at night in his hotel room under the pretext of giving him book to read, where the book

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<sup>27</sup> Richard Goodkin, *Around Proust*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1991, here p. 86. The author sees this infinity even realised on the level of the single Proustian sentence:

*The genius of Proust's text considered in the light of Zeno's paradoxes is that the text recognizes from the start that it will never catch up with what it is pursuing.*

*Thus Proust's narrative is profoundly consonant with Zeno's paradoxes, even at the level of what most strikingly characterizes it, its style. Proust's notoriously long and convoluted sentences create the impression of a Zenonian chase. Not only do they often take place within a single moment of time, but they also seem unable to come to a close precisely because they cannot manage to circumscribe what they are quite literally talking "about." The Proustian sentence gives the impression of an infinite narration of a single moment, of an unremitting postponement of the arrival at a goal (the end of the sentence), of a dissatisfaction arising both from the unrepresentability of a single moment and from the unpleasant feeling that no moment ever really "leads" to another moment except by default, or perhaps exhaustion.*

This also refers back to the idea of the text as *gaping garment*, as a potentially open narrative, as proposed by Erica Sheen, *Where the Garment Gapes. Faithfulness and Promiscuity in the 1995 BBC Pride and Prejudice*. IN: *The Classic Novel. From Page to Screen*. Ed. by Robert Giddings and Erica Sheen. Manchester (Manchester University Press) 2000, pp. 14-30.

<sup>28</sup> CS-I, 219. Odette is here likened to *Zéphora, la fille de Jéthro, qu'on voit dans une fresque de la Chappelle Sixtine*. The footnote of the Pléiade edition continues this intertextual game of Chinese boxes, in explaining the connection to Greek and Christian mythology, that Botticelli painted the fresco, and that Proust read about it in a text of John Ruskin titled *Mornings in Florence*, with a frontispiece design showing *Zipporah*. Cf also CG[notes]-II, 1206.

<sup>29</sup> CS-I,195. The book is a work of Bergotte.

itself also gives a hint of his true motives;<sup>30</sup> the mother taking up the late grandmother's habit of reading and quoting Mme de Staël is thereby both mourning her and keeping her alive.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore the *Recherche* not only refers to particular artists but also to the places in which the art works enter into the public sphere, into a place permitting their consumption, i.e. opera, theatre, concert, galleries.<sup>32</sup>

Contemporary culture as intertext enters into the *Recherche* in more devious ways: in the characters of the writer Bergotte, the painter Elstir. Here Proust has fused together several contemporary artists and the traits of friends to create a fictional subject. Thus, Bergotte echoes Anatole France, as Elstir resembles Auguste Renoir—but not exclusively. The historico-biographical studies of Proust have tried to unearth the actual persons behind these artistic figures as well as those behind the aristocratic and bourgeois characters of his novels. Yet, Proust has not merely encrypted certain identities. In fusing together several historical people he created new persons. In the index of the Pléiade *Recherche's* fourth volume, one finds historical and fictional characters and places next to each other with no indicator which is historically authentic and who is fictional.

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<sup>30</sup> JFF-II, 124ff.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. here Gerhard R. Kaiser, *Proust, Musil, Joyce. Zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Gesellschaft am Paradigma des Zitats*. Frankfurt a.M. (Athäneum Verlag) 1972.

Here Proust is said to appropriate ironically the canon of Racine, de Staël et al. by turning them into his Racine, his de Staël etc. (p.81ff.). The study furthermore points out that Charlus argues for (his) homosexuality only by means of quotation, Thus, intertextuality is also a mode of distancing.

Cf. also Dominique Jullien, *Proust et ses modèles. Les "Mille et une nuits" et les "Mémoires" de Saint Simon*. Paris (Jose Corti) 1989. In this book, intertextuality is read as an ideological tool of Proust.

Cf. also, Annick Bouillaguet, *Marcel Proust, le jeu intertextuel*. Paris (Editions du titre) 1999; Jacques Nathan, *Citations, références et allusions dans A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Nizet) 1953.

<sup>32</sup> Interestingly enough, the *Recherche* features not a single visit to the cinema. Marcel Proust was not very partial to the seventh art, nor would his asthma have permitted attendance of the spectacle in the very cramped and probably badly aired locales. But given his predilection for gathering and giving away photos, what may be more surprising is also that there is no mention

These processes of encoding make the Proustian text »permeable«: it becomes open to all kinds of different approaches. Despite its very distinct style and the fact that it is regarded as one of the more unapproachable works of twentieth century literature, its structure thereby can be read as arguing against any idea of hermetic seclusion: in the links (both in sheer number as well as in the diversity of them) it keeps with systems external to it (other art forms, biography,<sup>33</sup> history, contemporary politics etc.). The adaptation of *Le temps retrouvé*, then, could arguably be an example of what can happen if a film takes the intertextual functioning at the heart of the *Recherche* to narratological and adaptive conclusions.

But, *Le temps retrouvé* was not the first Proust adaptation to use such openness as narrative structure. The documentary film *L'art et la douleur* has already demonstrated how a filmic narrative can represent a text permeated by heterogeneous sources. In that film, such sources were the literary writings of Marcel Proust, the legend of Proust, the biographies of the interviewees Céleste Albaret and Philip Larcher, images of Venice and Illiers-Combray, photographs taken of Marcel Proust and Proust family members, the figure of the *narrateur*. Some of these intertextualities can be found in other documentaries, such as *How Proust can change your life*, or *Portrait-Souvenir* and a number of intertexts have been used in *Le temps retrouvé*.

In its textual strategies that constantly refer back to the same events, places and persons the *Recherche* could then well be termed »intra-textual«, by which I mean a text that not only has created a vast system of meaning within itself, but has created this system through strategies of repetitive affirmation of its

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of a photo atelier either—discounting the open-air session with Saint-Loup and the grandmother at Balbec, JFF, II-144f.

<sup>33</sup> This particular type of intertextual relationship has been explored with respect to other authors as well. Cf. Michael Meyer, *Gibbons, Mills and Ruskin: Autobiographie und Intertextualität*. Heidelberg (C. Winter) 1998; Jerome McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game That Must Be Lost*. New Haven (Yale University Press) 2000.

elements, and by incessantly foregrounding the process of its own creation.<sup>34</sup> As the novel progresses, there are more and more instances where the *je* speaks about the process of writing itself. The frequency of such self-reflexive moments increases as the novel progresses. Taking up several episodes from the adaptation of *Le temps retrouvé*, it is the intertextual character of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* that I look into as »intertextual playgrounds«. This will set off where the second chapter ended, i.e. when pointing out the inadequacies of a fidelity approach to adaptation that sees it as solely restricted to an exchange between the novel and the film. Taking my enquiry a step further, I also try to avoid a model of intertextuality that restricts adaptation to intertextual models of literary theory. Prior to exploring what I shall term »intertextual tangents«, however, I will outline my concept of intertextuality.

### Intertextuality

I most decidedly do not argue the films' intertextuality as a continuous history as an unbroken chain of cross-referencing interpretations, i.e. in the sense of an authorial intention or of subsequent directors knowing of films made prior to their own. Rather, because the literary work is intertextual on various levels and because it is perceived that way, and because the second wave of Proust reception started in the late sixties and early seventies, the reception trajectory will have been shaped by the readings and the theorising of that time—and one of them was the intertextuality model. With this, I am most decidedly neither

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<sup>34</sup> In *La prisonnière* and *Le temps retrouvé*, the *je* even goes so far as to refer to Marcel Proust, i.e. to itself. (LP-III, 583 & 663; TR-IV, 618).

The latter instance is an allusion to *Les Plaisirs et les jours* and that Anatole France/Bergotte liked it: *J'avais eu de la facilité, jeune, et Bergotte avait trouvé mes pages de collégien « parfaites »*. The first mention of Marcel Proust in *La prisonnière*, the addition of the name Marcel is, according to the footnote, Proust's way of biographising the *je* but also a distancing. LP[footnote No 1 to p. 583]-III, 1718.

arguing that the adaptation film, then, should be read like the book was read, i.e. as a repetition of the book's intertextual structure. The films refer to other intertexts. Instead, I argue that because certain types of literature are perceived as lending themselves to intertextual readings more easily, more obviously, and more extensively than others, the films based on these books might do so and be read as doing so as well. Understood this way, the gesture of quotation like the documentary material used in the film *Le temps retrouvé*, or the photographs of the first sequence would be a filmic variation on intertextual strategy not only intertextualising the specific documentary and what it represents, but representing an enunciation of intertextuality itself as structuring principle of such adaptation narratives.

Most important of all as a *Denkmodell* for this study are, of course, the terms of heteroglossia and dialogic novel as developed in the writings of Bakhtin, and I shall return to this in the course of the chapter. But due to Bakhtin's disjunctive publication, reception, and translation trajectory, his works began to have a wider impact only in the late sixties and early seventies, arriving in Western Europe through France. Chronologically, there is first of all the model proposed by Julia Kristeva<sup>35</sup> where (referring to Bakhtin) intertextuality serves to describe the links a literary text has with other texts. The text which is no longer understood as a closed *Unikat*, becomes a space of intersection through allusion, quotation, montage etc. Not only do these references place it in a relation to the »great traditions«<sup>36</sup> but also the mode of reference, the way they are embedded,

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<sup>35</sup> Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, Paris (Seuil) 1974; Julia Kristeva, *Bachtine. Le mot, le dialogue et le roman*. IN: *Critique* (1967) Vol. 33, issue 329, pp. 438-465.

The most important texts here of Bakhtin in English translation are: Mikael Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. [Translated by C. Emerson & M. Holquist]. Austin, TX (University of Texas Press) 1981; *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* [translated & edited by M. Holquist]. Minneapolis (University of Minnesota Press) 1984;

<sup>36</sup> As in the literary studies of e.g. Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. London (Thomas Nelson & Sons) 1869; T.S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood*. London

lay out the nature of its relation (affirmative, in opposition, critical etc.) to such a tradition and the ways in which poetic language breaks with these »chains« of tradition. This theoretical approach itself was motivated by an interest to divest the idea of the text originating with an author and as a closed, enduring entity. The text became text only in the reading when it instantly dissolved its boundaries in the intertextual reverberations. When not linked to the radical semiotic understanding of language as in Kristeva, however, intertextuality as model is still compatible with the understanding of literature as a chain of canonical writing, where entire texts »speak« to each other. The task of the reader (in most cases a scholar) would be to set out to unearth such intertextualities. Understood thus, cultural literacy would predominantly mean the ability to recognise as many literary references as possible to other works. In his introduction to a study of intertextuality,<sup>37</sup> Manfred Pfister points out first that, understood this way, intertextuality does not entail the discovery of something entirely new in literary studies, and second, that there are two rival tendencies in intertextuality studies:

*In unserem Überblick über die Entwicklung der Intertextualitätstheorie und den derzeitigen Diskussionsstand hat sich gezeigt, daß im wesentlichen zwei Konzepte miteinander rivalisieren: das globale Modell des Poststrukturalismus, in dem jeder Text als Teil eines universellen Intertextes erscheint, durch den er in allen seinen Aspekten bedingt wird, und prägnanteren, strukturalistischen oder hermeneutischen Modellen, in denen der Begriff der Intertextualität auf bewußte, intendierte und markierte Bezüge zwischen einem Text und vorliegenden Texten oder Textgruppen eingeengt wird.*

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(Methuen) 1961 (1st 1920); F.R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition. George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad*. London (Chatto & Windus) 1948 & idem, *Reevaluation. Tradition and Development in British Poetry*. London (Chatto & Windus) 1949. Also, Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*. New York (Oxford University Press) 1973.

<sup>37</sup> Manfred Pfister, *Konzepte der Intertextualität*. IN: *Intertextualität*. Ed. by Ulrich Broich & Manfred Pfister. Tübingen (Niemeyer) 1985, pp 1-30. Here, p. 25.

Translation: In our overview of the development of intertextuality theory and the current state of debate one can observe all in all the emergence of two rival concepts: the global mode of poststructuralism, in which every text appears as part of a universal intertext, through which it is defined in all its aspects, and more clear-cut, structuralist, or hermeneutic models, where the concept of intertextuality is limited to conscious, intentional and marked references between a text or a group of texts.

Understood thus, intertextuality as theory has been practised in such fields as *Motivforschung* and *Gattungsforschung*.

The differentiation between marked and unmarked intertextuality is taken up in other studies<sup>38</sup> and may be interpreted as a way of narrowing the field of studies by concerning oneself predominantly with the marked type of intertextuality as operative in canonised art. An article explaining the success of the movie *Casablanca* precisely because its intertextuality is unmarked, thus also points out that the movie is not art but cult.<sup>39</sup> Marked intertextuality, therefore, is connected to erudite traditions of intertextuality.

If intertextuality is inferred to an author-figure or even the historical person of the author, these studies restrict themselves to finding meanings that allegedly were there already—even if in the end it mostly is the (scholarly) reader that has marked and thus put intertextuality there. Transferring this to studies of adaptation implies that every time an element of the film (be it an episode, the psychology of the characters, the use of voice-over or other) is referred back to the literary source material, it is regarded as already having been configured there. Or, it is regarded as the intention of the literary author. The intertextual model then merely provides a conceptualisation of literature as canon and of film as its handmaiden.

In her survey of what intertextuality as an academic approach had developed into, Susanne Holthuis still restricts the object of study as that of the relation between aesthetic, literary objects but makes explicit the importance of the reception side of the phenomenon.<sup>40</sup> The problem here can be to simply replace the author with the reader—be that the director or scriptwriter adapting

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London (Methuen) 1984; Ulrich Broich, *Ways of Marking Intertextuality*. IN: *Fiction, narratologie, texte, genre*. Ed. by Jean Bessière. New York (Peter Lang) 1989, pp. 119-129; Jörg Helbig, *Intertextualität und Markierung*. Heidelberg (C. Winter) 1996.

<sup>39</sup> Umberto Eco, *Casablanca: Cult Movie and Intertextual Collage*. (1984). Reprinted IN: *Modern Criticism and Theory*. Ed. by David Lodge. London & New York (Longman) 1997, pp. 446-455. (1st 1988).

<sup>40</sup> Holthuis, Susanne, *Intertextualität: Aspekte einer rezeptionsorientierten Konzeption*. Tübingen (Stauffenburg Verlag) 1993.

the novel or, in a further step, the spectator watching the movie. Rather than replace the author or the author-figure with a reader (which in case of regarding the director as reader of the novel means a second author-figure), I propose to read also director, scriptwriter, actor, (re)viewer as intertexts among others where an overall mosaic of the film as a *cultural moment*<sup>41</sup> shall be pieced together.

There are models of intertextuality that locate intertextuality within the text, i.e. as a mode of not only reference to other works of literature, but also as a mode of auto-structuring. In the introduction to *Palimpsestes*,<sup>42</sup> Gérard Genette points to five types of intertextuality: } intertextuality, } paratextuality, } metatextuality, } hypertextuality and } architextuality. The first type, *intertextualité*, 1 } comprises modes of citation, allusion. The second, *paratextualité*, refers to written 2 } »intrusions« in the text such as chapter headings, intertitles, subtitles, introduction etc. Going beyond Genette and literature, one can say that with the advent of DVDs and the special features occasionally included, film here has acquired a variety of paratexts. Like literature's foreword, introduction, preface or afterword that Genette points out, the director's commentary or the featurette of the movie provide other information on the genesis or the relevance of the film. Deleted scenes included in the DVD reveal what was left out entirely, or how a particular scene was built up in a differently edited version. The inclusion of filmographies and interviews point the film towards that other »narrative system« of the film, i.e. the actors and here, also the director. Other added features explaining special effects relate the film to the technological state of the

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<sup>41</sup> I borrow this term from Yuri Tsivian, *Russia 1913. Cinema in the Cultural Landscape*. (1994). Reprinted IN: *Silent Cinema*. Ed. by Richard Abel. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 1996, pp. 194-216.

<sup>42</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes : La littérature au second degré*. Paris (Editions du Seuil) 1982.



industry,<sup>43</sup> while included trailers relate it to industry's marketing, variances in national censorship practices, and the targeting of a film at national audiences.

The third Genettian type, *métatextualité*, would be something in the nature of a commentary uniting one text to another without necessarily citing the commented-on text. The fourth type, *hypertextualité*, would be the case where one text models itself on another (Genette uses the verb *greffer* from gardening to describe the process) in ways which are not those of a commentary, e.g. James Joyce's *Ulysses* models itself on Homer's *Odyssee*. The last type, *architextualité*, would be of a taxonomic nature, e.g. the adherence to a certain genre and its conventions. It is between these three intertextualities that film adaptation can be located in relation to the literary source material. The latter type, *architextualité*, if transferred to film studies, involves attributing the individual film to a group (or to various groups) of films with which it shares certain features. In the case of adaptation one notes a multiple *architextualité*: the film is an adaptation but prior to that identification also another type of film or genre such as period film, thriller, western etc. With regard to adaptation, the choice between terming the relationship metatextual or hypertextual reveals how one conceptualises adaptation itself as a cultural practice. Terming the relationship hypertextual signifies choosing a dual conceptualisation: the book would be the hypotext of the film's hypertext. If one regards the adaptation as an interpretation of a book, then the relationship would correspond to Genette's term *metatextualité*.<sup>44</sup> However, the types of intertextuality developed by Gérard Genette are modelled on literature, this entails certain blindness to features of the filmic object studied, those where it differs from a literary text. Although he also cites examples of

<sup>43</sup> This also redefines the body of actors, e.g. the DVD of *The Mummy* (1999, Stephen Sommers). This DVD included an almost hour-long documentary on the making of the central character, the Mummy, who was played by an actor, but whose body is shown as becoming perforated, permeated, and possibly performed by a technology, that makes holes into his cheeks, turns it into a skeleton, and ultimately into sand.

<sup>44</sup> The relationship of theatre production to its play is implicitly understood thus. Adaptation studies have tended towards a hypertextual understanding.

intertextual relationships between two films (Woody Allen's *Play it again, Sam* and *Casablanca*), and also between two works of art (Warhol's and Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*) he compares them on the assumption that the intertextuality is predominantly at work within a specific form of art, i.e. intertextual relationships exist between two paintings, two works of literature, two films etc. The adaptation of a literary work by film, would, therefore, not be included in this model—or the model would have to be revised.

Intertextuality studies where intertextuality is understood as a change in medium frequently refer to the medium changes of theatre to film,<sup>45</sup> or of literature to art,<sup>46</sup> text and illustration.<sup>47</sup> Whereas in theatre productions divergence from the play is expected, in the case of adaptation to film, the adaptation more often than not is expected to comply within pre-conceived parameters. Or, the film is reduced (in its critical reception) to the allusions it felicitously makes (is read as making) to its literary source. As concerns the independent status of the individual film, the intertextual approach to adaptation study here does not differ greatly from that based merely on a narrative comparison of book and film.

In this study, the comparison between the literary source material and the finished film shall not be omitted entirely, but it is divested of assumptions that one can only be justified by the other. The narrative, the style, the characters of the novel, will be understood merely as another intertext that makes up the mosaic of the film's cultural moment. Following Teresa de Lauretis in her

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Horst Zander, Intertextualität und Medienwechsel. IN: *Intertextualität*. Ed. by Ulrich Broch & Manfred Pfister. Tübingen (Niemeyer) 1985, pp. 178-196.

<sup>46</sup> Ingeborg Hoesterey, *Verschlungene Schriftzeichen: Intertextualität von Literatur und Kunst in der Moderne/Postmoderne*. Frankfurt a.M. (Athäneum) 1988.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Renée Riese Hubert, The Illustrated Book: Text and Image. IN: *Intertextuality*. Ed. by J. Parisier-Plottel & H. Charney. New York (Literary Forum) 1978, pp. 177-195; Aage A. Hansen-Loeve, Intermedialität und Intertextualität: Probleme der Korrelation von Worten und Bildkunst am Beispiel der Russischen Moderne. IN: *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*. Sonderband 11 (1983), pp. 291-300.

feminist critique of semiotics and psychoanalysis applied to film theories, I argue that using adaptation as an object of film studies must be multiply located:<sup>48</sup>

*The productions of meanings, I rephrase, always involves not simply a specific apparatus of representation but several. While each can be described analytically in its matters of expression or its social-economic conditions of production (e.g. the technological or economic modalities of, say, sound cinema), what is at issue is the possibility of accounting for their joint hold on the spectator and, thus, the production of meanings for a subject and/or of a subject in meaning across a plurality of discourses. If—to put it bluntly and circuitously—the subject is where meanings are formed and if, at the same time, meanings constitute the subject, then the notion of semiotic productivity must include that of modes of production.*

The significance of adaptation as a cultural practice can, therefore, not be located in its relationship to literature alone. It acquires its relevance as object of analysis and as a tool of enquiry by locating it in other fields. The ones I have employed so far have been, film historiography, genre, mise-en-scène, casting, narratology and reception. Intertextuality, however, has traditionally understood its intertexts as cultural artefacts rather than framework conditions of the field of cultural production.

I apply an intertextual approach to adaptation with an awareness that the transferral of literary intertextuality inevitably brings with it conceptualisations that jar with the medium film. The Bakhtinian idea of heteroglossia is doubly relevant to this study. First, in seeing intertextuality operative at the level of the word, rather than the entire text, it precludes a mere crossreferencing between texts of a canon and enables interpretations starting from elements of the text (be that filmic or literary). Secondly, in Bakhtin's model of intertextuality the words reverberate with meaning because they carry the memory of their previous uses. To speak of memory in this context, then, foregrounds the subjective aspect of such an enterprise as well as its historic specificity, down to this study's own historic location. Intertextuality is to be understood as a an enterprise of

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<sup>48</sup> Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't. Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema.* Southampton (Macmillan) 1984, pp. 32f.

imagining occurring between subject and cultural formation in the confrontation with complex texts.

Intertextuality also signifies that the adaptation as coming after the book, is not only shaped by the book but the perception of book is also shaped retroactively by the film. In the words of Bal, it is shaped preposterously.<sup>49</sup> In the specific case study this implies that the interrelations between a book, a writer and a film, are jointly embedded in processes of cultural production and reception. It is particularly in the field of writing artists' biographies, that boundaries between the individual works and the production of the *œuvre* are suspended in order to arrive at a narrative the life of the artist. While not thematising it as intertextuality, in his study on Rossetti,<sup>50</sup> Jerome McGann weaves a complex narrative between the painter's biography, aesthetic programme, (the making of) the paintings and (the making of) the Dante translations. Here it remains to be clarified which of these is the »basic« text that refers to the others, or rather, the question of a »source« proves pointless as all of these mutually inform each other. The case of Marcel Proust is a particularly apt example, for here the boundaries between his work and its production are the enjeu, i.e. it is in the constant blurring of these boundaries that Marcel Proust (person, writer and author-figure) is continually made and unmade according to the interests at stake.

The film *Le temps retrouvé*, almost appears as if constructed in way that makes the viewer/critic get out paper and pen and start on a list of intertextual references. Such a list cannot be exhaustive. Intertextuality understood as list of references in such a case resembles randomness and degenerates into (erudite)

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<sup>49</sup> Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio. Contemporary Art, Preposterous History*. Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 1999.

<sup>50</sup> Jerome McGann, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Game That Must Be Lost*. New Haven (Yale University Press) 2000.

clutter. Instead, I propose the exploration of some elements of the films that obtain multiple meanings by bringing them together with other intertexts. Rather than being a mere reference, these examples begin to reverberate with other meanings in conjunction with their intertexts. In the following, I will give three examples of that which I will term »intertextual tangents«. Like Roland Barthes in his analyses of the Poe story, *Analyse textuelle d'un conte d'Edgar Poe*, and *S/Z* pointed out that his list of four codes was not exhaustive, I do not contend that these three examples are.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, not only is the text's intertextual potential not exhausted because it is renewed or changed by the memories each reading brings to it, also within the intertextual tangents there will be a residue of unresolved connections, comparable to the contradictions the spinning out of a metaphoric field might entail because of diverse denotations and connotations.

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<sup>51</sup> Roland Barthes, *S/Z*. (1970). IN: *Œuvres Complètes II. 1966-1973*. Paris (Seuil) 1994, pp. 555-737 & *Analyse textuelle d'un conte d'Edgar Poe* (1973). IN: *ibid.* pp. 1653-1676.

### 3. Intertextual Tangents

#### The Madeleine Proustienne

Just before the character of adult Marcel arrives at the *matinée* and while waiting in the library for the first movement of the concert to finish, he has several revelatory moments which in both the novel and the film *Le temps retrouvé* finally affirm his vocation as a writer. In Proust's words, these are instances of *mémoire involontaire*. The subject has no control over his type of memory, it is instead triggered by contingency. According to Proust, this is the true kind of memory because it eludes the subject's tendency to edit the past. The film first makes use of the moment of tripping over the pavement. Here, the adult Marcel stumbles and thereby is caught in a memory of another stumbling in Venice introducing an intra-diegesis. On film, the shooting and editing of this moment is extremely self-conscious, artificial, and far from being the recall of a real past, it used the Venice episode for a different presentation of the writer's biography by making Marcel a child during this voyage. Also, the fake-looking façade and the painted décor of the scene can be read as visual metaphor for the very artificiality of the putatively spontaneous memory. There are more of these revelatory moments in the novel, the most famous one being the madeleine dipped into a cup of camomile tea. The smell of the little cake evokes in the *je* (as it did for Proust) the memory of long gone Sundays in Combray.<sup>52</sup> However, none of the feature film adaptations took up the episode of the madeleine. This study argues that the disappearance of the Madeleine is a necessity of Proust adaptation.

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<sup>52</sup> The film does not use this particular incident but others, such as the stumbling, the feel of a napkin resembling the texture of a towel used years ago, the sound of a spoon chinking in a cup as a hammer on the wheels of a train.

In two documentaries the madeleine is elaborated upon as a central motif of Proust's work. In the documentary *Unpeeled: Proust Remembrance of Tastes Past*, it is first represented as the material memory-connection to Proustian Combray which in the film is, of course, Illiers: in the reenactment of the episode a pair of hands dips a piece of madeleine on a spoon into the lime tea served in a Wedgewood English Rose tea cup:<sup>53</sup> This spoon then starts its way towards a mouth. The mouth, however is not that belonging to the hands but it is the camera. In this movement of the spoon with the madeleine, the film is shown as literally devouring the madeleine, and paradoxically also being devoured by it, as the morsel fills out more and more of the screen. Furthermore, an instrumental rendition<sup>54</sup> of the Wagnerian *Liebestod* is used as soundtrack to underscore this mutually consumptive relationship between the represented object and the apparatus. Not only is film, thus, consuming Proust and the object represented proves itself too large for the frame, too big for the medium, it is consumed in an overtly English crockery. The music chosen is appropriately ironic giving this coupling a lethal (and aesthetically rather unconvincing) finality.<sup>55</sup> In the following, Tante Léonie giving Marcel Proust the tea is shown, as well as how these little cakes are made and sold at the bakery of Illiers-Combray, with the voice-over comment that essentially the madeleine is not different from an ordinary fairy cake. This deflating of the »hallowed pastry« is developed further in the last excursion on the madeleine by an art historian introduced as Professor Barry Sonnenfeld, when it is connected to Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus*. Here, the madeleine acquires a sexual connotation in

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<sup>53</sup> Abstaining from using a blatantly British tea set, the In the film *The Modern World: Ten Great Writers. Marcel Proust* also uses precisely this image of a piece of Madeleine on a spoon dipped into a cup to then introduce the enchanted Combray of Marcel Proust's Combray.

<sup>54</sup> Just as the hands picking up the spoon are deprived of belonging to a whole body, here the human voice of the opera is removed. Referring back to the analysis of the camera-eye (»I«) as employed in *The Lady in the Lake*, here the perceiving subject is even deprived of a mirrored face or wholeness.

<sup>55</sup> This irony was, I assume, unintended on behalf of the filmmakers who here have used Proust for what basically is an elaborate cookery and savoir-vivre film.

its resemblance to the shell that then is read as metonymy for female genitalia. That the film then cuts back to the mother as an origin of nourishment, would (following logic) make the eating of the genitalia-madeleine incest—a rather kinky variant of breastfeeding. Here, the intertextualities subvert the coherence of the documentary narrative by providing an unintended commentary of contradiction and irony. Intertextuality, thus, may also be tool of pinpointing inconsistencies.

An entirely different intertextual relationship is presented by Richard Goodkin: that of the madeleine, the film *Vertigo*<sup>56</sup> and the book it was based on.<sup>57</sup> First of all, he points out that the name of the heroine in the film, Madeleine Elster, is made up of the Proustian madeleine and of the painter Elstir, a character in the novel. Then, like the pastry in the novel, the figure of Madeleine is the protagonist's way of re-living, re-creating the past:<sup>58</sup>

*Hitchcock's "Madeleine", like Proust's, is thus the embodiment of the central experience of reliving the past. Perhaps the major character of the film, as of the novel, is time: the entire second half of the film describes Scottie's attempt to re-create the past. He, too, is going after lost time, albeit, as we shall see in a way that distinguishes him from Proust's hero. The power of vertigo comes from the incongruity of feeling one's finite being, limited in time and space, in the dizzying presence of the infinite, the abyss. We can hardly imagine a more heartbreakingly powerful image of lost time in its irretrievability than that of the film's falling scenes [...].*

In the film the character Scottie becomes obsessed by Madeleine, because she is trapped within a past. When Scottie meets the character Judy who resembles Madeleine Elster, he tries to transform her back into the Madeleine he craves, thus trapping her in his past. He recaptures his past by remembering her (i.e. Madeleine's) shade of blonde, the details of dress, of make-up etc. The

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<sup>56</sup> *Vertigo* (1958, Alfred Hitchcock).

<sup>57</sup> Boileau & Narcejac, *D'Entre les morts*. Paris (Denoël) 1954 .

The writer of the script had read Proust several years prior to *Vertigo* but had re-named the novel's heroine from Madeleine Gévigne into Madeleine Elster. The book also changed its title from *D'entre les morts* to *Sueurs froides* after the released film had been released in France under the title *Sueurs froides*.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Goodkin, *Around Proust*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1991, p. 91.



recreation of Madeleine<sup>59</sup> works through the very tools the heritage film uses to recreate the cinematic illusion of a past, and a certain type of past. In film production, this is the work of several departments. The attainment of the past here is the result of labour, and not something that putatively suddenly appears and blossoms in the consciousness.

It is then the connection between an accessoire and a painting that, according to Goodkin, propels the narrative to its conclusion:<sup>60</sup>

*What gives the character Judy, away is that she too-closely resembles art, since at the climactic moment, when the artistic transformation to Madeleine is complete, she puts on the necklace from the Carlotta painting that proves her criminal link to the "real" Madeleine Elster, to the Madeleine who cannot be brought back from the dead, art notwithstanding. What Judy forgets is that Madeleine is not simply, as in Proust, a means to reach the domain of art; she is also, in Hitchcock, the articulation between art and criminality, the character whose art is a result and a function of her involvement and whose crime is that she allows life to resemble art just a little too much, to be revealed as artifice.*

The double meaning of art as both artifice-deceit and art as in painting, music, literature, is according to Goodkin, also played upon shortly thereafter in the episode of Scottie's friend Mitch drawing a painting of herself as Carlotta. Mitch had given up painting as vocation, because it is artifice.

Goodkin then argues that the feeling of Vertigo is in both Scottie's and Marcel's case *the feeling of incongruity between mortality and anything that goes beyond mortality - be it the desire to resurrect the dead or that of bringing the past to life [...]*.<sup>61</sup> Rather than read the vertigo like Goodkin does, I would propose to link it back to the role illness plays both in the biography of Marcel Proust and then in the story of the *je*. It is illness that allegedly keeps Proust from society and thus permits him to write, it is illness (asthma) that prevents the *je* and the historical Marcel Proust from going back to Combray/Illiers where he first smelt the

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<sup>59</sup> The character Madeleine Scottie was following through San Francisco is herself represented as seeking to uncover the past by researching the life and emulating the image (the painting) of a Carlotta Valdes grandmother who unbeknown to Madeleine is her ancestress. The hairdo of Madeleine is copied from the painting of Carlotta and the specially commissioned bouquet matches the one of the painting.

<sup>60</sup> Richard Goodkin, *Around Proust*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1991, p. 94.

<sup>61</sup> Richard Goodkin, *Around Proust*. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1991, p. 96.

madeleine in the *tilleul* of his aunt. It is also illness that disabled the character Scottie from climbing up the bell-tower to see what really happened up there. Because he had to stop, he did not see that the Madeleine running up was not the wife of his friend, but an accomplice. With the help of the artificial Madeleine (the character Judy<sup>62</sup> wearing the same costume, with the dyed blond hair pinned up in the same elaborate knot) Scottie finally does find out the truth about that afternoon in the past. But it is a pyrrhic victory.

His illness, the vertigo, had also spared him: because now he comes several months too late rather than just a few minutes which would have made the loss of his desired object, the remembered Madeleine, all the keener. For even if he had been able to follow his Madeleine up the tower, the real Madeleine was already dead. And the »real« Madeleine was actually also a fantasy since she was jointly fabricated, over the course of the entire film, by her husband Gavin Elster, by Judy and by Scottie himself. The attainment of that fantasy, especially if cast in the narrative mould of rescuing a damsel in distress, is the impossible enterprise of the impaired hero. Looking at the Proustian madeleine through the plot of the film *Vertigo*, this reveals such fantasies of recovering the truth about such an imagined past to be doomed enterprises from the start: not only are they achieved through a series of artifices (dress, make-up, other bodies), they never really existed in the first place. Referring to the narrative surplus, David Boyd summarises this as:<sup>63</sup>

*The 'real' Carlotta Valdes and the 'real' Madeleine Elster have been narrated out of existence, in effect, their historical realities displaced by more powerful fictions.*

While the ultimate fictitiousness of the film's character is indisputable, the Proustian madeleine derives its fascination from the idea that it had once

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<sup>62</sup> The proximity to the name of Judas has not been pointed out by Goodkin either. And the character Judy even has betrayed twice: first the victim Madeleine and the duped Scottie, but then, also the murderer of Madeleine by helping the character Scottie re-cover the past.

<sup>63</sup> David Boyd, *Film and the Interpretative Process. A Study of Blow-up, Rashomon, Citizen Kane, 8 1/2, Vertigo, and Persona*. New York, Bern, Paris et al. (Peter Lang) 1989, p. 147.

existed. However, the »historic« madeleine of Tante Léonie shares the most vicarious of existences with that inhabiting the Proustian fantasy and those of his adaptors. The present existence of the formerly-extant is precariously-located in subjective constructions of them.

After this omnipresent and multiply-artificial madeleine in documentaries and in *Vertigo*, it possibly is a relief to find no madeleine in the film adaptation of *Le temps retrouvé*. Despite having used several of the instances of memory triggers (the stumbling on a piece of pavement, the chink of the spoon in a cup, the touch of a napkin), the madeleine is absent. But its locus has merely shifted. I would contend, that it is the figure of Marcel which has become the madeleine through the physical similarity between the Italian actor playing Marcel as an adult led Raúl Ruiz to cast him.<sup>64</sup> Like the resemblance of Judy inspired Scottie to turn her (back) into Madeleine, the physical resemblance of the actor instigated his casting as Marcel. Marcello Mazarrella, not only shares the name of the author, he intentionally imitates his gestures and, being on film, he also is clad in period dress with the necessary accessories. Like Judy, he stands in for something, and here it is the Marcel Proust, before the writing. He stands in for the beginning of that biographical trajectory, and at that beginning was the mythical madeleine. If indeed read as the madeleine, the actor/character also shares the feature of being both real and a fiction. This also goes some way of providing an explanation for his non-participation as a character in the film. He is the object onto which so much has been projected and which is continuously re-constructed in imaginings, that in the realisation on film he is, of necessity, an anti-climax.

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Jean Milly, *Le Temps retrouvé de Raoul Ruiz*. IN: *Bulletin Marcel Proust de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. (1999) No. 49, pp. 176-178.

The review of the film that connects the lookalike actor to the author's text (p. 176): *Le choix et le jeu de l'acteur principal, Marcello Mazarrella, [...] se révèlent excellents: la ressemblance physique avec l'écrivain est frappante; l'acteur parle peu, si ce n'est en de brèves formules de politesse, et le cinéaste utilise le plus souvent pour lui une voix off citant exactement le livre ou commentant l'action.*

## Top Hats & Gloves

In the film *The Age of Innocence* during the sequence of the Beaufort ball, the character Newland Archer is shown as walking through a series of small rooms before moving out into the open space of the ballroom in a long continuous shot. The small rooms are crowded with the visitors and the walls are crowded with paintings.<sup>65</sup> The paintings on the one hand point to the wealth of the hosts by representing art objects purchased at a certain price and thus the walls are covered with capital of culture and cultural capital. On the other, they also point out a double artifice: many of the paintings are life-size or near life-size portraits, or depict social scenes. Thus, they are extensions of the visitors, the characters of the film. The camera movement which glides over actors and paintings in alternation reinforces the similarities between them.<sup>66</sup> In this continuous shot, the voice-over not only does explain the peculiar architectonic arrangement of the rooms, but also states that they were the only way of accessing the ballroom and thus, everybody had to walk past the painting *The Return of Spring*. This scandalous nude was publicly displayed by its owner, the ball's host, to the puritan upper class of New York. The female nude is a publicly-displayed representation of body that the members of polite society most emphatically would not emulate. It is here doubly scandalous because it not only transgressed puritan morals, it also breaks the affinities between art and society the film has constructed in this sequence.<sup>67</sup> Society can thus be read to be as artificial as

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<sup>65</sup> Painting is frequently put to use in films and has been analysed in, e.g., Angela Della Vacche, *Cinema and Painting. How Art Is Used in Film* London (Athlone) 1996.

<sup>66</sup> As in the film *Orlando* there is a play with a tableau vivant and a family portrait, the paintings and the actors/actresses here together form something that is half *tableau*, half *vivant*. Cf. also, the film by Raúl Ruiz *L'Hypothèse du tableau volé* (1978).

<sup>67</sup> The character Archer, thus the voice-over, takes especial pride in looking at the picture because in his unashamed gaze he hopes to separate himself from the puritans who would not look upon that painting. Art and looking at art, then is also a way of dissociating oneself from one's peers.

paintings. But what is even more striking is revealed by commentaries upon the film's release: when ideas for the film's costumes were being researched, the filmmakers used precisely such paintings as source of inspiration. Some of the actors' and actresses' dresses were therefore actually imitating paintings which in turn were made as portraits of »real« persons. In this riddle of what is »the real«, they resemble the Arabic facade of the Musée Proust in Illiers-Combray as I laid out in the first chapter.

Before the male guests ascend to the ballroom in *The Age of Innocence*, the film shows how they all leave their white gloves and their top hats at the cloakroom with a card bearing their names. The pairs of gloves and the cards are laid out in neat rows—like the top hats with the gloves in that enigmatic image in *Le temps retrouvé*. Whereas the rows of gloves in *The Age of Innocence* are indicative of a former custom, the rows of top hats and gloves in *le Temps retrouvé* have no such explanation. They resemble a surrealist painting of René Magritte. The painting of a pipe titled, *Ceci n'est pas une pipe* thematises paintedness. It disavows what it shows by saying: this is not me. It is not, it represents. The film *Le temps retrouvé* and the œuvre of Magritte share the repetition of elements: there one can see the jockey on horse-back featured in the paintings *Le Jockey Perdu* (1942) and in *L'enfance d'Icare* (1960), or clouds are used as backgrounds and as surfaces in various paintings. The film lets objects appear repeatedly in close-ups in various scenes: vases, sculptures, a flower.<sup>68</sup> As has been pointed out before, it also repeats costumes against conventional narrative construction, and doubles the narrative itself. Like the painted pipe, the top hats and gloves do not have a self-explanatory meaning, or in the words of

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<sup>68</sup> Cf. here also Janell Watson, *Material Culture from Balzac to Proust*. Cambridge, (Cambridge University Press) 1999.

The material culture of the nineteenth century, in the shape of the bibelot, is seen as entering literature where the description of interiors of the living spaces and their cluttering expresses social order and disorder alike.

Iampolski,<sup>69</sup> they are not smoothly embedded in narrative, they are *hieroglyphs of reality*. I have already pointed out a possible interpretation that links them to an episode of the *Recherche*. This scene shows top hats and gloves in a way that deprives them of sense as real objects, or, taking into account that they are medially represented, as signifiers referring directly to a signified. Because these objects pose the questions of how they got there, and where they disappeared to, they add the dimension of time to a *mise-en-scène*. The destabilisation of reality through fantastic narrative that Margaret Cohen<sup>70</sup> ascribed to objects in movement on film, here is condensed into a static object. They are fragments of an unresolved narrative that intersects the exchange between Saint-Loup and the child Marcel. These two characters were roughly the same age in the novel, and the film here once again manipulates the age axis, elongating the biographical distance between them. As the child Marcel moves between the axes of the hats towards the figure of Saint-Loup, the meticulous arrangement of the hats with its exact space measurements is also a visual metaphor for the film's manipulation of age's chronological time and the continuity of reality.

Through the connection made to Magritte as in the above, then, intertextual referencing between film and painting no longer just implies the visual re-representation of, or a reference to a painting, or the act of drawing. Here, the

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<sup>69</sup> Mikhail Iampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias. Intertextuality and Film*. [Transl. by Harsha Ram]. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California) 1998 (1993). Here, esp. pp. 32 & 250.

<sup>70</sup> Margaret Cohen, Panoramic Literature and the Invention of Everyday Genres. IN: *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Ed. by Vanessa Schwartz & Leo Charney. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California Press) 1995, pp. 227-252.

Here p. 248: *In cinema, the photographic image replaces the dialogue between textual diversity and lithographic stability. The panoramic genre's constitutive heterogeneity, however, is not lost. It can become, as we have seen, an effect of the narrative: generic difference among micronarratives (the different kinds of films collected in one program), or, as with Méliès's film, a referential instability produced by shifting codes of representation within the scope of one narrative flow. It can also penetrate the image standard itself. In early cinema, this penetration occurs when the seemingly stable photographic image is unmoored from its referential function, its "proper" place (the dancing lamppost in the "Dream of a Rarebit Fiend").*

film uses just a fragmentary intertext, but the intertext is inferred in the process of trying to decipher a meaning of the enigma. The painting need no longer be recognisable as a painting. The film did not use the image of a bowler hat as in frequently seen in Magritte's paintings but substituted it with a top hat, shifting from clerk to aristocracy. The reference to Magritte is arrived at by the relation of the object to its vicinity. In the film: hats and gloves, in rows on the carpet of an empty room where no explanation is given. In painting: a bowler hat as one of six objects represented with a »misleading« caption and other instances of this particular object in Magritte's paintings. Surrealism has another connection to film. As Iampolski has pointed out, surrealists were the writers of numerous film scripts. However, these were film scripts that were never supposed to be made into films, they were supposed to remain books:<sup>71</sup>

*Cinema, then, was perceived as a means of attacking high culture, one that by no means necessitated a renunciation of language (the output of surrealist screenplays is ample evidence of this). The cinema promised the overcoming, within language, of the literary tradition. A literary text oriented toward the poetics of film was thus obliged to enter into a negative relation with the intertext of the broader literary arena. The cinema drew such a text into a kind of negative intertextuality, one that denied the wider context of culture.*

When a first collection of screenplays had been published in 1943, it was presented by the editors as the first instance of *a literature of the screen*.<sup>72</sup> Whereas here, the act of publication was read as proof of literariness, surrealist writers used the interim character of scripts for a critique of literary establishment. The literariness of a script resided in its being a written text. The scripts they wrote, however, were never meant to evolve into what scripts are supposed to become. In thus crippling the text, they sought to injure literature. This was a form of incomplete literature, a literature subservient to another medium and through it, the institution of literature itself could be discredited. In the field of Proust

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<sup>71</sup> Mikhail Iampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias. Intertextuality and Film*. [Transl. by Harsha Ram]. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California) 1998 (1st 1993), p. 163.

<sup>72</sup> *Twenty Best Screenplays*. Ed. by John Gassner and Dudley Nichols. New York (Crown Publishers) 1943.

adaptations, there then are several scripts that were never made into films. Here, the incompleteness of the script was not because it was not desired, but because it could not be made for financial reasons. The publication of the scripts (as any other published script that was not made into a film) more than anything else refer to film history's absences. They are the reminders of film projects that had advanced beyond the stage of a vague idea to various stages of pre-production. Like the hats in the film raise the question where the wearers of these hats are, published film scripts solicit the makers of their films. The published Proust screenplays re-call the persons involved in the making of the film, most prominently the directors and writers. A script qualifies for the definition of a script, yet by its production circumstances, it is here also prevented from becoming »fully« so, if remaining in its written stage. The hats in the film *Le temps retrouvé* are not permitted to be hats, to be worn, but they are insistently present as narrative enigma in the visual field of the scene. Read as an intertext referring to film production, the hats are, also and finally, a stand-in for unfilmed scripts, containing narrative but incomplete in themselves.

### Photos, Documentaries & Laterna Magica

The succession of photos at the beginning of the film is an extension of the title credit sequence: before the action begins, it gives the viewer also the faces of the actors and actresses (s/he may already know from other films), the hairdo they have for this film, in some cases also an entire costume is shown. Their filmic appearances are revealed in conjunction with the names of the characters they are playing, and as which they are about to make an entry in the next scene.

The documentaries are not only narrative elements in what they depict but also how they depict it and how they themselves are embedded in narrative.



When they are shown, they are all black and white material. Argued historically, this is because they are representing World War I, at which time colour film had not yet been developed. With respect to overall visual appearance, they insert a intertext into the film. They are a marked contrast to the coloured images of the *laterna magica* the scene before. The *laterna magica* makes its first appearance before the first scene with documentary material. As the child Marcel walks from the room where it staged the story of Geneviève de Brabant to the next room, where it is introduced to the stereoscope and its film, it is also moving from one stage of technological development to the other. Historically, the *laterna magica* preceded the stereoscope and film. It was the preceding *representational technology* and while photography and film signified progress in terms of realistic representation, they also signified a regress with respect to colour.<sup>73</sup> The intertext-chain of photographs, *laterna magica*, stereoscope and black-and-white film in rapid succession embeds the history of the medium film and its various precursor representational technologies into the first twenty minutes of the film.

Another presentation of documentary material is done in a crowded cafe scene. This then is a reference to the social context of the early medium: when audiences did not sit silently in a row in a darkened room, but brought picnic baskets, chatted, the projector would be louder than it is today, while the burning lamps would crackle and hiss, and sounds from the street might or a nearby underground train would enter into the experience as well.<sup>74</sup> From the private party where the *laterna magica* slide show took place, film moves the experience of visual narrative into the company of strangers—both prefiguring the darkened indoors anonymity of most Western cinemas. The film *William*

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. Rick Altman, *Toward a Theory of the History of Representational Technologies*. IN: *Iris* (1984) Vol.2 No.2, pp. 111-125.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Yuri Tsivian, *Early Cinema in Russia and Its Cultural Reception*. [Transl. by Alan Bodger. Edited by Richard Taylor. Foreword by Tom Gunning]. London (Routledge) 1998 (1st rev. English edition 1994; Russ 1st 1991). Esp. pp. 108ff.

*Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* had inscribed into its story the story of Shakespearean theatre: both the text itself by having advertisements quote lines from Shakespeare; as well as the institution by leaving the ruins of a Globe Theatre on Verona beach. In a similar way, the film *Le temps retrouvé* has incorporated a history of representational technology and of film's socio-cultural reception into its narrative.

It embeds that sub-narrative, however, in a film that is not technologically inventive. Therefore, the history of the medium does not indicate its progression to a logical (digital) conclusion, but is continued in the experimentalism of narrative. As argued in the previous close reading, the film both maintains and disrupts conventions of narrative cinema. It does not embrace avant-garde aesthetics or narrative either, which could be a form of progression substituting the technological sub-narrative. The ultimate sequence of the film, reverts to the figure of the author by containing his progression through the ages within one frame. The history of the medium, the ludic use of *mise-en-scène*, and the continuous play with the age of characters, jointly argue for a different stage in Proust adaptation. But above all, in the discontinuities, inconsistencies, and disruptions (both within themselves and in relation to the entire film), they indicate the impossibility of progression in a historiography of film adaptation in relation solely to chronology of the century. By this I refer to the need of specificity: to analyse each adaptation not only with respect to its literary source material, but also to take into consideration the specific reception trajectory of the author and the specific production period of the adaptation.

Despite the differences in narrative construction, visual appearance and in spectatorial appeal the two adaptations of the *Recherche* discussed so far might have, they both lend themselves to intertextual readings that reveal the artifice at work in their construction as period films. The film *Un amour de Swann*, in the previous chapter's intertextual reading of the final sequence was read as an oblique commentary on different types of the »forgery« at work at the heart of

any period film. The film *Le temps retrouvé* at first glance seems more appealing for scholarly research because it is self-reflexive not only with respect to the literary source material but also to other arts and to the medium and the practice of film itself. Following Genettian *architextualité*, this puts it in a group with other films that embark on similar filmic voyages which have questioned linear visual narrative and the workings of representation, e.g. *Blow-Up*, *Le mépris*, *L'année dernière à Marienbad*. But the intertextual ramifications of the two adaptations also reveal that the peculiar forms of narrating and of intertextualising are done with a *Zeitverschiebung*, a temporal differal. This then first of all abrogates the innovativeness of the gesture. For a viewer who, e.g., has seen the film *Blow-Up* or earlier films of Raúl Ruiz, *Le temps retrouvé* would in itself not be remarkable. As the audiences for the various documentaries done on Marcel Proust such as *L'Art et la douleur* will remain even smaller than the cinéphile audiences of film such as *Blow-up*, the general impression of the film will in popular memory be as experimental—regardless whether this is evaluated positively or negatively. It is only as an adaptation of Marcel Proust that it appears as innovative after all, both to the »specialised« audience of critics, reviewers and scholars as well as to audiences.

Narratives of adaptation to the screen cannot be written as a continuous progression per se, because the parameters change with each individual case: how (and whether) the author is perceived as author, how the literary source material is perceived, how the relation between life and work is perceived, and also where the individual film is historically located—both with respect to author and his work, as well as the history of adaptations of that oeuvre and in the context of contemporary film production. And while it can be imagined that a historiography of adaptation might one day be written that gives no consideration to the author, auteur, or author-figure, the interest of film adaptation as an instrument of cultural analysis in this particular case of Proust lies in the proliferation of author-figures. A more recent adaptation of an author will have to measure up not only to the work it is based upon, but also to the

adaptation work done before as well as the developments in film in general, and it will accordingly be taxonomised as conventional or innovative. It is reviewed as necessary, useful, or a failure according to criteria that stem from national, aesthetic, or other discourses. The practice of adaptation thus permits deductions reaching far beyond the »fidelity« to the individual work, into adaptation politics with reference to canon and author-figures. Like intertextuality was a theory fed by the political programme to usurp an understanding of literature as enshrined in canon, this study is motivated by the idea that adaptation does not enshrine the author, for the practice of adaptation brings back the author and at the same time undermines both the idea of his/her singularity and the concept of a singular meaning of his work.<sup>75</sup> Likewise, the study of adaptation over time permits insights into what is expected from or projected onto such enterprises as the following two chapters will show.

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<sup>75</sup> In this it is close to the argument of hermeneutic studies such as Hans Robert Jauss's seminal Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft. (1967). IN: idem, *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation*. Frankfurt a.M. (Suhrkamp) 1970, pp. 144-207.

I would argue that because of the multiple temporalities involved (reception trajectory of author, director, scriptwriter, adaptation curve, development of the medium film), the cultural practice of adaptation opens a much more complex field and consequently a multiply-oriented debate. And no doubt, case studies of other authors would open up other debates.

#### 4. Adaption II: The Free Market

I now turn to examples of films which represent the other end of the scale of adaptation. First I look at a film that does have a literary source but this is hidden. Intertextuality here is unmarked, but as the reception shows it is the knowledge of the literary source and other contexts that makes the viewing doubly pleasurable. Adaptation thought as an affiliation between the film and a literary source, here then will be read as marker of negation.

At the end of this chapter, I would like to take the example of William Shakespeare because adaptations here face the challenge of a substantial body of films. If they want to set themselves apart, in order to arrive at an »original« adaptation, new films based on Shakespeare have to go diverse ways of approaching the author and text.

There are films that in various ways conceal their status as adaptations by rendering their literary source material quasi unrecognizable: either through not mentioning it at all; transposing so few parts of the narrative that it appears as fragment; or by changing the historical setting. The previously mentioned film *Blow-up* is an example of the first type. In the opening credits it refers to its literary source material, i.e. the short story *Las babas del diablo* by Julio Cortázar,<sup>76</sup> but in the same mention also rescinds this affirmation by stating that it is not *Based on* (which is the most conventional phrase of referral for adaptations) that story but merely *Inspired by* it. In the years following the film's release, the director had then pointed out that there was another literary source the film recurred to and in several respects, the connections to that source, the novel *I*

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<sup>76</sup> *Las babas del diablo*. (1st 1959). IN: Julio Cortázar, *Las armas secretas*. Madrid (Catédra) 1978, pp. 123-139.

*quaderni di Gubbio, Operatore* by Luigi Pirandello<sup>77</sup> is much more obvious. What must be noted, however, that the film and its reception are not marked out as adaptations, neither by the makers nor by the reviewers. This can be attributed to the immediate impact the film had as a succinct portrayal of London in the swinging sixties, and as a film by the auteur Antonioni. It was thus aligned with the output of Fellini, the Nouvelle Vague and other directors who had distanced themselves and had been distanced through their reception from the »old« cinema, and thereby also from adaptations that capitalise (on) their adaptation status through straightforward narrative transposition into illusionist cinema, and by marketing themselves as adaptations. Here, to present the film as an adaptation would have been counter-productive. For a film like *Blow-up*, to have been regarded as an adaptation, would have diminished its artistic pedigree.

Then, there are films whose relation to its source material is just as tenuous but in the marketing and in the reception of the film are read as securely in place. The Bond films are such a case in question. Whereas the older James Bond films could still claim to be based on novels or short stories written by Ian Fleming, the later ones are based on ever-shorter pieces of the writing. The most recent film, *Die Another Day* then hides this non-existent adaptive relationship by inserting numerous other referentialities into its self-invented story: the bikini of the protagonist is an approximate copy of the first Bond girl's bikini, Ursula Andress in *Dr. No*;<sup>78</sup> James Bond poses as an ornithologist which refers to the historical person that Ian Fleming allegedly burrowed the name from, an ornithologist called James Bond; the phallic killing apparatus is an even larger version of the one used by the villain Goldfinger in the eponymous film. Bond films thus also increasingly use the life of their literary author and the previous films as a license to market, as it were. In this, they do not differ from the films

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<sup>77</sup> Luigi Pirandello, *Quaderni di Serafino Gubbio, operatore*. Firenze (Bemporad) 1925.

<sup>78</sup> The bodily shift in these scenes indicates further cultural differences/continuities in cinematic fantasy: this bikini formerly covering a white-blond body, and several decades later a black-brunette body, which however seem virtually interchangeable as silhouettes.

based on the books of Jane Austen who also sell as stories of Jane Austen's time and world or align themselves with previous films. However, the reaction to a film project that would market itself as »an Austen« without being based on a specific novel, can be imagined. Whereas James Bond is permitted to expand both in terms of narrative invention as in terms of marketing,<sup>79</sup> this appears forbidden for films claiming to be adaptations of Austen. Given the limited number of novels Jane Austen wrote and given the money and pleasure such films generate, it would make economic sense to dispense with the idea that there must be a particular, individual book behind an Austen adaptation. This seems all the more reasonable as the recent Austen adaptation, *Mansfield Park* (1999) has also incorporated non-literary material into the story, i.e. journals and letters of the writer. One thus might imagine a filmic Austenian *Fortschreibung* (a »supplementary« writing) like it was done with the novel and the film *Gone with the Wind*. But this does not seem an option either—or not yet. This is rooted in the status the source material has within a canon of literature. For popular literature such attitudes towards their source material are permissible, but not for »high« culture. As it can replace other genres in the reception and evaluation of a specific film, adaptation here proves itself to be a powerful genre category in the scope of what is considered allowed for certain authors. It reveals itself as restrictive for »high« literature. On the playing field of filmic adaptation, 007 is admitted to more games than Elizabeth Bennett.

On the other hand, certain changes to the literary source material are permitted even for the canon. Most notably among these is the updating or the temporal and local transposition of the narrative. The theory of quotation

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. Werner Faulstich & Ricarda Strobel, *James Bond im Medienproduktverband: Genealogie und ästhetische Bauformen*. IN: *Text Transfers. Probleme intermedialer Übersetzung*. Ed. by E.W.B. Hess-Lüttich. Münster (Nodus Publikationen) 1987, pp. 229-269.

On page 234, Faulstich and Strobel draw up a table spanning the years 1953 from the publication of the novel to 1985 for showing the increasing commodification of 007. In addition to the literary source, one finds charted out the comics, the fictional biography, the songs (music and lyrics), the feature film, the soundtrack, the screening of the feature film on television, the plagiarised novel, the video, the novelisation, etc.

outlined recently by Mieke Bal,<sup>80</sup> is obviously helpful to this study in that it argues for the re-appropriation and thus re-interpretation of the work of Caravaggio and the term baroque through the work of contemporary artists referring to his work or other art works of the period. Furthermore, not only do Caravaggio and his contemporaries serve as source material, but they, and the ways in which their work is regarded and held meaningful, are changed through this practice of quoting. In similar fashion, it is now impossible for even the most ivory-tower scholar of English Literature to ignore what the plethora of film and TV adaptations have done to the reception of Jane Austen.<sup>81</sup> This line of argument effectively precludes continued adherence to the idea of the literary source as the strong and the adapting film as the passive part of a dual relationship.

Bal's subsequent argument regarding the problematic nature of how meaning is to be ascribed in iconographic study,<sup>82</sup> finds an echo in my approach to literary adaptation when set in the context of the interrelations drawn between film and literature as art forms. Adaptation here serves as prime example how there is not one meaning to be found in the visual text but that the meanings evolve and change over time:<sup>83</sup>

*Instead of classifying and closing meaning as if to solve an enigma, this study of what Freud would call Nachträglichkeit attempts to trace the process of meaning-production over time (in both directions present/past and past/present) as an open, dynamic process, rather than to map the results of that process.*

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<sup>80</sup> Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio. Contemporary Art, Preposterous History*. Chicago (The University of Chicago Press) 1999, pp. 9f.

<sup>81</sup> For this argument being made in the case of William Shakespeare cf. Deborah Cartmell, *The Shakespeare on Screen Industry*. IN: *Adaptations. From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan. London & New York (Routledge) 1999, pp. 29-37.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. also E.H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images. Studies in the Art of the Renaissance*. London (Phaidon press) 1972.

However, Gombrich defends the idea of a work of art having but one meaning, and the task of the art historian as finding that meaning?

<sup>83</sup> Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio. Contemporary Art, Preposterous History*. Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 1999, p. 9.



There are several characteristics of quotation when located by Bal at the intersection of art history and literary studies. To name the four: quotes as authenticating the visual; as shifters of realities; as fragmenting elements; as deconstructing. Applied to adaptations, such quotative use would be voice-over or intertitles which often functions as authenticator for the visual narrative as a literary narrative. The conversion of the Globe theatre into a ruin on the beach, or quotations from Shakespeare onto posters, the TV news prologue<sup>84</sup> point to the co-existence of multiple realities in objects represented visually on the screen. The intertitles in *Orlando* function as fragmentors of the diegesis first on the level of the *histoire*. They then also transcend the diegesis by displaying a mode of subject-construction where the protagonist Orlando becomes a full character only through the consecutively narrated aspects of him/herself, i.e. through fragmentation into personae like lover, aspiring artist, mortal. And in *Le temps retrouvé* the use of photographs to introduce characters, the naming of the central character as Marcel, the insertion of documentary material into the fictional narrative serve as fragmentors of the fiction while simultaneously unveiling the concept of historical or biographical *Verortung* as a fictitiously-configured enterprise.

The following looks at the effects of such a process of updating in the particular case of *Clueless*. It serves as an example of how a film that disavows is literary source material in certain respects, nevertheless becomes a vehicle of producing new images of Austen and a new image of Austen at the same time.

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<sup>84</sup> These are all employed in *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1997, Baz Luhrmann).

## Updating

In the second chapter the film *Orlando* has already been analysed as a play on the narrator-figure. Another feature of the film pointed out is that it deviates from its source material by writing the plot into the present, i.e. the present of the film's production. Where the novel *Orlando* ends in its present of publication, i.e. in 1928, the film adds the following sixty-four years.<sup>85</sup> The film *Clueless*, entirely transposes part of Austen's *Emma*.<sup>86</sup> It relocates the narrative into a different location and into the present: into Beverly Hills and the early nineties. It is a comedy aimed at an audience of teenagers.<sup>87</sup> In the case of *Clueless* it is interesting that the literary source material is not acknowledged in the credits of the film but surfaces in interviews with the director or is brought up by reviewers themselves. The director was awarded the prize for Best Script Written Directly for the Screen by the Writers' Guild of America in 1996.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Other recent adaptations that update plays have been in particular adaptations Shakespearean plays: *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (1995, Baz Luhrmann); *Richard III* (1996; Richard Loncraine); *Ten Things I Hate About You* (1999, Gil Junger, based on *The Taming of the Shrew*). These films have either chosen the present or a more recent historic period, respectively. Other adaptations like, e.g. the two Kenneth Branagh films based on *Much Ado about Nothing* (1993), and *Hamlet* (1996) chose a non-specified past. Yet, others, have a modern frame narrative, i.e. *Titus Andronicus* (1999, Julie Taymor) that then switches to the period of Roman history the play is set in. I shall refer to these at the end of this chapter. Cf. also, the adaptation of Choderlos de Laclos's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* set in contemporary New York, with the title *Cruel Intentions* (1999, Roger Kumble).

<sup>86</sup> Jane Austen, *Emma* (1st 1816).

<sup>87</sup> A further line of enquiry would be to look into the recycling of classics in the guise of, or as structuring narratives in this genre of teenage comedy and coming-of-age drama. More often than not, the teenage audiences of these movies will be reading plays of Shakespeare in their own schools.

<sup>88</sup> The literary source material enters into the book in several instances: Like *Emma* in the novel, *Cher* is an semi-orphan, her mother having died, however, of a complications at a routine liposuction; like *Emma*, *Cher* is a support for her father, here a highly paid litigation lawyer who merely suffers from vitamin deficiency and thus deviates from the novel's invalid; *Cher* also tries to revamp and set up a girl in a relationship; this girl, *Tai*, recently moved to Beverly Hills and is totally clueless how to integrate; like *Emma*, *Cher* misunderstands the feeling of others and her own feelings for three men (boys) in the film and, like *Emma*, ends up with the boy she has known for ages. Other references are, e.g. that the family name of the novel's character Mr. Elton, becomes a first name of *Cher's* would-be suitors.

Especially with a target audience of teenagers, the film *Clueless*, insistently raises the question of cultural literacy. Looking at samples of US reviews of the film, one could be tempted to draw up a map of the US and mark in green the areas where newspapers mentioned the connection and discussed it at length and in red where this is not a topic mentioned. The colour red, for the *Kulturpessimisten* would then mark an area where education levels would have to be raised.<sup>89</sup> In this particular case, the papers mentioning (and mostly praising) the uses made of Jane Austen are located on the East Coast and Chicago, whereas West Coast papers, based in Los Angeles and San Francisco, make fewer or no mention of Jane Austen.<sup>90</sup> Where articles in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Reader*<sup>91</sup> analysed the significance of Austen today and the new light shed on Austen by the film, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Variety* wrote their articles on the appeal it has for teenage audiences and how the film captures the *Zeitgeist* of contemporary Beverly Hills.<sup>92</sup> In reviews available on the Internet Movie

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. Horst Zander, *Intertextualität und Medienwechsel*. IN: *Intertextualität*. Ed. by Ulrich Broich & Manfred Pfister. Tübingen (Niemeyer) 1985, pp. 178-196.

Understood as a transfer from one medium to another, intertextuality here problematises the filmic adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, because of the putatively higher level of education theatre audiences in contrast to cinema audiences (p. 184):

*Denn im Gegensatz zum recht elitären Theaterpublikum mit seinen Vorkenntnissen über Shakespeare handelt es sich beim Kinopublikum eher um ein unspezifisches Publikum, bei dem die Regisseure nicht davon ausgehen können, daß ihm der Verweistext bekannt ist.*

Translation: *For in contrast with the fairly elitist theatre audiences with its pre-knowledge about Shakespeare, regarding cinema audiences one is dealing with a non-specific audience, where the director cannot be sure that the reference text is known.*

<sup>90</sup> This is a general trend and not an absolute dictum: e.g. the Roger Ebert (of the influential duo Ebert & Siskel) writing for the *Chicago Sunday Times* made no mention of Austen in his article from July 19th 1995. The film industry weekly *Variety* did mention Austen in the first paragraph. However, it did not elaborate on the interrelations between film and book.

<sup>91</sup> In the *New York Times*: Janet Maslin, [Review] (19.07.1995); Bernard Weinraub, [Review] (24.07.1995).

In *The Village Voice*: Bernhard Weinraub, [Review]. (01.08.1995).

In *The Chicago Reader*: Gina Fattore, *Emma Goes to the Mall* (18.08.1995).

<sup>92</sup> In the *San Francisco Chronicle*: Peter Stack, [Review] (19.07.1995); Sam Whiting, [Review] (29.07.1995); anon. [Review in section Datebook pp. 28-29]. (09.07.1995).

Also in *Variety*: Brian Lowry, [Review] (17.-23.08.1995).

Database, which originated from North America, England, Australia and Brazil, one could notice an overall positive reception of the film and its humour. The overall user ratings give this film an average of seven out of ten.<sup>93</sup>

The total number of votes cast on the movie was 10,039. Out of the total number of reports written on the movie 6,099 were contributions by men who thus outnumbered those of women by about 3 : 1. But women consistently rated the film higher than men. Surprisingly, the largest number of reports of a specific age segment came from those aged 18-29: 3,862 reports (and 2,892 of these were written by men). The second most active age segment was the one even older, i.e. those aged 30-44 (out of 1130 reports, 880 were written by men). Thus, rather than confirming gender and target-audience expectations, the film provoked more answers from men than from women, and more comments by an age group that appears to be older than the targeted audience.<sup>94</sup>

With particular reference to the interrelation between the book and the film, several things can be noted. Sometimes the book was known before-hand and filmic adaptation was anticipated with dread (which in most cases then changed to enjoyment). If the book was not known, the film motivated viewers to read *Emma* or even all of the Austen novels. But to interpret this as an unqualified success of increasing cultural literacy would be premature. There are several instances of misspelling Jane Austen's name as Jane Austin<sup>95</sup> or a review states he didn't know Jane Austen nor *Emma* the book of the 18xx's;<sup>96</sup> another review author confesses to be glad not to have seen Austen beforehand in the theatre.<sup>97</sup> In the former case, this suggests (at least) rather careless typing, and

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<sup>93</sup> It should be kept in mind, however, that a film very rarely receives a rating under five on this website.

<sup>94</sup> Taken from: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) (25.05.2002).

<sup>95</sup> Review by Duane A. Neitzel (Richmond, VA, USA; posted 22.01.2002) Taken from: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) (25.05.2002). Review by Benny 26 (Nottingham, England; posted 01.02.1999). Taken from: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) (25.05.2002).

<sup>96</sup> Review by Pedro Guida (Macapa, Brazil; posted 02.07.2000). Taken from: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) (25.05.2002).

possibly his not having read the book at all, and the latter cases a very vague notion about Jane Austen as a writer and about what she wrote exactly.

In the academic reception, it is to be noted that *Clueless* is invariably discussed as an adaptation. This is certainly due to the fact that there is a renewed interest in filmic adaptation and especially the films made of nineteenth-century or turn-of-the-century authors such as Dickens, Eliot, James, Forster etc. Furthermore, I think, the causes for this are to be found in the reception trajectories of the authors and those of the films. Jane Austen has attracted considerable attention as the object of literary studies. Both her body of work, and her historical person command a large following. Feminist re-evaluation of women writers of the nineteenth century have from the mid-seventies onwards firmly established Jane Austen in the curriculum.<sup>98</sup> I would even go so far as to say that the generations of students who have studied a »post-Lovell-Gubar-Gilbert-Said« Austen, may now be contributing to her prominence in the very columns of newspapers.<sup>99</sup>

In the numerous articles on period films, then, reviewers or academics often confer a modern-day feminism to the lives of the heroines or even the author.<sup>100</sup> Stella Bruzzi argues in an article<sup>101</sup> that today's feminists must liberate

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<sup>97</sup> Anonymous review (posted 15.03.1999). Taken from: [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) (25.05.2002).

<sup>98</sup> Cf. Terry Lovell, *Jane Austen and Gentry Society*. IN: *Literature, Society, and the Sociology of Literature*. Ed. by F. Barker et al. Essex (University of Essex Press) 1976; Sandra Gilbert & Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven (Yale University Press) 1979.

<sup>99</sup> For setting me on this track, I have to thank Mireia Aragay. Discussing with her what may have been the renewed interest in the making of film adaptations, she put forward the new academic understanding of Austen. It seems to me, however, more likely that Austen-propagators who have had a biographical university intersection with this academic re-evaluation of Austen, now in larger numbers may be found among the staff of the media.

<sup>100</sup> Rebecca Dickson, *Misrepresenting Austen's Ladies: Revising Texts (and History) to Sell Films*. (pp. 44-57); Kristin Fliieger Samuelian, "Piracy Is Our Only Option": *Postfeminist Intervention in Sense and Sensibility* (pp. 148-158). Both IN: *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. Ed. by Linda Troost & Sayre Greenfield. Lexington, KY (University Press of Kentucky) 1998.

<sup>101</sup> Stella Bruzzi, *Jane Campion: Costume Drama and Reclaiming Women's Past*. (1993) Reprinted IN: *Women and Film. A Sight and Sound Reader*. Ed. by Pam Cook & Philip Dodd. London (bfi) 1996, pp. 232-242.

Victorian women from their repressed lives which in film is expressed through their clothing. First of all, the gesture of graciously liberating a posteriori smacks of patronising. Arguing about costume film in general, James Morrison cautions against uncritically taking over the representations of women's past that such films may project:<sup>102</sup>

*They're all about repression, too, typically with the self-congratulatory implication that we have risen above the stifling but picturesque social rituals of the days of yore.*

Then, if films focussing on emotional drama do indeed use clothes to express emotion, then it is interesting that in a monograph<sup>103</sup> on the role of costume in the cinema, there is no mention let alone a chapter dedicated to the adaptations of Austen. In Austen adaptations, it is then primarily the male costume that is read as expressing liberation: the un-clad or semi-clad figure of Mister Darcy in the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* has been read as a liberation of masculine emotionality.<sup>104</sup> First of all, Austen is not a Victorian writer, and the period-indicator costume can not be represented this easily as symbolising suppression, because of the marked difference between high-waisted Regency dress and the Victorian tight-lacing.<sup>105</sup> But the lack of critical engagement with making male bodies an object of female-spectatorial desire

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Bruzzi differentiates between two types of film on pp. 233f.: *Although both types of looking back involve costume, in liberal films these are merely signifiers to carry information about country, class and period. Films interested in the emotive aspects of the past imbue the clothes themselves with sensuality, so they become essential components of the sexual dialogue.*

<sup>102</sup> James Morrison, *The House of Mirth* [Review]. IN: *Film Quarterly*. (2002) Vol. 55, No. 1, pp. 49-51. Here p. 49.

<sup>103</sup> Stella Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema. Clothing and Identity in the Movies*. London & New York (Routledge) 1997.

In the chapter on the costume film, *Desire and the Costume Film*, she discusses the films *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, *The Age of Innocence* and *The Piano*.

<sup>104</sup> Lisa Hopkins, *Mr Darcy's Body: Privileging the Female Gaze* (pp. 111-121); Cheryl L. Nixon, *Balancing the Courtship Hero: Masculine Emotional Display in Film Adaptations of Austen's Novels* (pp. 22-41). Both IN: *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. Ed. by Linda Troost & Sayre Greenfield. Lexington, KY (University Press of Kentucky) 1998.

<sup>105</sup> Tellingly, the costumes of the 1940 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* seem to have been inspired more by Victorian crinolines than the historically correct regency dress.

through costume, or the de-problematized affirmative connection made between carelessly-clad, or semi-clad male bodies and expressive emotionality indicates another blind spot of period film study, because it does not take into account the costuming of the female characters/bodies.<sup>106</sup>

The film *Clueless* is read both ways. Despite their agreement regarding the pleasure it was watching the movie,<sup>107</sup> articles on *Clueless* deliver diametrically opposing interpretations of its feminist content.<sup>108</sup> Suzanne Ferriss<sup>109</sup> argues that the character of Cher lags behind the emancipation level of her literary model Emma whereas Lesley Stern argues<sup>110</sup> that the film shows the female characters as emancipated consumers.

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<sup>106</sup> The same films show carelessly or informally clad female bodies, but costume here is expressive of another range of emotions and thus moralities: of both privacy and wantonness. In *Pride and Prejudice* (1995, BBC) one sees the sisters Elizabeth, Jane and Lydia in night-gowns. In the conversations taking place between the sisters Elizabeth and Jane Bennett late at night in their bedrooms indicate the intimacy between them and their emotional and moral maturity. Whereas their semi-clad sister Lydia is on bedrooms scenes stigmatised as »living in sin« and thus even in her marriage bed.

<sup>107</sup> This also argues against the target audience of teenagers of the film's producers.

<sup>108</sup> Cf. here also the ambivalent relationship of the British heritage film towards Thatcherite ideology, as argued by Andrew Higson in *Re-presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film*. IN: *Fires Were Started. British Cinema and Thatcherism*. Ed. by Lester Friedman. London (University College of London Press) 1993, 109-129.

On p. 128: *They do criticize the values of this upper-class Englishness in various ways, as we have seen; but they do also popularize this social formation as one whose possessions are worth acquiring, or at least admiring. They also popularize this social formation as one in which the contemporary spectator might find refuge from the radical and often problematic transformations of the 1980s. Yet the liberal-humanist visions of social union in so many of these films implicitly criticize rather than celebrate the values of the marketplace, suggesting a flight from Thatcherism rather than concord with its Victorian antecedents or its contemporary effects.*

<sup>109</sup> Suzanne Ferriss, *Emma Becomes Clueless*. IN: *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. Ed. by Linda Troost & Sayre Greenfield. Lexington, KY (University Press of Kentucky) 1998, pp. 122-132.

I would, however, wish to point out that several of her arguments are disproven by the film itself, e.g. her claim that Austen's *Emma* presents its reader with a more emancipated heroine, because the character makes her future husband move under her roof, whereas in the film *Clueless*, that move does not take place. This move cannot take place because for one, the character Josh is already living under Cher's roof, and actually has no mansion of his own. Secondly, the film represents them neither as marrying nor as co-habiting.

<sup>110</sup> Lesley Stern, *Emma in Los Angeles: Remaking the Book and the City*. IN: *Adaptation*. Ed. by James Naremore. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 2000, pp. 221-238.

Esther Sonnet compares<sup>111</sup> two adaptations of Austen with regard to the positions they represent on the debate high vs. low culture. *Clueless* performs a critique of the perpetuation of the symbolic capital of literature, precisely because it does not collapse high and low culture into one but puts them into complex interrelationships. Referring to Featherstone,<sup>112</sup> Sonnet argues that the film thus illustrates shifts in the conception of cultural capital.<sup>113</sup>

*In the late twentieth-century postmodernity, cultural (and not only material) wealth is measured through consumption, and style is high culture: the new globally distributed middle and upper classes utilize "bodily presentation and lifestyles as indicators of social status."*

Compared to the over-refined representations of its period-film counterpart *Emma*, the film *Clueless* displays a more defiant view as regards the cultural canon. According to Sonnet, however, it also plays on anxieties of the defenders of that canon by staging the canon as extant only in a mediated form, i.e. Cher only knows the Hamlet played by Mel Gibson and not the original text. On the other hand, she, still is able to correctly attribute a quote which the self-declared elite character in *Clueless* cannot:<sup>114</sup>

*In this sense, for all its frothy humour and celebration of 'depthless' surface identity, Clueless registers real anxieties around the increasingly hegemonic values of a taste elite that actively contest older, traditional class-based hierarchies.*

Lesley Stern takes Cher's predilection for makeovers (of the new girl's appearance, of her teachers' private life, of her soul) as a starting point for her

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<sup>111</sup> Esther Sonnet, *From Emma to Clueless*. IN: *Adaptations. Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan. London (Routledge) 2000, pp. 51-62.

On p. 54: *By considering the 'meaning' of film as being in part produced through 'knowledges' formed through what Pierre Bourdieu has analysed as the larger social construction of 'taste', it is possible to see how the shared relation to Jane Austen's EMMA functions in EMMA and CLUELESS to invoke distinct cultural discourses which specifically and a priori define the cinematic pleasures offered. Further, it should then be possible to grasp that these are postmodern pleasures, both differentially and simultaneously defined, which are indicative of contemporary formations of taste.*

<sup>112</sup> Mike Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*. London (Sage) 1990, there p. 110.

<sup>113</sup> Esther Sonnet, *From Emma to Clueless*. IN: *Adaptations. Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan. London (Routledge) 2000, pp. 51-62, here p. 61.

<sup>114</sup> Esther Sonnet, *From Emma to Clueless*. IN: *Adaptations. Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan. London (Routledge) 2000, pp. 51-62, here p. 62.



analysis, and applies that plot-element to the process of adaptation itself. The film thus gives both Jane Austen and Los Angeles a makeover. It re-makes them over the course of the narrative:<sup>115</sup>

*A remake is generally considered a remake of an earlier film. Adaptations are not, strictly speaking, remakes, although if a property has previously been adapted, the more recent film is almost by default a remake, and particularly in a case in which the source is not a classic text, the reference point will be the earlier film. But the reference point is also generic, because remakes tend to update and modernize earlier texts in terms of their generic possibility. This generic quality indicates a paradox: remakes reflect the conservative nature of the industry; they are motivated by an economic imperative to repeat proven successes. But in order to maintain economic viability, in the very process of repetition remakes are also compelled to register variation and difference (from the originals), to incorporate generic developments. They are often, then, through the patterning of repetition and difference, a way of testing and also flexing generic boundaries. Also, over time they provide an index of changes in social and cultural values.*

As I had argued previously, the pervasive practice of adaptation also necessitates progressive differentiation in order to still market itself effectively. The film *Clueless* evokes through the pleasure of its viewing, the pleasure of reading Austen's text. But then, what the film provokes above all is an equalisation between various intertexts. While it does liberate Austen from costume this does not come as a posteriori gesture of feminist liberation as Stern seems to argue, but rather to confer onto her work renewed meanings and thus cultural value in terms of contemporary relevance. The film positions Austen as one of many intertexts among others, e.g. MTV, the thank-you tenor of Academy Awards acceptance speeches, teenager TV series such as *Beverly Hills 9210*. Furthermore, it underscores that intertextual strategies of reading are a precondition for not merely understanding »high art« or postmodern artworks, but also for everyday phenomena such as a Lucky Strike add. The ability to undertake such readings hinge upon the knowledge of cultural intertexts, where the authorial intertext Austen is one among several.

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<sup>115</sup> Lesley Stern, *Emma in Los Angeles. Remaking the Book and the City*. IN: *Film Adaptation*. Ed. by James Naremore. New Brunswick (Rutgers University Press) 1999, pp. 221-238. Here p. 226.

Also p. 225: *In this context Los Angeles is figured not simply as an imitation or deviation from Highbury, but rather as an intertextual site spun by the movies, television series, MTV, and a variety of remakes and adaptations.*

What intertextual readings can, however, also entail is the *Beliebigkeit*, the arbitrariness, of the reference. The film *Moulin Rouge*<sup>116</sup> cannibalised painting, opera, popsongs, and made this its governing structure. This approach set as the basic structure of a film was not always well-received. For in the age of music videos, computer games, and internet an aesthetics of quotational abundance is no longer regarded as innovative per se.<sup>117</sup> The multi-purpose use one can make and has made of Proust, e.g. for cookery books, has been mentioned previously. A near-inexhaustible reservoir for quotes on virtually everything, the *Recherche*, thus must also be read as a parable of the end of intertextuality in a way. Because if everything is seen as being connected to everything, then, to point out a link seems to be an tautological exercise that reaffirms the cultural value of a literary work by nothing else than an endless referral to itself. It becomes boomerang culture. The endlessly repeated quote of the lost paradises, (the phrase in *Le temps retrouvé* that goes *Les vrais paradis sont les paradis perdus*) here once again handily lends itself, this time as *Abgesang*, on a Baudrillardian disappearance of the original cultural capital behind its proliferating re-representations.

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<sup>116</sup> *Moulin Rouge* (2001, Baz Luhrmann).

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Wilfried Wiegand, *Moulin Rouge: Dem Mammon zu Willen*. IN: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (17.10.2001):

*Dabei sind die Handlung aus der "Kameliendame", "La Bohème" und dem "Moulin Rouge"-Roman zu einem so rührend süßen Melodram verrührt, dabei ist die Musik so herrlich persiflierend mit all ihren Popzitate, und das Paris der Jahrhundertwende schließlich so skrupellos frei erfunden, daß man den Film eigentlich mögen müsste, wenn nur der Regisseur nicht gar so ungebremst vorführen dürfte, was ihm außerdem noch alles eingefallen ist. "Moulin Rouge" geht an seinen Einfällen zugrunde.*

Translation: Here, the plot of *La dame aux camélias*, *La Bohème*, and the *Moulin Rouge*-novel are mixed together to such a movingly sweet melodrama, here the music is such a divine pastiche with all its Pop quotations, and fin-de-siècle Paris is so utterly unscrupulously invented, that one should actually like the film. If only the director would not parade at breakneck speed all those other things which he had also thought of.

## Shakespeare

Austen certainly is a writer who has become integrated into popular cinema and television memory over the past decades. William Shakespeare has been adapted to film continuously from the earliest days of cinema. A rough estimate gives about two hundred and fifty films,<sup>118</sup> and as with the list on Proust adaptations I have drawn up, there will be films that have been omitted or films that are no longer extant. A critical history of Shakespeare's reception will show that (just like Marcel Proust) his reputation was likewise made—even though it today appears as monolithic success narrative. As a possible historical reason for his cinematic popularity, Michael Anderegg puts forward the coinciding of the popularity of his works as theatrical entertainment at the end of the nineteenth century with the advent of cinema as a new form of popular entertainment.<sup>119</sup> Besides the sheer number of films made, the fact that his works are plays rather than novels certainly contributed to a liberalisation of film adaptation parameters. As plays, his works have a long history of stage adaptations and this also produced all kinds of approaches to the work. Thus, e.g., historically correct dress would not be a similarly pre-scribed feature for a Shakespeare adaptation as it would be for a E.M. Forster adaptation.

Academic interest in the relations between William Shakespeare, his work and the medium film has had a recent renaissance. The earliest books dedicated to the topic date back to the sixties.<sup>120</sup> Over the past decade, in just ten years, a good dozen of books have explored the exchanges between the bard and the

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<sup>118</sup> Kenneth Rothwell, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen. A Century of Film and Television*. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 1999.

The appendix (pp. 299-307) lists films made between 1899 and 1999. The Internet Movie Database, e.g., lists more than 500.

<sup>119</sup> Michael Anderegg, *Welles/Shakespeare/Film: An Overview*. IN: *Film Adaptation*. Ed by James Naremore. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 2000, pp. 154-171.

screen.<sup>121</sup> Clearly, William Shakespeare and his work thus undergo a visual canonisation. Besides being an object of study as adaptations, the films based on his work feature prominently as supporting didactic materials in the English curriculum of schools and university, he is no longer read but also watched. Several studies, then, point out the importance of Shakespeare plays for a (British) acting career. Here, they become touchstones for success.<sup>122</sup> Out of a successful thespian encounter, in some instances a directing career takes off: most prominently here the films of Laurence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh, both having directed and starred in a *Hamlet* and a *Henry V*. Here, the director may not be adapting the script in the sense of adapting a novel,<sup>123</sup> but the double-bind of main role and director's chair, especially after having won acclaim for the stage work, creates a strong authorial discourse of the actor-director in the film's reception. The adaptation of the same play by recognised thespian-directorial

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<sup>120</sup> *Shakespeare im Film*. Ed. by Max Lippmann. Wiesbaden (Deutsches Institut für Filmkunde) 1964; Robert Hamilton Ball, *Shakespeare on Silent Film. A Strange Eventful History*. London (George Allen and Unwin) 1968.

<sup>121</sup> *Shakespeare and the Moving Image. The Plays on Film and Television*. Ed. by Anthony Davies & Stanley Wells. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 1994; *Shakespeare the Movie. Popularizing the Plays on Film, Television and Video*. Ed. by Lynda E. Boose & Richard Burt. London & New York (Routledge) 1997; *Shakespeare on Film*. Ed. by Robert Shaughnessy. London (Macmillan) 1998; Lorne M. Buchmann, *Still in Movement. Shakespeare on Screen*. Oxford & New York (Oxford University Press) 1999; Katharina Kettner, » *Such Stuff as Films are Made on.*« *Shakespeare im Medienwechsel* [2 Vol. and CD-ROM]. Münster (Lit Verlag) 1999; Kenneth Rothwell, *A History of Shakespeare on Screen. A Century of Film and Television*. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 1999; Douglas Brode, *Shakespeare in the Movies. From the Silent Era to "Shakespeare in Love."* Oxford (Oxford University Press) 2000; *Shakespeare, Film, fin-de-siècle*. Ed. by Mark Thornton Burnett & Ramona Wray. Basingstoke, London & New York (Macmillan & St. Martin's Press) 2000; Deborah Cartmell, *Interpreting Shakespeare on Screen*. Basingstoke (Macmillan) 2000; Kathy M. Howlett, *Framing Shakespeare on Film*. Athens, Ohio (Ohio University Press) 2000; *The Cambridge Companion to Film*. Ed. by Russell Jackson. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2000; Robert F. Willson, Jr., *Shakespeare in Hollywood. 1929-1956*. Madison, Teaneck & London (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press) 2000; Stephen Buhler, *Shakespeare in the Cinema. Ocular Proof*. Albany (State University of New York Press) 2002.

<sup>122</sup> Cf. e.g. Stephen Buhler, *Shakespeare in the Cinema. Ocular Proof*. Albany (State University of New York Press) 2002.

<sup>123</sup> Kenneth Branagh published a screenplay of *Hamlet* with his name as that of the author—even though the film claimed to use the full text.

Kenneth Branagh, *Hamlet by William Shakespeare. Screenplay, Introduction and Film Diary*. London (Chatto & Windus) 1996.

author-figures is a staple feature of comparative case studies. Other directors who are frequently discussed are Franco Zeffirelli, Orson Welles, and Akira Kurosawa. It is interesting to note what liberties Shakespeare adaptations are permitted with the actual text. In *Chimes at Midnight*<sup>124</sup> a new play was created around the characters of Falstaff and Hal, by excising passages from several of Shakespeare's histories. Akira Kurosawa adapted *Macbeth* to the screen in *Kumonosho jo*<sup>125</sup> without a line of the play being spoken. In the film *Prospero's Books*<sup>126</sup> an entire frame-narrative of 24 books was added to the plot of *The Tempest*. Deborah Cartmell has argued on the other hand,<sup>127</sup> that the representation of explicit violence is not condoned in Shakespeare adaptations, because this is seen as detrimental to his cultural value. In cases where this line is transgressed,<sup>128</sup> suitable explanations are sought.

The following two chapters will deal extensively with the question of the importance of Proust, his work and the adaptation thereof, for a screenwriter and a director, respectively. What I want to focus on for the concluding remarks of this chapter are adaptations of Shakespeare that play with the material in similarly digressive ways as *Clueless*.

While an Austen musical still awaits to see the light of day, the comedy *The Taming of the Shrew* had been transformed into the musical *Kiss me Kate* and was brought to the screen in the fifties.<sup>129</sup> A few years later, the dramatic structure of family feuds of *Romeo and Juliet* was transformed into a musical. This was set in a contemporary New York of gang warfare between Americans and Puerto

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<sup>124</sup> *Chimes at Midnight* (1966, Orson Welles)

<sup>125</sup> English titles: *Throne of Blood* / *The Castle of the Spider's Web* (1957, Akira Kurosawa).

<sup>126</sup> *Prospero's Books* (1991, Peter Greenaway)

<sup>127</sup> Deborah Cartmell, *Interpreting Shakespeare On Screen*. London (Macmillan) 2000. Here, pp.1-20.

<sup>128</sup> Deborah Cartmell gives as an example the film *Macbeth* (1971, Roman Polanski).

<sup>129</sup> *Kiss Me Kate* (1953, George Sydney). Musical 1948 by Cole Porter. Play written by Bella & Sam Spivack; and Dorothy Kingsley.

Ricans, and was then also made into a film.<sup>130</sup> The same drama was transposed into a contemporary Mexican ambience with the film *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* over thirty years later. In 1995, the history play *Richard III* was filmed as taking place in the 1930s,<sup>131</sup> and a Shakespeare sonnet became a ballroom tune. As already pointed out above, the film *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* extended its Shakespearean intertextuality beyond the text, to the set design in advertisements, naming of bars, the ruins of a Globe Theatre on Verona Beach. Running in the Berlin Film Festival in 1997, the film marketed itself by putting up posters resembling the headline advertisements of newspapers on lampposts, cardboard signs etc., thus blurring the line between the fictional drama and other »real« news events advertised in that way. A number of films have made the staging of a Shakespeare play their plotline. An early example is *To Be or Not to Be*,<sup>132</sup> and among the most recent ones there is *In the Bleak Midwinter* and *Looking for Richard*.<sup>133</sup> The film adaptation of the Tom Stoppard stage play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, had a second play written into the wings of *Hamlet*.<sup>134</sup> In *My Own Private Idaho*, the protagonist recited dialogue from *Henry IV* over the course of the narrative.<sup>135</sup>

The film *Shakespeare in Love*<sup>136</sup> integrates both the writing and the staging of a Shakespeare play into its narrative structure. The adaptation here uses not only the cultural capital of an author for its film, but maximises that capital by integrating the cultural practice of adaptation itself into the its narrative. Next to

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<sup>130</sup> *West Side Story* (1961, Robert Wise & Jerome Robbins). Musical 1957 by Leonard Bernstein (music) & Stephen Sondheim (lyrics). Book by Arthur Laurent. Script written by Jerome Robbins, Arthur Laurent and Ernst Lehmann.

<sup>131</sup> *Richard III* (199XXX, Richard Loncraine).

<sup>132</sup> *To Be or Not to Be* (1942, Ernst Lubitsch).

<sup>133</sup> *In the Bleak Midwinter* (1995, Kenneth Branagh); *Looking for Richard* (1996, Al Pacino).

<sup>134</sup> Film: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1990, Tom Stoppard).

Play: Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. London (Faber and Faber) 1967.

<sup>135</sup> *My Own Private Idaho* (1991, Gus van Sant).

<sup>136</sup> *Shakespeare in Love* (1999, John Madden)

desire and writing, money then is a »rich« subtext in this film. In one of the first scenes, the character William Shakespeare is located on the couch of Dr. Moth confessing to an affliction that is writer's block but extends to sexual impotence. Thus, Shakespeare (who is here familiarly called plain Will), the »author of them all« is represented as utter failure. In that »confessional«, what is openly admitted to by Will Shakespeare is writer's block, and that which has to be shrewdly guessed by Dr. Moth is impotence. The (lack of) writing is thus first used as a cover-up for the lack of sexual fulfilment. The character recovers his writing skill to the extent that he is granted sexual satisfaction. Thus, the film then reverses the narrative roles of writing and desire: first there is desire and its fulfilment and from there spring writerly ability. As the narrative progresses to success in both of these areas, one can also notice an ennoblement of both. In the narrative of desire this moves from the base satisfaction of carnal appetites with his mistress Rosaline, to the sexual attraction and fascination when catching sight of the character Viola and (on her side) for being attracted initially to his writing instead of his person, to sexual union, to each of them finding a colleague and soulmate in this partnership, to finally being deeply and tragically in love.<sup>137</sup> In the narrative of writing this progresses from suffering a writer's block, to writing a play badly and for hire, to writing a sonnet for a lover, to writing an inspired play, to being termed »the poet of true love«. Thus, the film is not only inscribed with the narrative archetype of doomed love, but also a narrative of authorial accession to the domain of high art, i.e. from a literature of *playwrights [who] teach nothing about love, they make it pretty, they make it comical, or they make it lust*—and from there to the play that *made it true*.<sup>138</sup> Viola's opinion of Shakespeare's genius and her total belief in the ability of plays to move without being base, has been confirmed by public monarchical approval of the play. The

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<sup>137</sup> It is in the scene where Viola admits to loving Will as a man more than she does love the poet and his writing that she also openly confronts him about his marriage and reveals him to be a cheat. They thus both have become traitors, albeit to different causes.

play also became the subject of a wager closed between the disguised Shakespeare and his rival Lord Wessex, Viola's future husband. The transcendence of art becomes the *enjeu* in a wager instigated by both idealism (Viola), curiosity (the Queen), and jealousy (Will and Wessex).

Alongside the narratives of desire and writing, there are several other narratives involving money: Whereas the character of Will earns and wins his fortune by writing, the character Lord Wessex salvages his fortune by marrying rich; Will sells his still unwritten play to several interested parties; the character Burbage stages a play of Will's without paying royalties; the character Henslowe wins the character Hennyman over as a theatre producer and flatters him in to becoming an actor, because he has to stave off paying his debts to Hennyman; Henslowe even promises bit parts to his tailor in exchange for a reprieve of payment; in order to cease being a player for hire and to become an equal partner of a theatre company, Will needs fifty pounds. In the narrative resolution of the three (desire, writing, money), it is the outcome of the wager that makes Will a free writer through his writing. The »price« of his authorial success is the loss of Viola. As a character, she consents to the marital barter arrangement with herself as the *enjeu*, not only because they are approved of by her father and queen, but because of Will's duplicity as her lover: being married already he cannot be her true love.

There are other economies of writing going on in the film. First of all, there is the economy of authors: here one has a surplus of authors, as it is not on his own that Will succeeds in writing his play. He compiles it through a network of associates, such as his stage manager Henslowe, his lead actor Ned, his colleague Christopher Marlowe, and not least of all his lover Viola. Then, there is an economy of narrative doubling: several scenes from the play *Romeo and Juliet* are used before they come to be written and performed as the »real thing« in the

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<sup>138</sup> Marc Norman & Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*. New York (Hyperion) 1998, p. 94. Queen Elizabeth says this to the court, and is contested by Viola.



theatre production. A variation of the Shakespeare's balcony scene occurs on the night of the film's small engagement party. When the character Will is outside the house looking up at the façade, he catches sight of an *as ever*, [...] *convenient tree* according to the script. As he ascends that convenient tree, the scene of the film ascends through the dramatic structure of its famous precursor-scene, and the comic outcome of the ascent (coming face to face with the Nurse rather than his desired object) is commented upon in the script's stage directions with the sequence closed by *He could have written it better*.<sup>139</sup> The awakening scene on the first marriage day of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is prefigured (for the enactment of it in *Shakespeare in Love* is yet to come) and restaged (by copying Shakespeare's text and diegetic situation) in a variation of the first night the characters Viola and Will have spent as unmarried lovers. Shakespearean lark and nightingale are replaced by rooster and owl. While in the logic of contemporary relationships, the »first night« takes place prior to marriages and is no longer stigmatised as outrage, this is a multiply scandalous moment in narrative. Diegetically, virginity is still expected of Viola as part of the marriage barter. This scene presents itself as the original out of which the play *Romeo and Juliet* grows, while it is in fact, a variation of that scene and part of a film claiming to be popular entertainment—the rooster thus crows not only because it is light but because treachery has taken place. On the play's first night then, a woman is historically-incorrectly inserted into a theatre company which had already caused censorial disruption on diegetic level: Will's theatre had been closed down and in an act of solidarity, his fellow director offered him the use of his theatre. Finally, in the reception of the film, this script won awards for being the best original screenplay, not least of all at the Academy Awards, i.e. on the western shores of the country that the character Viola is washed up on at the end

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<sup>139</sup> Marc Norman & Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*. New York (Hyperion) 1998, in the stage directions p. 47.

of the film to meet her *brave new world*.<sup>140</sup> Intertextuality in adaptation, here, reaches its logical conclusion in an economy of arts that economically maximises the relationship between film and literature. Not for nothing is the next play to be »written by« Will at the end of this narrative for Queen Elizabeth's *Twelfth Night* (a night of carnival and revelry) then also known as *What You Will*, i.e. make the most of what you desire. Read here *Will* aka as William Shakespeare.

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<sup>140</sup> Marc Norman & Tom Stoppard, *Shakespeare in Love*. New York (Hyperion) 1998, stage directions p. 155.

## Chapter 4

### The Proust Screenplay

#### or Down Memory Lane

*It is very likely that nearly every one has been very nearly certain that something that is interesting is interesting them. Can they and do they. It is very interesting that nothing inside in them, that is when you consider the very long history of how every one ever acted or has felt, it is very interesting that nothing inside them in all of them makes it connectedly different. By this I mean this. The only thing that is different from one time to another is what is seen and what is seen depends on how everybody is doing everything. This makes the thing we are looking at very different and this makes what those who describe it make of it, it makes a composition, it confuses, it shows, it is, it looks, it likes it as it is, and this makes what is seen as it is seen. Nothing changes from generation to generation except the thing seen and that makes a composition.*

Gertrude Stein, *Composition as Explanation*

### 1. »The Making of« the Script and Its Genesis

Trying to retrace the making of a film project three decades after it was supposed to be made, can lead into a veritable quagmire of conflicting stories—copied, perpetuated, and mythologised in articles written on it. The two Proust projects of the early seventies partake of such ephemeral or even chimerical existence. What can be ascertained is that Nicole Stéphane offered the project to Joseph Losey in early 1972 after the Visconti-project had fallen through.<sup>1</sup> Since

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. David Caute. *Joseph Losey. A Revenge on Life*. New York (Oxford University Press) 1994, pp. 338f.: According to this Losey biography, Luchino Visconti had told Nicole Stéphane (and her colleague Robert Dorfmann) at the 1971 Cannes film Festival that he was going to film *Ludwig II* next. Since this shooting schedule conflicted with that of the Proust project, he was told by the producers that all obligations were ended.

In an interview with Anne Borrel, Suso Cecchi d'Amico stated that because of financing problems the shooting could not have started in July 1971 but three months later. As Visconti was eager to take another opportunity, i.e. for *Ludwig*, he would have needed a longer moratorium, which the producers were unwilling to grant him. Suso Cecchi d'Amico & Anne

none of the accounts nor manuscripts mention the possibility of using the film script written by Luchino Visconti and Suso Cecchi d'Amico, one can only assume that the rights to it had not been bought by the producers and thus remained with Visconti and Cecchi d'Amico. Harold Pinter was then asked by Losey to write a script.<sup>2</sup> According to the *Introduction*, all of this took place from early 1972 onwards. Since Pinter also said that he spent three months reading *A la recherche du temps perdu* and the first ideas on the draft script date from March 6th 1972 and refer to the entire *Recherche*, it seems plausible that the project was already being at least discussed in 1971. This chapter begins with a close analysis of the screenplay in its published form and progressively interweaves this with a parallel story that emerges from the variations of it, apparent in the manuscripts of Harold Pinter held at the British Library.

In his *Introduction* to the script, Harold Pinter makes specific reference to the fact that this project would incorporate the entire *Recherche*, and not merely two volumes, like e.g. *Sodome et Gomorrhe* and *La Prisonnière*. Here, it is interesting to note two things. First, that Pinter uses the French titles of the *Recherche* volumes throughout his *Introduction* and even in the title: *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*,<sup>3</sup> but from the page references in his manuscripts and from the notes written to him by his collaborator Barbara Bray, it transpires that he was working with the English translation of the novels.<sup>4</sup> On the one hand, this might have been done to make explicit the literary

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Borrel, *Entretien avec Suso Cecchi d'Amico*. IN: *Proust, Visconti et Lanterne Magique*. [Published by the Musée Marcel Proust on the occasion of an exhibition June 21st - October 18]. 1992. Illiers-Combray (Musée Marcel Proust) 1992, pp. 13-18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Introduction*. IN: Harold Pinter, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*, New York (Grove Press, Inc.) 1977.

<sup>3</sup> The British edition of the screenplay published a year later was titled Harold Pinter, *The Proust Screenplay - A la recherche du temps perdu*. London (Methuen/Chatto & Windus) 1978. For brevity and clarity, the script will in the following text be referred to as *The Proust Screenplay*.

<sup>4</sup> The page references given by Harold Pinter in his list titled *Notes, Images, Observations* of first ideas and impressions dating March 6th 1972 almost all tally with the 12-volume paperback

source for target readers of the English book, but it also represents a tenuous claim to Gallic literacy. Second, specifying his type of approach, Pinter established his writing in opposition to the approach taken by Luchino Visconti and Suso Cecchi d'Amico. Through this oblique form of critique he is, as it were, already setting his approach as the correct one. This was done at a time when there was yet no sign of the Cecchi-d'Amico-Visconti script being published—and the film could no longer be made because Luchino Visconti had died in the interim.<sup>5</sup>

Pinter concludes his two-page introduction with two brief paragraphs:

*Working on A la recherche du temps perdu was the best working year of my life.*

*We then all tried to get the money to make the film. Up to this point the film has not been made.*

Not only the reading of Proust is presented in a rhetoric of magic and enchantment, but also the work of adapting Proust. Yet it was money that had the final word in this enterprise: its non-materialisation signified that the film was never made.<sup>6</sup> Since in the early and mid-seventies, Joseph Losey started to lobby for other film projects and Harold Pinter was kept very busy with the writing of plays, other scripts, and with numerous stage productions of his plays, the possibility of doing this film appeared more and more remote.

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edition of *Remembrance of Things Past*, which was first published in 1970 by Chatto & Windus, London.

<sup>5</sup> The script was published in French seven years later: Suso Cecchi d'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984.

The following chapter will show that this film project and also particulars of the script were known to a general public though declarations made by Luchino Visconti et al. at press conferences given in the pre-production period.

<sup>6</sup> Also, Harold Pinter was allegedly unwilling to compromise on a TV-serialisation format for his screenplay. Cf. David Caute, *Joseph Losey. A Revenge on Life*. New York (Oxford University Press) 1994, p. 342.

## Overall Structure

The script comprises 445 scenes on 177 pages, which makes it a rather long script. The total number explains itself when one reads through the first three-and-a-half pages. These alone already contain thirty-six scenes. Scene number thirty-six is the first scene that incorporates dialogue. The previous thirty-five scenes all are flashes of different locations, impressions of landscapes, brief glimpses of a scene with the character Marcel. The very first scene, or rather, shot or flash, is: *Yellow screen, Garden gate bell*. This enigmatic opening is repeated in scenes three, five and seven, all of which are simply *Momentary yellow screen*. In scene twenty-two this is revealed as:<sup>7</sup>

*Yellow Screen.*

*The Camera pulls back to discover that the yellow screen is actually a patch of yellow wall in a painting.*

*The Painting is Vermeer's View of Delft.*

As in most of the other scenes up to scene thirty-six, the scenes are fragmentary visualisations of narratives or elements from the *Recherche*. Some of these are the moments when memories flood back to the *je*, such as when he is tying his boots, the sound of a spoon chinking against porcelain, the bell of the garden gate; or, moments of epiphanic bliss such as the three trees seen from a railway carriage and the three church steeples seen from a moving carriage; other scenes refer to locations where action takes place, e.g. the dining-room at Balbec, Marcel in a sanatorium, Venice; in yet other scenes a whole sequence cumulatively takes place at the house of the princesse de Guermantes in 1921, where in discrete scenes Marcel is shown on his way there, as waiting in the library, and as entering the drawing room.

It is first of all to be noted that, like in the film adaptation of *Le temps retrouvé*, the central protagonist is named Marcel and thus the novel is moved

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<sup>7</sup> Harold Pinter, *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*. New York (Grove Press) 1977, p. 4.

closer to the biography of its author. Like that film, this adaptation becomes a puzzle of sorts, where the elements of *A la recherche du temps perdu* become pieces to be put together over the course of the film—through the film's narrative and also through spectatorial supplementation. Over the entire script, these fragments (the puzzle pieces), re-appear in their larger diegetic context as full narratives. Reading the script, it is not that difficult to decipher the meaning of the discrete images flashed. Viewing a film made from this script might prove a different matter—especially for spectators who have not read the *Recherche*. Furthermore, the script does not indicate that each location or time should be specified by intertitles, as done in the scene set (and indicated thus in headers) in 1921 at the Guermantes' matinee. The obvious intention to provide a succession of images without lingering on any one of these extensively, rules out such explicit indicators. It would in all likelihood furthermore rule out a scene duration that would give the spectator the time to process the information given in one scene before being delivered onto the next one. The makers themselves saw the problems of their approach. The necessity of succinctly introducing and clearly establishing characters is a recurring commentary in the notes of Joseph Losey sent to Harold Pinter regarding the first draft.<sup>8</sup>

In general, each larger narrative segment is set in a specific, contained *endroit proustien*: Combray 1888; Paris 1898; Combray 1893 & 1888; Paris 1979; Combray 1895; Paris 1879; Balbec 1898; Paris 1898-1900; Balbec 1901; Paris 1902; Venice 1903; Paris 1915; Tansonville 1915; sanatorium 1917; Paris 1921. An overall script structure drawn up prior to the first draft reveals that initially the script may have contained less topographical alternation. The one-page structure list six segments: the first is described as *Time. Combray* and *The Past. Paris* (and gives an estimated length of 32 pages); the second is titled *Balbec* (26 pages): the

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Losey: *I appreciate the problem of avoiding obvious verbal exposition, but I think it is essential, with our jumboing around in time, to label characters as soon as and as definitely as possible.* Dated July 3rd 1972.

third, *Paris* (42 pages); the fourth *Balbec* (33 pages); the fifth, *Albertine in Paris* (39 pages); the sixth *After Albertine. The Matinee* (24 pages).<sup>9</sup>

Any adaptation of the entire *Recherche* would have to cope with the problem of compressing the source material into a coherent form, i.e. striking a balance between incorporating as much as feasible while also shaping it into a narrative that would permit non-specialists (of Proust, the *Recherche*, and the historic period represented) to find their way around the labyrinth of characters, locales, and different time periods. As proposed here, the oscillating narrative and its meanderings are a challenge for spectators. While the choices made are not the same ones as realised in the Ruiz film, there are some parallels between the film project and the film made twenty-eight years later. As the previous chapter has shown, the film *Le temps retrouvé* experimented with its narrative by incorporating documentary material, by making non-continuous use of setting space, by multiply representing the various Marceles in one frame, by narrative doubling/tangentialising. It did not make use of scene-flashes, as in the opening sequence of *The Proust Screenplay*. Conversely, the latter does not undo a realistic continuity of space as does the film *Le temps retrouvé*. The locations are always topographically realistic, albeit embedded in different narrative sequences that do not necessarily progress along a chronologically-consecutive temporal axis.

Both scripts name their central character Marcel and thereby identify the *Recherche's* figure *je* as the author Marcel Proust, thus enabling a return of the author-figure Proust. As pointed out with respect to the film *Le temps retrouvé*, this is already done in the first sequence where the old Marcel is shown lying in his bed in the rue Hamelin with his servant Céleste. In *The Proust Screenplay*, the central character is referred to as Marcel throughout the script by the directions as well as by the other characters—here, too, a casting of several actors would

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<sup>9</sup> The opera visit in scene fifty would, here, not count as location change but as subjective analepsis (flashback) of Marcel—or rather a prolepsis (a flashforward), since the preceding scenes are set in childhood-Combray.

For an overview of the screenplay's structure see Appendix II.



have been necessary to represent Marcel at various intervals between age eight and forty-one.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in scene 102 and for the following, *The Proust Screenplay* specifies the flat of Marcel as located on boulevard *Malsherbes* (sic), where Marcel Proust had lived together with his parents (at boulevard *Malesherbes* 9) in the years 1873 to 1900. At the turn of the century, the historic Proust family moved to boulevard *Hausmann* 102, whereas the screenplay's Marcel moves to a locationally non-specified new flat in a wing of the *Guermantes* house. Another instance of historicising in the final script, is the re-naming of the character *Bergotte*. Along with *Elstir* and numerous other characters, the figure of *Bergotte* was on a hand-written list of characters and scenes that were to be omitted from the adaptation. But *Bergotte*, then did appear in the comments sent to Pinter by Losey in July 72, and in the final script he re-emerges under the name of his historical source figure, i.e. as *Anatole France*. Where the *Recherche* fictionalised the characters, Losey and Pinter re-historicise them.<sup>11</sup> In his comments to Pinter,<sup>12</sup> Losey several times also expressed an interest to include the historic photographic images of *Dreyfuss* as he is driven to prison—but this did not appear in the published script.

## The Author

In the comments of Joseph Losey on the script and from Harold Pinter's handwritten notes onto that list, a fear of stand-ins for the literary author can be noted: They are hesitant to add characters or dialogue suggesting an authorial

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<sup>10</sup> The script lists explicitly the following ages: 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 35, 37 and 41. Ages 22 and 23 would have to be added according to the years given in scene headers. This would necessitate at least three to four actors to play Marcel at all of these ages.

<sup>11</sup> The figure of *Bergotte* has also been read as a stand-in for Marcel Proust himself. Cf. the various death-narratives linked to the viewing of *Vermeer's View of Delft* as analysed in Chapter One.

<sup>12</sup> Dated July 1972: *Somewhere here the photograph of Dreyfus being driven to the prison could be used ... the conversation about Dreyfus could arise out of a picture in a newspaper.*

presence. In the sequence where Marcel and Saint-Loup are visiting Rachel at the theatre, e.g. the character of the writer is a point of discussion. Initially, this sequence was supposed to be preceded by a scene representing Marcel and Saint-Loup on their way to the theatre and talking about art and writing. This is the first omission of writing as a theme from Pinter's successive drafts. This indicates that too many references of Marcel as a writer, especially this early in the narrative, are undesirable. Then, in his comments on the theatre sequence Losey wrote: [...] *and then there [is] also the point I have made about the repeated play on "Have you seen the author?"* and a bit further down: *"I wonder what happened to the author seems to me very risky"* [sic] to which last comment Harold Pinter annotated a YES!. Taken together and referring to discussions on this particular scene, this indicates a reluctance to refer to the figure of any kind of author-figure, even a purely fictional author-character.

This »fear-of-the-author« is further manifested on the level of character construction. Barbara Bray in several notes points out how important it would be to keep the central character (Marcel Proust) weak. To achieve this, Marcel is first split into two parts, Marcel the hero and Marcel the writer. The latter in the film is invariably represented as not-yet-here, as yet to come, and thus prefigures the making of the film itself. The narrative's protagonist is Marcel the putative hero, but he is designed as weak or absent—as such, he resembles the character Marcel of the film *Le Temps retrouvé*:

*Marcel the hero is absent because he must be seen to be so. His absence is deliberate, it is one of the essential conditions of the work of art. Marcel has to be insignificant because that is his role. He is not so naturally and innocently, like Marcel Proust before the revelation, but because it is imposed on him.*<sup>13</sup>

Since the central figure of the film script is presented as Marcel Proust (through the naming and the other historic indicators), this passage then also represents a desire on behalf of the adaptors to disempower the author of their literary source material. In the final script as well as in the drafts, the character

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<sup>13</sup> Comments sent by Barbara Bray to Pinter, March 7th 1972.

Marcel is not represented or imagined as an author but as an author-in-the-making. The figure of Marcel is confined to a period by historicising him from *je* to Proust. He is fragmented into a narrator and a protagonist of »action«. As a protagonist he is described as weak, absent, unformed. The strong part of Marcel, the author-figure Proust, does not exist yet. While the script project was historicising the protagonist of the novel, Marcel Proust as a historical figure and as a celebrated author was not discussed at all in the manuscripts. It is striking that none of the three persons involved, ever commented on the very recent anniversaries of Marcel Proust (the centennial of his birth in 1971 and the fifty years of his death the following year), and also that among the sources mentioned in the manuscripts, no biography was given as reference, nor was any reference made to the first documentaries that were just being made at the time. Like the narrative of *The Proust Screenplay* marginalises Proust as author-figure, the script's making-of-narrative reveals that the historical figure is also marginalised in the work done on the project—despite biographising the novel's *je*.

The film script, as it transpires from the manuscripts, is riddled with contradictions. These can be related to three areas: the construction of the central character, the integration of art into the narrative, and the favoured location. Barbara Bray and Harold Pinter saw several dualisms at work in the *Recherche*. For them, two movements are going on in the novel: an inner and an outer movement. These are the narratives of creative calling and the social ascent, respectively. Then, there are two antagonistically paired themes. These are death versus revelation and art versus society, respectively. The relationship between the inner, the artistic, and the outer narrative, the social, is described as follows:<sup>14</sup>

*For the impact quality and resonance of the inner narrative to work clearly have its desired impact, the outer narrative must be very firm and indeed full. But it could so easily [We cannot allow it to become shapeless] be unwieldy and laborious and—~~I'm sure you~~ naturally we must guard ourselves against this at all costs.*

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<sup>14</sup> Harold Pinter quoting Barbara Bray in hand-written notes, no date given. All the struck-out words and the parentheses sic in manuscript.

This paragraph voices an »anxiety of period«: the details of Marcel's life should in no case be permitted to take precedence over the story of his artistic vocation. For the film specifically this refers to the appearances, i. e. the costumes and the *mise-en-scène*. The material manifestations of period represent a threat when trying to represent the interior life of a subject. However, taken together with the desire to keep the central character weak, i.e. to not represent him as a character empowered by artistic performance, he is doubly crippled: as narrative centre and in his appearance on screen.

A definition of the oppositional themes is given by Barbara Bray:<sup>15</sup>

*Poring over the final section of the book suggests how the architecture of the film might be based on two main and contrasting movements: one, chiefly narrative, towards disillusion with love, society (i.e. the two "ways"), and art; and the other, more intermittent, towards revelation. If one could "orchestrate" these two movements so as to keep their relationship clear, that, together with the arrangement of images, and intimations of immortality, around Combray, would give a strong shape.*

The movement of disillusionment is narrated in the large segments, where it is represented as (or supposed to represent) fluid and fairly linear narrative. The movement towards revelation, then is expressed in the script by those flashes that spring upon the spectator and are not easily attributed to a time and a space. The attribution of art to the side of disillusion, is a lapsus of the quote, denigrating the domain of art itself. In the *Introduction* to the script Harold Pinter wrote and amended this *nachtraeglich*, post factum:<sup>16</sup>

*We decided that the architecture of the film should be based on two main and contrasting principles: one, a movement, chiefly narrative, toward disillusion, and the other, more intermittent, toward revelation, rising to where time that was lost is found, and fixed forever in art.*

The last five words are a topsy-turvy quote of the last paragraph of *Le temps retrouvé*, where the *je* describes his intention to show the persons he knew, i.e. the

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<sup>15</sup> This quote is taken from type-written notes which I attribute to Barbara Bray. No date is given, but the list is headed by *LE TEMPS RETROUVÉ*, and what follows is a fairly detailed run through the twelfth volume of the English translation with frequent criticism of the translation and then a reference to the pages of the three-volume Pléiade edition *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

<sup>16</sup> Harold Pinter, *Introduction*. IN: idem, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*. New York (Grove Press Inc.) 1977, p. ix.

society he moved in as forever fixed in time.<sup>17</sup> All of these instances betray an insecurity where, and endowed with which meanings art is to be integrated into the narrative.

Urban and mundane Paris, in the narrative, comes to function as a scapegoat in the interpretation of the adaptors. Whereas rural and tranquil Combray is read as one of the true paradises, *les vraies paradis*, Paris is the space of shallowness and hypocrisy. From the notes dating from early March, Bray connotes Combray exclusively positively (i.e. as real, permanent, true, artistic) and Paris negatively (as artificial, disillusioned, shallow). The film, however, contradicts this by favouring the location of Paris over Combray in terms of representational time and narrative expanse. The film grants more representational time to negatively prescribed spaces and characters. Thus, the film not only displays a disaffection with Proust as author-figure, it also presents to the spectator a narrative that is primarily one of decline and disillusionment, i.e. the opposite of the personal narratives of Proust readings that celebrate the author and define the *Recherche* as a biographically deeply meaningful narrative for readers—including Pinter himself.

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<sup>17</sup> Aussi, si elle [la force] m'était laissée assez longtemps pour accomplir mon œuvre, ne manquerais-je pas d'abord d'y décrire les hommes, cela dût-il les faire ressembler à des êtres monstrueux, comme occupant une place si considérable, à côté de celle si restreinte qui leur est réservée dans l'espace, une place au contraire prolongée sans mesure puisqu'ils touchent simultanément, comme des géants plongés dans les années à des époques, vécues par eux si distantes, entre lesquelles tant de jours sont venus se placer — dans le Temps. TR-IV, 625.

## 2. The Opening Sequence

As already presented in the above, *The Proust Screenplay* begins with a series of scenes, of flash-shots, that refer to some key moments of the *Recherche*. A yellow screen reveals itself to be a detail of the Vermeer painting *View of Delft* which Marcel Proust (and with him the *je* and *Swann*) cherished. Furthermore, the introductory scenes refer to the moment when untying his boots, the *je* remembers how his late Grandmother did this for him at the previous visit to Balbec.<sup>18</sup> Further flashes are: a view of the sea (with towel in foreground);<sup>19</sup> a glimpse of Venice;<sup>20</sup> a prospect of countryside from a railway carriage;<sup>21</sup> the dining-room of the hotel at Balbec;<sup>22</sup> Marcel in a sanatorium;<sup>23</sup> the three trees;<sup>24</sup> the three steeples;<sup>25</sup> the garden gate at Combray;<sup>26</sup> and the little boy Marcel writing in his room at Combray.<sup>27</sup> Also, several shots refer to Marcel arriving at the Guermantes house for the final *matinée* and Marcel lingering in the salon before being admitted to the concert room.

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<sup>18</sup> SG-III, 152.

<sup>19</sup> Note the similarity of scene to scenes in *Le temps retrouvé*. As for location in *A la recherche du temps perdu*: TR-IV, 447 & JFF-II, 33.

<sup>20</sup> AD-IV, 203-234.

<sup>21</sup> Several allocations are here possible. The most likely one, due to re-embedding of this scene at a later stage of script, is that it refers to a journey back to Paris from Tansonville in *Le temps retrouvé*. TR-IV, 433.

<sup>22</sup> Again, numerous locations are possible. Here in JFF-II & SG-III.

<sup>23</sup> TR-IV, 433.

<sup>24</sup> JFF-II, 76.

<sup>25</sup> CS-I, 177 & SG-III, 876.

<sup>26</sup> Several locations in *A la recherche du temps perdu* are possible, most notably in CS-I and TR-IV, 624.

<sup>27</sup> CS-I, 28.

### 1. The Trees and the Steeples

Among the key elements of the script's first thirty-four scenes there are three images of three church steeples and two images of three trees. Both are to be shot as if seen from a moving carriage. The difference is the time of the day indicated: sunset for the steeples, noon for the trees. It is the scene number 93 where the steeples are introduced in a complete narrative sequence: they are seen by the child Marcel who is driving in the carriage of Dr. Percepied in the countryside around Combray. Here, they are also introduced as the two steeples of Martinville with a third one that appears as if belonging to them. Preceding this scene is the episode of the lesbian games Mlle. Vinteuil and her Friend play in the Vinteuil house while the child Marcel watches them from the window. What follows in scene 93, is the seventeen-year-old Marcel catching sight of Mme. Swann take a walk along the avenue des Acacias in Paris<sup>28</sup> and Marcel observing Gilberte on the Champs-Élysées.

The three trees are introduced as complete narrative later, when they are revealed to be the trees of Hudesmesnil, seen by Marcel (now a youth) driving in a carriage around Balbec with Madame de Villeparisis and his grandmother. Here, the steeples once more become a narrative insert into the sequence of the trees (between scenes 138-149). Preceding this sequence is the episode of Marcel's grandmother having Saint-Loup take a (last) photo of herself. The tree sequence is followed by the picnic episode, where Marcel spends a day with Albertine, Andrée and the other girls of the *petite bande*. While in the above, there is a large jump forward on the narrated time axis, here there is a fairly continuous narration. Both episodes are moments where the character Marcel is transported into a state of bliss at the perception of first the steeples, and then of the trees which recall the forgotten steeples.

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<sup>28</sup> As in the film *Un amour de Swann*, here onlooker-characters comment that they were in bed with her the day Macmahon resigned.

## 2. The Sea

The view of the sea from a window with and without a towel in the foreground, returns in scene 115, where it is narrated in context: it is the first morning of Marcel and his Grandmother at the Balbec hotel. It is preceded by their arrival at Balbec by train and their settling in at the hotel and followed by the first visit to the dining-room. Thus, it is closely linked to its narrative context by both location and time.

## 3. Venice

The glimpse of Venice returns as a full narrative in the scenes 367 to 373, representing the voyage to Italy done after the death of Albertine. It is preceded by the episode of Marcel speaking to Andrée about (the by now deceased) Albertine where he tries to discover her lesbian inclinations. The scene 366 immediately preceding Venice, is a close-up of Swann telling in voice-over, he had wasted years of his life in pursuit of a woman who had not appealed to him in the first place. The Venice sequence is followed by the episode of Marcel walking through Paris 1915 and chancing upon the Hotel Jupien. Not only is Venice then preceded by two narratives, sharing the same sexually-configured theme of loss and betrayal, disappointment and disgust, the sequence also brings together events that are temporally remote from each other: the late 1880s, the turn of the century and the World War I. Venice itself, even though it is told as an integral diegesis, here appears as unreal, as an interim location. This is underscored by the absence of any dialogue between the characters Marcel and his mother in this sequence: a »silent echo« of the absence of sound in the first two scenes set in Venice at the beginning of the script. Nothing is inserted into the Venice sequence.

## 4. The Dining-Room

The empty dining-room at Balbec is represented in scene eight and twenty-one of the opening sequence. As described in the above paragraph on the seaside



view of Balbec, it is represented in context during the first stay of Marcel at the hotel in Balbec in scene 117. But it is represented even before Marcel's arrival there, in scene 109 where the camera follows the progress of Saint-Loup towards the Hotel, jumping onto a carriage being handed a letter by the hotel manager. The scene also contains different framings of the sea through the windows and the glass front of the Hotel. The scene is preceded by a view of Albertine's *petite bande* walking along the beach and followed by a close shot of Charlus at Combray.

#### 6. The Matinée Sequence

A number of scenes refer to the final Guermantes *matinée* of 1921. These scenes form sequence of their own within the opening sequence. It is to be noted that they are inserted into the first thirty-five scenes non-consecutively within their own sequence. Scenes nine to eleven show Marcel approaching the house, looking up at the sound of a spoon chinking against a plate, and the drawing-room doors opening, respectively. Scene number twenty shows Marcel yet again on his way to the house, and in scene 24 he is represented in the drawing room of the Guermantes. These five scenes (9 to 11, 20 and 24), are the only scenes that have full scene headers, set off by capital type-letters indicating the location, characters, and time. However, another five scenes<sup>29</sup> which are written exactly like the others of the opening sequence also are connected to this sequence. Their lower case is only interrupted by the capital letters of the *MARCEL* in scenes fourteen and fifteen.

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<sup>29</sup> These are scenes thirteen (*Spoon hitting plate*); fourteen (*Continue MARCEL's progress into the drawing room. Voices. Faces. The wigs and makeup, combined with the extreme age of those who with difficulty stand, sit, gesture, laugh, give the impression of grotesque fancy dress.*); fifteen (*In the library, MARCEL, a glass by his side, wipes his lips with a stiff napkin, which crackles*); seventeen (*In the drawing room, a group of very old women talking*); and eighteen (*Water pipes in the library. The shrill noise of water running through the pipes.*)

Besides these scenes and the repetition both of the *yellow screen*, and of the trees and the steeples, the entire opening sequence also introduces images of a view of countryside from a train (scene nineteen, also here there is no sound), and of the garden gate at Balbec. The repetition of the garden gate at Combray, first shown in scene thirty-two, already occurs in scene thirty-four. The garden gate scenes thus do not function as first introductions to pivotal vocational episodes of the overall narrative, nor as a premonition of scenes that are yet to be fully represented and diegetically embedded. In their proximity and coming at the end of the introduction sequence, they function as a transition. Immediately following the repeated garden gate, there is the first scene proper of Combray: the child Marcel writing the letter to his mother that is to ensure his goodnight kiss.

In the following, I make these extremely brief scenes, these shots or flashes, the starting point for an exploration of the script's »insertive« structure, i.e. one that inserts shots into other sequences and then turns such inserted shots into sequences in their own right—into which other shots are then in turn inserted. In several instances, scenes appertaining to a different diegesis are used as brief transitional narratives between sequences. The narrative is then configured as a complex oscillation where a constant shifting is going on from being an »insert« to becoming and »inserted-into«. As a chorus of images, they are an illustration of Bakhtinian polyphonic narrative.<sup>30</sup> In narratological terms, these various narratives can not be attributed to an embedded structure of various diegetical levels because their transitions are abrupt and not motivated by each other. Depending on their diegetic context they change from metadiegesis to diegesis and vice versa.

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Mikhael Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostojevsky's Poetics*. [Ed. and translated by Caryl Emerson; Introduction by Wayne C. Booth]. Minneapolis (University of Minnesota Press) 1984 (1st Russ 1929).

In addition, I look at instances where inserted scenes are merely snapshots and/or close-ups of persons;<sup>31</sup> where scenes are explicitly referred to as repeats; and scenes where non-synchronic sound is used. The closing sequence(s) of the script at the *Guermantes matinée*<sup>32</sup> will be taken out of the initial analysis. Unless specified otherwise, all references to episodes refer only to the film script and not to the *Recherche*. The manuscript versions and various ways of embedding the episodes will be read against the big narrative arches of the script.<sup>33</sup>

One can note that when listed according to location, the structure is one of interlaced narrated locales, where in most cases Paris alternates with other locations. If listed according to date on the narrated axis, one can note a certain progression from a beginning in 1888 to 1921, with a few initial analeptic and proleptic movements in diegeses located in the childhood and the early adolescence of Marcel. The turn of the century marks approximately the middle of the film's narrative. Thus, Paris as an intellectual and social phenomenon of fin-de-siècle fama emerges as narrative centre.<sup>34</sup> A general observation is that the opening and the closing sequences of the final *matinée* could be seen as remnants of a frame narrative. This is in part justified through their appearance: unlike other narratives the *matinée* is not taken up as insertion in any of the other narratives of the script. What contradicts this is that they do not initiate nor conclude narrative proper: at the beginning of the script, the *matinée* scenes are, dispersed over the opening sequence, and at the end of the script they are intersected with numerous flash-scenes.

Of the remaining eighteen sequences, Combray II, Paris IV, Paris V, Paris VI, Balbec II, and especially Paris VII have inserts from other sequences. There

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<sup>31</sup> The characters thus inserted are, e.g. Albertine, Marcel, Odette, Swann, Mlle Vinteuil and her friend, the *princesse de Guermantes*, and the *duchesse de Guermantes*.

<sup>32</sup> This covers the scene numbers 395 to 455. There one finds re-quotes of virtually all of the flash-shots of the opening sequence.

<sup>33</sup> An overview over the big narrative arches of the script is given in Appendix II.

<sup>34</sup> If one counts the »glances-sequence« as location, then the numbers are equal—still excluding the Paris of the opening sequence.

are inserted transitions between Paris II and Combray III; Balbec I and Paris IV; Balbec II and Paris VII; Paris VII and Venice. Several segments are begun with scenes that are repeated within the segment, such as Balbec I (the scenes of Saint-Loup jumping onto carriage and of Charlus staring), and at the beginning of Paris VII, scene 280 proleptically shows a bunch of syringa on the kitchen table where they actually only end up in scene 291 in a full narrative.

As for scene repetitions, in the segment Paris VII when Marcel listens to the Vinteuil sonata at Morel's concert, the steeples, a repetition of the trees and the yellow screen are inserted. This has a certain thematic logic, as the listening to the music of Vinteuil is another pivotal moment of artistic formation. The scene 278 with the riderless horse (that is located between the segment Paris VII and Looks), is represented again in scene 353 in the segment Paris VIII. A trackout of the camera widens the image to include the corpse of Albertine in the frame and thus the story of her death. Scene 343 is a repetition of Marcel in his flat's corridor listening at Albertine's door, and is explicitly pointed out as a repetition in the header. Also explicitly indicated by the header as a repetition, is the scene 169 where Marcel's Grandmother is shown to be reading. She then turns to the camera, and smiles with an effort. Here too, one can observe a narrative expansion in the repetition of scene 188 where dialogue assigns her smiling to an addressee through dialogue: *Hullo, Marcel*.

It is noteworthy, that in this script Harold Pinter took great care to indicate the shooting details of several scenes, while at the same time there are huge differences as regards narrative scope of individual scenes. As pointed out when looking at the opening sequence, some scenes are mere flashes. On the other hand, there is e.g. scene number fifty, which takes up the better part of a page and narrates an entire evening at the opera.

The closing sequence interweaves three diegeses: Marcel arriving at the Guermantes'; Marcel waiting in the library; and Marcel making the social round in the drawing room. It is intercut with all the pivotal moments of artistic vocation: the Vivonne, the steeples, the trees at Hudesmesnil, the Vinteuil sonata,

Vermeer's yellow, the blue of San Marco's frescos, the dining room at Balbec, the sound of the garden gate. It is also intercut with images of the pain and delight of *mémoire involontaire*: the untying the shoe-laces, the line of trees, the sound of the spoon chinking, the feel of the napkin. In this bundling, the film makes clear what it interprets as the most important features of the *Recherche*: that it is a book moving towards its own writing.

The above description of the ways in which narrative sequences are perforated with other sequences, has made clear that this is, indeed, a script that would challenge the spectator. The alienating mode of narrative progression structuring the plot in retrospect is the most distinct feature of the script, but this does not necessarily signify an exclusion of the society theme. I read this perforation or diegetical oscillation as expressing (through narrative structuring) the relationship between the two themes of memory and society: the film is a narrative of a historical society and at the same time the narrative of the memory of that society. For not only does the narrative not respect chronology, the a posteriori narrated society is not embedded in a classical frame narrative that would render a clear-cut distinction between a now and a then possible. The entire narrative of a society is suspended in its being remembered. The two themes of society and memory cannot be separated by terming the former as located in the past and the latter as the viewpoint of the present. Society only exists in its remembered form and memory also only exists because of its »matter«. They are inseparable and mutually condition each other. One can, as I have done, break up the segments into locations or along a time axis. But as the above has shown, the explanatory supplement necessary to catch all the interweavings (and I am sure there are still additions to be made) show that such a schema would not render the script's specificity. The narrative structure of the script is marked out by internal suspension. Such »perforation« was also operative in the construction of Marcel Proust as an author-figure. There, it refers to the complex interweaving of his life and his work. In the reception of Marcel Proust, it became impossible to separate the life of the writer from the life

of the *je* and from the writing of the *Recherche*. The following chapter will show that similar processes of perforation recur in the construction of Luchino Visconti as an author-figure. This chapter now continues with the history of *The Proust Screenplay* when it in 2000 became a stage play directed by Di Trevis at the National Theatre in London.

### 3. Trevis 2000

#### Her Story

In her booklet, *Remembrance of Things Proust*, Di Trevis used materials such as her journal, her recollections of meetings, and drafts of the stage version to piece together a making-of-narrative. Through these she showed how she progressed from a reading of Pinter's screenplay in 1989 to its stage production in 2000. The author-figure Harold Pinter appeared in her work in several ways. From the outset, she declared herself over-awed with *the brilliance* of the screenplay. After having adapted it, she staged the adaptation in 1996 with a group of actors for a workshop of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA). When she finally did approach him with her version, she was afraid of what Pinter would say when he saw it. It was the authority of Pinter that set her up with the then Artistic Director of the National Theatre, Trevor Nunn. But, Pinter demanded corrections to her adaptation of his screenplay when the project was accepted by the National Theatre.

Conversely, the respect or trepidation sparked by Marcel Proust seems small. Contrary to the readers Pinter, Visconti, Schlöndorff, et al. Trevis states at the outset of her booklet<sup>35</sup>

*I started to read Proust several times as a young woman but I never got past the first few pages. "There is time," I always thought, as I put the first volume back in the shelves once again [...]*

Unlike the other readers of Proust, she was not instantly enamoured of nor drawn into the literary text. It was when moving to France with a baby in tow that she discovered Proust through Pinter:<sup>36</sup>

*One day, unpacking cartoons of books that had been sent from England, I came across a copy of the*

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<sup>35</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. Booklet published by the National Theatre (London) 2001 [46pp]. Here p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. Booklet published by the National Theatre (London) 2001 [46pp]. Here p. 2.

*screenplay of Remembrance of Things Past by Harold Pinter. I took one look at the opening page, settled down among the packing cases - I can only suppose the baby was sleeping - and read it without interruption. I came at last to a realisation of the full sweep of Proust's narrative - and a subtle and brilliant evocation of his meditations and epiphanies, his agonies and comic set pieces - through a simple script of 455 shots.*

In her adaptation of »Proust«, she instrumentalised the novel as a work of reference, something wherein to look up specific scenes in Pinter. Proust's *Recherche* became a secondary source, the Pinter screenplay the primary source material. Trevis related to the novel through tropes of omission, opposition, and challenge. In the other cases, where the readers' lives entered into the experiencing of Proust, these were configured as narratives of admiration, affinity, or even bare survival *grace à* the beauty of the *Recherche*. Schlöndorff's years in France were read as a supporting act in the adaptation. Having read Proust as a teenager and when accepting the challenge of adapting this French classic, Schlöndorff had cast himself in the director who would avail a general public of Proust, extracting him from the exclusivity of the XVI arrondissement. In the case of Raúl Ruiz, the choice of this particular adaptation was reportedly due to financing, Proust being cheaper than other authors. Harold Pinter, himself, had described the experience of Proust in glowing terms, a period of tranquillity and happiness. Visconti reportedly had been an ardent admirer and avid repeated reader of the *Recherche* from his twenties up until his last years. Di Trevis couches her Proust-story in yet different terms. The reading of Proust was something that would take her away from her life, for which she will need a lot of time, and not something that would complement it, let alone enrich it. Consequently, the abbreviated version of the *Recherche* in the shape of *The Proust Screenplay* was a welcome time-saver, and her narrative wastes not a word of regret on the fact that she had not read Proust's novel in its entirety. As she progressed through the various stages of the work, she interpunctuates this story with the baby's growing-up: learning to walk, talk, and finally toddling off to the local school. The labour on the Proust project is here narrated as a parallel to the labour of childcare.



The story of adapting the screenplay to the stage is one of struggling against the vastness of the entire narrative. This motif can also be traced in the manuscripts of Harold Pinter. In the case of Trevis, however, the author against whom she must assert herself is most decidedly not Proust but Pinter. Marcel Proust in her story is woven into the scenic backdrop of her life in Normandy. In the programme of the stage production she wrote:

*And as I looked out of the window, I realised that not a mile away was a lane bordered in spring with white hawthorn. Across the endless plain between Longueville and Luneray, you could see the church spires dancing on the horizon. On the door of my house was a bell set upon a curve of metal which rang each time someone entered. I had come, without quite knowing it, to the country of Proust. I became fascinated.*

The fascination of Trevis, here, however refers to Proust-country rather than to Proust himself or to the *Recherche* as written by him. Moreover, this landscape appears more invented than real. It is a landscape that is coloured in with the experience and the thoughts of Di Trevis. This becomes even more pronounced when she metaphorises her first thoughts on reading the film script:<sup>37</sup>

*Afterwards I was lost in my imagination for hours. I was reminded of the time when, on two consecutive days, I first walked down the Grand Canyon and then flew over it in a helicopter. And that is the clue to rendering in one medium something that so faultlessly and resplendently exists in another. In one you traverse the terrain by putting one foot after the other. It is a long and solitary march, word after word accumulating into its images, its vast edifices of thought, its long arduous journey. In the other, you are granted the capacity to hover within the images, to swoop, to dive, to dwell, to pass swiftly over. The camera gives you wings.*

The *Recherche* here is explicitly compared to a real landscape, that of the Grand Canyon. The reading of the *Recherche* and the filming of it are compared to exploring the Grand Canyon on foot or by helicopter, respectively. The first is a physical challenge, against distance, heat, and terrain. According to Trevis, she did conquer the Grand Canyon. However, as an adaptor she did not »walk« the

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<sup>37</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. Booklet published by the National Theatre (London) 2001 [46pp]. Here p. 2.

The only variation regarding the previous quote is in the first sentence: *And as I looked out of the window of that French house, I realised that beyond the apple trees in the orchard lay a lane bordered in spring with white hawthorn.*

entire *Recherche*. In the second comparison, rotor blades of the helicopter transmute into the wings of the camera. The metaphorical field thus implies both exploration and conquering. Trevis thus replaces the Proustian metaphor of the cathedral, a man-built *vast edifice*, with nature-as-obstacle, in narrative often gendered as female.<sup>38</sup> The narrative twist here resides in the female gender of the explorer writing her story through the conquest of a landscape.<sup>39</sup> Describing her impressions and her reactions to the film script and the *Recherche*, she speaks of: walking through, flying over, putting one foot in front of the other, a solitary march. In this comparison, the *Recherche* seems to stay the same regardless of the medium (the mode of transport) one chooses for the approach. As laid out in the second chapter, the narrative approaches to adaptation analysis assume that there was a basic plot line which could be transposed without loss to film (bar shortening, or condensing etc.). Here, Trevis seems to argue that the content of the book is still all »there«, the medium of film will only change the perspective taken on it. One still does see »the whole thing« as one would when reading the book. The difference resides in how it is to be represented to, and how the various narratives are to be interconnected for the spectator. The film thereby becomes an exhilarating overview-ride rather than a page-by-page reading drag.

The ensuing narrative of bringing the entire project onto the stage of the National Theatre, however, is hard labour. It is made up of mostly organisational or technical problems, such as keeping the costume budget from exploding, how to manoeuvre props on and off the stage, working out a system for the easy and the complicated dress changes, the lighting scheme, etc. Finally, the day of the first night is one of frayed nerves culminating with the breakdown

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<sup>38</sup> Cf. Teresa de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't. Feminism, Film, Semiotics*. London (Macmillan) 1984, p. 121.

<sup>39</sup> Often serving as the backdrop of the western genre, this is a landscape which cinematically is already inscribed with man-written narratives. Furthermore, the nearby Monument Valley is known as Ford-country because it was the locale where John Ford shot his westerns and to shoot a film there has from then on been regarded as an act of trespassing among (male) directors.

of the old and a rapid purchase of a new car and additional worries about what to dress a body in that due to unhealthy eating habits during the rehearsal period is overweight.

The differences between the narratives is striking. Neither in the foreword of Harold Pinter nor in his manuscripts does any reference to his private life appear. Where the private life of Schlöndorff appears, it only refers to those parts of it connected to a French institutional education (at a lycée and later at university) and in Schlöndorff's version the reading of the *Recherche* was part of his teenager years and to make a film of it a dream project.<sup>40</sup> Trevis on the other hand, when telling her of biographical infatuation with France, tells of pillow talk with her French boyfriend in Paris. This is not entirely gender-related, in the sense of a female director by virtue of her sex does not draw a line between the public and the private. Although the entire narrative includes elements of joy and exhilaration, in Trevis's Proust-narrative she tells a struggle rather than a voyage of discovery. Here, it is the private that becomes the Other. An Other that is instrumentalised as a foil for the professional and very demanding enterprise. The struggle of adapting Proust, is here transformed into an endeavour to do Pinter's film script justice, and then it is a struggle which the female director has to incorporate into her own life. In one respect, the work and the private life meet: the Proust project becomes a private endeavour when Trevis tells the financial side of the tale. Not only was she paying various expenses out of her own pocket, it was also several years before she was able to earn some money with the project—by which time her financial situation had become difficult. To adapt Proust is here done at a high cost—literally and figuratively. Moreover, all of this was not done out of admiration for the author Proust or his large opus, but out of admiration for a screenplay adapting his work. Not only are Proust and his work here no longer represented as a central, enriching experience: his

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<sup>40</sup> Pierre Montagne, *Schlöndorff filmera «Un amour de Swann»* IN: *Le Figaro*. (05.12.1982); Sylvie Generoix, *Ils ressuscitent le Paris de Marcel Proust*. IN: *Le Figaro Magazine*. (18.02.84); [anon], *Volker Schlöndorff cinéaste. Un Paris de Swann*. IN: *L'Humanité*. (21.02.1984).

work no longer exists in its own right but rather is medialised through others. Adaptation here, is yet one more step removed from the »original«. Embedding the narrative of the play's genesis in a biographical narrative configured by gender-related parameters, has several consequences. It reinforces a patriarchal matrix of power relations in the adaptive chain: Harold Pinter is the origin of the narrative and the master-narrative of authorial power into which Di Trevis inscribes herself.<sup>41</sup> Di Trevis as an author-figure presents herself *a priori* as subordinate but then also reveals her writing (here both the stage play and her booklet) to be a subversive power: she subjects the authorial narrative of Proust, the narrative of the *Recherche* to the narratives of Harold Pinter. Additionally, she frames the narrative of her adaptation within a story of infancy. Furthermore—though this is not spelt out in her writings—her adaptation, in its being brought to a theatrical conclusion, reaches »maturity«, i.e. a developmental stage unattained by *The Proust Screenplay*, or rather, only acceded to through her adaptation, her story.

### On Stage

The stage production of *Remembrance of Things Passed* opened in the Cottesloe Theatre, the smallest of the three stages of the National Theatre on November 23rd, 2000. It transferred to the Olivier, the largest of the three stages, three months later in February 2001 and closed May 2001. More than a decade passed between the first reading of the film script and the opening night—which is still shorter than it took Nicole Stéphane to get *Un amour de Swann* made.

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<sup>41</sup> This relationship between a female and a male author-figure is repeated in the case of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*. There, the scriptwriter Suso Cecchi d'Amico, describes herself in the introduction to the screenplay as working for Luchino Visconti, rather than an author in her own right. Although from her memoirs she emerges as a figure well-rooted in the centre of Italian literary and intellectual life and though she had worked for Luchino Visconti on numerous previous occasions, in the publication of the script, Luchino Visconti is the author-figure setting the structure and then approving of her work for hire.

The play starts with the goodnight-kiss drama at Combray and then it adds a scene in which the old Marcel stands on the stage while it snows upon him. He is quickly surrounded by a host of other characters who represent the guests of the 1921 matinée. At a certain point, the character Jupien climbs onto a grand piano to shout out all the names of deceased persons. The relation to the *Recherche* is drawn as follows: Marcel in the snow is the first part of the madeleine episode,<sup>42</sup> but here the second half with the madeleine is omitted. The recital of the names of the deceased was also narrated as episode in *Le temps retrouvé*.<sup>43</sup> There however, the recital was done by Charlus who meets the *je* in the park as the *je* is on his way to the matinée. In the novel, neither Jupien nor Charlus attend the final matinée (as in the play), nor had this been featured in the film script of Harold Pinter. The stage play, thus, widens the diegetical distance between novel and itself in this second-degree adaptation.

The first impression one has of the play,<sup>44</sup> is a profusion of characters, locales and scenes. While the stage setting is quite minimalist, a wide range of props is employed to create certain locations.<sup>45</sup> The geographical locations used, or rather, indicated by props and sound effects are Paris, Balbec, Combray, Montjouvain. Each of which is split up into several sub-locales such as e.g. the hotel, a restaurant, the beach, a bedroom, etc. Instead of being represented one after the other and telling each one in its entirety, these locales are then mostly represented intermittently throughout the production, as various story strands are intricately interwoven with each other. This, in turn, means that props have

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<sup>42</sup> CS-I, 44ff.

<sup>43</sup> TR-IV, 440f.

<sup>44</sup> The production is no longer in the repertoire of the National Theatre, but video recordings of two performances can now be seen at the archives of the National Theatre, which I consulted in November/December 2001.

<sup>45</sup> It is a slightly tilted, bare stage, which in the back merges into a walkway. At the front, one corner is painted with a bright yellow triangle (echoing a patch of yellow colour on the screen at the back of the stage), at the back the stage is painted blue.

Amongst these are, e.g., a bed, chairs, restaurant tables, a grand piano, a vase with flowers, light chains, a chaise longue, tables with washing utensils.

to disappear and reappear or be rearranged as required in each successive scene.<sup>46</sup>

Visual archives, too, are used to shape the appearance of the stage play in the present. First of all, the stage production makes references to art works. In the archive materials appertaining to the production, there are notes on the costumes referring them to art works. Thus, the dancer in the episode at the theatre with Rachel, Saint-Loup and Marcel is supposed to be dressed like a Watteau page. This extends to props: the sponge for Albertine's morning toilette is described *As in the Degas picture* in the production's notes. As in previously cited films, the visual appearance of the film intertextually uses painting. The stage play explicitly and obviously used the painting of the *View of Delft*: at the back of the stage was a huge canvas on which one could initially see a blob of yellow colour set off against tones of grey. In the course of the play, this screen becomes a blue sky with white clouds on it.<sup>47</sup> At the very end of the play, the light gradually reveals a skyline of houses and the yellow patch is revealed as the roof of one of the houses in Vermeer's painting *View of Delft*. The yellow triangle that is painted onto the floor in the front corner of the stage ultimately reveals itself as a visual echo of the yellow corner in the left hand corner of the painting.<sup>48</sup> Then, Trevis avers having done historic research in Paris for visual reference: a visit to the Musée Carnavalet in Paris and a Jean Béraud exhibition of which she used the catalogue. She furthermore made use of period photos by Brassai and Nadar made of Marcel Proust and friends.<sup>49</sup> Not least, the different

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<sup>46</sup> In her booklet, Trevis also devoted several pages to describing the challenge of coordinating the many costume changes (where she distinguished between *quick* and *difficult* ones) and rearranging the stage for a new scene without tiring the audience.

<sup>47</sup> According to the production notes, this blue sky has also been taken from the Vermeer painting *View of Delft*.

<sup>48</sup> In the painting, the yellow triangle in the picture, is a quay or a border of the river upon which walking pedestrians are shown.

<sup>49</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. Booklet published by the National Theatre (London) 2001 [46pp]. Here pp. 23 and 25.

colour palettes for the costumes of early and later society and Balbec respectively were all chosen as chromatic echoes of the Vermeer painting.

Just like the film *Le temps retrouvé*, so did this theatre production require the audience to have a fairly good knowledge of Marcel Proust and *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Unlike the film and despite its intershot diegetic structure it did not stage objects as surreal, e.g. in the episode of the top hats. In the film *Le temps retrouvé*, these images transferred the object onto another level of reality and thence produced multiple interdiscursivities between film, literature and adaptation as cultural practice. Here, the episode of aristocratic gentlemen leaving their hats on the floor, is taken up as a narrative unequivocally related to the social history of *fin-de-siècle* Paris. It is used to reveal class differences between the aristocratic and bourgeois characters at the Verdurin soirée, where the bourgeois Monsieur Verdurin remarks to the Prince de Foix that the hat should not be left on floor lest it be trodden upon.<sup>50</sup> As the episode of the top hats was on stage used to present a sociologically concise narrative of Paris, so the desire to remain as historically faithful as possible reveals itself in the choice of music. Searching for songs she could use in her play, Trevis relinquished the idea of using the song *Parle-moi d'amour* because it was composed a few years after the historic period. This is in marked contrast to the very liberal attitude she has as regards changing the story of the novel to suit her ideas, or adding

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Here, the director and her colleagues use painting, photography as well as representations of these—the cork-lined room of Marcel Proust was itself taken from a photo. It is a reconstruction with the help of photographs.

<sup>50</sup> In the novel, this episode is located in CGI-II, p. 509f., where the historian Pierre de La Fronde gives this advice to the duc de Châtelleraut and the comte d'Argencourt, causing the duc de Guermantes to ask the *je* who this person (i.e. de la Fronde) is. The habit is here referred not necessarily as aristocratic but as something which was *à la mode* at the time.

Similarly, the earlier reference to top hats in the play (in the episode at the salon of Madame Villeparisis), is used to show the ignorance of Marcel (sitting next to Saint-Loup) of the aristocratic habits. In the novel, too, it forms part of that episode but Saint-Loup is not present, instead it is an exchange between Mme de Villeparisis and Bloch where the habit is discussed alternately as a sign of deference to a visiting King or as a personal idiosyncrasy. (CGI-II, 490)

scenes like the laundresses washing and singing.<sup>51</sup> In addition to the detailed diagrams drawn up for dress changes, for entries and exits, for prop employment, the National Theatre's archival documentation also feature a list for sound prompting, (titled *Sound Q's*). Apart from songs used in and music composed for it, the production featured numerous sound effects which either generated atmosphere for a scene or were used to underscore a scene's diegesis.<sup>52</sup>

All of this labour not only can be read as indicator of extensive planning necessary for staging (not least due to an ideology of authenticity as analysed in Chapter 2), but also reveals the amount of visual and acoustic information poured upon the individual spectator. Besides taking in all of these diverse indicators setting the scenes, as it were, the spectator then also has to grasp the diegesis of each scene. The entire production involved twenty-eight actors and actresses.<sup>53</sup> It consisted of a multitude of scenes and several instances of what Trevis termed *images*.<sup>54</sup> These images appear to be the director's solution to the problem of frequent scene changes. She defines them as follows:<sup>55</sup>

*Now I conceived the idea of using an image as a curtain which moved swiftly across the stage to divert the eye, images that often pre-figured a scene to come or referred back to a scene we had already played. The static images Pinter had used in his screenplay now had to involve a journey through the space — to catch the audience's eye and to keep it moving until the image disappeared and the eye fell back again to the characters in a new scene in a new place and time. The images could not therefore be static tableaux or a mere moment in time caught by the camera's eye. They had to be more like SLIVERS of scenes, concentrated action, heightened movement, dynamic and articulate. We found too that they often had to be accompanied by a phrase or two or three lines of dialogue, the human voice luring the eye*

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<sup>51</sup> According to the production notes, they sing a Norman folk song titled "Compère et commère" harmonized by Thos. Marson.

The second song used in the play, is a poem by Appollinaire but set to music by the production's composer, Dominic Muldowney.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. the sound of a spoon against saucer reinforces the gesture of Françoise with that prop via speakers; or playback sounds of seagulls and waves create seaside atmosphere.

<sup>53</sup> In addition, smaller roles were played by unnamed members of the National Theatre Company.

<sup>54</sup> Depending upon which document one refers to (the published stage play, the sound-effects breakdown, the script breakdown), the number of scenes is 40-41, and the number of images varies between 21 and 30.

<sup>55</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. Booklet published by the National Theatre (London) 2001 [46pp]. Here p. 6.



*better than anything else.*

The heightened sense of movement to be evoked by such images and their purpose of guiding or diverting the eyes of the audience, making them move in a certain direction, may be seen as a parallel to the overall increase of choreographed movement, when comparing the staged play to the script. The play features dances or dance-like encounters in several scenes which are intended to convey sociability, or sexual attraction.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, choreography appears in the staging structure of the play itself: as the dancers are in individual scenes, the audiences eyes are led along a carefully planned choreography.

It is at times difficult (if not impossible) to differentiate between images and scenes proper, especially when one is looking at one of the more comprehensive images, i.e. with sound and dialogue rather than at a very brief one.<sup>57</sup> Reading the booklet, one can observe that these images are a way of making the play run smoothly on stage, i.e. glossing over the frequent changes of props and costumes that are potentially disruptive for a spectator. When comparing the archive copy of the script used on the press night with the print edition available to the general public, one can also notice that the distinction becomes blurred in the layout itself: whereas the press night script had the images clearly set off from the rest of the text by framing them in a box, in the print edition these boxes were not used and images were merely discernible as such by the word *Image* preceding them. On stage, this became even more

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<sup>56</sup> The first episode involves almost all the characters at the Guermantes' social gathering in 1921. It features a waltz of six couples that build a bridge to an episode of the Swann-Odette couple.

In the episode set at La Raspelière, the play has the two characters Albertine and Morel who are attracted to each other. In the stage version, they circle each other in a waltz in front of the dinner table at which all the other guests are seated. In the printed version of the play, they (and their respective jealous companions Marcel and Charlus) exchange glances and/or are represented, by detailed camera instructions, as observing each other.

<sup>57</sup> Some examples of images would be: a figure in black (Mlle. Vinteuil) running across the stage and opening or closing imaginary window shutters; a character (Saint-Loup) hitting another character and arguing (this forms part of the later scene at the theatre with Rachel and Marcel); Marcel listening to Jupien and Charlus having sex.

obfuscated. As a consequence, the spectator had to work harder at identifying the elements of the play—or remains altogether unaware of the distinction.

Several narrative uses are made of the images. As said in the quote above, they were to announce subsequent scenes or refer back to preceding scenes. They were also employed as a cross-cutting device, e.g. simultaneously contrasting a scene between Albertine and Marcel with a (freeze-frame) image of Swann and Odette, thus underscoring the parallels in their love stories. This thematic matching executed in the juxtaposition of image and scene also has its opposite: images are also employed to express difference or to intimate subversion. In the scene where the Mother proposes that Marcel had better marry Albertine, her »proper« view of sexual relationships is subverted by the following image of the lesbian Mademoiselle Vinteuil. Beyond that, some images serve as further illustrations of the scene that immediately preceded them, e.g. the encounter of Charlus and Jupien in the street as a scene is followed by an image of Marcel hearing them have sex.

These images can be read as curtains in more senses than they were employed by Di Trevis. In the sense she put forward, they were to be »curtains« drawn across scene changes, small intermissions that divert spectatorial attention away from the technical side of the play. But in doing so, they not only serve to conceal (they veil) that most of work for this production went into technical things, but summon up Trevis' initial making-of-narrative. While producing her stage version of the screenplay, Trevis used the *Recherche* only as a work of reference. The literary source material here has been relegated: it only enters into the adaptive process in second place. The images as »curtains« thus also divert the enquiring spectatorial gaze from the »secondary-ness« of this adaptation, where the literary text was reduced to a stopgap when Pinter's »primary« text did not suffice.

The stage version is an interpretation of the *Recherche* focussing heavily on the sexual relationships between characters. About two thirds of the play's

scenes sexual relationships as theme,<sup>58</sup> whereas less than a quarter deal primarily with the theme of society and only two (out of ca. 40) exclusively with the vocation of a writer. This list to a certain extent disregards that a scene may contain various themes, but it still indicates a certain unilateralism in what was taken up from the *Recherche* and put into the adaptation. Thus, the stage adaptation may have made a general public aware of one topic of the literary source material in particular, for to say that the *Recherche* is about sexual relationships between characters and their social interaction does rudimentarily sum up one plotline of the book, for all that is »there«, i.e. contained in the novel—contrary to what the French press was trying to argue when criticising the adaptation *Un amour de Swann*.

A different observation to be made here, regards possible terms of engagement with such cultural goods. Regardless how one evaluates the outcome of the labour, this would, for one, be the admirably pragmatic attitude the director displayed towards a work of literature that (as the reception of Marcel Proust has shown) threatens to become overpowering by virtue of the immense socio-literary prestige it has accumulated over the course of its reception trajectory, i.e. through all the cultural value which has been ascribed to it. Beyond this specific adaptation project, the adaptation to the stage additionally raises awareness of the challenges inherent in such transfers from one media to the other—be that from literature to film, film script to theatre or other transfers. It also demonstrates that such productions require the right moment: this form of adaptation would have been difficult to undertake at an earlier time, especially on a stage of the British National Theatre, i.e. as opposed to fringe theatre. Like the film *Le temps retrouvé*, the stage production is rendered possible (and successful) by anterior theatre and film practices which shape viewing habits, evaluation parameters, and spectatorial expectations.

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<sup>58</sup> The themes love, desire, jealousy, homosexuality, sadomaschism are ubiquitous.

The fluidity of movement that the play itself engaged in, on the level of dance and of constant shifting of scenes and images here metaphorically matches the movement of the cultural good Proust entering once more into cultural circulation. This is underscored by several exhibitions that accompanied the stage production thus amplifying this »nouvelle Proustian vague«. At the time of the production, drawings and paintings of the production, and several drawings made during the rehearsal period by Alan Halliday, became an exhibition at the Gallery Collins & Hastie. At the Olivier Theatre, another exhibition ran until 10th March 2001 to accompany the production. It was titled *The Art of Memory. Contemporary Painters in Search of Proust*. This exhibition referred back to a previous one organised a few years earlier by the Francis Kyle Gallery.<sup>59</sup> Almost concurrently, there was the second exhibition on Proust in Paris at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the film *Le temps retrouvé* was released in the UK in January 2001. This indicates that in recent years there has indeed been an increased interest in Marcel Proust and his work, and it also indicates that the work done on Proust (both adaptations as well as artistic work inspired by or referring to his work) is itself recycled. Another example for this is that Eric de Kuyper, the writer of the script of *La Captive*,<sup>60</sup> has started to adapt parts of the *Recherche* to the stage.<sup>61</sup> Another event of the Brussels Art Festival 2003 was called *Marcel Proust va au cinéma*. The programme describes it as follows:

*Thanks to Eric de Kuyper, Marcel is going to the cinema — short films that Proust might have seen and loved in his time will be shown.*

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<sup>59</sup> The production notes describe the Francis Kyle exhibition and its revival as follows:

*In 1999, Francis Kyle invited eighteen artists to undertake a journey both real and metaphorical into the world of Marcel Proust. First presented at the Francis Kyle Gallery to great acclaim, the exhibition is now recreated with many new works to mark the production of "Remembrance of Things Past", and includes paintings by Hugh Buchanan, Christopher Kilmartin, Alan Kingsbury and Edward Stone.*

<sup>60</sup> *La Captive* (2000, Chantal Ackerman) is based on the relationship between Marcel and Albertine but sets it mostly in a flat in contemporary Paris, turning it into a claustrophobic *Kammerspiel*.

<sup>61</sup> The two done so far (of a total planned ensemble of four) are titled *De Kant van Swann* and *De Kant van Albertine*.

Like in the fidelity discourse on adaptation, here intentions and opinions are imputed to an author in order to legitimise a new cultural event: had Marcel Proust gone to the cinema, he would have liked this film, this play, this book etc. This is a discourse that has only a very tenuous connection to the historical person and writer.<sup>62</sup>

I close my analysis of the stage adaptation with another look at the images used in the play. The images in Trevis' stage play present to the spectator certain fragments of the *Recherche* and of Proust. The images, however, also refer back to a lack operative in this particular instance of adaptation. This »lack« does not appear in itself, not even as an omission here. Rather it appears only as a trace wherever something is to be concealed. For one, the »veil of fluid action« that the images draw across the play indicates that there may be lack there on the stage itself. Here, this refers to the *Recherche's* reduction to a sexual tableau with a huge array of technological support mobilised in order to stage the narrative. Secondly, there is a »lack« through the intermittent or incomplete knowledge of the literary source material. As the previous analysis of the reception of the film *Un amour de Swann* has shown, and as the following analysis of the play's reception in newspapers and journals will show, Trevis is not the only person involved who lacks this knowledge. But finally, the screening function of Trevis's »curtains« may also serve to divert from questions raised by the cultural practice of adaptation itself. This becomes obvious in the last scene of the play, where Marcel stands on the stage and propounds his artistic vocation in a final long monologue:<sup>63</sup>

*On my way to the Guermantes' reception I tripped on two uneven paving stones, and very dim,*

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<sup>62</sup> It is in fact fairly obvious from the few remarks he made on the subject that Marcel Proust did not hold film as an art form in high esteem. Given his asthma and other impairments, it would have been fairly surprising had he entered one of the early smoke-filled, noisy and crowded cinemas.

<sup>63</sup> Harold Pinter & Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Past. By Marcel Proust*. London (Faber & Faber) 2000, pp. 137f.

*before my eyes, flashed Venice, a canal, a gondola. The sensation I had once felt on two uneven slabs in the Baptistery of St. Mark's came back to me and I saw again the azure-blue fresco and I remembered that when the waiter inadvertently knocked a spoon against a plate it reminded me of a line of trees seen from a railway carriage. And then I seemed to be in the railway carriage again, so forcibly had the identical sound of the spoon knocking against the plate recalled the sound of the hammer with which the railwayman had remedied some defect. And then I remembered a carriage ride with my mother. At a bend in the road I experienced suddenly that special pleasure which bears no resemblance to any other when I caught sight of the twin steeples of Martinville on which the setting sun was playing, and then of a third steeple, that of Vieuxvicq, which, although separated from them by a hill and a valley, and rising from rather higher ground in the distance, nevertheless seemed to be standing by their side. And as I wiped my mouth with a napkin instantly I thought that the waiter had opened the window onto the beach. And I saw a flash of blue sky through the window. For the napkin had precisely the same stiffness and starchiness as the towel with which I had dried my face on the first day of my arrival at Balbec.*

[Stage direction] The shrill ring of a garden-gate bell.

And I remembered:

The trees at Hudesmesnil

The steeples at Martinville.

The river Vivonne at Combray.

The roofs of Combray.

The garden at Combray in the evening.

Swann opening the garden gate.

The patch of yellow wall in the painting.

Vermeer's View of Delft.

*It was time to begin.*

Apart from some minor liberties taken with the literary source material, this quote sums up all the instances of *mémoire involontaire* the *je* experiences during the day of the final matinée. It also reveals how much is missing from the play since quite a number of the images invoked here have not been referred to by dialogue nor sound, let alone represented visually on the stage: Venice, St. Mark's, the baptistery, the line of trees, the napkin, the towel, the Vivonne, the three steeples, the roofs of Combray. While it is not strictly necessary to see these objects visually represented, turning them into a recited list reveals what this play has ultimately done in the process of adaptation: it has reduced the *Recherche* into a list of must-mentions—both as regards the (rather exclusive) overall choice of plotline as regards this (fairly inclusive) selection of »writerly-artistic-motivation-moments«. There are two narrative movements in the first paragraph of the above quote: first, there is the rapid forward motion towards »The End« in the enumeration of incidents indicated by the repeatedly used conjunction *and* or *and then*; then, there is a movement of postponement through

the descriptive and explanatory elements of the passage. Since several incidents had not been introduced on stage previously, these moments or sights have to be explained lengthily to the spectator and are introduced by the character Marcel speaking, *I tripped...; I remembered...; The sensation I had ... came back to me; I saw again ...; it reminded me of ...; I seemed to be ...; I experienced ...; I caught sight ...; as I wiped ...; I saw... ; etc.* In doing so, the play is foisting a summary of experiences onto the spectator, trying to make him/her see what the play, finally, is »about«. But the spectator here can neither identify him/herself with the remembering »I« of the opening sentence here, nor can s/he identify that »I« satisfactorily as Proust, the famous writer. Not having seen these images, the spectator can only take the three minutes of monologue at »face-value« and must try and tally the narrative strands of jealousy, love, desire, sexual inclination etc.—which s/he has just seen performed—with this added-on message of a calling to great artistry. The position of the »I« remains vacant. Whereas previously, the play had been operating within the rules of an illusionist, closed narrative space, in the monologue it explicitly addresses itself to the audience. This marks the final monologue out as an appeal for help—to come to a mutually satisfactory conclusion:<sup>64</sup>

*There should be no direct address to the audience until the last scene, when Marcel finally turns to them and begins to pull together the strands of all his memories.*

But this obliterates that though these may be memories for Marcel, they are not so for the spectator, who has been provided with an entirely different set of stories by the play. Thus, the solicited cultural interpellation between an »I« and a »you« fails.

The ultimate lack concealed by the »curtains« here is, that the play has lengthily and predominantly told one story of the *Recherche*, but built its finale on a story (or stories) it has touched upon only very intermittently. But that story has to be the finale, because not only is it the finale of the novel (albeit drawn out

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<sup>64</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. Booklet published by the National Theatre (London) 2001 [46pp]. Here p. 14.

much longer, and of course, introduced in much more detail over the entire *Recherche*), but because the novel—through its reception—has not acquired cultural value as a story of (sexual) relationships, but as the story of an artist's life. Had the play followed its primary narrative choices to their logical conclusion, it should built its finale around the many stories the characters, i.e. what had become of them by 1921. However, this would not have given the play the seal of cultural merit, and thus, it would not have exploited the reputation of its source material, the cultural capital of the novel and of the figure Marcel Proust/Proust to the full. The final monologue about art and vocation is expected from such a play by spectator and producer alike—as all want to acquire a stake in such cultural capital.

But foisting the »parcel« of Proustian education onto it in the last minutes, the play virtually pours all its lack onto the (ears of the) spectator. The final unveiling of the blob of yellow colour in the back as the yellow roof top in the Vermeer painting, and the lighting up of that painting across the entire back of the stage, does little to mitigate the discrepancy between the tremendous, joyous revelation the character Marcel has just recited and the abrupt ways in which the spectator is supposed to grasp and share those experiences. Like the sudden cessation of movement in the many freeze-frames used throughout the production, the brusque thematic change here shows that this play is lacking not so much because it made a selection of what was to be represented, but because the logic of the selection was not, or rather, in an adaptation logic of cultural capitalisation could not be followed through.



## Who is the Author?

Another notable facet of the staging history and the reception of the film, is the continued displacement of authorial figures. If to Trevis, Harold Pinter had replaced Marcel Proust as the main author-figure of her project, she herself is displaced by Harold Pinter in the reviews of the play and on the published script for her stage play. On the cover of the book that was published to accompany the production,<sup>65</sup> the authors are listed as (first) Harold Pinter and (second) Di Trevis. On the book's back cover, there is only an image of Harold Pinter, although there would have been plenty of space for another photo of Trevis.<sup>66</sup> Di Trevis who did the main body of adaptation work is not represented. »Woman« appears differently: The illustration of the front cover shows a drawing of a male figure representing Marcel Proust,<sup>67</sup> a woman and a rose. Whereas the Marcel Proust figure is facing the onlooker, the woman is only seen from behind. The enormous pink rose in the foreground covers the lower back of the woman whose dark hair is piled up on her head, the abundant waves held in place by combs. Between the rose and the hair, the woman is naked. As her arms are at her sides, her posture allows the Marcel Proust figure an unrestricted view of her chest. Whereas the woman is in stark black-and-white (clashing with the bright pink of the rose and the violet background), Marcel Proust has traces of colour in his face: his lips, eyelids and cheeks. It is almost like makeup. This implies effeminacy (the dandy of the Emile Blanche portrait), an additionally the heightened colour on his cheeks may also be read as blushing since he is looking at a nude woman. The woman's breasts, buttocks and face are not shown but

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<sup>65</sup> Harold Pinter & Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Past by Marcel Proust*. London (Faber & Faber) 2000.

<sup>66</sup> The photo of Harold Pinter on the back, moreover, presents the author as slightly younger than he de facto was at the time of publication. On the photo he is in his early to mid-sixties, whereas in 2000 he turned 70.

<sup>67</sup> It is, in fact, a simplified copy of the Emile Blanche portrait of Marcel Proust with the gardenia in his lapel.

implied in the construction of the illustration: gazed at by the man in the picture, covered by a rose, and the reverse side of an overly feminine hairdo.

Above this illustration, one can read:

*Remembrance of Things Past*  
by Marcel Proust  
adapted by Harold Pinter & Di Trevis

On the back of the book above the Pinter photo is written:

*Recognized as one of the major literary works of the twentieth-century [sic], Marcel Proust's monumental seven-volume novel brings together memories of childhood and Parisian society before and during the First World War.*

*This new adaptation is based on Harold Pinter's screenplay, written at the request of the film director Joseph Losey in 1972.*

*Remembrance of Things Past premiered at the Royal National Theatre in November 2000.*

Although Trevis is listed, with reference to copyright, as the author with the attendant rights over the publication inside the book, the brief introductory note on the first page does not indicate in any form the work she has done as an author on the project but simply points out her past work as actress and as director. The text on the back cover mentions a director, but it is not Trevis. The name Joseph Losey, here, seems more important than mentioning Di Trevis who co-wrote and directed the play. Similarly, of the three authors involved in the book, only the two male authors, Harold Pinter and Marcel Proust, are recognisable iconically and in print on front and back cover, respectively.<sup>68</sup> The third author-figure, the woman Di Trevis, is replaced by and reduced to a nude object in a picture which both conceals her identity and turns the female body into a caricature of voluptuousness for reader and the figure of Marcel Proust alike.

This shift away from Trevis the author to Pinter and Proust as the main author-figures is a recurring feature in the British press. A contemporary event contributing to this was that the play opened only about a month after the festivities for the seventieth birthday anniversary of Harold Pinter in October

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<sup>68</sup> This furthermore omits the producer Nicole Stéphane.

2000. While most articles on the play do mention both Trevis and Pinter, in some instances it appears as if Harold Pinter had adapted the screenplay for the stage and Trevis only collaborated or merely directed the play.

## 4. Proust 2000

### **My (Oh My) Proust! or Does Ownership Matter?**

Whereas the reception of the Schlöndorff adaptation a decade and a half earlier was very much a cultural event whose reception was strongly predicated on nationalist arguments, the reception of this stage production is configured by questions of cultural literacy, availability and also feasibility. The latter here relates both to the feasibility in terms of adapting the *Recherche* (to screen and stage respectively), but also to the feasibility in terms of being able to read the original, and the very desirability of such a labour. Noteworthy as recurring elements in the articles is that this »digest version« of *A la recherche du temps perdu* was welcomed as an introduction to, or even as a satisfactory summary of the entire work: one is spared the expense of time and energy a reading of the novel would require.<sup>69</sup> The US-American *International Herald Tribune* article<sup>70</sup> on the production sums it up as follows:

*At the National's Cottesloe Theatre, Harold Pinter and Di Trevis have done everyone a considerable favor with "Remembrance of Things Past," a three-hour digest of Proust's "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu." [...]*

*Sure it takes a little time to work out who everyone is, how they are related and why they matter, but three hours in a theater is a small part of your life to pay for the first coherent overview of a sequence of novels that all too many of us have still never quite managed to fathom.*

This is in marked contrast to the opinions expressed in French papers and in academic articles on the making of *Un amour de Swann*. There, the act of

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<sup>69</sup> Articles in favour of this were Nicholas de Jongh, *Dream of a Play is a truly memorable Remembrance*. IN: *Evening Standard* (24.11.2000) and *ibid.*; John Gross, *Elevating O'Neill*. IN: *Sunday Telegraph* (26.11.2000; the first half of article is on theatre production of *A Long Day's Journey into the Night*); Charlott Birkett, *Review: Remembrance of Things Past by Harold Pinter*. ON: *Theatreworld Internet Magazine*. <http://members.aol.com/mouseuk/stage>. (taken 27.11.2000); and Robert Hawes, *Memories are made of this...* . IN: *The Post* (09. 03. 2001).

<sup>70</sup> Sheridan Morley, *Triumphant Return of 'Long Day's Journey'*. IN: *International Herald Tribune* (29.11.2000). The first half of the article is on theatre production of the Eugene O'Neill play *A Long Day's Journey Into the Night*, which was of particular interest for the US-press because the actress Jessica Lange was among the cast.

popularising Proust, of making him accessible to a larger public was berated for its oversimplification of the novel's complexity. Already in the reception of the Ruiz film, one could note a shift in evaluation parameters. Here, finally, one could find unequivocally positive responses to an abbreviated version of Proust. It is seen as a plus that the work can be consumed at one evening's entertainment. A nationalist argument only appears marginally.<sup>71</sup> While one may be tempted to attribute this debonair attitude regarding the *Recherche* to the sources' US-American provenance, the following shows that this was also an opinion held on the European side of the Atlantic. In some articles, the play and its extreme condensation of Proust were berated as confusing or simply not worthwhile.<sup>72</sup> While most articles singled out either the directing, the stage design, or the vignettes of the episodes, the acting or other,<sup>73</sup> very few remarked on how a newcomer spectator will react to the play. An article<sup>74</sup> in the *Evening Standard* is an exception:

*The question which I kept asking myself all though the evening was: would any of this make sense if you hadn't read the book? There isn't really a plot to A la recherche and, without the narrative voice as*

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<sup>71</sup> Matt Wolf, *Abroad. Remembrance of Things Past*. IN: *Variety* (22.01.2001). In this US-American weekly film magazine, the article commented on the lacking representation of the *fluid sexuality*, and then explains it by *well, these are Brits playing les français [...]*;

Also, John Peter, *Rest of the Week's Theatre*. IN: *The Sunday Times* (03.12.2000). This article criticised the wrong pronunciation of the names and titles: *People should pronounce names properly: here, Vinteuil is pronounced Van Toy, prince as Prance, Gilberte as Zhil Burt*.

<sup>72</sup> Kate Bassett, *Painful Gathering of the Crumbling Clan*. IN: *Independent on Sunday* (26.11.2000).

Roger Foss, *Best Forgotten*. IN: *What's On* (29.11.2000). Far from being a time-saver, the article says one risks *deep vein thrombosis sitting for three hours in the Cottesloe's cramped seating* and describes the production as *a strange three-hour page-to-stage experience which is unlikely to appeal to either Proust pundits or general theatregoers who may never have dipped into the vast novel*. This view was contradicted by the ticket sales of the following months: the production was sold out.

<sup>73</sup> John Lahr, *Bluebirds of Unhappiness. The Haunted Houses of Proust and O'Neill*. IN: *The New Yorker* (29.01.2001; the second half of the article is on the stage production *A Long Day's Journey Into the Night*); Peter Hepple, *Direct Playing is Atmospheric*. IN: *The Stage* (29.11.2000); Sheridan Morley, *Triumphant Return of 'Long Day's Journey'*. IN: *International Herald Tribune* (29.11.2000; the first half of the article is on theatre production of the O'Neill play); Matt Wolf, *Abroad: Remembrance of Things Past*. IN: *Variety* (22.01.2001), John Peter, *Rest of the Week's Theatre*. IN: *Sunday Times* (03.12.2000).

<sup>74</sup> A.N. Wilson, *Something to Remember Marcel By*. IN: *The Evening Standard* (21.11.2000). Please note, the overall tenor of the article was very favourable of the production.

*the unifying gel, how can it ever avoid being just a series of vignettes?*

*So, while it will fascinate Proust addicts — many of whom will disagree with this or that interpretation — I found it hard to know whether it stands on its own as a play.*

Those articles who did point out the comprehension challenges posed by the staging, did not necessarily formulate this as a critique of the play's merit—as the just quoted article is proof of. Rather, they predicted a return to the book to find answers to questions left unanswered by the stage play or pointed out the general inability of a theatre production to grasp, represent and transmit the significance, essence or the relevance of Proust and his work.<sup>75</sup> It again must be noted that this did not signify the dismissal of the stage production. An article in *The Evening Standard*<sup>76</sup> lauds the play even though it is utterly incomprehensible to the uninitiated:

*Those of us who have never dipped into Proust's deep waters and never had the courage to take the plunge will be unable to judge how far Harold Pinter's theatre version, adapted from his never-filmed 1972 cinema script, is faithful to the author. But that's beside the theatrical point. Director Di Trevis, who co-adapted Pinter's script, has created a thrilling three-hour reverie, a theatrical dreamscape which drifts between the comic and the sad.*

First of all, one can note how Di Trevis is once more demoted into becoming a co-author of Harold Pinter in his theatre adaptation of his screenplay in this article. Then, one can note here a shift as regards the esteem »fidelity« is held in—especially in contrast with the theories of adaptation the previous chapters have outlined. »Fidelity« still exists as a way of evaluating an adaptation, but being »faithful« to the author is no longer the primary goal of an adaptation. When the article relegates fidelity to the sidelines, this implies that cultural literacy in the form of prior knowledge of Marcel Proust and his work does not matter anymore either. In both of the reviews in *The Evening Standard*, whether the production does Proust and his work justice, and whether it conveys the content of the *Recherche* to the public, are not regarded as central

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<sup>75</sup> Dominic Cavendish, Journey from Page to Stage Leaves Proust and Pinter's Remembrance Sadly Forgettable. IN: *The Daily Telegraph* (27.11.2000); Peter Hepple, Direct Playing is Atmospheric. IN: *The Stage* (29.11.2000);

<sup>76</sup> Nicholas de Jongh, Dream of a Play Is a Truly Memorable Remembrance. IN: *The Evening Standard* (24.11.2000).

concerns of such an adaptation.

Critical articles pointed out that the medium of the theatre is much less flexible than the medium of film and that the film script of Pinter was not only clearer but also much better than the stage adaptation.<sup>77</sup> Apart from this somewhat facile assertion, the critical elevation of the film script is noteworthy. Because, paradoxically, it was in articles written on the Harold Pinter script at its initial publication, that the comprehension challenge of the script was noted as a shortcoming. In comparative approaches to the two film scripts of the *Recherche* it was almost invariably the Cecchi-d'Amico-Visconti script that was seen as the better of the two.<sup>78</sup> Over the course of almost twenty-five years, the evaluation of the Pinter script has thus changed quite significantly. The article in *The Financial Times*<sup>79</sup> describes it as follows:

*Harold Pinter's 1972 screenplay adaptation of Proust's magnum opus A la recherche du temps perdu is a work of brilliant, extraordinary re-imagination. That the film director Joseph Losey was never able to realise it on celluloid is one of the great might-have-beens of cinema. Pinter has much in common with Proust - the fascination with memory, the obsession with power-struggles within a couple or a trio, the ironic view of a social milieu - but he has, too, an un-Proustian gift for concision.*

As the following chapter will further map out, these two film projects were

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<sup>77</sup> Cf. e.g. Benedict Nightingale, A Pinteresque Proust Brings All the Mysteries of Life to the Stage. IN: *The Times* (28.11.2000): *It was never made into a film, but it's still a superb read: a mix of suggestive images and fascinating events that somehow contrives to show the protagonist simultaneously enduring and remembering the louche upper-crust life that prepared him for a career as a writer. [...] It pains me to say that the play falls shorter of those unscalable Proustian peaks than the film script, because I like to believe that the stage can lift the imagination higher up the slopes than any movie, but a theatrical piece cannot easily cut from a glimpse of Venice to a yellow screen to a Vermeer painting, or between the watching eyes of character after character, and therefore it cannot take you so far into Marcel Proust's flickering mind as he sums up involuntary yet intense memories.*

<sup>78</sup> Cf. also for a re-evaluation, Thanh-Van Thon That, Du livre au film imaginaire: les scénarios d'A la recherche du temps perdu. IN: *Bulletin Marcel Proust de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. (1997) 47, pp. 157-171.

Here, the Pinter and the Cecchi-d'Amico-Visconti script are termed different *réécritures* of the same story which focus on different themes (Pinter on memory and the symbolic; Visconti on *mondanité* and the anecdotal). Both interpretations are regarded not only as legitimate for themselves but equal in comparison.

<sup>79</sup> Alastair Macauley, Pinter's 'Recherche' a Lyrical Collage. IN: *The Financial Times* (27.11.2000).

Another article praising both the Pinter film script and the medium of film vs. theatre is Dominic Cavendish, Journey from Page to Stage leaves Proust and Pinter's Remembrance Sadly Forgettable. IN: *Daily Telegraph* (27.11.2000).

(each by itself at different times) regarded as losses to arthouse cinema. As pointed out in the second chapter, here again the adaptors are likened to Proust. Whereas before the stories were predominantly (auto)biographically configured, here the connection is made via themes and writerly obsessions. While the article praises the film script Harold Pinter wrote, it criticises the stage adaptation. It here singled out a feature that could be blamed on the director, i.e. the acting style she demanded from her actors. She thereby had turned *Proust's exceptionally poetic novel* [...] into *Upstairs, Downstairs prose*. Re-reading Proust and blaming Trevis here serves not so much an ultimate truth, but to assert the author-figure Harold Pinter, who upstages both Trevis and Proust.

The critique or the praise always revolved around the question whether or not the production managed to convey the feeling or the meaning of the *Recherche*. Several articles describe the production or the *Recherche* in terms such as *haunting*, *spooky* and *dreamlike*, as filled with ghosts.<sup>80</sup> The choice of words indicates another shift as regards evaluation parameters of adaptation. While the reviews still work on the presumption that there was a definable meaning to the *Recherche*, this meaning is not longer set as absolute nor is the criterion of fidelity to Proust a prime evaluator. The »aboutness« I referred to in the second chapter, for this cultural event, has become a more opaque or diffuse affair. Even if an absence of French reviewers' polemics may signify a certain *détente*, one must, however, bear in mind that these are predominantly English and US-American reviews commenting on a London production. When contrasting the non-nationalistically configured reception of the theatre play with that of the film *Un*

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<sup>80</sup> Nicholas de Jongh, Dream of a Play Is a Truly Memorable Remembrance. IN: *The Evening Standard* (24.11.2000): *a thrilling three-hour reverie, a theatrical dream-scape* [quoted in full above].

Peter Hepple, Direct Playing Is Atmospheric. IN: *The Stage* (29.11.2000): *its dreamlike quality and strangely haunting portrayal*.

Paul Taylor, Long Pause, Pinter's Proust is Stuck in Mystifying Freeze Frame. IN: *The Independent* (23.11.2000): *suffused with the distant dreamy piano sounds of Dominic Muldowney and the spooky out-of-time rapture shots*.

John Peter, Rest of the Week's Theatre. IN: *Sunday Times* (03.12.2000): *like a realistic dream sequence*.



*amour de Swann*, one must also take into account that while the medium film is circulated internationally, theatre is predominantly performed within a national context. In 2000, a Proust adaptation certainly appears as a less contested object of cultural production than during the reception of the film *Un amour de Swann*. In the reviews then, there emerge several themes that Proust and the *Recherche* are supposedly »about«. The theme of class is one of these, and it invariably appears in the negative, i.e. as something the production failed to convey in proper way.<sup>81</sup> On the other hand, when this Proustian theme is not termed class but snobbery, it is evaluated positively in reviews.<sup>82</sup>

As another theme of the play, sex is listed in numerous articles. In contrast to the reviews written on the film *Un amour de Swann*, here the reviews do not negate the theme a priori. Regarding *Remembrance of Things Past*, there are very few disparaging remarks on the predominance of sexual matters in the stage version. Where the play is criticised, it is rarely done so because of its representations of sex.<sup>83</sup> Several reviews even welcomed the exploration of gayness and lesbian relationships as primary plot-motivation.<sup>84</sup> One article went

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. A.N. Wilson, Something to Remember Marcel By. IN: *The Evening Standard* (21.11.2000); John Gross, Elevating O'Neill. IN: *The Sunday Telegraph* (26.11.2000)

<sup>82</sup> Ingrid Wassenaar, Plying the Little Phrase. IN: *Times Literary Supplement* (8.12.2000): *Having said that, the delight in this production, and its pictures of Paris and the Normandy coast, definitely lie in the first half, when Proust's great themes are opened up: snobbery and sexuality.*

<sup>83</sup> Favourable articles: Ingrid Wassenaar, Plying the Little Phrase. IN: *Times Literary Supplement* (08.12.2001); Alan Strachan, Comedy, Sex, Snobbery - The Essence of Proust. & A.N. Wilson, Something to Remember Marcel By. Both IN: *The Evening Standard* (21.11.2000); Nicholas de Jongh, Dream of a Play Is a Truly Memorable Remembrance. Also IN: *The Evening Standard* (24.11.2000).

Adverse articles: Dominic Cavendish, Journey from Page to Stage leaves Proust and Pinter's Remembrance Sadly Forgettable. IN: *Daily Telegraph* (27.11.2000); Charlott Birkett, Review: Remembrance of Things Past by Harold Pinter. ON: *Theatreworld Internet Magazine*. (<http://members.aol.com/mouseuk/stage>. Taken 27.11.2000); John Lahr, Bluebirds of Unhappiness. The Haunted Houses of Proust and O'Neill. IN: *The New Yorker* (29.1.2001; the second half of the article is on the stage production of *A Long Day's Journey Into the Night*); Benedict Nightingale's Five Best West End Shows. IN: *Play* (23.02.2001).

<sup>84</sup> Charlott Birkett, Review: Remembrance of Things Past by Harold Pinter. ON: *Theatreworld Internet Magazine* (<http://members.aol.com/mouseuk/stage>. Taken 27.11.2000).

so far as to state this was the main theme of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. And again, this is connected to Harold Pinter's mastery of Proust:<sup>85</sup>

*Pinter is one of the few adaptors of Proust who has been able to transmit what keeps A la recherche du temps perdu on the move, which is sex [...].*

What can be noted in newspapers, is that not only do they point out the success of the production, but that this particular production is also singled out (not least through international attention given to it) as one of the prime events if one were to be in London at the time. The *Guardian* put it on the list of five »must-sees« as did *The Post* critic Benedict Nightingale.<sup>86</sup> *The Sunday Times* put it on the *Top Arts Events of the Next Month* List—alongside the US-film *Charlie's Angels*.<sup>87</sup> *The Financial Times* listed it as one of the global attractions of the season.<sup>88</sup> That there was great demand for the play transpires not only from the continuation of the production beyond the initially planned number of performances but also in transferring it from the smallest stage of the National Theatre to the largest stage, from the Cottesloe in November/December 2000 to the Olivier in February 2001. Just before the premiere of the production, *The Evening Standard*<sup>89</sup> wrote on the phenomenon Proust:

*Once the prerogative of turtle-necked Gauloise-smokers, Proust has finally become cool; you could say we're on a crest of a Marcel wave. So it's the perfect time for director Di Trevis to exhume Harold Pinter's seventies adaptation compressing the gargantuan meditation on Parisian high society and the poser of memory into an evening in the theatre.*

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The article described the actress playing the comtesse de Guermantes: [...] *Julie Legrand's Vicomtesse is an aristo dyke with a vengeance.*

<sup>85</sup> Ingrid Wassenaar, *Plying the Little Phrase*. IN: *Times Literary Supplement* (08.12.2000).

<sup>86</sup> *The Guardian* (16.12.2000; on the list it takes the second place). *Benedict Nightingale's Five Best West End Shows*. IN: *Play* (23.02.2001).

<sup>87</sup> *The Sunday Times* (29.10.2000).

*Charlie's Angels* (2000, McG [sic])

<sup>88</sup> *The Financial Times* (20.11.2000).

<sup>89</sup> *The Evening Standard* (23.11.2000).

Several months later, after the production had been transferred to the larger theatre, *The Post*<sup>90</sup> wrote on the *Recherche* and the production:

*A novel almost everybody has heard of but few have actually read. It has always been surrounded by literary snobbery, so that even the people who have managed to struggle through some of it are dismissed by the purists, who insist it's no good unless you've read it in the original French — and of course they look down on potted versions too.*

*So what is one to do? Well, a new escape route is offered by the National Theatre, which has put on a delightfully digestive three-hour taster in the form of a play.*

After commenting on the necessity of constantly lugging furniture and props on and off the stage during the play, the article concludes:

*This production is a best seller, so get a ticket if you can. Whether you're a Proust expert or one of the many people who feel they ought to have made an effort to read a work so raved about, you will enjoy this exquisitely tasteful titbit. At the NT bookshop you can buy the book and the film-script of the book and the book on the author and even the magical music of the play.*

Notably absent from the articles is a critical reflection on the implications of the stage production in the context of Proust reception and of cultural literacy in general. Not only does the stage version represent an appropriation into another medium, there even is a double medialisation from novel to script to stage—and none of the reviewers commented on the fact that Di Trevis had not read the *Recherche* in its entirety. That what had been a initiatory and cherished rite of passage in many of the previous narratives of reading Proust, i.e. the complex experience of reading the entire *Recherche*, in the Trevis narrative has been replaced by a mere reference-relationship between the director and the literary source material. This is not reflected or critically commented upon in any of the reviews. Nor do the articles critically analyse whether it makes sense at all (setting aside the merits of this particular project) to undertake such a condensation and abbreviation of a work of literature; or what would be the ideological pre-conditions for such demands of facile consumption of a difficult work of literature; or whether such demands should be catered to. While several

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<sup>90</sup> Robert Hawes, *Memories Are Made of This...* IN: *The Post* (09.03.2001). Here: *potted versions, digestive, taster and tasteful titbit.*

Note also the same choice of metaphorical field as in André Bazin, *Adaptation or the Cinema as Digest.* (1948). Reprinted IN: *Film Adaptation.* Ed. by James Naremore. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 2000, pp. 19-27.

articles referred the theatre goes back to the book for the »real« thing, none of the reviews berated the possible motivations behind such theatre visits, i.e. to keep up literate appearances while eschewing the work that the acquisition of such cultural literacy demands. What in film studies has been termed the transition from gaze to glance (differentiating between spectatorial absorption in the visual narrative as displayed on a cinema screen vs. the distracted look at a TV screen), here resurfaces in an unwillingness to engage laboriously with Proust.<sup>91</sup>

Nor was much critical commentary to be found regarding the effects of pseudo-literacy that could be the outcome of such projects. As the above quotes from *The Evening Standard* and *The Post* show, reception even turns the tables around: making a mockery of those who actually have read the *Recherche* and argue in defence and sympathy of those who find such cultural literacy too much effort. In several of the articles, then, an obvious lack of Proust-knowledge becomes apparent:<sup>92</sup> the number of volumes the *Recherche* consists of varies between eight, nine and twelve;<sup>93</sup> Swann is mistaken for Marcel; the madeleine is dunked into camomile tea; Mlle. Vinteuil is misspelt as Verneuil, Balbec as

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Janet Staiger, *Modes of Reception*. IN: idem, *Perverse Spectators. The Practices of Film Reception*. New York & London (New York University Press) 2000, pp. 11-27.

<sup>92</sup> Also note the omissions and mistakes in the chronology of Marcel Proust's life as given in the programme of the stage production. Omissions are primarily the writing of *Jean Santeuil* and the awarding of the Prix Goncourt and move to rue Hamelin. Omitting *Jean Santeuil* here (after having mentioned his work on Ruskin and *Les plaisirs et les jours*), on the one hand likens this story to that of the reception, where *Jean Santeuil* had been rediscovered long after *A la recherche du temps perdu* had been published and thus somehow relativised what was seen as the great leap between his first attempts and his masterpiece. Omission of the Prix Goncourt and the move to rue Hamelin makes Proust more *weltabgewandt*, even more of a recluse than he de facto was—especially after having mentioned not only the moving to boulevard Haussmann but extensively describing the apartment as being *famous for the corklined bedroom from which, in later years, he almost never stirred, partly to prevent asthmatic or nervous attacks, partly to avoid distraction from his writing*. The move to boulevard Haussmann is dated 1907, whereas de facto Marcel Proust moved there two years earlier. The programme thus links his alleged life of a recluse even closer to the beginning of work on the *Recherche* (1908) by putting only a year of delay between the two.

<sup>93</sup> The twelve volumes most likely stem from mistaking the number of volumes of the English version for the novel's structure.

Baalbec; Proust (who died 1922) is described as having a keen grasp of the 1890s and 1920s.<sup>34</sup> Besides the perpetuation of popular-knowledge mythologising, one can also object to the *New Yorker*<sup>35</sup> formulating Marcel Proust as partaking in the *avant-garde of suffering*.

This is not to argue against adaptations of the *Recherche* in general, but to pose the question what is received in exchange for, what takes the place of the first-hand experience of reading. This experience may be positive and negative. It is quite possible to be bored by Proust. But if one were bored by reading him, why would one go and see the play? To find out whether one's attention might have been engaged seriously if one had read one volume further? Considering the comprehension challenge the production was for the spectators, this would have presupposed a sound knowledge of the structure of the entire *Recherche*. Conversely, if one has read the *Recherche*, what does one stand to gain from watching such a production? No opinion given on the stage production ventured so far as to say Trevis did the story a better service than Proust himself had done. So, this is not a narrative of progress. Moreover, since the authorial exchange took place between Trevis and Pinter, one must ask where Proust and his work really do enter into this. Do such projects, indeed, succeed in an educative function, i.e. do they render a difficult work of literature accessible?

Firstly, as pointed out above, the play poses comprehension challenges to

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Alastair Macauley, *Pinter's 'Recherche' a Lyrical Collage*. IN: *Financial Times* (27.11.2000)

<sup>35</sup> John Lahr, *Bluebirds of Unhappiness. The Haunted Houses of Proust and O'Neill*. IN: *The New Yorker* (29.1.2001; the second half of the article is on the stage production *A Long Day's Journey Into the Night*).

On, p. 92, the article argues: *His father and his younger brother were distinguished doctors who lived lives of social usefulness and robust heterosexuality; the cosseted, sickly Proust chose instead the avant-garde of suffering. Everything about his life—breathing, eating, sleeping, travelling, even sex—was problematic; his eyes, ears, stomach, skin and psyche were so delicate and so easily irritated that he could only intermittently partake of the privileged world that was his inheritance. He was a connoisseur of collapse, a homosexual outsider who made a myth of retreat.*

In the following, the article mentions Trevis only as director and exclusively Harold Pinter as the author of the stage adaptation. And when the article tells how the character Charlus reiterates the entire list of his titles at La Raspelière, this is attributed to Pinter's *sense of bombast* rather than recognising it as a verbatim Proust (SG-III, 333).

the uninitiated. I have doubts whether one carries more out of the theatre than multiply intersecting narratives of fin-de-siècle encounters, most of which revolve around illicit sex and betrayal. Then, there is a more complex question whether this play acts as a cultural equaliser, in the sense that because of it more people are aware of, become knowledgeable about, and thus possess cultural capital of the phenomenon Proust. Reformulated: the question arises whether more people are aware of what his work (rather than this theatre event) is »about« and what having read his book represents in itself. The answer to the latter is clearly no, since one cannot make such experiences by proxy. Regardless of the ultimate verdict an individual reader may pass on the *Recherche*, the durée-experience of the reading in itself marks the book out. Even if the three-hour stage version of Proust were to have given all the key episodes of Proust, it cannot replace the temporal expanse of the reading act required.<sup>66</sup> The three-hour theatre experience did not comprehensively re-present the entire *Recherche*: while giving an impression of Proust and the *Recherche*, it should not be mistaken for Proust or the *Recherche*. The National Theatre production, then, may even deepen the rift between a Proust-initiated audience and those who only know the stage version—where the former regard the latter as semi-literate, the latter the former as culture snobs. Another bizarre detail of the production is that the National Theatre repertoire listed it in the misleading rubric of New Writing.<sup>67</sup>

The guidelines for subsidising of the production's prime sponsor, the Laura Pels Foundation, were given in the programme as follows:

*The Laura Pels Foundation, based in New York, is committed to the support of outstanding*

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<sup>66</sup> As far as filmic experiences of such temporal expansion are concerned, there is, e.g., the adaptation of Alexander Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1980, Rainer Werner Fassbinder) which lasted approx. 15 1/2 hours including a 90-minute epilogue added by the director. Also, the *Heimat* cycles (1984, 11 episodes, 15 1/2 hours; 1992, 13 episodes, 23 1/2 hours; a third cycle is planned; Edgar Reitz) represent such a durée project. The Russian adaptation of *War and Peace* (1968, Sergej Bondcharuk) with a length of 7 1/2 hours almost seems short in comparison.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. article Roger Foss, *Best Forgotten*. IN: *What's On* (29.11.2000): *How, one wonders, does the National justify calling a five-year-old rehash of a 30-year-old novel [sic] 'new'? Pinter, at 70, is our greatest living playwright and Trevis is a fine director, but there must surely be some genuinely NEW writing talent out there worth encouraging?*

*theatrical productions and theatrical organisations that make a significant contribution to the vitality of the field. It's mission is to encourage the production of classic plays, including the great works of the 20th century; to foster the creation, growth and production of new work by recognized contemporary playwrights; and to develop an arena for theatre to flourish so that it is accessible to the general public.*

As the above analysis on the question of authorship in this production has shown and the following analysis on Pinter will further elaborate, it is unclear which author is the central one: the modern classic Proust? The famous playwright Harold Pinter? Or Di Travis who at fifty is not a newcomer to the directorial chair, but could arguably be a *new writer*?

Also, the mandate of making such authors and theatre accessible to a general public, in this adaptation project is a double-edged sword. For it is a dubious achievement indeed, that such productions foster a belief that having seen the play one knows the *Recherche*—even if done quite unintentionally. It is not necessary to have read this work of literature (or any other from a canon) to get through life, to be cultured, let alone to be happy. But to pretend one »knows Proust« because one has seen a stage adaptation is clearly pretentious. Beyond a naive curiosity about Proust, the popularity of the sold-out production suggests that knowledge of the literary canon still is the »proper thing to have«. Together with other new forms Proust has taken in the past few years, this theatre production does not liberate the author and his work from the preservationists. It reaffirms his work as *Kulturgut*, a cultural good, while the reception of the play's production documents an openly displayed unwillingness to undertake the work of reading the *Recherche*. Proust and his work are firmly relocated back into a restorative canon—in the form of an easily digestible commodity.

## 5. Pinter 2000

### Changes

One key episode of the *Recherche* that those relying solely on the stage adaptation and the film script for their knowledge of the *Recherche* would be unaware of, is the madeleine—which had been featured in Di Trevis' first adaptation but was omitted (again) at the request of Harold Pinter. In her booklet<sup>\*</sup> this is the second item on the list of re-writings:

2. The opening sequence of my workshop production — the scene with the madeleine — should be cut

*It was not in the original screenplay but I had incorporated it into a new beginning taken from Proust's — as opposed to Marcel's — life where he becomes chilled in a snow storm and Françoise brings him his tisane and a madeleine to warm him on his return home. This is the most famous moment from Proust and for that reason Harold was adamant about dispensing with it.*

First of all, one can note here again a confusion between historical persons and characters. When Trevis speaks of Proust, she apparently means the author and when speaking of Marcel, she means the central character *je*. But in the second sentence the novel is implied in the preposition *from*, rather than *of* or *about*. Whereas *of* would designate the word *Proust* to be a person, *from* equates *Proust* with the novel, which again blurs the boundary between the writer and his fiction.<sup>99</sup> Then, she transfers the literary character Françoise to what according

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<sup>\*</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. London (National Theatre) 2001, p. 13.

The first had been the omission of a narrator that Trevis had inserted into the stage version. On the other hand, there were changes that Harold Pinter apparently agreed to such as shifting the position of certain scenes (the troubled relationship of the figures Swann and Odette appears much earlier in the play than in the script); or omitting scenes (the trees at Hudesmesnil; the Vivonne; Venice; Doncières; or, at the Verdurin soirée Madame Verdurin does not try to introduce Morel to the Queen of Parma). That Charlus and the Queen of Parma effusively greet each other with an Italian *Cugino! /Cugina!* at the soirée is, e.g. an addition of Trevis' to the script.

<sup>99</sup> In her discussions with Pinter this appears when referring to Proust's/Marcel's sexuality:

*In the course of this conversation, I mentioned Proust's homosexuality and Harold said, "But Marcel is not homosexual". This led to consideration of what critics call the double "I" in Proust — there is Marcel*



to her, is part of the writer's biography. However, the madeleine episode does form part of the biography, whereas the servant Françoise does not. The character Françoise is fiction. As many other characters, Françoise is aggregated from several historical servants Marcel Proust had known. Then, Trevis furthermore misrepresents the fictional narrative: it was not a servant but the mother who gave the *je* his tea in the novel and the servant fetching the cake is not named.<sup>100</sup>

Harold Pinter insisted on the omission of this episode not because it would have been difficult to stage or irrelevant but because it is so well-known. It had already been absent from the film script thirty years earlier. It featured only in the earliest of notes dating back to February 29th 1972 (where it was misspelt as *Madelaine* twice) and in a list of thoughts on the opening sequence dated March 7th. In the latter manuscript document, it is already preceded by a question mark.<sup>101</sup> In subsequent notes and in the next drafts of that same month it is omitted. What is also notable comparing the successive drafts of the film's script, is that the opening sequence was already in place in the first notes and did not change much in the following reworkings of the script. Thus, from very early on it was clear that though there was to be a »memory sequence« as the opening of

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*Proust and there is Marcel. They are different. Proust chooses to fictionalise Marcel's love affair as a heterosexual one. While we may be aware of a writer's sexuality, aware that his choices might have been affected by the social pressures of his time, the fact remains that he has made a choice — as Tennessee Williams did in, for instance, A Streetcar Named Desire or E.M. Foster in A Room with a View.*

Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. London (National Theatre) 2001, p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. CS-I, 44: *Il y avait déjà des années que, de Combray, tout ce qui n'était pas le théâtre et le drame de mon coucher, n'existait plus pour moi, quand un jour d'hiver, comme je rentrais à la maison, ma mère, voyant que j'avais froid, me proposa de me faire prendre, contre mon habitude, un peu de thé. Je refusai d'abord et, je ne sais pourquoi, me ravisai. Elle envoyait chercher un de ces gâteau courts et dodus appelés Petites Madeleines qui semblent avoir été moulés dans la valve rainurée d'une coquille de St. Jacques.* My underlining, KD.

<sup>101</sup> The list (dated 7.3.1972) is headed by *Recap of our phone conversation last week about opening sequences*. Most of the elements of that sequence are already assembled in the descriptions given, the white (or rather yellow) screen images are not yet included. It cannot be ascertained beyond doubt who wrote this scene. In declining degrees of probability it would have been written by Harold Pinter, Joseph Losey, or Barbara Bray.

the film, and although other memory triggers and pivotal moments (the towel, Venice, the steeples, the train, the trees, and the cobbles) still feature in the final script, the madeleine was dropped. This rigorous denial of the madeleine suggests a threat emanating from it. The threat is that in the reception of Marcel Proust, the madeleine has come to be read as metonymic object for the writer and the *Recherche*. To leave this *Wahrzeichen* in the play, or to have left it in the script, would have irrevocably asserted the literary writer in the film (or in the play) once more as author-figure and would have had the effect of detracting from the writer of the script (from Harold Pinter), as author-figure. Just as Harold Pinter had been asserted as the author and Di Trevis as the co-author (or even just as the director) in the stage adaptation, here, the omission of the madeleine is a refutation of Proust's authorial position.

It was Harold Pinter who then also insisted on omitting a narrator and all direct address to the audience. This meant more than a deviation in narrative technique. It meant purging the stage play from an authorial voice that might be ascribed to Proust:<sup>102</sup> *As a consequence of cutting all notion of narration there should be no passages from Proust at all.* The play's plotline is still that of the *Recherche* just as the dialogue may still be taken from the novel and, thus, Proust is not entirely absent from the text of the play. But by barring the descriptive passages, the play indeed reduces Proust to a string of society encounters setting aside reflective or analytic passages of the *Recherche*, i.e. those that amongst other aspects of the work have made the novel so interesting for modern criticism. In the same move it makes the literary source material appear rather banal. Among those spectators who come to the play with knowledge of the novel this may not be the case. However, it does result in a lopsided view for those spectators who rely entirely on the play for their knowledge of the work and the writer. Just as the play may foster an erroneous belief of »knowing Proust«, it may also lead a

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<sup>102</sup> Di Trevis, *Remembrance of Things Proust. A Rehearsal Diary*. London (National Theatre) 2001, p. 14.

spectator to the conclusion that the *Recherche* cannot be that interesting after all, if this is all it is »about«. In both cases, the feat of adapting it appears as the most remarkable (i.e. as the heroic) feature of the entire production—which would position the author-figure Pinter centre stage.

Before I analyse how the Proust-project has been interpreted in relation to Harold Pinter's œuvre and his biography, it is helpful to point out some general observations from the various stages the script went through. Most scripts in general undergo a process of cutting as soon as they reach the stage of pre-production. Cuts may be necessitated by budget constraints, by the specific locations found or the possibilities of creating sets in a studio etc. In the case of film adaptation, the story is not constructed from scratch but there already exists a plotline. Adaptations have to cut not only for all the other reasons, but also because the literary source material is (in most cases) too abundant as to be taken up in its entirety if the finished film is expected to stay within a certain time limit. In the case of *The Proust Screenplay* it can be observed that the cutting predominantly concerns those parts of the novel that represent the theme of society. Some of these can be ascribed to financial considerations as voiced by Barbara Bray: thus the episode with the character of the princesse de Luxembourg and of her black servant at Balbec is omitted.<sup>103</sup> Time certainly was the other motivator for the editing of certain scenes.<sup>104</sup> What can be observed from the cuts done, is that very few fundamentally change (let alone leave aside entirely) narrative strands regarding the amorous or sexual relationships between the characters. Here, it is only the degree of elucidation or of representation that differs from draft to draft. I come back to the theme of sex as configured in the script, the stage play and the reception of it at a later stage.

What is striking is how the omissions or changes affect the overall theme of

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<sup>103</sup> *Can we afford the Princesse de Luxembourg?* (In notes of Barbara Bray, dated 9/9/1972, comments on draft).

<sup>104</sup> I give a list of the most prominent omissions in Appendix II.

society. For one, the Dreyfus affair is significantly reduced. While it is still present in the final version, it is no longer represented as a social divider within and across social strata in the script, i. e. as the event that historically split France at the turn of the century. That it was regarded as important can be deduced from the fact that it figured among the second group of omissions and thus it was held on to for a longer time. Here, I point out (again) that according to his notes, Joseph Losey had intended to use well-known historic photographs of the arrested Dreyfus in the film. No reference is made to this in the published script. Not only does this particular cluster of omissions indicate a de-historicisation and certainly a de-politicisation of the narrative. In the same move it strengthens the other overall theme of the *Recherche*, i.e. memory. It is seconded in this by numerous other omissions at the cost of the society theme, i.e. scenes that showed more characters, or scenes that would have represented the characters in depth and especially in their social interactions. Despite keeping so much of the society theme, the adaptation written by Pinter used its source material as a way of narrating a memory of Proust rather than the society of Proust. The script's opening sequence with its profusion of shots that show Marcel's pivotal memories (which as yet cannot be located in an overall narrative) rather than pivotal social scenes is a prime indicator of this.<sup>105</sup>

Additionally, as the previously analysed narrative technique of insertions revealed, this means that of the two themes in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, society gets slightly short-changed. The opening sequence of *The Proust Screenplay* significantly shows not various people but flashes of objects, of landscape, of cities.<sup>106</sup> The individual diegeses of the various emotional and sexual entanglements are interwoven in the script. This becomes perhaps more clear in comparison with another film offering a social critique through similar narratives: in the film *La ronde*, the opening sequence represents society as a

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<sup>105</sup> This was reversed in the stage adaptation.

<sup>106</sup> Cf. here, the introduction of the principal character through photographic representation in the film *Le temps retrouvé*.

succession of amorous encounters, where each partner cheats and is cheated upon in the successive shot. Here, the film tells a brief narrative of its own in each shot. Each of these narratives is on the one hand self-contained, but it gains its significance by the rapid succession of a number of similar narratives and by being one in a chain of scenes. In each succeeding shot the story of the previous scene is linked to that of the following by the continued presence of one of the characters from the previous scene and the absence/replacement of the other through another character. The cuts here mark not so much the shot/countershot absence of an Other in an exchange between characters,<sup>107</sup> but indicate both presence and absence in the chain of replacements.<sup>108</sup> This dis/continuity finds a narrative double in the repetition of a betrayal/desire narrative in each scene. In the opening sequence of *The Proust Screenplay*, the scenes do not tell a self-contained story, nor are they linked to each other in an obvious thematic way. As already pointed out above, the initial sequence was devised early on in February and March 1972, and was one of the script's parts that did not change significantly over the next few months. Also, it emerges that the early versions already intended to use the final Guermantes matinée as a narrative parenthesis bracketing the entire action. *Strictu sensu*, action opens with Marcel walking towards the Guermantes house and entering library and salon. The action then ends with the vocational calling just before and during the social gathering. The shots that do not feature action proper are in that first sequence chiefly

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics*. Oxford & New York (Oxford University Press)1983.

Here, the cut in cinema is read as marking a character's absence/presence that entails a structuralist relationship between consecutive shots: *These absences make possible a signifying ensemble, convert one shot into a signifier of the next one, and the signified of the preceding one*. Quoted from: Mimi Yiu, *Framing Between Takes: Suture, Subject, and the Derridean Enterprise*. IN: *Travelling Concepts II: Meaning, Frame, and Metaphor*. Ed. by Joyce Goggin & Michael Burke. Amsterdam (Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis) 2002, pp. 186-200, p. 195.

<sup>108</sup> This dis/continuity renders it almost difficult to assert what narrative function the cut is supposed to have, i.e. whether it is to mark a continuity or a discontinuity. Cf. Tom Gunning, *Non-Continuity, Continuity, Discontinuity: A Theory of Genres in Early Film*. (1984). Reprinted IN: *Early Cinema. Space - Frame - Narrative*. Ed. by Thomas Elsaesser & Adam Barker. London (bfi) 1990, pp. 86-94.

connected by the way in which they appear. Both the brief flashes of scenes and the inter-weaving of the various plots obliterate a chronological time.

The narrative interweaving of the numerous stories is already practised in the early draft versions of the script. What does change in some instances is the exact locus of insertion. Here, too, one can observe a shift away from representing social relations to representing interior states of mind. Thus, the plotline of Odette and Swann shifted not only its places of insertion in various drafts of *The Proust Screenplay*, its replacements also indicate other foci. The ecstatic moment of aesthetic revelation when Marcel hears the Vinteuil Septet was in an earlier draft linked to a long insertion of the Swann-Odette-story. Here, the story of Swann and Odette had been inserted in order to make a connection through the music: another piece composed by Vinteuil, the Sonata, had brought Swann and Odette together. In the script's final version, the sequence is purged of love stories. It is represented firstly as a public aesthetic event through rapidly alternating shots of the audience, the musicians, Marcel and the yellow screen. Secondly, it is then also represented as a »memory event« of Marcel. The sequence of various shots featuring moments he remembered from Combray and surroundings and the Vinteuils, carries him back in several respects. For one, the epiphanic moment of the music transports him back to his original intention of becoming an artist himself: it shows the composer Vinteuil who here becomes an author-figure for the character Marcel reminding him that he still has not written his work. It then furthermore transports him back to his own origins (Combray) and thereby to that which will become the starting point for his own writing.

Immediately following the epiphany is the social aftermath: when the character Madame Verdurin makes Morel turn against Charlus and the latter departs with the Queen of Naples (scenes 331 - 336).<sup>109</sup> The Swann-Odette story

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<sup>109</sup> This represents a rift between the new and the old social power-centres (Guermites vs. Verdurin), marking the ascent of Madame Verdurin and the descent of Charlus.

becomes the final, delayed closure of Marcel's revelatory moment of the concert: after the concert and after the final argument with, the departure and the death of Albertine, shot 366 is an insertion of a close-up of Swann in profile. Swann is then heard in voice-over saying: *To think I have wasted years of my life, that I have longed for death, that the greatest love I have ever known has been for a woman who did not appeal to me, who was not my type.* This refers also to the never-accomplished artistic enterprises of the character Marcel. Swann, too, had never taken up his aesthetic calling, which was to write about Vermeer, about Zipporah, or to do research on Vinteuil's work.<sup>110</sup> The wasted passion for a woman, in the final version of the script thus came to be re-textualised as an indicator of other failures. This is one of the few instances in the script where sexual relations and desire represent not just an aspect of a character but through their narrative framing express a theme. The story of Swann and Odette is conspicuously edited out of the pivotal epiphanic moment of the Vinteuil concert. The use made of the concert in *The Proust Screenplay*, thus maintains this piece of art in a state of »purity«. The wasted passion of the character Swann and its effects on his life and work, i.e. that it hindered him from writing his study on Vermeer, become a final admonition for Marcel to begin writing.

I now return to the theme of sex, which the reviews noted in the *Recherche* as played on stage and map out its development from the film script (1972/77) to the stage play (2000/01).

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<sup>110</sup> The subsequent transferral of the narrative to Venice in scenes 363 to 367 further underscores this finality. It is only *a posteriori* that the Venice sequence, also becomes a new aesthetic beginning, when the character Marcel has the revelatory remembrance of Venice in scenes 399, 401, and 420.

## Sex

The predominance of sex as a theme in the stage version was an element Harold Pinter could not have objected to, since it had already featured prominently in his film script. This already appears in the notes exchanged between Joseph Losey, Barbara Bray and Harold Pinter during the writing of the script. In the notes that Losey sent to Harold Pinter as comment on the script, he was anxious not to have too strong a focus on sex in the script:

*Last line: "Marcel watching": what is his age? I feel it is important to establish that he was reading and fell asleep and not simply that he was there at night watching. This puts too much emphasis, I think, on the sexual, although it may reduce the drama, I realize.*

In the way of comment, Harold Pinter had written by hand into the margin of this typed memo: *Don't agree*. This indicates differing opinions on where the focus of the play was to be set, and how important sex as a theme was for the author Harold Pinter at the time.<sup>111</sup>

Sex and the attitudes towards sex also came to be read as indicators of cultural difference along national lines. Barbara Bray had pointed out<sup>112</sup> the different views of »the French« and »the English« supposedly have regarding adultery:

*One general point that might be more stressed.*

*Although Marcel's family has to be kept comparatively puritanical, it's important to retain the atmosphere, especially relative to Swann and to Marcel himself, where it's taken for granted that everyone does plenty of philandering. E.g. it needs to be evident Odette represents the big mistake of an otherwise successful amorist. Most important of all, the problem of Albertine, whatever her sex or sexes, become more manageable the farther Marcel's relationship with her is kept away from any sort of "Anglo-Saxon" idyll, even a failed one, and the more it's seen (at least in one of its aspects) as an impossible attempt, by an extremely voracious susceptibility, to center the emotions almost arbitrarily on one person.*

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<sup>111</sup> The character Marcel gets older with each redrafting of this scene. In the final script, in the scene between Marcel, Gilberte and Swann on the Champs-Élysées the age of Marcel is given as 17, whereas in the additions Pinter had assumed him to be 15. In a comparative commentary between Harold Pinter and Joseph Losey on the first draft of the script, it appears that Marcel's age was first given as 16 (typed) amended to 17 and that Gilberte's age was still not given.

<sup>112</sup> She did so in comments on the draft dating from September 9th 1972, ten typed pages, said as referring to "draft up to page 134". The quote given forms part of a general note preceding all other comments. Unlike other comments this note is not assigned to a specific scene.



Other comments in a similar vein by Bray on a list from September 9th 1972:

*Instead of the long speech about the Comte de Paris, mightn't it be more economical for us to convey (see pp. 53-4) something about how Swann came to marry Odette because of Gilberte (long after she was born), and how, if Odette "carries on," Swann makes no scruple of doing the same with other women (p. 54, but cf. Fr., I, 466 – S.M.'s translation of "ne se fait pas faute" isn't too helpful: the French means he makes no scruple of doing the same as Odette does). This would at once help to create the climate I mentioned in my general note at the beginning, and show us – what we might not otherwise realise – that Swann has "got over" his love for Odette.*

Other comments by Bray:<sup>113</sup>

p. 12 (706) Gilberte the first to mention Albertine's name to M. See also the reference to yet "another young woman" with whom Morel is supposed to be "in love" (cf. Vol. 11, p. 355) – though this passage is an insertion by Proust, and like many it is unreconciled with the main body of the text. The two together, however, do have a bearing on what we were saying about bearing in mind the "French" convention about taking such affairs for granted.

What is further interesting here, are the debates about the transformation of certain scenes. The first example is the masturbation scene. In the novel, the adolescent Marcel is obliquely described as masturbating while looking out of the window.<sup>114</sup> This scene in the script,<sup>115</sup> drew some comments as to whether it was sufficiently explicit for the audience—since there were no indicators of bodily movement or of verbal utterance in it. Another example is the episode in which the novel's *je* observes first a meeting between Charlus and Jupien in his courtyard. Stung by curiosity, the *je* enters Jupien's shop into which the two men have disappeared and where he then overhears them as they have sex.<sup>116</sup> In the

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<sup>113</sup> The six pages of typed notes are headed by "LE TEMPS RETROUVE. These comments are not dated.

Also in that list: *As we said, it would be a falsification to try to "sort out" the Marcel-Albertine relationship too much – it might be a positive virtue (if that's the expression!) to keep the film as subtle on this aspect of characterisation as the book.*

<sup>114</sup> CS-I, 154ff.

<sup>115</sup> Harold Pinter, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*, New York (Grove Press, Inc.) 1977, p. 16 (scene number 62).

<sup>116</sup> SG-III, 6-11. Fearing to make a noise that might be heard by Jupien and Charlus on the other side of the partition between the two shops, which would give away his presence, the *je* initially foregoes the possibility of visual knowledge and just listens: *Car d'après ce que j'entendis les premiers temps dans celle [the shop] de Jupien et qui ne furent que de sons inarticulés, je suppose que peu de paroles furent prononcées. Il est vrai que ces sons étaient si violents que, s'ils n'avaient pas été toujours*

film script, this is followed quite closely. The exact wording for the sexual encounter between Jupien and Charlus in the stage directions are:

*Violent inarticulate sexual sounds emerge from behind the partition.*

*Gasps. A sudden silence.*

*Sound of running water.*

*Voices: [...]*

In the stage script this is shortened into: *Image: Marcel listens to Charlus and Jupien having sex.* In the theatre production, the stage is darkened and, while the character Marcel is listening, the two actors playing Charlus and Jupien act out sex for the audience by pretending to engage in fellatio. Obviously, the three decades which have elapsed between the writing of the script and the staging of the play have contributed to rendering representations of such sexual encounters easily possible. A progressive habituation of seeing sex on screen or on stage is manifested in the brevity of stage directions: no lengthy description is necessary; no longer is sexual intercourse referred to obliquely, by shrouding it in descriptive acoustics.

What is notable beyond the different historical contexts of the script and the play is, however, not merely that the stage play chooses to go beyond the novel in terms of explicitness.<sup>117</sup> It engages the character Marcel and the audience

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*reprises un octave plus haut par une plainte parallèle, j'aurais pu croire qu'une personne en égorgeait une autre à côté de moi et qu'ensuite le meurtrier et sa victime ressuscitée prenaient un bain pour effacer les traces du crime. J'en conclus plus tard qu'il y a une chose aussi bruyante que la souffrance, c'est le plaisir, surtout quand s'y ajoutent — à défaut de la peur d'avoir des enfants, ce qui ne pouvait être le cas ici malgré l'exemple peu probant de la Légende dorée—des soucis immédiats de propreté. (p.11).*

The conversation between Jupien and Charlus is then observed by the *je* who has climbed a ladder and looks down upon them through the ventilator.

The English translation of the novel more or less renders the sexual encounter like this, with one exception. Where the French gives the rather straightforward words *à défaut de la peur d'avoir des enfants* to refer to the possibility of conception, the English text gives the rather technical *fearing the fear of an eventual parturition* (Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*. [Vol. 7. *Cities of the Plain. Part One* (1st 1929)]. London (Chatto & Windus) 1973, p. 12.

<sup>117</sup> On the other hand, it should be noted that the episode set in the Hotel Jupien where Charlus engages in sadomasochistic sex with male prostitutes is not shown on stage nor does it feature in the script for the stage play, but it is represented as a scene in *The Proust Screenplay*. Cf. Harold Pinter, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*. New York (Grove Press, Inc.) 1977, p. 159).

on different levels of knowledge: Marcel is still only hearing the scene whereas the audience sees it acted out. With regard to censorship, Marcel is kept in representational conventions of the late 1910s/the 1920s, when the French novel and its English translation were published. The audience, on the other hand, is permitted to participate in the more permissive representation conventions of the years 2000 and 2001. The way in which this episode is staged in the context of narrative point of view indicates another shift. Whereas in the novel, in its translation, and in the film script, the reader and the audience only participate in the scene to the degree the character Marcel is privy to it, in the stage version of the episode, the character Marcel knows less than the audience. In narrative terms, the play has shifted the position of the audience from participation in a personal point of view to the position of omniscience. The English-speaking audience, thus, is permitted a degree of access to the *Recherche* denied to the protagonist himself. As the central character is named Marcel and thereby is biographised, this partial exclusion of the character Marcel implies an exclusion of the author Marcel Proust. The author is in a certain way excluded from his work. It is no longer Marcel Proust who is the source of the narrative (in control of it) but a chain of other author-figures: Harold Pinter, then Di Trevis, and finally the individual spectator who devises (and thereby is in possession of) his/her version of Proust through the theatre production. Through the way in which he is staged by the play here, the character of Marcel becomes the remnant of foreign-ness: he stands in for the French author Marcel Proust, located on the other side of the Channel. By being part of French (sexual) culture and by being an only partially empowered narrator-figure, he is disempowered as author-figure. Both the way in which he is socio-historical located and in his re-enactment on stage as disempowered with regard to narrative focalisation, machinate his displacement as omnipotent author.

Returning to the exchanges between Barbara Bray and Harold Pinter: it is the representation of food, then, which in the early seventies was to serve as a way of bridging the Anglo-French divide and which is another instance of

demoting Proust to secondary author. At the episode of a dinner with Norpois, Françoise serves Monsieur Norpois and the family of Marcel a dish of beef. In the novel, this is *bœuf aux carottes* bedded on a *gêlée*,<sup>118</sup> which in the English translation of Scott Moncrieff became *cold beef, spiced with carrots*.<sup>119</sup> In a first draft of the script this had been condensed into spiced beef. Barbara Bray comments on this as follows:

*Sp. 1: couldn't Norpois say "bœuf en daube," which is pretty well known from TO THE LIGHTHOUSE? Spiced beef doesn't sound very scrumptious.*

In the final script version, the French *bœuf en daube* is used. Thus, what is an adaptation of a French novel can here be observed as using French terms that have not entered into the final script from the literary source material but rather by way of an English novel having used a French term for a recipe. It is, thus, not only an English-speaking public that the producers of the film script are considering but, to be more precise, the cultural literacy of an English-reading public: the term *bœuf en daube* is supposedly known because of the Woolf novel *To the Lighthouse*. The cultural literacy gap between the English-speaking spectator and the French novel is thus not closed by his/her reading of the novel itself, but by home-grown and home-read cultural prompters. Again, the author Marcel Proust is displaced in relation to his novel not only by the succession of his adaptors but also by other author-figures who are better known to the spectator.

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<sup>118</sup> JFF-II, 449. (*Bœuf en daube* is boiled beef with a sauce of carrots, vegetables. KD)

<sup>119</sup> Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*. [Vol. 3 *Within a Budding Grove. Part One* (1st 1924)]. London (Chatto & Windus) 1972, p. 40.

## Proust and Pinter

Harold Pinter wrote *The Proust Screenplay* in his early forties. At this stage of his life he had already been very successful both as a playwright for over a decade, and a second career<sup>120</sup> as a scriptwriter dated back just about a decade. Prior to the Proust adaptation he had written seventeen plays (plus numerous revue sketches and several short stories). The sixties had been a decade in which Harold Pinter had been present and very successful in the theatre, on the radio and in film—not only did he write screenplays, several of his theatre plays had been adapted to film as well.<sup>121</sup> In his mid-thirties, in 1966, he was awarded the Commander of the British Empire. Academic writing on Harold Pinter also proliferated. Already in 1967 it was noted<sup>122</sup> that several studies on Harold Pinter had been published. Three years later, plays of his had been translated into German, French, Italian, Spanish, Danish Swedish, Polish, Czech, Portuguese (Brazil and Portugal), Dutch and Hungarian.<sup>123</sup> By the late seventies when *The Proust Screenplay* was published, this had multiplied many times over.<sup>124</sup> By 2001

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<sup>120</sup> If one takes into account his beginnings as an actor, and his work as a director then this is his third or even fourth career avenue in theatre and film.

<sup>121</sup> In 1960, the first Broadway production of one of his plays took place: *The Caretaker*, which in 1963 was also made into a feature film that won a special prize Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival.

<sup>122</sup> Martin Esslin, *Harold Pinter*. Hannover (Friedrich Verlag) 1967.

But cf. in particular the revised and considerably expanded English version of this study: Martin Esslin, *The Peopled Wound: The Work of Harold Pinter*. Garden City, NY & London (Doubleday & Company, Inc. & Methuen & Co. Ltd.) 1970, p. vii & p. 243ff. The study was published yet again in an updated form in 1973 as *Pinter, A Study of His Plays*, and again in 1982 as *Pinter the Playwright*. Still being revised and re-published to this day, this study has become a standard reference of Pinter criticism.

<sup>123</sup> In France, Harold Pinter remained incomprehensible to the critics until the mid-sixties. In the USA, the first staging of a play of his (*The Caretaker*) in October 1960 was done at the Lyceum Theatre on Broadway itself. The play was a success with the critics, but failed financially.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Karl-Heinz Stoll, *Harold Pinter. Ein Beitrag zur Typologie des neuen englischen Dramas*. Düsseldorf (August Bagel Verlag) 1977. On p. 7 the author estimates that there are ca. thirty monographs and over a hundred articles on Harold Pinter and his work—more than about any other contemporary dramatist.

he is hailed by Peter Raby as the British dramatist of the twentieth century.<sup>125</sup>

His plays had been staged in Germany from very early on (i.e. 1959), and had been more successful there than they initially were in Britain. Also, the first awards Harold Pinter won were foreign awards. Being successful abroad then, in turn, raised his profile in Britain. Amongst the much-cited studies on Harold Pinter, are the already-mentioned monographs of Martin Esslin. He had first written about Harold Pinter's work in his book *The Theatre of the Absurd*, and then was asked to write a book exclusively on Pinter by a German publisher as early as 1967. Besides the fact of publication in 1967 suggesting a very keen and early interest in Harold Pinter and his work in Germany, this book is also interesting in the different opinions voiced in the German and the revised English version. The role of language, e.g., in the German edition is seen as a way of expressing concrete class conflict. In the English edition, it is still linked to exercise of power of one party over another, but that power is seen in more abstract terms. The English study then devotes much more space to his screenplays than the German version. The question why Harold Pinter only writes adaptations instead of original screenplays is also answered differently. In the German study, this is attributed to his self-confessed inability to devise a film story of his own.<sup>126</sup> In the English edition, it is the structure of the film

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Also, first bibliographies on Pinter had been published by this time, e.g., Lois G. Gordon, *Pigeonholing Pinter: A Bibliography*. IN: *Theatre Documentation*. Fall 1968.

<sup>125</sup> Ronald Kowles, *Pinter and Twentieth-Century Drama*. IN: *The Cambridge Companion to Harold Pinter*. Ed. by Peter Raby. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 2001, pp. 73-86.

On p. 84, the article closes with the sentence: *However, on closer analysis we find that each of Harold Pinter's plays has its own character and accomplishment, and the totality of his drama, over nearly half a century, is of unique, unrivalled distinction.*

<sup>126</sup> Martin Esslin, *Harold Pinter*. Hannover (Friedrich Verlag Velber) 1967, p. 94:

*Pinter ist am Film als Kunstform außerordentlich interessiert, kann aber, wie er dies im Gespräch selbst betont, zumindest bis heute nicht direkt in filmischer Form konzipieren.*

Translation: *Pinter is highly interested in film as an art form, but as he himself points out in conversation, he is (at least up until now) unable to write directly for film.*

The subchapter on film covers about a page in the German version.

industry that provides the explanation:<sup>127</sup>

*Clearly the adaptation of other writers' work for the screen is an exercise of craftsmanship rather than the wholly creative process of shaping themes and images that have spring entirely from the artist's imagination. Yet it is probably no more than the conditions under which the film industry works, which do not favour the commissioning of entirely original work from dramatists, that provides the reason why Pinter has not as yet produced a film entirely his own. That the cinema medium attracts him is shown by his skill in writing television plays and in the success of his screen adaptations.*

In the revised edition of the monograph three years later, the absence of original screenplay work is not ascribed to Harold Pinter's own inability but to of the industry's lack of interest in original work, or put in other words the industry's favouring adaptations more than original work. Besides being perceived primarily as a theatre dramatist, it is adaptation as an industrial practice that puts Harold Pinter as a potentially »original« author-figure at a disadvantage.

*The Proust Screenplay* was his sixth screenplay adapted from other work and the last one written for Joseph Losey.<sup>128</sup> It was also the first feature film script he wrote that was not turned into a film, which singles it out as failure. Despite the fact that it was never brought to the screen, it is mentioned in most chronologies of his vita and œuvre as an important project. As it sometimes is Pinter's only film work mentioned, it relegates even those films to the sidelines that have been made.<sup>129</sup> While failure may be too strong a word to describe the emotional investment of the author Pinter in this project and the fact that it was never

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<sup>127</sup> Martin Esslin, *The Peopled Wound: The Work of Harold Pinter*. Garden City, New York (Anchor books; Doubleday & Company Inc.) 1970, p. 200.

Here, the subchapter on his screen work covers seven pages.

The film *The Go-Between* had not yet been made in 1967, when the German study was published. But it would still have been possible to go into details of the four films he had collaborated in up until 1967, especially since the English study devotes a sizeable section to analysing *The Servant*.

<sup>128</sup> The first five screenplays and the films made were: *The Servant* (1963, Joseph Losey), *The Pumpkin Eater* (1964, Jack Clayton), *The Quiller Memorandum* (1966, Michael Anderson), *Accident* (1967, Joseph Losey), and *The Go-Between* (1971, Joseph Losey).

<sup>129</sup> Cf. e.g. Mark Batty, *Harold Pinter*. Horndon, Tavistock (Northcote in association with the British Council) 2001, p. viii.

In a one-and-a-half page chronology, Batty mentions the Proust project but none of the other films actually made, in which Pinter collaborated.

made, the final words of his introduction to the published script hint at regret:<sup>130</sup>

*In November [1972] the screenplay was completed. It was long and clearly very expensive. I cut twenty-four pages, which in fact I thought all to the good, and at the beginning of 1973 the revised version existed and was final. This is the version published here.*

At later stages of his scriptwriting career, Pinter once more experienced disempowerment as author: in the early nineties he was replaced by another author while writing the adaptation of *The Remains of the Day*.<sup>131</sup> Twenty years and a further seven adaptations<sup>132</sup> lie between this screenplay and *The Proust Screenplay*. Yet his comments echo certain phrases in the introduction to *The Proust Screenplay*:<sup>133</sup>

*I have a certain sense that the kind of way I worked in movies over all these years is narrowing. I suppose I take this from the experience with *Remains of the Day*: writing a script and then the director getting someone else to write a script. That never happened to me over all this time. My position is: I've always written a screenplay, and that's the screenplay that's been done.*

With its affirmation of having a final script, the paragraph quoted from *The Proust Screenplay* suggests that Harold Pinter was the principal author not only in the writing of the script, but also in the final cutting decisions—after location scouting in France had been done in the summer of 1972. Harold Pinter was

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<sup>130</sup> Harold Pinter, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*. New York (Grove Press) 1977, p. x.

<sup>131</sup> *The Remains of the Day* (1993, James Ivory, based on the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro). In the film credits, the author listed as scriptwriter is Ruth Praver Jhabvala.

<sup>132</sup> *The Last Tycoon* (1976, Elia Kazan, based on the novel by F.S. Fitzgerald); *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981, Karel Reisz); *Victory* (not made, written 1982 with director John Lester, based on the novel by Joseph Conrad); *Turtle Diary* (1985, John Irvin; based on the novel *Man in Bookshop* by Russel Hoban); *The Handmaid's Tale* (1989, Volker Schlöndorff, based on the novel by Margaret Atwood); *Reunion* (1989, Jerry Schatzberg, based on a short story by Fred Uhlmann *Der wiedergefundene Freund*, orig. written in 1971 in English but traceable as book only with Swiss and German publishers Diogenes 1988 & Deutsche Verlagsanstalt 1989); *The Comfort of Strangers* (1990, Paul Schrader, based on the novel by Ian McEwan).

I have excluded from my count the film adaptations and TV productions of Harold Pinter's own work, as well as adaptations he wrote for television. Cinema releases to evolve out of his plays were (up to 1993): *The Caretaker/The Guest* (1963; Clive Donner); *The Birthday Party* (1968; William Friedkin); *The Homecoming* (1973, Peter Hall); *Betrayal* (1982; David Jones).

<sup>133</sup> Interview done with Mel Gussow in September 1993. Published IN Harold Pinter & Mel Gussow, *Conversations with Pinter*. London (N. Hern) 1994, p. 145. My underlining KD.

In the following, Harold Pinter also asserted that his replacement as the scriptwriter of *The Handmaid's Tale* was of his own volition.



already at this stage of his career an author who insisted on a position of supremacy. The previous analysis of stage play as well as the comments of Di Trevis and the representation of the author-figures in the articles are later testimony to this. It is also noticeable that in the paperback edition of his early screenplays, the names of the adapted are given, but in a paperback edition of his later screenplays, no reference is given who is the author of the literary source material of *Reunion*, *The Comfort of Strangers*, *Turtle Diary* and *Victory* (written 1982, without being made into a film).<sup>134</sup> Only the back cover reveals that there are other authors involved, but they remain mostly nameless:

*There is no writer who excels at the art of adaptation for the screen so much as Harold Pinter, and his latest work The Comfort of Strangers (directed by Paul Schrader), illustrates his consummate skill.*

*Reunion, The Turtle Diary and the unmade Victory are all fascinating insights into Pinter's understanding of other authors. These four screenplays are not only sensitive and faithful interpretations of their originals, but are also stamped with the distinctive Pinter hallmark.*

As an author-figure, he manages at times to displace film directors. The letters and faxes exchanged between Harold Pinter and Paul Schrader when discussing the screenplay for *The Comfort of Strangers* suggest that Paul Schrader is courting the approval of Harold Pinter, while Harold Pinter gives almost curt answers to the long enquiries of Paul Schrader.<sup>135</sup> In the year of finishing the Proust adaptation, an argument of authorial power arose between Harold Pinter and Luchino Visconti regarding a stage production of Pinter's play *Old Times* at

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<sup>134</sup> Harold Pinter, *The Comfort of Strangers and Other Screenplays*. London (Faber & Faber) 1990.

The previous screenplays were first published as Harold Pinter, *Five Screenplays*. London (Methuen) 1971. They were then re-published as Harold Pinter, *The Servant and Other Screenplays*. London (Faber & Faber) 1990.

<sup>135</sup> Paul Schrader wrote: *It is disconcerting to realize that others take you as seriously as you take yourself [...] First, some flattery: the text (subtext) grows richer with rereading and examination. I feel like an ass for half the things I said during our first long conversation. Thank you for your tolerance. It's a gift to be polite in the face of uninformed opinionatedness. You were right about holding back, letting the actors fill in the blanks, etc. [...]. In the same fax sent 6 July 1989, Paul Schrader closes with: The hour is late. It's time to close these progressively discursive (wine-soaked) anxieties. If you would like to be kind to me, send me an autographed copy of a collection of your plays. It would mean a lot to me.*

Cf. also a copy of a letter among the manuscripts of Harold Pinter's correspondence with his publisher of the screenplay *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. According to Pinter, not enough publicity has been done for the screenplay, and he points out that a large film bookstore on Sloane Street did not stock the title.

the Teatro Argentina in Rome. To the press, Pinter objected first against the use of a non-authorised translation into Italian of his play by Luchino Visconti. Then, Harold Pinter voiced his objections against not having been asked permission for the staging of his play. Finally, he criticised the stage production itself.<sup>136</sup> These comments expressed his surprise and anger:<sup>137</sup>

*A me pare che egli [Luchino Visconti] abbia agito dal principio alle fine partendo dal presupposto che io fossi morto da più di cinquant'anni e perciò al di fuori delle legge del copyright. A quanto pare una sorpresa per lui e per il Teatro di Roma scoprire che io sono vivo e assolutamente deciso a difendere il mio lavoro.*

Clearly, Harold Pinter is not an author to be crossed. However, when his adaptation of Proust was published, the reception of his writing did not celebrate him as author-figure. In his article on adaptations of Marcel Proust, Enid G. Marantz<sup>138</sup> terms Harold Pinter's play *Betrayal* as *une banale comédie de boulevard*, and in the comparison between the two œuvres, Harold Pinter is the minor author. He is supposed to be in the service of Marcel Proust when adapting:

*Il est impossible de ne pas regretter le sacrifice de Bergotte, de Bloch, de la Berma, d'Elstir, de la nièce de Jupien et des grands-tantes entre autres, et de tant de scènes pour nous essentielles. De même, une Recherche sans discussion théorique aucune semble trahir les intentions de Proust. Ceci dit, il est indéniable que la série de scènes dialoguées, entrecoupées de scènes muettes que se déploient autour du «petit pan de mur jaune» est, grosso modo, respectueuse des grandes lignes de l'œuvre. Loin de s'égarer dans le labyrinthe proustien, Pinter en sortit sain et sauf [...]*

The underlined terms reveal the hierarchy in which the two author-figures are framed. That Proust will come before Pinter is hardly surprising if one takes

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<sup>136</sup> The production apparently had added scenes and music that Harold Pinter considered inappropriate.

<sup>137</sup> Harold Pinter held a press conference in March/April 1973. Here quoted IN: Luchino Visconti, *Il mio teatro*. (A cura di Caterina d'Amico & Renzo Renzi) Bologna (L. Cappelli) 1979, p. 426).

Translation: *It seems to me that he [Luchino Visconti] has from the outset acted on the pre-supposition that I have been dead for over fifty years and that copyright law, therefore, does not apply anymore. So it seems to come as a surprise to him and to the Teatro Roma to discover that I am alive and absolutely determined to defend my work.*

<sup>138</sup> Enid G. Marantz, L'Action de Proust sur ses traducteurs et adapteurs anglais: Scott Moncrieff, Stephen Hudson, Harold Pinter. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. (1981) Vol. 31, pp. 331-338. Here 337. My underlining KD.

into account the provenance of the article. The *Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*, is an association whose journal most decisively is dedicated to maintaining Marcel Proust as French heritage. The criticism levelled at Harold Pinter, i.e. that he may have achieved rendering the emotionality of the work but failed to capture »intellectual Proust« on screen, was however also raised in articles of non-French provenance, e.g. by David Davidson in the journal *Comparative Literature*.<sup>139</sup> Here, too, the omission of the characters Elstir and Bergotte is lamented.<sup>140</sup>

Most of these omitted characters are aggregated from historical persons Marcel Proust knew. Furthermore, they are different types of artists: Elstir is a painter; Bergotte and Bloch are writers; la Berma is an actress. If one regards these artist-characters as »colleagues« of Marcel Proust or even as *Stellvertreter* of the author himself, then the joint lament on the removal of these artist characters from the final script is also a transferred lament. It is in the absence of the artistic characters that the absence of the »original« author is most keenly felt. Such criticism, thus, expressed resistance to conferral of authorial power from Marcel Proust to Harold Pinter. To then write not only that *The Proust Screenplay* is nothing out of the ordinary but also that it does not even match the standard of Harold Pinter's other work, is an apt parting shot in defence of the author-figure Proust.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> David Davidson, *Pinter in No-Man's Land: The Proust Screenplay*. IN: *Comparative Literature* (Spring 1982) Vol. 34, issue 2, pp. 157-170.

Here p. 162: Pinter recognizes the power of film to heighten dramatic impact through swift, boldly sensuous sights and sounds. But according to article, he fails to capture the intellectual Proust.

<sup>140</sup> It seems paradoxical that he then berates the ways Harold Pinter used it on the few occasions.

<sup>141</sup> David Davidson, *Pinter in No Man's Land: The Proust Screenplay*. IN: *Comparative Literature* (Spring 1982) Vol. 34, issue 2, pp. 157-170. Here p. 170. My underlining KD.

Quite apart from whether one agrees to the concept of the Proustian camera-eye or not, it is interesting here, that the article also tries to ascribe cinematic narrative to Proust—who himself had no high opinion of the cinema as a way of representing what he understood by »réalité«. As he had written in the *Recherche* itself:

*Si la réalité était cette espèce de déchet de l'expérience, à peu près identique pour chacun parce que quand nous disons: un mauvais temps, une guerre, une station de voitures, un restaurant éclairé, un jardin en*

*The similarities between Proust's devices and those of film are undeniable, but as Pinter's screenplay indicates these similarities do not enable the scenariste to achieve the richness of Proust's expression. Though employing almost every representational method designated by critics as common to both the cinema and Remembrance of Things Past, the screenwriter erects, in place of the anticipated "Proustian Camera Eye," a series of Pinteresque perceptions communicated through somewhat hackneyed screen devices. Not only does Proust deserve better, but Pinter has done better when adapting from less challenging, more manageable sources.*

The last words of the quote remind Harold Pinter of his place in the chain of adaptation, i.e. that he should restrict his work as a screenwriter to authors less complex than Marcel Proust.

The relationship between the two authors is represented quite differently in a study on adaptation where film is argued to be an art form equal to film. While criticising the just released film *Un amour de Swann*, Joyce Boyum refers to the author of *The Proust Screenplay* as someone whose imagination could match the novel's greatness:<sup>142</sup>

*It implies that when an adaptation fails it isn't because of any inherent limitations in the film medium or because a novel simply can't be put on the screen; it suggests that the cause lies instead in a very individual failure of either courage or imagination on the part of the filmmaker. [...] Above all, though, my reason for including it here is that I can think of no work that better embodies what I've tried to suggest throughout this book: that the finest adaptation is centered on the most sensitive reading of its source and that it consequently exists not simply as art but as significant commentary; and that rather than diminishing film, the contact with literature tends to enrich it. And do more than enrich it. For what *The Proust Screenplay* illustrates most pointedly of all is that in its collaboration with literary greatness, film may produce greatness itself.*

Whereas articles written in the years following the publication of the script even made adverse reference to Harold Pinter's social background in comparison to Proust's, those written in response to the stage production in 2000 drew affirmative parallels between Marcel Proust and Harold Pinter on the basis

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*fleurs, tout le monde le sait ce que nous voulons dire; si la réalité était cela, sans doute une sorte de film cinématographique de ces choses suffirait et «le style», la «littérature» qui s'écartaient de leurs simples données seraient un hors-d'œuvre artificiel. (TR-IV, 468)*

<sup>142</sup> Joyce Gould Boyum, *Double Exposure. Fiction to Film*. New York (Universe Books) 1982, p. 229.

The problematic discourse of literature's greatness in the above quote and that the adaptor is measured up against an original, then also entails that the work of Harold Pinter cannot be regarded as anything else but Proustian. On p. 225 she refers to the opening sequence as *Confusing at first, but completely, inescapably Proustian*.

of their work:<sup>143</sup>

*Both writers are poets of the semiology of life, dreams and nightmares, and this play gives a clue to their work.*

An article of Paul Taylor in *The Independent*<sup>144</sup> even goes further when following up Harold Pinter's question whether an adaptation could be faithful to the novel. Here, the assumed spectatorial approval of Marcel Proust for the Pinter play is enlisted to forestall any questions or doubts of a spectator:

*The answer to that question is yes, but in a rather spooky way, for in the process of adapting him, Pinter, as it were, inseminates Proust with his own future writing as a dramatist.*

*Certainly, you feel that the novelist would have a wonderful time at any production of Pinter's Old Times. Indeed you could argue that he would be proud of it. For that play with its triangular relationship between a husband, wife and a female friend from the wife's past, brilliantly heterosexualises the male fascination with and fear of lesbianism that permeates large tracts of A la recherche.*

A year before work started on the Proust project, Harold Pinter and Joseph Losey had done their third film together. Described in a review as *un tableau à l'Anglaise*,<sup>145</sup> *The Go-Between* was not universally praised. *Les Nouvelles littéraires*<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> John Peter, *Rest of the Week's Theatre*. IN: *Sunday Times* (3.12.2000).

<sup>144</sup> Paul Taylor, *The Play of the Film of the Novel*. IN: *The Independent* (22.11.2000).

Apart from puzzling over what Taylor exactly means by *heterosexualises* here, one also wonders at the conceptualisation of gender. In the immediately following paragraph, he draws the connection between homosexual Proust and the female director as follows:

*You can't, however, readily imagine Proust rushing out to buy a copy of The Whole Woman or, even if he had managed to procreate, putting in a bid for paternity leave from the cork-lined bedroom where his novel accreted. So what's in it, and in him, for Di Trevis, who is a woman with a child and a husband (the composer Dominic Muldowney who has written the music for this event)?*

Setting aside for now the way he portrays Proust here, Taylor marginalises Trevis qua gender, i.e. as merely a reader of bestseller feminist literature, as opposed to a Pinter who writes plays Proust himself would approve of. And if he has to mention Trevis's family, why not make mention of Pinter's familial situation as well? It is telling that the article supposedly is an interview with her, but consecrates most of its space to other adaptations of and books on Proust, to Pinter, and even to Taylor himself. Here he devotes two entire paragraphs to narrating how Di Trevis wins his (i.e. Paul Taylor's) favour because she is reading articles on Pinter (and thereby she almost, but alas for her only almost, makes it onto his Christmas card list, sic!). By lengthily referring back to the articles of his that tore apart a production of hers in 1988, he thus harks back to an event that was traumatic for her—the day before her next premiere.

<sup>145</sup> Gilbert Sachalas, [Review of *The Go-Between*]. IN: *Téléciné*. No. 171-172 (September 1971). Here quoted IN: *L'avant-scène du cinéma*. Nr. 118 [Issue dedicated to the film *The Go-Between*] (October 1971), p. 62.

considered it too simple:

*Si subtilement qu'il soit raconté, ce récit est un peu trop clair. Ce qui nous séduit dans les meilleurs film de Losey c'est la part de l'ombre. Cette faiblesse du Messenger, il l'a si bien senti qu'il s'est employé à compliquer le jeu. Malheureusement, le «mystère» donne l'impression d'être surajouté. (...) Il est visible que Losey et son scénariste Harold Pinter ont risqué un coup d'œil du côté de «la recherche du temps perdu». Mais pas un instant ils ne parviennent à nous convaincre.*

The added mystery, here is ascribed to their already being inspired by *A la recherche du temps perdu*, and in that same move the review also erects a barrier between the director and his screenwriter on one side and the *Recherche*. The attempt to approach Proust's novel is seen as sheer temerity on the part of Losey and Pinter. The *Recherche* as the surplus, the added value in an adaptation, here is presented as overshadowing the duo's anterior film. This comment is, furthermore, a harbinger of the controversy surrounding the work of Volker Schlöndorff in *Un amour de Swann*.

The comprehension difficulties the theatre adaptation of the *Recherche* posed for the uninitiated have been pointed out, as well as numerous omissions made from the literary narrative. This, however, did not deflect from the importance accorded to the production. As lined out in chapters two and three, the expectations of what adaptation as a cultural practice is supposed to achieve are very diverse: comprehensive transposition of narrative; accurate representation of a historic period; the relevance of the literary material in a new historical context; the connection the literary source material may have to other art works (literature, film, painting etc.); the rendering of a general theme. These are (together or separately) then assumed to represent what the literary source text is »about«. As the different reception of the films and film projects demonstrate, the precise meaning of what constitutes this »aboutness« is fashioned by a plurality of factors which change over time: depending above all on the adaptation project's historical location with relation to the reception trajectory of the literary author and his work; but also on the divergence

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<sup>146</sup> Georges Charansol, [review of *The Go-Between*] published IN: *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* (25.06.1971). Here quoted IN: *L'Avant-scène du cinéma*. Nr. 118 [*The Go-Between*] (October 1971), p.62.

from/similarity to other adaptations and films made at the time; in this particular case also on the nationality of the makers involved.

In the analysis of *Le temps retrouvé*, I argued that the intertextuality operative in an adaptation can be used as a reservoir of cultural literacy. The film offers its spectators a plurality of intertexts out of which readings of the film itself evolve and which also transform the understanding of the intertexts, not least of all those taken from the literary source. In the reception of *Remembrance of Things Past*, the adaptation is regarded as transmitting cultural capital, or as raising the level of cultural literacy. However, compared to the film *Le temps retrouvé*, the cultural literacy here results not in an intertextual game involving many other intertexts, but in delivering a compressed version of *A la recherche du temps perdu* which will spare the spectator the labour of reading Proust. Already the making-of-narrative revealed that it economises on such labour of culture by not being based on *A la recherche du temps perdu* but on already-condensed version thereof, *The Proust Screenplay*. As a second degree adaptation, it doubly practises cultural economy through adaptation.

As argued in the analysis above, the stage adaptation of *A la recherche du temps perdu* does not manage to transmit everything what the source material is »about«, but in the contingent writings of the producers it is argued to be an adequate and satisfactory representation of the literary source material. Audiences are still encouraged to go and attend this cultural event. It is almost as if the labour that had gone into the adaptation from the novel to the script, into the pre-production of the (failed) film, and into the stage adaptation is added up along this string of adaptations. Amounts of cultural capital are transferred from each link in the chain to the next: from the reading of the novel by Harold Pinter, Barbara Bray, and Joseph Losey; to the writing of the script; to the search for financing and location; to the reading of the film script and writing of a stage version by Di Trevis; to the viewing of the play. Rather than losing in value by increasing the distance between the literary source and the finally resulting adaptation, value is accreted accumulatively.

## 6. Cultural Landscapes and Cartographies

The recent film *Adaptation*<sup>147</sup> is an apt illustration of such an accumulative adaptation chain. This film not only adapted a novel. Half of the film's running time is devoted to a making-of-narrative of how that book comes to be adapted, and to the question which challenges the practices of screenwriting and adaptation pose for an author. Like in the general process of adaptation, authors and author-figures proliferate in this film. The adaptor-author-character not only appears on the screen next to the author-character of the literary source material, but is split into two: two twins are scriptwriters with heterogeneous approaches to their work.<sup>148</sup> For Charlie Kaufman, the professional scriptwriter, who is supposed to adapt this book that he loves, adaptation is a terrible trial: he is ravaged by guilt and bogged down by the responsibility of such an enterprise. The other twin, Donald, is a newcomer to scriptwriting and as he with increasing success follows a scriptwriting course with an attitude of blithe utilitarianism. This renders it easy for him to help his more scrupulous twin to write the script. But it is then this twin then to die a sticky end in the Florida swamp, whereto the twins have inserted themselves into the narrative of the book they were to adapt. In ultimately castigating nonchalance in the process of adaptation, the film diegetically endorses the position of critics who defend literature against usurpers, but in its overall narrative construction puts the idea of the author into question.

While the reception narratives of the various Proust adaptations did not end in a shootout and a bloodbath as the film *Adaptation* did, it has transpired from these analyses how multiply-contested the arena of Proust and of

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<sup>147</sup> *Adaptation* (2003, Spike Jonze). The film is an adaptation of Susan Orlean's, *The Orchid Thief*. New York (Random House) 1998; London (Heinemann) 1999.

<sup>148</sup> One of these twins, Charlie Kaufman, is also the real writer of *Adaptation's* screenplay, whereas the other twin, Donald, is an invention. Both twins are, however, listed as writers of the script and were nominated for a US-Academy Award.



adaptation as a cultural practice is. The film *Adaptation* furthermore illustrates the decreasing space accorded to the »original« author in that process. First, in the act of film production the author of the literary source material, Susan Orlean, is replaced by an author who adapts her, the screenwriter Spike Jonze. She as a character is further displaced diegetically, by only being accorded half of the film's narration and screen time. Spike Jonze who directed and wrote the script, in turn, is replaced by the names of the two twins appearing as the writers of the script in the film's credits.

In the case of *A la recherche du temps perdu*, the various instances of biographising the *je* with the concomitant re-interpretation of Marcel Proust's role, indicate similar processes, where Proust the author has been displaced by either being programmatically popularised in a mainstream film, by being biographised into the narrative of the *Recherche*, or by being replaced with a new »first-source« author altogether. A system of assertion and cessation is carefully played out between various author-figures between 1970 and 2000. The author-figure Marcel Proust is ever more separated from his work by being displaced along a chain of author-figures. In a certain sense, he is exiled from his work because it has been taken out of his hands. He is still cited as the author of the novel, but over the course of its successive adaptations, the narrative is no longer the one of his making. Adaptation, therefore, may also be a process that destabilises power positions held by representatives of a cultural canon. Understood this way, adaptation has no fixed abode. Seemingly most securely rooted in the inner sanctum of European culture, in the literary canon, it can also be read as departure from that home turf. Instead of heading for *das Herz der Dinge* (*the heart of the matter*), the process of adaptation might actually lead into exile.

When she was asked what drew her to Marcel Proust, the director Di Trevis answered:<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> In Paul Taylor, *The Play of the Film of the Novel*. IN: *The Independent* (22.11.2000).

"I've never asked myself that before, so I'm talking completely off the top of my head here. But what I would imagine it's something to do with his solitariness and his outsidersness." Women can identify with that, particularly creative women with small children who, according to Trevis, "feel exiled whether at work or at home".

Trevis here points out gender-related parallels she perceives between a woman's life and Proust. A more tangible version of exile forms part of the narratives: two of the directors were exiled for political reasons. Formerly a member of the communist party, Joseph Losey had to leave the United States in the summer of 1951 to evade being subpoenaed. He returned briefly to New York in the autumn of 1952, and in November that year settled permanently in Britain until 1975. Raúl Ruiz had to leave Chile after the military coup in 1973 and eventually settled in France.

Consequences of this enforced displacement in terms of loss of social networks, of *vertraute* locales, of a language and as regards adjustments to a new environment are obvious. What is less apparent is that this also decisively shapes the perception of the director's *œuvres*. In the case of Joseph Losey, exile shaped the perception of him as a director after he had relocated to Britain. Not only did he have difficulties finding work, he intermittently lost his name as he had to work under an alias on a number of films in order not to endanger the films' chances of an US-release. He was then also read as a figure of exile in histories of British cinema and of film in France: while several films of his made in the 60s are listed as important British films of the decade,<sup>150</sup> he himself is referred to as a director working in exile, or as a foreigner in Britain. Roger Manvell lists Losey as an *outsider* of British cinema, whereas other foreign directors receive the more friendly-seeming classification of *visitor*.<sup>151</sup> Roy Armes referred to the great influence on British film yielded by *foreign-born* directors, who made the *most*

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. Robert Murphy, *Sixties British Cinema*. London (bfi) 1992. The appendix *A guide to the 1960s in Britain* (pp. 279-286) lists as *significant films* several directed by Losey: *The Damned* (1962), *The Servant* (1963), *Modesty Blaise* (1966), *The Secret Ceremony* (1968), and *The Go-Between* (1970).

<sup>151</sup> Roger Manvell, *New Cinema in Britain*. London (Studio Vista/Dutton Paperback) 1969. The »visitors« are e.g. Sidney Lumet, Fred Zinneman, Stanley Kubrick, François Truffaut, Michelangelo Antonioni.

striking films. He terms some of these directors as visitors, whereas Losey is subsumed into a contingent of foreigners:<sup>152</sup>

*In addition to such occasional visitors, three foreign directors settled in Britain (though temporarily in one case) during the 1960s and produced work of such an essentially 'British' nature that it would be impossible to ignore them here. These are Roman Polanski, Joseph Losey and Stanley Kubrick.*

Written a decade apart, the first study implies that Losey does not yet belong to the British filmmaking scene. At the time of the latter's publication, he had already left Britain and settled in France. After having been resident in the UK for 18 years he is still regarded as an outsider by Roger Manvell, and the study of Roy Armes treats his residence of almost 25 as if it were an interim arrangement.

A director's reputation as an *auteur* might be underscored from being perceived as a foreigner. As analysed in the second Chapter, the label of foreignness, contributed to auteurial recognition. It was the arrival of large numbers of foreign (i.e. US) films in France that contributed to the rise of auteur theory. Conversely, it had been argued that the arrival of European arthouse films in US-cinemas marked the beginning of auteur theory on that side of the Atlantic.<sup>153</sup> Losey certainly was one of the directors whom the propagators of auteur theory admired. In the early sixties his film *The Servant* had entered him into their pantheon, and his work done over the rest of the decade further ascertained his reputation.<sup>154</sup> His move to France in 1975, however, was not motivated primarily by these accolades heaped upon him, but represented a pecuniary form of exile: Losey left the UK for tax reasons.

The œuvre of Raúl Ruiz has also been read as a labour not only done in exile but also part of a »national« film production that is marked by exile. Apart from Raúl Ruiz, there were numerous other film directors and writers who left

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<sup>152</sup> Roy Armes, *A Critical History of British Cinema*. London (Secker & Warburg) 1978, here p. 284.

<sup>153</sup> Cf. Chapter 2, p. 94 and ibd. footnote 73.

<sup>154</sup> Following *The Servant* (1963), he directed *King and Country* (1964), *Modesty Blaise* (1966), *Accident* (1967; Special Jury Prize at Cannes Film Festival), *Secret Ceremony* (1970), *Boom!* (1970), *The Go-Between* (1971; Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival).

Chile and continued their work in their respective host countries. In the reception of these films, these are then often read as exiled bodies of work.<sup>155</sup> In her article Zuzana Pick,<sup>156</sup> mentions the film material shot in Chile that these filmmakers managed to salvage or smuggle into European, Caribbean or American exile, where they completed the films. These films then were seen in countries of Western Europe, in North and Central America, and in Cuba not only as images of exile through what was seen on the screen, i.e. what by then was tangibly lost, but also in the ways in which they were assembled as films. For the work of Ruiz and others, there were of course also losses of the films he could not save into exile. But then, several of his films are also lost to spectators even though they were made in the West, because they are unavailable for viewing. Due to their production format, not many get a release outside of festivals and even fewer a wide cinema release. These films then are infrequently available on video or DVD. For the spectator, Ruiz is an exilic filmmaker, I would argue, most tangibly because being located outside mainstream cinema, his work is absent from amazon ordering lists and even outside of video rental circulation—even though he is an established auteur.<sup>157</sup>

In his article on Ruiz,<sup>158</sup> Richard Peña refers to the self-positioning of Ruiz in his films as a process of self-effacement rooted in the experience of exile:

*Ruiz, as an exile, finds himself adrift in a world in which objects and events appear to be*

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<sup>155</sup> The term national in this context is problematic even if argued as transnational, there remains, to me, an unease at a categorisation that writes experiences onto the work of filmmakers, thus perpetuating the real (and difficult) experience of exile. Cf. e.g. the rather problematic definition of such transnational films as a genre in Hamid Naficy, Phobic Spaces and Liminal Panics. Independent Transnational Film Genre. IN: *East-West Film Journal*. (1994) Vol. 8, issue 2, pp. 1-30.

<sup>156</sup> Zuzana M. Pick, Chilean Cinema in Exile (1973-1986). The Notion of Exile: A Field of Investigation and Conceptual Framework. IN: *Framework*. (1987) Vol. 34, pp. 39-57. Cf. also idem, The Dialectical Wanderings of Exile. IN: *Screen*. (1989) Vol. 30, issue 4, pp. 48-64.

<sup>157</sup> This is proven most obviously by his work having been the subject of an entire issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1983.

<sup>158</sup> Richard Peña, Images of Exile: Two Films by Raoul Ruiz (1987). Reprinted IN: *Reviewing Histories. Selections from New Latin American Cinema*. Ed. by Coco Fusco. Buffalo NY (Hallwalls Contemporary Art Centre) 1987, pp. 136-145. Here pp. 144f.

*meaningful, yet without a knowledge of the proper codes, there is no way to derive their significance. Ruiz's depiction of a world in which there exists an unbridgeable chasm between referent and signified, between objects and their meaning, brings him very close to the work of French theorist Jean Baudrillard (For a Political Economy of the Sign, The Mirror of Production, etc.). The artist-self of Ruiz, often embodied in his protagonists, becomes, in Baudrillardian Terms, "only a pure screen, a switching center for all the networks of influence."*

Read in the light of this article and its interpretation of the impact of exile has on Ruiz' work, the adaptation of *Le temps retrouvé* then becomes a film where the director vanishes into a narrative labyrinth whose signposts make no sense because they cannot be read. This illiteracy, however, is presented as an auteurial choice by Peña. Rather than argue along lines that impose a »choice« of exile on the director, I argue that exile is operative on another level of the film as well. Besides the incomprehension of what the overall narrative means (even spectators endowed with the cultural literacy to decode the film will be left with irresolvable residue), the film poses the question of identification. Whereas the narrative of the film *Le temps retrouvé* is enigmatic, the identity of its central character is not. He is recognised by reviewers and spectators alike as Marcel Proust. Thus, he becomes the prime identification point, the »I« of the film. The character of Marcel Proust thereby, most obviously through the lookalike Marcello Mazzarella, replaces the auteur behind the film, Raúl Ruiz. But, as pointed out, the central character is marked by absence. Thus, the film is located between this over-identification of Proust and his not really being there. At the centre, i.e. in the one common rallying point, there is a void—but this void is opposed by the extradiegetical ubiquitousness of auteurial signature. Not only the spectator who has seen other films of the director will recognise certain recurring features (e.g. the repetition with variations of narrative, the use of costume). The arthouse aesthetics of this film, identify it as the work of an auteur. Thus, I would argue, it is not only Raúl Ruiz who is »in exile«. He may seem to be vanishing behind the images, but he is also present, i.e. on every spectator's mind, in virtually every frame of the film through the irritation caused by the enigma of narrative. Rather, it is Marcel Proust himself who is exiled by his construction in the narrative. It is ironic that the film of Raúl Ruiz

achieves with considerable less forceful demonstration of authorial power, what in the case of *The Proust Screenplay* appears as a continued politics of omission, suppression, and displacement: the absence of the author-figure Proust.

In an article on the director,<sup>159</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum presents various levels at which exile is operative in Ruiz' work:

*It's partially the strategy of this political exile to elude categorical imperatives; to be categorized, after all, is the first step toward being labeled an undesirable.*

[...]

*An anti-auteurist par excellence, Ruiz proceeds partially by subterfuge and anonymity, addressing many of his works to an audience whose responsiveness is largely predicated on not knowing who he is or even precisely what he is up to.*

[...]

*Judging from most accounts of his early films, they seem to be interesting but "pre-Ruizan" to the degree that they are Chilean or Latin American in subject, hence regional—if we understand that "Ruiz" in this context is less a biological entity than a particular point of convergence between different levels of culture, and lack of fixed identity or allegiances which make work as mercurial as the *PETIT MANUEL*, *LA VILLE DES PIRATES*, and *POINT DE FUITE* possible. This is essentially the condition of exile which Ruiz has shared since 1974, and the subject of the first film he shot after leaving Chile as a political refugee: *DIÁLOGO DE EXILADOS* (*DIALOGUE OF EXILES*, 1974), made in Paris. Rightly or wrongly, it is here that the Ruiz I am mainly discussing is born.*

Exile is seen as operative in a heterogeneous choice of films and narratives, i.e. in the director's work refusal to facilitate an easy categorisation. Then, exile is imputed to an obscuring of authorial intention, i.e. in offering spectators a film that challenges their understanding by defying their strategies of reading. Finally, it is in his European exile that the »real« Ruiz is born. For the Western critic, the work of Ruiz becomes interesting, only after it has ceased becoming regional, i.e. after it has ceased being Latin American. The cruelty behind such logic is obvious. This director became an auteur only by having made the experience of enforced relocation, which obliterates his origins and places him at an intersection of different cultures. It is from this non-location that his auteurial

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<sup>159</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Mapping the Territory of Raúl Ruiz* (1990). IN: idem, *Placing Movies. The Practice of Film Criticism*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London (University of California Press) 1995, pp. 222-237. Here quoted from p. 225 (first two paragraphs of quote) and p. 227 (third paragraph).

work springs. Rather than define the director according to pre-conceived definitions of the auteur film that originated in Europe, I would also ask what the presence of the director implies for Europe as a space of cultural production. Europe itself produces auteur figures of exile.<sup>160</sup> Anton Kaes has pointed out for one the effects a *disjointed German film tradition* had on directors.<sup>161</sup> It caused *Wenders to look to American directors like John Ford for his stylistic inspiration. Werner Herzog placed himself in the tradition of German Expressionism of the 1920s. Volker Schlöndorff went to France to learn filmmaking.* As another example Kaes gives the director Rainer Fassbinder who had a deeply ambiguous relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany and was considering emigration to the United States.

The article on Ruiz is titled *Mapping the Territory of Raúl Ruiz*. The text attempting to assess the oeuvre of this director, is interspersed with paragraphs that reflect the nature of maps and mapmaking. Maps and mapmaking here serve as metaphors to describe approaches to the work, the ways in which it fulfils or denies spectatorial expectations, the possibility of unearthing different levels of signification. Trevis had used the metaphor of the Grand Canyon to put into words her approach to adapting Pinter, and to explain the differences between (reading) the *Recherche* and *The Proust Screenplay*, respectively. Pinter used the metaphor of a map to describe his first draft of a screenplay. In a letter

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<sup>160</sup> At the same time, Europe in recent historiography has come to be studied as a Europe of exiles and migrants. Cf. Luisa Passerini, *Memories of Resistance. Resistance of Memory*. IN: *European Memories of the Second World War*. Ed. by Helmut Pietsch, Charles Burdett & Claire Gorrora. New York & Oxford (Berghahn Books) 1999, pp. 288-296.

On p. 291: *It is at this point that a notion of Europe becomes important. Revelli's book [Nuto Revelli, *Il disperso di Marburg*, Torino 1994] does not allude to a Europe of intellectuals (L'Europe des esprits of the Enlightenment) but to a Europe of Exiles, of political refugees, of migrant workers and of homeless people.*

<sup>161</sup> Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat. The Return of History as Film*. Cambridge, MA (Harvard University Press) 1989, pp. 8 & 97, respectively.

Fassbinder did not emigrate but, ultimately, committed suicide. Kaes presents Germany as a the particular case (p. 72): *No other country in the world has produced so much in the way of fantasy and images about itself. No country ever had so many emigrants among its intellectuals, emigrants who—like Thomas Mann and Brecht in exile—still passionately indulged in fantasies of Germany.*

to Adrian Lyne (dated July 18th 1994) he wrote about the draft screenplay of *Lolita*:<sup>162</sup> *What I hope I've given you in this draft is a map of the territory. We obviously need to define the journey more precisely.* Writing a script is here once more likened to a journey where the map yet has to be drawn. The adaptors are exploring, as it were, the territory of the novel. In the article by Rosenbaum,<sup>163</sup> one of the paragraphs referring to maps, describes possible diversions between map and territory:

*First hypothesis: it's an old map and perhaps the city has changed. The map lags behind the territory. It is partly inaccurate.*

*Second hypothesis: the map is prospective. It serves as a model for development. It is in advance of the territory. The city does not yet resemble the map.*

*Third hypothesis: the city has been destroyed by a cataclysm and has been rebuilt in accordance with several maps. These present the characteristics described in the first two hypotheses. The inaccuracies are compounded. So one must envisage the construction of a perfect map.*

*First proposition: the perfect map would be on a scale of one to one. It would be as big as the territory. Direction signs and road nameplates can be seen as a timid endeavour to create this perfect map, which would make it possible to do without a map.*

*Second proposition: the perfect map would be the sum of all possible routes, memorized on a videodisc, which would reproduce them as required in a visual form. This perfect map would render inestimable services to the army, tourist agencies, and all sorts of travellers.*

Hypotheses (of this study): Like the city that is to be transposed onto the paper of a map might have changed or might change in the future or doesn't even exist, the novel also changes in its readings over time. Thus, a mode of adaptation that might have been perceived as accurate at a certain point in time, after a while may cease to be regarded as such. Or, the adaptation as a certain type of film might have come merely at the wrong moment: the film *Un amour de Swann* might have met with a different fate at the hands of critics if it had been made a few years later and not as the first adaptation of the *Recherche*. Apart from the term loop in the context of constructing Marcel Proust as an author-figure, I have used the term arena to designate the space where the individual

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<sup>162</sup> *Lolita* (1997, Adrian Lyne). In the end, Pinter's script was not the final version used. On the film itself, only one out of four writers involved in the writing was given writing credits: Stephen Schiff)

<sup>163</sup> Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Mapping the Territory of Raúl Ruiz* (1990). IN: idem, *Placing Movies. The Practice of Film Criticism*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London (University of California Press) 1995, pp. 222-237. Here p. 227.



adaptation is negotiated in a public sphere populated by critics and audiences. Like the uncertain fate of gladiators in a Roman arena, in adaptation few are accorded the chance of testing themselves again after a defeat like *The Proust Screenplay* was. For adaptation as a process of cultural re-production, such incidents of forgetting may also be necessary because they, as it were, clear the terrain for new cartography.

Propositions: Since a one-to-one transposition is impossible in adaptation because the novel is not the only territory that film has to cover, there will inevitably always be a felt discrepancy between the novel and the film. Adaptation as a cultural practice inscribes itself into a complex cartographic system consisting of several maps: the map of the literary source narrative, the map of the reception trajectory of the work and the author, maps drawn up by anterior and contemporary adaptations or films; maps of other arts, to name the ones discussed so far. To obtain one definitive map from such a cartographic system, the map that would end all quests, clearly is an impossibility. Beyond that, adaptation as a practice potentially may contain all possible routes, but it is always undertaken within a space that ceases to exist the moment it is achieved, for an adaptation as a cultural event inscribes itself into a particular cultural landscape of reception. The transitoriness of its cultural moment and the multiplicity of the maps shaping that moment, mean that in one way or another, adaptation operates upon a matrix of exile: of what could have been, what should be, what was not, or what then was not but now is. The latter case, is clearly a rare phenomenon. This chapter has dealt with a case that did get the chance to return from an exile, it was re-called as it were. The recall of *The Proust Screenplay*, however, conversely entailed a cultural forgetting: that of the author-figure Proust, of the labour cultural literacy entails and which a digest version cannot replace, and of the initial critical failure of *The Proust Screenplay*. When reviewers were fondly remembering other acclaimed collaborations of Pinter and Losey and the successful theatre-scribe career of septuagenarian Harold Pinter, all of this fell off the map walking down memory lane.

## Chapter 5

### *Progetto Proust & Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*

#### or Dream Team

*We die containing a richness of lovers and tribes, tastes we have swallowed, bodies we have plunged into and swum up as if rivers of wisdom, characters we have climbed into as if trees, fears we have hidden as if caves. I wish for all this to be marked on my body when I am dead. I believe in such cartography—to be marked by nature, not just to label ourselves on a map like the names of rich men and women on buildings. We are communal histories, communal books. We are not owned or monogamous in our taste or experience. All I desired was to walk upon such an earth that had no maps.*

Katherine

in *The English Patient*, written by Michael Ondaatje

*We die, we die rich with lovers and tribes, tastes we have swallowed ... bodies we have entered and swum up like rivers, fears we have hidden in like this wretched cave. I want all this marked upon my body. We are the real countries, not the boundaries drawn on maps with the names of powerful men. I know you will come and carry me out into the palace of winds ... that's all I've wanted - to walk in such a place with you, with friends, an earth without maps.*

Katherine and Hana

in *The English Patient*, adapted & directed by Anthony Minghella

### 1. Author Portrayal

The entire script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*<sup>1</sup> consists of 98 scenes. As several of these are split and one has been omitted entirely, the total number is one hundred and thirteen scenes. It thereby drastically distinguishes itself from the script of Harold Pinter by its formal structure alone. The very first scenes present a beginning of action: a train travels through landscape and the characters of Françoise, the young Marcel and his Grandmother are shown

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<sup>1</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984.

The bibliographic page of this edition gives an earlier edition of the script under the title *Proust - Visconti*. Published Rio de Janeiro by Berlendis e Vertecchia Editores. However, I have been unable to trace this edition. The script was published two years later in Italian as Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* [Introduction by Giovanni Raboni]. Milano (Mondadori) 1986.

Since referring to the script by its French title will lead to confusion with the novel's title, it is referred to in the following under the Italian title: *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*.

arriving at Balbec. From the station of Balbec they transfer to the Grand Hôtel. In the following, the characters of the Marquise de Villeparisis, Charlus, Saint-Loup, and *la petite bande* are introduced as the action unfolds in chronological sequence. Unlike *The Proust Screenplay*, there is no experimental opening sequence with flashes of scenes, collages of sound and image. Nor does *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* in the following employ narrative construction as complex as *The Proust Screenplay*. Thinking of other films Luchino Visconti made, one might like to imagine that—like those films—it unfolds at a slow pace, gradually exploring the visuality of the locale, the fabric of dresses, the surfaces and contours of tables, chairs, and other objects. Earlier versions of the script reveal, however, that a more discontinuous narrative structure had been planned, with flashbacks and impressionistic images. Such a plot construction would have been much closer to *The Proust Screenplay*. A similarity between the two *Recherche* scripts, as they were finally published, is most notable in the locationally alternating structure of the narrative: as in *The Proust Screenplay*, here too, the narrative moves back and forth between Balbec and Paris.<sup>2</sup>

Where *The Proust Screenplay* is an experiment in narrative intricacy, this script narrates its plot along a chronological axis. There are virtually no flashbacks or flashforwards that disrupt the continuity of the story. The entire plot of the narrative is told in chronological sequence. It is only in the scenes where the character Marcel is questioning Andrée about the past of Albertine that the screenplay resorts to flashbacks coupled with the voice-over of Andrée.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II for an overview of this alternation.

<sup>3</sup> *La pièce est envahie par les ombres du soir et des bruits lointains. Allongée à côté d'Andrée on croit voir une silhouette. L'impression se précise.*

*Voix H.C. Andrée: - Nous vous avons entendu monter, j'eus juste le temps de m'arranger, de descendre. Précipitation bien inutile, car, pas un hasard incroyable, vous aviez oublié vos clés et étiez obligé de sonner.*

*En surimpression : une gerbe de seringas, ces seringas qu'un jour lointain Marcel avait dans les bras et qui lui cachaient le visage. Puis, toujours en surimpression, comme dans le souvenir de Marcel, la porte qui*

The film was to narrate the stories of two affairs: that of Albertine and Marcel, and the affair of Morel and Charlus. These are narrated in full, i.e. the entire development of the relationships is covered by scenes. The film would have closed with scenes narrating the emotional distress of Marcel, Charlus and also Morel caused by the final disruptions or separations. It thereby marks out as the most interesting parts of *A la recherche to temps perdu*, the sexual and romantic entanglements of the quartet and the numerous occasions of social interaction they are represented at. The adaptation nonetheless still has omitted substantial society narratives: most notably *Combray*, the story of Swann and Odette, the story of Gilberte and the *je*, and the final *matinée*. When contrasted with *The Proust Screenplay* as discussed in the previous chapter, the straightforward narrative structure of the script here presents the story as chronologically unfolding, as grounded in a history of France. It offers a tableau of fin-de-siècle Paris and the disintegration of its society in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The narrative embedment of the characters Swann and Odette supports this reading. While their joint story remains un-represented, they do appear separately in two scenes: Odette (by now Madame Swann) appears in scene 25 (pp.45-50) which is set at the Paris salon of Madame Villeparisis. Her appearance precipitates the departure of Oriane de Guermantes who does not wish to be introduced to the former cocotte. In the dialogue of the same scene, Saint-Loup says to Marcel that he does not wish to be presented to her either, but in his case

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*est ouverte par Albertine que l'on entrevoit à peine, parce qu'elle n'est éclairée que par la lumière provenant de l'escalier.*

*Voix H.C. Andrée : - Mais nous avons tout de même perdu la tête, de sorte que, pour cacher notre gêne, toutes les deux, sans avoir pu nous consulter, nous avons fait semblant de craindre l'odeur du seringa, alors que nous l'adorions.*

*Les images en surimpression et en mouvement se succèdent encore. Les branches de seringa.*

*Puis, brusquement, les images en surimpression disparaissent, chassées par la lumière de la lampe que Marcel a allumée.*

Suso Cecchi d'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, p. 157. My underlining KD.

this is related to their different political opinions.<sup>4</sup> The character of Swann makes an appearance in scenes 72 and 72/A (pp. 116-122), where the red-shoe-encounter between Marcel, Swann and the duc and duchesse de Guermantes is narrated.<sup>5</sup> In both cases, the characters are employed to flesh out portraits of major social players (the duchesse de Guermantes, the duc de Guermantes, and Saint-Loup). The narrative function of the characters Odette and Swann, respectively, thus, is to illustrate political divisions and social boundaries within French society and the moral decline of its society towards the end of the film.

Reviews or comments on the script and the film project, were quick to point out the socio-biographical affinities Visconti had to the type of society portrayed. The pre-WWI aristocratic, wealthy circles of Proust were regarded as removed by just one border from Visconti's native Milan. Luchino Visconti himself was keen on presenting Marcel Proust as an elective affinity. In a *Selbstdarstellung*, he described himself as a contemporary of the writer:<sup>6</sup>

*Io stesso sono dell'epoca di Mann, Proust, Mahler. Sono nato nel 1906 e il mondo che mi ha circondato, il mondo artistico, letterario, musicale, è quale mondo lì. Non è un caso che mi ci senti attaccato. Probabilmente ho anche dei ricordi visivi, figurativi, una specie di memoria involontaria che mi aiuta a ricostruire l'atmosfera di quell'epoca. Oggi è tutto diverso. Se dovessi fare oggi un film moderno non so dove andrei a cercare i miei ambienti, mi sembra tutto molto meno interessante, mi sembra, come dire, molto meno stuzzicante. La società europea fino alla prima guerra mondiale è stata quella dei più grandi contrasti e dei maggiori risultati estetici. Il mondo contemporaneo invece è così livellato, così grigio, così poco estetico, non le pare?*

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<sup>4</sup> In the novel, Oriane (the duchesse de Guermantes) does not wish to be introduced because of the social origins of Odette. St-Loup who is a Dreyfusard, does not wish to greet the anti-dreyfusard Odette Swann. In the novel CGI-II, 560.

<sup>5</sup> Here, the duc and duchesse are represented as more worried about wearing the matching shoes for a ball than willing to talk about the imminent death of their friend Swann. CGII-II, 871-884.

<sup>6</sup> Luchino Visconti in an interview IN: *Il Mondo*. March 14th 1971. Here quoted in: Pio Baldelli, *Luchino Visconti*, Milano (Gabriele Mazzotta) 1973, p. 278. My underlining and bold. KD.

Translation: *I myself am from the age of Mann, Proust, Mahler. I was born in 1906 and the world that surrounded me, the artistic, literary, musical world, was the world of that age. It is not that I feel attached to it. Probably, I also have visual or image-memories, a form of involuntary memory which help me to reconstruct the atmosphere of that age. Today, everything is different. If I had to do a modern film today, I would not know where to begin to look for my settings, it seems that to me everything seems a lot less interesting, much less inspiring. The European society before the end of the World War I was that of the largest contrasts and of the greatest aesthetic achievements. The contemporary world is so uniform, so grey, so un-aesthetic, don't you agree?*

Describing his aesthetic and emotional affinity to the time of Proust, Visconti uses the words *memoria involontaria*, a literal translation of *mémoire involontaire*. This term refers those moments in the *Recherche* where the past springs upon the subject unbidden and reveals itself »truly«. The *Portrayal* of Visconti as belonging to the time preceding the First World War was also taken up in Paris in the Musée Jacquemart-André on boulevard Haussmann. The house had formerly been the private residence of a collector of art, most prominently Italian religious art and its grand staircase is dominated by a Tiepolo. In 1980, this museum organised an exhibition dedicated to the costumes used in films directed by Luchino Visconti. In the catalogue one could read:<sup>7</sup>

*En 1914, on donna un grand bal dans le palais Visconti, le dernier du genre. Caché derrière une petite fenêtre haute s'ouvrant sur le salon, Luchino y assiste. Il reconnut les plus belles femmes de Milan. Elles portaient des toilettes de Worth, Molyneux et Poiret. Ana Maino avec une tunique brodée de cristal, Ada Basalini en tulle et paillettes. Sa mère avait des perles au cou qui voltigeaient à chaque tour de valse. « Les invités n'avaient d'yeux que pour elle. Je la regardais et ne la perdais pas de vu un instant. Je voulais me souvenir de cette vision dans chaque détail le plus longue possible. Le spectacle était grandiose. Puis je me réveillais livide: les valets de chambre rangeaient, balayaient les plumes et les paillettes. c'était la fin d'un monde.»*

While it can be agreed upon that Visconti was reading the *Recherche* when it was a synchronous cultural event, i.e. almost at the moment it was first published in the 1920s, it is debatable in how far he »is« of that period. Born in 1906, Visconti was sixteen years old when Proust died and merely six when World War I had begun. His life as an artist proper only started in the 1930s

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<sup>7</sup> *L'Art du costume dans les films de Visconti*. Exposition organisée par la Délégation à l'Action Artistique et le Musée Jacquemart-André. Catalogue edited by Béatrice de Andia. Alençon (Firmin-Didot, Imprimerie Alençonnaise) 1980, p. 14.

The exhibition was at three locations: 29.IV.-29.V.1980 Marie Annexe du XVeme arrondissement; 3.VI.-6.VII 1980 Musée Jacquemart-André; 10.VIII-2.IX 1980 Trianon de Bagatelle.

The catalogue also constructs biographic parallels between Visconti and the *Recherche* when it tells a story that as a boy Visconti wrote little letters to his mother asking permission to go to a concert or the theatre instead of learning and saying that the mother always passed by the children's rooms to tuck them in at night. This is a parallel narrative to *Combray* (the first part of CS) in the *Recherche*, where the *je* writes a note to his mother to come to his room after dinner because he had not received the usual maternal goodnight kiss.

when he was working on film sets of Jean Renoir, and his own directing career began in the forties. Thus, Luchino Visconti matured politically, artistically, and intellectually in the interwar period and during World War II. He started to direct films of his own in World War II. That early work was influenced by his leftist political formation of the thirties and his forming part of Neorealismo in Italy, from *Ossessione* (1942) and *La terra trema* (1948) onwards to subsequent films. Setting aside the certainly privileged upbringing the child and youth Visconti had with all its attendant rich (and rightfully cherished) memories and the importance it had in his formation as a person, his formative years as a professional in the film trade were the thirties and forties—arguably lasting up until 1954 when he directed *Senso*. It is only with that film (his fifth feature film) that an aesthetics approaching *fin-de-siècle* heritage features in his work—at which time he was almost fifty years old. The »(auto)portrayal« as a contemporary of Proust and finding the present a period of impoverished aesthetics is contradicted by the historical location of his artistic vita and the types of films he directed which (also after *Senso*) were very much concerned with contemporary Italian society.<sup>8</sup> This biographically-configured perception is an a posteriori construction of Visconti as auteur. A vital omission from the first to the second of the above quotes constructing the director Visconti as formed pre-WWI, is the absence of a critical distance between Luchino Visconti and that past in the second quote. What I marked in bold in the first quote (*Non è che mi ci sento attaccato*) signals Visconti's emotional detachment to that period despite the strong aesthetic attachment.<sup>9</sup> In reviews of this film, this resurfaced in remarks

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. here the film *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (1961) dealing with the plight of poor migrant families from the South trying to find a materially secure existence in the northern industrial towns.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. also Suso Cecchi D'Amico in an interview with Anne Borrel titled *Proust - Visconti*. IN: *Proust, Visconti, et la lanterne magique*. [Catalogue of an exhibition June 21st - October 18th 1992 at the Musée de Marcel Proust]. Illiers-Combray (Musée de Marcel Proust) 1992, pp. 13-18.

Here p. 17: *Il n'y plus personne qui ait connu profondément ce monde-là, et qui soit donc capable de le représenter comme aurait fait Visconti qui y était né et y avait grandi, en absorbant un certain type d'éducation et de culture dont, peu à peu, il s'était éloigné, mais qu'il avait continué à aimer tout en les*

pointing out the political convictions conveyed through the narrative that work against the seductiveness of the aesthetics of films such as *Il Gattopardo*.<sup>10</sup> In the second quote, however, the organisers of the exhibition (done six years after the death of Luchino Visconti) preferred to present the relationship between the little boy and the world he had witnessed in a configuration of nostalgia. This prohibits critical distance.

In the above quote, a portrait of the director was drawn up via the little boy longingly looking down into the ball room 1913. This is repeated in the reception of the ball-scene of the film *Il Gattopardo* (1963). But here it is the nostalgia operative in reviews and articles which insert the (in the interim more than grown-up) director into the ballroom scene of the film *Il Gattopardo* as if he was describing his own society. In its reception, this film was the first of several which was read as affirmation of that affinity between Visconti and the turn of the century. This happened despite the contradictions inherent in the fact that the film was set in the *Risorgimento*, a historical period anterior to Proust, let alone the fin-de-siècle; and also despite the views expressed simultaneously in reviews that Visconti was seen as enacting a negative critique of Italian history through that film. At the time of the first quote given above (in 1971), Visconti was poised to present his adaptation of Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig*<sup>11</sup> at the Cannes Film Festival. It was also in that year that he planned to undertake the adaptation of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*. His posing as the contemporary of Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, and Gustav Mahler<sup>12</sup> thus should

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condamnant. And on his parents: *Très beaux, très riches, très mondains, très policés et pourtant sans véritable culture.*

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Robert Chazal, *Un aristocrate progressiste* IN: *France-Soir* (15.06.1963). Quoted IN: *L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma [Il Gattopardo]*. January 1964, no. 32/33.

*Visconti, dont les goûts artistiques sont d'un aristocrate et les aspirations sociales d'un progressiste, a trouvé ici de quoi concilier ces deux tendances. Il montre avec amour des décors somptueux, des êtres neaux, une nature éblouissante, tout en faisant comprendre la marche inexorable de la Sicile — et du monde — vers un libéralisme que rien ne peut empêcher.*

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Mann, *Tod in Venedig* (1913).

<sup>12</sup> The music used in the film *Morte a Venezia* is the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony.



also be seen as being partly a strategy to promote these films. While biography does explain a certain emotional investment of the director in the period(s) represented in *Il Gattopardo* (1963), *Morte a Venezia* (1971) and the subsequent *Ludwig* (1973) and *L'innocente* (1976, completed after Visconti's death), that affinity was also used as rhetoric in the production and reception of the films.

By grounding his films in his own life, the director as the biographical subject set himself the prime authoritative source, brooking no disagreement. The author-figure Visconti asserted himself as the director best able to recreate the defunct world described in those novels because he himself had lived in, and (more significant in a reception trajectory configured to no small degree by a politics of nostalgia) had seen that world vanish—like the writer Marcel Proust had been feted by his contemporaries as their last *mémorialiste*.<sup>13</sup> In the œuvre of Visconti from the seventies onwards, the grip the turn of the century putatively had on the director (in his imagination and in the imaginings of him) was tenacious indeed.

Parallel to the topos of that enchanted childhood, then, the recreation of its aesthetic appearance on film are endowed with the golden air of a garden of Eden before the fall—before adulthood and the war. In that garden, naturally, all women are beautiful but—unlike Eve—are covered with dresses from the famous couturiers. On the level of the script, the dominant theme is society, but when looking at the script as part of Visconti's œuvre, memory forcefully insinuates itself: for the tableau drawn up is not only that of Proust, but presented as the director's own past in the backward perspective, in memory. The boy's awakening to the sight of paltry leftovers inadvertently points out the fictitiousness in that construction: what is presented as having been lived then, is a dream, a fantasy. Turning such memories into films, is a twisted variation of the fascination with the photograph, Barthes' *Ça a été*. Here, fantasy weaves

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. here Chapter 1, passages in the subchapters »Proust Country: Illiers - Combray (-Auteuil)« and in »Salons«, pages 18f. and pp. 25ff., respectively.

together biography and work of Visconti, and that of other artists, to a complex composition which celebrate a has-been. In the particular case of Luchino Visconti, it furthermore is a fantasy of cultured-ness. The little boy dreaming, is a locus where producers, reviewers and academics pieced together their dream teams of culture.

## 2. Visconti and Proust - A Drama of Heritage

In the script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, the character Marcel is in several scenes represented as an author in the making. In these scenes, the work of the author is increasingly encroached upon by illness. Like in the novel itself and the perceptions of the historical figure Proust, *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* equates the work of the writer with his progressive physical disintegration and his gradual withdrawal from public life. The adaptation of the novel thus also signifies biographisation of the *je* as Marcel Proust/Proust. In scene 34 (pp. 59ff.), Saint-Loup and Marcel are dining out in a restaurant during wartime. As Marcel mentions that he will be going to Balbec earlier than planned, Saint-Loup guesses this is for reasons of failing health. Then, the character Marcel tells Saint-Loup because he has submitted an article for publication he sends off Françoise to buy the Figaro every day. But, so far this has been in vain. The first attempt at writing of the protagonist never appears as article. Its employment in the script links the article (the product of writing) to mourning, to illness, and to withdrawal from society.<sup>14</sup>

The final stage of the writer and his illness is presented in scene 90 (pp. 161-164). In this scene, Saint-Loup visits Marcel at home. The exact temporal construction of the plot can only be deduced from reading the previous scenes as well. The script has taken a leap forward in time between scenes 87 and 88. In scenes 86 and 87, Marcel is making his enquiries about Albertine after her death. In scenes 88 and 89 Paris and the courtyard of the Guermantes Hôtel are shown as if abandoned and desolate. Neither scene has dialogue. Scene 88 not only

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<sup>14</sup> Marcel : - Je m'efforce à travailler. J'ai envoyé un article au Figaro. (ironique) Chaque jour Françoise achète consciencieusement le journal, mais l'article n'a pas encore paru. A cause de mon deuil, je vais très peu dans le monde ...

Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, p. 60.

features stage descriptions with details about changed fashion, benefit events for the mutilated soldiers etc, but is explicitly dated in the header, i.e. as 1916.<sup>15</sup> The stage directions of scene 90 then retroactively reveal how much time has passed: seven years. On the finished film, the stage directions would have been transformed into visual information and the date would not have been given. The spectator would have had to assess the passing of time through the visual appearance of the set and then through physical changes of the characters. As analysed in the second chapter, *mise-en-scène*, wardrobe and makeup are employed as tools of signification which here indicate elapsed time. The stage directions describe Françoise: *Françoise a pas mal vieilli pendant ces sept années*.<sup>16</sup> The war has also brought changes in the physique of Saint-Loup: his face is scarred. The sickly appearance of the character Marcel further indicates elapsed years. It is primarily through his physical disintegration, the intimation of mortality, that the film announces its imminent narrative closure. In the scenes 91 to 95 and in scene 96, this physical disintegration is then complemented with stories of moral depravity (of Charlus, Saint-Loup, and Morel, respectively).<sup>17</sup>

From the film *Senso* (1954) onwards, Luchino Visconti gained a reputation of particular aptitude in representing visually opulent tableaux of falling grandeur. The script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* also arrives at the type of ending that is found in several of Visconti's films, i.e. stories of decay and death. Here, one should distinguish in his œuvre two parts: period films and contemporary films.<sup>18</sup> All the period films of Visconti are shot in colour,

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<sup>15</sup> In the logic of its biographising movement, the screenplay is contradicted by Marcel Proust's writing chronology: at the outbreak of World War I, the first *Recherche* volume (*Du côté de chez Swann*) had already been published. The historical Marcel Proust thus had been a published writer for three years at least—more than ten if one takes into account *Les plaisirs et les jours*.

<sup>16</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, p. 161.

<sup>17</sup> With the sequence of the Hôtel Jupien, i.e. Charlus' sadomasochistic predilections and Saint-Loup's *croix de guerre* lost there and the cowardice of the soldier Morel

<sup>18</sup> The period films would be: *Senso* (1954), *Il Gattopardo* (1963), *La caduta degli dei* (1969), *Morte a Venezia* (1971), *Ludwig II* (1973), *L'innocente* (1976). The contemporary films: *Ossessione* (1942;

conversely a large proportion of his contemporary films were shot in black and white.<sup>19</sup> This makes the films representing a past chromatically (and thereby visually) richer. The instrumentalisation of colour and lighting in Visconti's films is also seen as undergoing a development in the way it was re-traced across his period films. In *Senso*, the artificiality of the film's visual appearance, in particular the interiors with their heightened colours or tinting,<sup>20</sup> matched the melodramatic plot. In his later period films, the »operatic« aesthetics gave way to more »realistic« colour schemes relying on the employment of light(ness) and dark(ness) rather than on heightening of specific colours: in *Il Gattopardo* (1963), overexposure served to visualise the heat of a Sicilian summer whose exteriors then give way to the darker, interior scenes towards the end of the film; in *Morte a Venezia* (1971), the visual representation uses colour excess in the scenes of the ribald, violent performers and pale pastels for scenes characterising Aschenbach and other characters. These pastels express both social differences in their prevalence among the seasonal wardrobe of the affluent classes on holiday, as well as Aschenbach's orderliness and timidity. As *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* was not made, what colouring and exact lighting the director of photography and Luchino Visconti would have used in scene 90 is to a large extent speculation—but for some indicators. Whereas the changes in Saint-Loup and

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b/w), *La terra trema* (1948; b/w), *Bellissima* (1951), *Siamo donne* (1953; b/w); *Le notti bianche* (1957; b/w) *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (1961; b/w), *Boccaccio '70* (1962, with others), *Vaghe stelle d'orsa* (1965; b/w), *Le streghe* (1967; with others), *Lo straniero* (1967; b/w & colour), *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* (1974).

<sup>19</sup> *Ossessione*, *La terra trema*, *Bellissima*, *Siamo donne*, *Le notti bianche*, *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*.

<sup>20</sup> This film was shot in Technicolor, which at the time was a novelty in Italy. G. R. Aldo, the first director of photography on the film (of three), was experimenting with the film stock, exploring the limits of the technology. The effect was that the film looked unlike the contemporary US films shot in Technicolor. For a detailed description of the continued experimentation with the film stock and colour effects, cf. Colin Partridge, *Senso — Visconti's Film and Boito's Novella. A Case Study in the Relation between Literature and Film*. Lewiston, Queenston & Lampeter (The Edwin Mellen Press) 1991, pp. 102-104.

Cf. also Bernard Cuau, « *Senso* »: *une symbolique des couleurs*. IN: *Etudes Cinématographiques. Luchino Visconti*. (1963, 3ème trimestre) No 26-27, pp. 61-67.

This article tries to ascribe a distinct emotions to various colours.

Françoise are given in one brief sentence each, the character Marcel and his illness are revealed in successive steps over the entire scene and this also involves directions for lighting:

*Dans la chambre, les deux amis se regardent. Marcel est en robe de chambre. Il a maigri, s'est voûté. Nous ne le voyons pas encore bien en face.*

[...]

*Marcel a parlé très vite, en riant, et maintenant il est contraint de se taire, son asthme lui coupant le souffle. Saint-Loup l'observe inquiet, mais tout de suite détourne les yeux.*

*Marcel a repris en main la croix de guerre de Saint-Loup et il fait semblant de l'observer avec une grande attention, tandis qu'il reprend son souffle. Saint-Loup est très frappé par l'état de santé de Marcel, mais il s'efforce de ne pas le lui laisser voir.*

[...]

*Marcel s'est déplacé. Son visage est maintenant en pleine lumière: il a les yeux comme enfoncés dans les orbites, des cernes immense, il est livide, son teint a une blancheur cadavérique.*

The character is first placed in the shadows and then moved into the light to reveal the full extent of his physical disintegration. The lighting of the scene is here employed to heighten the entwined dramas of illness and art.<sup>21</sup> The author-figure Marcel Proust is represented first as elusive and withdrawn and when finally caught by the camera and the light, his pallor symbolises the unearthliness of his being: leaving behind »life« and moving towards death, and choosing art. Saint-Loup's enquiry after Marcel's health is first countered by the story of how war made the running of the sanatorium impossible, which forced Marcel to return to Paris where he started to write. Marcel then affirms that he is finally writing his book, working by night when he feels much better. In the stage directions, the night-table next to the bed is referred to twice as covered with papers and hand-written manuscripts. In the scene, Marcel explains what his great novel is going to be about, i.e. his own life. Saint-Loup's interjection

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<sup>21</sup> There are only two other scenes in the script where lighting is explicitly used to create narrative. The scenes 82-84 of the seringa episode and scene 92A, in the hotel Jupien where the faces of male prostitute and Saint-Loup are layered over each other.

Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, pp. 153f. & pp. 156-158.

Cf. Chapter 1, footnote 50, p. 32. This focus of the scene on the eyes of the Marcel Proust character, corresponds to descriptions given by Marcel Proust's contemporaries in biographical writings.

that he cannot have that much to write about, is answered with Seneca: *L'art est long et la vie est courte*.

What I propose to do is to read the build-up of the character Marcel as author in this scene as an striking narrative parallel to the conceptualisation of Luchino Visconti's film production as *œuvre*. The making of this director as an author-figure resembles the build-up of the character Marcel Proust as a writer as written in this scene. The first written cinematic adaptation of *A la recherche du temps perdu* undertaken by Ennio Flaiano had a five-act structure where the protagonist starts out remembering the days at Balbec, and then moves towards solitude and ignominy (represented through the character of Charlus).<sup>22</sup> Whether the five acts would have been transposed onto the finished film, had it been made, is questionable, but their appearance in this script does intimate that the narrative of Proust and his work is imagined within a drama structure. The scene in *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* is built up in several stages. The making of the writer Marcel in this scene and the perception of Visconti's late work reverberate off each other. The last five period films the director made (*Il Gattopardo*, *La caduta degli dei*, *La morte a Venezia*, *Ludwig*, *L'innocente*) will be read as the five acts of a drama structure closing with the death of the director.

The entire dialogue of the scene concerning Marcel's vocation and spoken by the character in five instalments runs as follows:<sup>23</sup>

*La nouvelle maison de santé dans laquelle je me trouvais n'a plus de personnel médical. Il va falloir en trouver une autre. Qui ne me guérira pas plus que la première. Mais je suis beaucoup mieux que cela la nuit. C'est alors que je travaille, que je sors ... Je n'ai jamais ces crises d'étouffement durant la nuit. Enfin, presque jamais ...*

[...]

*Jusqu'à présent, au lieu de travailler, j'ai vécu dans la maladie, les soins, les manières. J'entreprends mon ouvrage à la veille de mourir. N'aie pas peur ... c'est une longue veille ... car c'est tellement long ce que j'ai à écrire. Un livre aussi long que les Mille et Une Nuits ... que les mémoires de Saint-Simon.*

[...]

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<sup>22</sup> Ennio Flaiano, *Progetto Proust*. Milano (Bompiani) 1989 (written 1964/65).

<sup>23</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, pp. 163f. All spelling sic in script.

*L'art est longue et la vie et courte. Une œuvre, même de confession directe, est pour le moins intercalée entre plusieurs épisodes de la vie de l'auteur, ceux antérieurs qui ne lui ressemblent pas moins, les amours suivantes étant calquées sur les précédentes. Car, à l'être que nous avons le plus aimé, nous ne sommes pas aussi fidèle qu'à nous mêmes.*

[...]

*Je cherche à retrouver la notion du temps évaporé, des années non séparées de nous ... le temps perdu. Je fais la récapitulation de ma vie, car j'ai découvert que sa réalité réside ailleurs. La littérature qui se contente de «décrire les choses», d'en donner seulement un misérable relevé de lignes et de surfaces, est celle qui, tout en s'appelant réaliste, est la plus éloignée de la réalité, celle qui nous appauvrit et nous attriste le plus, car elle coupe brusquement toute communication de notre moi présent avec le passé, dont les choses gardent l'essence, et l'avenir, où elles nous incitent à la goûter de nouveau.*

[...]

*Tous ces matériaux de mon œuvre littéraire, c'est ma vie passée ; ils sont venus à moi dans les plaisirs frivoles, dans la paresse, dans la tendresse, dans la douleur, emmagasinés par moi, sans que je devinasse plus leur destination, leur survivance même, que la graine mettant en réserve tous les aliments qui nourriront la plante. Comme la graine, je pourrais mourir quand la plante se sera développée ... L'art n'est qu'un prolongement de la vie...*

When the character Marcel talks of his illness and his work, his counterpart Saint-Loup is reduced to listening, and speaks but once in the remainder of the scene. The dialogue therefore seems monologic rather than an exchange. The omissions (indicated by [...]) in the above are the quotes given below and the omissions given below (also [...]) are the quotes given above:

[...]

*Saint-Loup regarde la table de Marcel qui est encombrée de papiers.*

[...]

*Saint-Loup (essayant de trouver un ton léger): – Tes mémoires, à toi? Pourtant, cela ne devrait pas être si long, du moment que tu es si jeune...*

[...]

*Marcel sourit affectueusement à Saint-Loup.*

[...]

*Marcel regarde vers la table où sont entassés des feuilles et des feuilles de toutes dimensions couvertes d'une fine écriture, raturée, surchargée.*

[...]

Where the monologue of Marcel sums up his current situation, his wasted past life (in society) and his future life (for art), the stage directions further flesh out final conclusions towards which both the character's life and thereby also the narrative are heading: the beginning of writing. The »perforation« of the monologue with the stage directions and Saint-Loup's interjections makes the declarations and consolations which the character Marcel gives in the scene appear as the five acts of a drama and the character Saint-Loup here functions



both as a rudimentary fragment of a tragic chorus and as spectatorial metonymy. In *The Proust Screenplay*, the perforation of the various episodes with images from other episodes resulted in an internal suspension of the narrative structure. In this scene of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, the perforations serve to underscore the content of artistic narrative transmitted in the five acts of authorial ascension. The first act gives the conditions of writing (i.e. illness, and working at night), the second locates the planned work in the biography of the writer (i.e. at death's door); the third gives the theme (i.e. the author's own life); the fourth indicates how it is to be written, what will make it special (i.e. how the fictionalising process will inscribe itself into and thereby re-write the author's own life); the last act reveals how the material for that work has come to him over the course of his life, gathered by chance, without sense of their destiny, but with the hope of bringing the seeds to a fruition (i.e. a declaration of finally being equipped for the writing and having an awareness of material and a sense of purpose). The four instances of »perforation« signify: awareness that a writer is beginning his work; a friendly protest at the mention of the writer's imminent mortality; then (shifting to the figure of the writer), serenity; and finally an awareness of how much remains to be done. Striking parallels become evident when juxtaposing this scene and its dramatic structure with the making of Luchino Visconti as an author-figure of heritage.

### *Il Gattopardo* - Act One

Obviously, this film is not the beginning of Luchino Visconti's work, it is not even the first of his films to be celebrated as a masterpiece. That had been achieved by the director several times already. *La terra trema*, *Senso*, and *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* had already secured him a name as auteur in Italy and abroad before *Il Gattopardo* opened the Cannes Film festival to critical acclaim. But the film did, in a sense, serve as the first act of a development at the end of which Luchino

Visconti would emerge as a auteur not only of Neorealismo and Italian cinema but, in contradiction to these, as an auteur of a cinema that inscribes itself into a classicist and universalist notion of culture by aligning itself with other arts (most notably literature and music) and by subscribing to an aesthetic of historical detail overwhelming in its cumulative and compositional sumptuousness. Michel Mesnil described the film as the achievement of an œuvre:<sup>24</sup>

*Rares sont les films-sommes. Eux seuls nous donnent une impression de plénitude, de perfection, au moins d'achèvement. Et Le Guépard est de ceux-là.*

And then:

*Il fallait, en vérité, pour que l'adaptation très personnelle qu'il avait tentée du roman devînt trahison féconde, que le détachement de la caméra objectivante n'atteignît pas seulement le Prince, devenu symbole de sa classe en perdition, mais s'étendît à la peinture même de cette classe. Pourtant il y avait, dans les divers épisodes, et surtout dans le climat général du livre, tant d'éléments de séduction auxquels venait s'ajouter le fait supplémentaire et très peu négligeable vue le noble Visconti est en réalité du même monde que le noble Lampedusa.*

While Luchino Visconti at this stage of his life arguably is not mortally sick (as the character Marcel is made out to be in the script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*) nor is he constrained to work at night, at age 56 he is no longer a director at the beginning of his career, experimenting with the medium film. Rather, the films he now directs are read as works of a maturity.<sup>25</sup> Criticism and

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<sup>24</sup> Michel Mesnil, « Le Guépard »: La fascination du beau. IN: *Etudes Cinématographiques. Luchino Visconti*. (1963, 3ème trimestre) No 26-27, pp. 103-116. Here pp. 103 & 107, respectively. My underlining KD.

The relation of the director to his subject matter is seen through a camera that objectifies, but at the same time the film is invested with emotions. This contradiction will be taken up later. Note here also the reference to the way in which Luchino Visconti transfixes that which happens before the camera.

<sup>25</sup> Christiane Blot & André Barrière, « Le Guépard ». Fonction symbolique du décor. IN: *Etudes cinématographiques [Luchino Visconti. L'Histoire et l'esthétique.]*. (1963. 3ème trimestre), No. 26-27, pp. 131-136.

On p. 133, the film's interiors and estates are seen as symbols of decay: *Les maisons somptueuses ne traduisent pas, comme le paysage, la violence des passions (encore que certaines salles baroques soient propres à l'Italie du Sud): elles deviennent le symbole — flamboyant dans ses derniers rayons — d'un monde qui finit. Déjà dans Senso et dans Le travail, Visconti nous avait accoutumé aux fastes des grandes salles, à la savante répartition des tentures et des meubles élégants, à la disposition très élaborée de chaque élément dans le décor. Avec Le Guépard, il se surpasse.*

reviews moreover read Luchino Visconti into the character of the *Principe*.<sup>26</sup> It is here, also, that intertextual referents from several arts construct meanings that tie the figure of the artist into the interpretation:<sup>27</sup>

*Painted by a victim of violent social change [i.e. Jean Baptiste Greuze, 1725-1805], "Death of the Just Man" can easily be read as class death by a spectator himself contemplating the end of an era. In the relay of image makers—Greuze, Lampedusa, Visconti—the film offers a succession of aristocratic authors each contemplating the death throes of his class in an anterior artistic embodiment.*

While Marcus also points out the disjunction between aesthetics and politics of Visconti,<sup>28</sup> this critical distance is undone by contradictions in the analysis. Marcus terms the intertextual chain a *true imaginative linking*<sup>29</sup> and at the same time points out that the painting spoken about in the film, *The Death of a Just Man* by Greuze, is not that painting at all but *The Return of the Prodigal Son*. Yet, she does not let this »false image« impinge upon her overall analysis.

It is with *Il Gattopardo*<sup>30</sup> that Luchino Visconti is seen as not only reinstating himself as a director who through his films offers new (and controversial)

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. Michèle Manceaux, *Autant en emporte la Sicile*. IN: *Express*. (23.05.1963). Quoted from: *Avant-Scène du Cinéma [Il Gattopardo]*. (January 1964) No. 32/33, p. 73:

*A la fresque historique autant en emporte la Sicile, se superpose un portrait bouleversant : celui d'un homme vieillissant en qui l'on sent frémir Visconti lui-même.*

<sup>27</sup> Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book. Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993, p. 63. Marcus is here referring to the painting, literature, and film.

<sup>28</sup> Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book. Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993.

Here on p. 66: *In The Leopard, the family portrait is put to more complicated moral and metacinematic uses, expressing the profound contradiction at the core of Visconti's style. Sentimentally and aesthetically implicated in Fabrizio's world but ideologically committed to its demise, Visconti's backward-looking perspective lets him have it both ways. He can revel in the aristocratic art of life while condemning it by portraying its historically necessary end.*

Cf. here also Carol Glover, *The Eye of Horror*. IN: *Viewing Positions. Ways of Seeing Film*. Ed. by Linda Williams. New Brunswick, NJ (Rutgers University Press) 1995, pp. 184-230.

This article deals with viewing positions that enable a spectator to participate in certain actions while also denying their ideological implications. Quoted in Chapter 2, p. 129f.

<sup>29</sup> Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book. Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993, p. 63. My underlining KD.

<sup>30</sup> The film won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes film festival.

readings of Italian history,<sup>31</sup> but beyond that his representation of history originates with a novel that was well-known to the Italian public. The novel of the same title by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa had been published in 1958, and at the time caused controversy. According to the director himself, it was partly this that drew him to making an adaptation.<sup>32</sup> The film's hour-long ball-scene has become the filmic prototype for representations of society and in subsequent decades has been used by film studies and other disciplines alike to illustrate the functioning of society.<sup>33</sup> It is also with this film, that the social origins of Visconti tangibly enter into the film's narrative: the ball scene used an unknown waltz by Giuseppe Verdi that Luchino Visconti had found among papers of his family. Not only is the talented director thereby delivering a literary adaptation, the »aristocratic-music-connoisseur« had recovered a piece of music for posterity. At the time of its release, the film met both with enthusiastic reviews and doubt. It was regarded as a culminating point which summarised the director's œuvre but it also gave rise to doubtful enquiries

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<sup>31</sup> His already controversial representation of the Risorgimento in *Senso*, was continued here by the film's representing this, for one, as a failed revolution, and then by destroying the myth of a unified Italy. Cf. Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book. Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993, pp. 47ff.

<sup>32</sup> Luchino Visconti said: *I became impassioned by the critical polemics on the content of the novel, to the point of wanting to be able to intervene and state my thinking. Perhaps this is the reason that pushed me to accept the offer to make the film.* Quoted in Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book. Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993, p. 45.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book. Italian Film and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993, pp. 54 ff.

Cf. Werner Preisendanz, *Fest des Endes, Ende des Festes - Ballszenen in französischen Romanen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert*. IN: *Das Fest*. Ed. by Werner Haug & Rainer Warning. München (Werner Fink) 1989, pp. 418-440. Here p. 437.

Cf. also Jean Milly, *Le Temps retrouvé de Raoul Ruiz*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. (1999) No. 49, pp. 176-178.

Here, the perfection of this ball scene renders similar scenes impossible to make for subsequent directors. Therefore, the frequent social gatherings in the film *Le temps retrouvé* are judged inadequate (p. 178): *Mettre l'accent sur la totalité d'une œuvre très longue est un risque sérieux, et faire la part plus belle aux grandes scènes mondaines n'est peut-être plus possible après Visconti (encore celui-ci partait—il d'œuvres brèves)*. In purporting that Luchino Visconti restricted himself to adapting only shorter fiction, the review here conveniently forgets Visconti's adaptation project of the *Recherche*.

whether this film signified the director's retrogression by choosing aesthetics over politics.<sup>34</sup> The acerbically-detailed representation of historic period, postulated its realism with an entirely different political understanding of representation than Neorealismo. While not identifying Luchino Visconti biographically with the Principe, the way in which René Briot's article reads the author-figure Visconti mirrors the character Marcel in the scene of the screenplay. Like that character is portrayed as producing his work after his world has vanished and he is dying, the director is described as being of a dying breed, as an anachronism in the nascent era of television:<sup>35</sup>

*Détruits par la concurrence redoutable de la télévision, des réalisateurs de la classe de Visconti ne devront-ils pas dire, dans quelques années, avec le même désenchantement que Salina: «Nous étions les Guépards»?*

In the U.S.A. it was praised for its physicality both at the time of initial release and at the release of a restored copy twenty years later.<sup>36</sup> In the Italian critical reception of the film, the interpretations of Italian history, were not confined to the nineteenth century. The opportunism of the character Tancredi was seen as exemplary in the portrayal of failed revolutions. The *Risorgimento* was represented (and read) as another instance of *trasformismo* which eventually led to an Italy under fascist rule.<sup>37</sup> However, it is only in the novel that explicit references to Italy in World War II are made, e.g. when at the end of the novel a bomb made in Pittsburgh destroys a serene fresco of gods.<sup>38</sup> The adaptation did not represent these flashforwards in the narrative, but limited the time of action

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Guido Aristarco, *Portée sociale de l'œuvre de Visconti*. IN: *Etudes Cinématographiques. Luchino Visconti*. (3ème trimestre 1963) No. 26-27, pp. 14-22.

<sup>35</sup> René Briot, « *Le Guépard* »: *une construction exemplaire*. IN: *Etudes Cinématographiques. Luchino Visconti*. (1963, 3ème trimestre) No 26-27, pp. 126-130. Here, p. 130.

<sup>36</sup> Reviews by Jonathan Miller (13.07.1963) and Pauline Kael (19.09.1983). Both IN: *The New Yorker*; David Ehrenstein, *Leopard Redux*. IN: *Film Comment*. (Sept/Oct 1983).

<sup>37</sup>The material available in the Fondo Viscontiani at the Istituto Gramsci in Rome support this reading. Among the many location-scouting photographs pertaining to this film, several show the poverty-stricken inhabitants of derelict Sicilian towns and term them the losers of Italian history by giving the photos the titles *Vittime*.

<sup>38</sup> Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *Il Gattopardo* (1958).

to the period of the uprising. Like the adaptation of the Boito novella *Senso*, the script followed a strictly chronological and temporally restricted storyline—as with *A la recherche du temps perdu* several years later. The film acquired its national contemporary relevance, i.e. as interpretation of more recent Italian history only by inference. There is nothing in the film itself which would suggest its representation of the *Risorgimento* is also a reading of postwar Italy. That is done through its Italian reception at the time of release. Here, it was the previous work of Visconti and contemporary Italian history that configured the interpretations.<sup>39</sup> The absence of this interpretation in the US-reception points to the viability of such readings only in a national context. Where the political and filmographic intertexts are unavailable, the film is not read politically and its aesthetics are taken as those of a Hollywood epic.<sup>40</sup>

*Il Gattopardo* is a turning point in the œuvre of Visconti in two ways: on the one hand, it was the previous work of Visconti that shapes the reception of the film, it summed up perceptions of major concerns of his work; on the other hand, this was also the film that would re-locate Visconti in another type of cinema, it would push the perception of him as a director into new areas. Filmographically, it thus is a caesura read both backwards and forwards. All that which had been regarded as the hallmark of Visconti comes together in this film: a questioning of tradited views of Italian history and implied through that a left, social critique of the present. In addition to these, the film presented aspects which in the future would be regarded as staple elements of a Visconti film: recreation of a period in acribic detail, an adaptation that is read as a

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<sup>39</sup> Here, in the early sixties the unease at the extreme aestheticism of the film explains itself not only by comparing it with the director's previous work, i.e. when contrasted with the films of Neorealismo—that dated back to the forties and early fifties. By seeing it in conjunction with other Italian films being made at the time. This seemed to indicate an absence of political program, a reinforcement of the already noted dilution of Neorealismo into Realismo Rosa. It was now even further apparent in films like Fellini's *Otto e mezzo* of the same year which was a ludic autobiographical narrative; or Vittorio de Sica's commercially suspiciously successful comedies in the mid-sixties *Ieri Oggi Domani* (1963) and *Matrimonio all'italiana* (1964).

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Peter Bondanella, *La (s)fortuna critica del cinema viscontiano in USA*. IN: *Studi Viscontiani*. Ed. by David Bruni & Veronica Pravadelli. Venezia (Marsilia) 1997, pp. 277-286. Here p. 278.

process of mutual enhancement between film and other arts, an aristocratic legacy, and a narrative of death and decay of a social class through a family prism.

In an article on Luchino Visconti on the occasion of the retrospective of his complete works at the National Film Theatre in 2003,<sup>41</sup> Michael Wood listed as the recurring themes in the oeuvre of Visconti: Class, realism, homosexuality, history, melodrama, and family. As argued, most of these themes were present in *Il Gattopardo*. But homosexuality, for instance, comes to the fore only in his later films, and most blatantly for the first time in *La caduta degli dei* in 1969.

### **La caduta degli dei - Act Two**

In this film, for the first time, homosexuality, paedophilia and incest are used as marker of moral corruption and decay. In *Il Gattopardo*, the heterosexual carnal appetites of characters such as the Principe, and the engaged couple Tancredi and Angelica were portrayed as natural desires which—while they do not necessarily exist within marriage and they certainly can be enjoyed outside of or before marriage—do not endanger marriage as an institution. It is the narrative emplotment of sexual desire that functions as indicator for social processes. That sexual desire is fairly absent from the marriage of the Principe is a marker that it his family will no longer be the unquestioned ruling class of Italy. The marriage which embraces heterosexual desire is instrumental in creating the new social order. Angelica's attractiveness coupled with a substantial dowry will both enable the character Tancredi to pursue his career

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<sup>41</sup> Michael Wood, *Death Becomes Visconti*. IN: *Sight and Sound*. (May 2003) Volume 13, issue 5, pp. 24-27.

Cf. also Claudio Gargano, *Ossessione Proust. La Recherche de Luchino Visconti*. IN: *Segno Cinema*. (1995) Vol. 15, No. 73, pp. 22-24.

This article lists as recurring themes, homosexuality, music, jealousy, and a taste for the morbid.

and elevate Angelica to the aristocracy.<sup>42</sup> In *La caduta degli dei* the sexual inclinations of the protagonists are either outright perverse (incest, paedophilia) or portrayed as deviant. Marked out as abnormal sexualities, they are instrumental in the extinction and the downfall of a ruling class—the industrialist family. The film is also a novelty with respect to topographical setting. After *Lo straniero* (1967), this was a film in which Luchino Visconti made a film about the history of another country, and it was his first period film to do so.<sup>43</sup> While the reviews on the film were mostly positive, some suggested that Luchino Visconti was not at home in the German setting, or rather was using fascism for his personal self-exorcism—an indirect reference to Visconti's homosexuality.<sup>44</sup>

Thomas Elsaesser sees this film as one of the first to represent fascist aesthetics on the cinema screen—as opposed to narrating a history of fascism. According to Elsaesser, the inherent challenge of representing fascism on screen is to come to terms with the use fascism itself had made of the media for propaganda. In contrast to the representation of other historical periods, the medium film here has to question the intentionality and historical instrumentalisation of the cinematic images: to run the risk of representing fascism as seductive spectacle, or to deny the pleasure of the image.<sup>45</sup> Two Italian films probed this question at the end of the decade:

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<sup>42</sup> In the film *Vaghe stelle d'orsa* made two years after *Il Gattopardo*, the incestuous relationship between the two protagonists ends with the death of the brother and a subsequent confrontation with the mother reveals a longstanding story of incest and abuse.

<sup>43</sup> The film Visconti directed just prior to this one, i.e. *Lo straniero*, was set in contemporary Algeria.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma*. [Les Damnés]. (June 1970) No. 104, pp. 69-70.

Among the negative reviews quoted there, there were those of Gilles Jacob for *Les Nouvelles Littéraires* and Jean de Baroncelli for *Le Monde*. Gilles Jacob: *La caméra glisse amoureusement, frôle ces chairs avec une complaisance suspecte, comme si Visconti profitait de l'alibi nazi pour exorciser ses démons personnels.*

<sup>45</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *Subject Positions. Speaking Positions. From Holocaust, Our Hitler and Heimat to Shoah and Schindler's List*. IN: *The Persistence of History. Cinema, Television and the Modern Event*. Ed. by Vivian Sobchack. New York & London (Routledge) 1996, 145-185.



The watershed which signalled a renewed interest in fascism as a film subject came around 1970 when Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (1969) and Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (1970) chose to do battle on the enemy's terrain, so to speak—the territory of fascination, sex, death, violence—not least because the enemy was also the enemy within: the cinematic self in another guise. The representational reality of this self rather than its historical meaning was what made fascism material for a certain (idea of) cinema in the first place. This in turn signalled the crisis of another and previous (idea of) cinema: that of neo-realism. This choice of topic, we have to assume, was neither naïve nor speculative, but one that recognized the legacy of Nazi aesthetics (even where its politics had lost its appeal) in present-day commodity culture, also given to conspicuous waste and spectacular destruction. In the age of the blockbuster, who does not recognize the seductive appeal of creating a substitute world, of treating power as a work of art, in short, of the Eros and Thanatos of objectification? Visconti et Bertolucci spoke to these thoughts, unequivocally.

In *La caduta degli dei*, the visually seductive representation of fascism is intricately linked to perversion (homosexuality represented as such), as if to counter-act the seduction through the image through images of perverse seduction. This filmic representation of fascism provoked a lingering malaise at that time in general. In the years following the release of *La caduta degli dei*, other films made in Europe fuelled a debate on this question.<sup>46</sup> In an article in *Le Monde*, Roland Barthes argued against a reduction of fascism to mere spectacle:<sup>47</sup>

*Le fascisme est un objet contraignant: il nous oblige à le penser exactement, analytiquement; la seule chose que l'art puisse en faire, s'il y touche, c'est de le rendre crédible, de démontrer comment il vient, non de montrer à quoi il ressemble.*

The article thus postulated the necessity to go beyond appearances when representing fascism—the same critique had been levelled at the later heritage films. In another article on the relation between film and the representation of

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Here p. 150f.: *As a result, cinematic representations of Nazism after nazism are of necessity involved in a dimension of self-reference or mise-en-abyme. They are confronted with a choice of evils: either adhere to a stringent form of understatement and visual asceticism in order to counter the visual pleasure and seduction emanating from the regime's spectacular stagings of itself, or expose the viewer once more to the fascination, making the emotional charge residing in these images part of the subject matter itself.*

The quote given in text p. 151.

<sup>46</sup> *La strategia del ragno & Il Conformista* (both 1970, both Bernardo Bertolucci); *Lacombe Lucien* (1973, Louis Malle), *Il portiere di notte* (1974, Liliana Cavani), *Salò* (1975, Pier Paolo Pasolini), *Pasqualinno Settebellezze* (1975, Lina Wertmüller).

<sup>47</sup> Article titled *Sade - Pasolini*. IN: *Le Monde*. (16.06.1976).

history,<sup>48</sup> David Forgacs points out that over the sixties and in the wake of 68, hitherto forbidden, out of bounds, or even taboo areas of representations were being explored by Italian filmmakers and that especially the work of female directors like Lina Wertmüller and Liliana Cavani linked fascism to representations of extreme forms of sexual behaviour. Almost thirty years later, the conjunction of sex and fascism in these films seems less convincing to spectators. According to Forgacs, this indicates that at the time the connection was made not so much because this was assumed to be an accurate historical representation, but that at the time these were the frontiers of cinematic representation. Representation of fascism in film has controversially also been read as the absence of history in the present:<sup>49</sup>

*According to Baudrillard contemporary societies locked into political stasis, nostalgically dream and imagine through the cinema — the traditional refuge for myths — a time where history still involved human agents and individual victims, forces and causes that mattered and decisions involving questions of life and death. One attraction of such a history is the excuse it gives for still telling stories with a beginning, middle and an end, and thus for the possibility of conceiving a personal destiny — the very desire fascism had to gratify on a collective scale. The return to history in the cinema is thus for Baudrillard not a coming to terms with the past, but the fetishisation of another trauma altogether: that of the present. What to the Freudian is the female thigh or laced-up foot, Fascism is to contemporary imagination. It is the last permissible sight that can be possessed as object prior to and in lieu of the traumatic event barred from consciousness. Fascism has become a perversely efficient fetish history, to cover for the absence of history altogether.*

That numerous films from Italy explored relationships between fascism, perversion/obsession, and representation suggests, however, not necessarily the absence of an engagement with history, but that the exploration of historical traumata makes painfully obvious an absence of heroes, i.e. figures that rallye affirmative identification. Here, the ensemble of Luchino Visconti's heritage films offered images of decline that bridged the chasm between a traumatic past and a desolate present not least through their visually and culturally rich texture and epic narratives with a definite closure. While the film *Les Damnés* certainly

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<sup>48</sup> David Forgacs, *Fascism and Anti-Fascism Reviewed: Generations, History and Film in Italy after 1968*. IN: *European Memories of the Second World War*. Ed. by Helmut Pietsch, Charles Burdett & Claire Gorrora. New York & Oxford (Berghahn Books) 1999, pp. 185-199.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*. London (Macmillan & bfi) 1989, p. 254. My underlining KD.

does not represent an apologetic let alone revisionist narrative, the figure of the director able to furnish such films became the rallying point of an identification that eschewed the more unsettling confrontation with fascism of other contemporary films.

Forgacs does not list *La caduta degli dei* as one of the films exploring the representation of fascism even though it fits the bill perfectly. Here, it is the perception of Luchino Visconti as a director in his maturity that bars him from joining the list of new and daring films and directors. Like the character Marcel in the scene, who starts out as artist *à la vieille de mourir*, here Visconti's art is read as moribund rather than new and vigorous, because the director at the time of the film's making was over sixty and has come to be regarded as a director of films celebrating a past. Thus, even though the representation of fascist aesthetics was *de facto* a *novum* both at the time and in his *œuvre*, his work at the time is *in toto* not seen as innovative but as a classicist work, i.e. consolidating an artistic reputation. He had, in short, become part of cinema heritage. Visconti himself colluded in his marginalisation by connecting his film both to German mythology, the universal talent of Shakespeare, and to a specific period of German history: Among the manuscripts pertaining to this film, one finds articles on the Krupp family and the introduction given to the script, In his overview of German history, Luchino Visconti sees fascism as a return of Europe to the middle ages, and the years 1933 to 1934 as period where total evil and any kind of corruption and cruelty were possible, even inevitable. Furthermore, he points out the connections the narrative of the film has with Macbeth (he had been planning to do a modern adaptation of Macbeth) and then, the *Ring of the Nibelungen*.<sup>50</sup> All three of which intertexts bind the film back into either foreign contexts, two of which connect them to art and not to politics, and the third then

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<sup>50</sup> Initially, Luchino Visconti had planned to give the film the German title *Götterdämmerung*. This ultimately, only survived in the Italian title in translation. The German title was *Die Verdammten*.

designates fascism as a German phenomenon. All of which takes the film out of contemporary Italian film, and out of the contemporary political and ideological debates which engage with the question of representation in general, the question of appropriately representing fascism on screen, and the question of appropriating fascist representations for other purposes.

Besides using fascism as a film topic, another shift in the narrative construction of Visconti's films in terms of gender (as pointed out by Sam Rohdie<sup>51</sup>) contributed to the exclusion of Visconti. Whereas in the early films, female characters were at the centre of the narrative, in the later films (acc. to Rohdie, starting from *Rocco e i suoi fratelli*) male characters are the principal characters.<sup>52</sup> Where other Italian films made at the time featured women as central characters and gave particular attention to (a pathology of) female sexuality, the films of Luchino Visconti while also exploring fascism and »deviant« sexuality, shifted from women to men. The work of Visconti in this period distanced itself from that of other Italian directors through choice of protagonist gender.

It is then yet again the age of the director and his already substantial contribution to Italian film (history) that conspire to both cut him off from what is regarded as new in Italian film. While it is in the period of the sixties that the work of Visconti is regarded as entering a new phase, its novelty is not read as groundbreaking so much in the context of national cinema but in the context of Visconti's œuvre. His work was now perceived as so substantial as to merit segmentation. Rather than group his films together with those of other filmmakers, as in the years of Neorealismo, œuvre-internal parallels were solicited. The inability to decide where exactly the incision is to be made, indicates an aporia as to wherein the significance of each of his new films can be

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<sup>51</sup> Sam Rohdie, *Le dive e le donne*. IN: *Studi Viscontiani*. Ed. by David Bruni & Veronica Pravadelli. Venezia (Marsilia) 1997, pp. 211-217. Here p. 216.

<sup>52</sup> The films *Boccaccio '70* (1962; Visconti contributed the episode *Il lavoro*) and *Vaghe stelle dell'orsa* (1965) contradict this segmentation of the œuvre.

based, as well as what the sum total of his films represents for Italian cinema. He does not seem to fit.

Parallel to the character Marcel, Visconti is viewed as an author-figure who is on the eve of death. But this artist in decline then »perversely« turns out one acclaimed film after the other. The discomfort of film historiography and contemporary reception as regards the later work of Luchino Visconti is ultimately, then, located in the perception of the author-figure and in his work as contradicted through timing: the implications of the type of films he produces at what stage of his life precisely, and in and for which national and cultural context.

### Morte a Venezia - Act Three

The film *La caduta degli dei* was a posteriori regarded as the beginning of a trilogy. The first Viscontian trilogy had been the Sicilian or Southern trilogy. Originally, the film *La terra trema* had been planned as a tripartite ensemble on the struggles for survival of Sicilians. That was abandoned early on in the shooting of the film, and instead *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* came to be read as the second part, with *Il Gattopardo* as the third.<sup>53</sup> With the advent of *Morte a Venezia*

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<sup>53</sup> Several reviews of the film *Il Gattopardo* in the *Observer* defined *Rocco* as the successor to *La terra trema*, celebrating it as a depiction of contemporary Italy and as a true film d'auteur. Cf. *The Observer*. (30.10.1960) & ibd. (11.09.1960).

Cf also Marcel Martin, *Sous le signe de Verga*. IN: *Lettres Françaises* (20.06.1963) Quoted from: *L'Avant-Scène du Cinéma*. (January 1964) No. 32/33.

Martin saw a diptych made up of the two films *Senso* and *Il Gattopardo* which owed more to Verga than to Proust—overriding the visual affinities the two films had with the projected film: *Pourtant Le Guépard est moins placé sous le signe de Proust, même de Proust peintre d'une société, que sous celui de Giovanni Verga, l'auteur de « La Terre tremble », le grand romancier réaliste italien de la seconde moitié du XIX siècle. Car il s'agit avant tout d'une ample fresque sociale qui décrit la Sicile, et par contrecoups toute l'Italie, au moment de la proclamation de l'indépendance et de l'unité du pays, en 1860. En ce sens, Le Guépard est le second volet d'un diptyque dont Senso constitue la première partie. Le thème de la disparition d'une société est au centre des deux films, plus exactement l'effacement d'une classe, l'aristocratie, au milieu d'une société en pleine transformation politique et économique.*

two years later, *La caduta* came to be the first part of the German trilogy, of which the third part would be *Ludwig*. Beyond a segmentation into phases, here, the films of Luchino Visconti are grouped together by thematical arches: from 1948 to 1960 and 1963 for the Sicilian trilogy, and 1969 to 1971 to 1973 for the German trilogy.

The Seneca quote uttered by the character Marcel, *L'art est longue et la vie est courte*, re-read against this new approach to Visconti acquires multiple meanings. It underscores the extent of the body of work achieved: as it is now substantial enough for sub-groupings, it is *longue*. It can also be read against the age of the director, who is closer to the end both professionally and biographically. Like the sand in the hourglass in *Morte a Venezia* his time is running out, thus life is *courte*. But it also points to the peculiar relationship between work and life in this case: just as the work (in particular *A la recherche du temps perdu*) of Marcel Proust and his biography had formed a symbiotic relationship which in the reception of author and work surfaced in various constellations, the work of Visconti, his »art«, was progressively seen as interwoven with his life. This was done both on the side of production by Visconti and film producers, and in the reception of his work by critics and biographers.<sup>54</sup> His motivation to make the later period films was presented and perceived as rooted in childhood memories of, in emotional attachment to, and in intellectual and aesthetic affinities with the world represented therein. The films were so well received because next to his proven talent, this »insider position« of Visconti seemed to guarantee an authenticity barred to other filmmakers.<sup>55</sup> The project *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, seemed to promise a first-hand evocation of Visconti's world and Proust's world through

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<sup>54</sup> At the time of making *La terra trema* he chose a narrative of opposition. Though being Italian he reportedly had to accustom his Lombard ears to the sounds of Sicilian dialect.

Cf. Millicent Marcus, *Filmmaking by the Book. Italian Cinema and Literary Adaptation*. Baltimore & London (Johns Hopkins University Press) 1993, p. 36.

<sup>55</sup> This rhetoric of authenticity can also be observed in Western European/US reviews on the cinema of developing countries. By questioning that authenticity discourse, the point is not to

biographical affinities and through his reading of the *Recherche* at the time of its initial publication. That *A la recherche du temps perdu* had been read, at the time of the film's production was read, and still is being read as a fictional autobiography, doubly imposes the biographical matrix: at the level of the film's narrative the *je* is turned into Marcel Proust, and in the narrative of the film's production Luchino Visconti is seen as making a film about himself.<sup>56</sup>

The character Marcel counters Saint-Loup's interjection (that the brevity of his life cannot diegetically sustain a long novel) with a theory of writing that does not directly transpose his life into art, but that it must be redone as a composition, bringing together episodes from various stages of life and producing new narratives from this. This »recomposition« is exactly what is done in the making of the author-figure Visconti: by looking backwards, new parallels are found in the *œuvre* and films are regrouped in trilogies according to the new perception of the director: as a director entering the phase of artistic maturity and *œuvre* consolidation, and through biographically-configured readings of his *œuvre*. In that same movement, the figure of the director imposes himself most powerfully on each of his period films as socio-historical source. The accumulation of one biographically-read film after the other, enhanced and consolidated not only his artistic reputation as a director, but Visconti as author-figure.<sup>57</sup> Though the exact wording of Marcel's artistic vocation (as written in the film script) was not available in print, i.e. to a public, until the early eighties, the celebratory anticipation of the film project throughout the seventies eerily pre-enacts (*nimmt vorweg*) the parallels between the author-figures and their *œuvres*.

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discredit the intentions of the filmmakers, but to subject reviews propagating such arguments to a critical analysis.

<sup>56</sup> Note here also that the year 1971 was the year of the centenary and the following year marked the fiftieth anniversary of Marcel Proust's death.

<sup>57</sup> This process was further amplified by the continuity of repeat castings: e.g. Dirk Bogarde in *La caduta degli dei* and *Morte a Venezia*; Silvana Mangano in *Morte a Venezia*, *Ludwig II*, and *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*; Alain Delon, in *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* and *Il Gattopardo* and announced for *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*; Burt Lancaster in *Il Gattopardo* and *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*; Helmut Berger in *La caduta degli dei*, *Ludwig II*, and *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno*.

*Morte a Venezia* was presented at the Cannes film festival, where it ran in the competition. Despite its success with the critics it lost as the best film to *The Go-Between*,<sup>58</sup> but Luchino Visconti was awarded a special prize on the occasion of the festival's twenty-fifth anniversary. With this film, Visconti repeated several success parameters of *Il Gattopardo*: it was an adaptation, it was a period piece, it successfully integrated a famous composer in its narrative (Mahler whose work provided the soundtrack and who figured as a model for the character Aschenbach), it narrated with spectacular opulence another story of a man on the threshold of death. Like an Austen adaptation by the late nineties, this film was instantly recognised as »a Visconti« by the reviewers and acclaimed as a masterpiece.<sup>59</sup> More than any of his other films, this one was and is celebrated as a so-called meeting of great minds. Here the artists were Luchino Visconti, Thomas Mann and Gustav Mahler.<sup>60</sup>

*Visconti is an unrivalled observer of superficially cultured ways of life in their death-throes, and Death in Venice has all the decadent inevitability of The Leopard (1963), The Damned (1969), Ludwig, and The Innocent as a culture gives way to the pressure of social change and submits to a final orgiastic indulgence before the apocalypse. Death in Venice is another of Visconti's lavish reconstructions of the past, monuments to a grand style which is going out of movies as well as life. Diffuse but sumptuous, it succeeds in fixing its characters with a stare so penetrating that the society which has formed them also comes sharply into focus. It is finally perhaps the combination of unique talents which makes the experience of the film so overwhelming, for all its internal sense of three giant*

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<sup>58</sup> Directed by Joseph Losey and with a script by Harold Pinter.

<sup>59</sup> Jean de Baroncelli, « Mort à Venise », de Luchino Visconti au Festival de Cannes. IN: *Le Monde*. (25.05.1971):

*L'auteur de Senso et du Guépard est sans égal quand il s'agit pour lui de reconstituer une époque [...]. And: Mort à Venise est ce qu'il devait être - et ce que nous attendions qu'il soit : l'ouvrage accompli d'un grand classique de l'écran.*

<sup>60</sup> Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation*. London & Sydney (Croom Helm) 1986, 129f. My underlining KD.

Also p. 126: *The film of Death in Venice (1971) represents a meeting of minds of three of the great European artists of the twentieth century: writer Thomas Mann, composer Gustav Mahler, and filmmaker Luchino Visconti. The conjunction is almost too rich, a well-nigh indigestible cultural pudding from a writer who, in D.H. Lawrence's phrase, 'feels vaguely that he has in him something finer than ever physical life revealed'; from a composer who felt he was carrying the whole history of music on his shoulders; and from a massively cultured and aristocratic director seeking to make the ultimate art movie in an industry given over to commerce. Consequently, we have a movie almost insufferable in its self-importance, top-heavy with significance, which somehow compels respect and attention because the artists involved have the genius to justify their pretensions.*



*artistic egos from a different epoch all narcissistically indulging in cultural one-upmanship. The trinity of Mann, Mahler and Visconti makes for the kind of artistic interchange that was, in fact, one of the most glorious aspects of pre-First World War arts, which, in Visconti's words, saw a 'whole complex of cultural change and revolution and which one must understand to follow our own history'.*

While the above quote (and the additional one given in the footnote) indicates a certain scepticism with regard to such meetings of »great minds,« it counteracts this critical distance by referring to the artists involved as *unique talents* or as *geniuses* and by using the words of Luchino Visconti as argumentative justification. Furthermore, the above quote disregards the historic location of the artistic vita, in its transposition of Luchino Visconti to the pre-WWI period. All three artists had—by the time of the film's making—become part of their arts' respective canons, but Luchino Visconti, I repeat, earned his artistic reputation primarily in the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>61</sup> In contrast with the uses made of and the interpretations given for the film *Il Gattopardo*, *Morte a Venezia* was not regarded as an obviously political reading of society or history. Whereas in the reception of *Il Gattopardo*, the fact that it was an adaptation came second to the political meanings transported by the film, here the fact that it was an adaptation was the prime recurring feature of the reviews and displaced a political reading. To adapt the most famous early novella of Thomas Mann configured the reception along other evaluative categories, than the adaptation of a much-debated and recently published novel. Through the adaptive company kept, Visconti becomes an even more classicist author-figure. Defending the film against criticism, the director becomes a classic and the film is re-located to the domain of timeless art:<sup>62</sup>

*« Cinéma d'un autre âge, cinéma trop parfait, cinéma de musée » diront les sectaires du modernisme. Qu'est-ce que cela signifie ? L'art n'est pas affaire de mode, et un film de cette qualité se moque des engouements et des engagements passagers.*

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<sup>61</sup> Arguably, this rhetoric of geniuses invoked contributed significantly to the canonization of Luchino Visconti, an possibly even to that of Thomas Mann and Gustav Mahler through this recall of their work. 1975 was to be the centenary of Thomas Mann's birth.

In addition to the rhetoric of »great artistic talents« meeting in this adaptation and of »timeless art«, academic articles on the film, introduced an idea of the mythic as operative on the diegetic level.<sup>63</sup> The Proust film project, too, was endowed with mythological dimensions. Its positioning as follow-up project to *Morte a Venezia* fuelled multiple imaginings of culture. Already prior to the presentation of *Morte a Venezia* in Cannes, the film project *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* had entered into public debate. In February 1971,<sup>64</sup> Luchino Visconti gave a press conference in Rome announcing the project. This was taken note of abroad as well.<sup>65</sup> The shooting was to begin in mid-July and last a month, and the finished film would be three to four hours long. The production, then, was supposed to begin two months after the Cannes film festival. The expectancies formulated about it coalesced with the enthusiastic responses to the

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<sup>62</sup> Jean Baroncelli, « *Mort a Venise* » de Luchino Visconti au Festival de Cannes. IN: *Le Monde*. (25.05.1971).

<sup>63</sup> Werner & Ingeborg Faulstich, *Der Tod in Venedig. Ein Vergleich von Film und literarischer Vorlage*. IN: *Literaturverfilmung*. Ed. by Wolfgang Gast. Bamberg (C.C. Buchner) 1999 (1st ed 1993), pp. 113-125.

While the authors see a weakening of the novella's *leitmotiv* (the artist's search for perfection), they concede that the film has introduced a new mythos, that of decadence. On p. 122: *Visconti hat damit gemäß den immanenten Bedingungen des Mediums Film die mythologischen Motive der Novelle zwar ausgelassen, nichtsdestoweniger aber einen neuen Mythos geschaffen: den Mythos des Verfalls schlechthin.*

Decadence is one of the new key words in articles on the late films of Visconti.

Cf. also Carolyn Galerstein, *Images of Decadence in Visconti's "Death in Venice"*. IN: *Literature/Film Quarterly*. (1984) No. 13, pp. 29-34.

<sup>64</sup> Even earlier, in 1963, an interview of Luchino Visconti had made reference to this project. The announcement was taken up in other articles. Cf. Bernard Dort, *Les avatars du réalisme*. IN: *Etudes Cinématographiques. Luchino Visconti*. (1963, 3ème semestre) No. 26-27, pp. 117-125.

Here quoted in footnote number 6, p. 125. Luchino Visconti in the interview to Georges Sadoul (IN: *Les Lettres Françaises*; no 980, 30.05.1963) said: *C'est mon ambition la plus consciente qu'on se souvienne d'Odette et de Swann à propos de Tancredi et d'Angélique, de la nuit du bal au Palais Ponteleone, dans les rapports de don Caligero et des paysans pendant la nuit du plébiscite.*

<sup>65</sup> Jacques Nobécourt, *Visconti va tourner « A la recherche du temps perdu »*. IN: *Le Monde* (12.02.1971).

On the same page and right next to this article, is an contribution on the new director of the Centre National de la Cinématographie, André Astoux. Luchino Visconti's Proust project is thus juxtaposed with an eminent French institution of film heritage.

film *Morte a Venezia* presented that May. The January announcement of the cast by Visconti offered casting-mythologies:<sup>66</sup>

*Visconti annonçait une distribution surprenante et prestigieuse: Laurence Olivier ou Marlon Brando pour Charlus; Alain Delon ou Dustin Hoffmann pour Marcel, le narrateur; Silvana Mangano pour Oriane de Guermantes ; Charlotte Rampling pour Albertine ; Edwige Feuillère pour Madame Verdurin ; Madeleine Renaud pour la grand-mère ; Marie Bell pour la Berma ...Une actrice mythique, qui n'avait pas tourné depuis trente ans, voulait revenir à l'écran pour Visconti : Greta Garbo lui avait fait savoir qu'elle aimerait incarner la reine de Naples [...].*

Laurence Olivier and Marlon Brando represent film-historiographic fairy-tale choices of Shakespearean prince and the king of method, respectively, with Dustin Hoffman as the young pretender. The return to the screen of Greta Garbo would have been a casting bordering on the miraculous. But like the little boy after the ball, one awakes to find the servants sweeping up what remains of this »dream team«. Not only has interim history obliterated this project, the fascination of the cast was at the time not unilaterally welcomed, and (as pointed) out the financing collapsed.<sup>67</sup>

*Morte a Venezia*, had provided another casting narrative: finding the right child-actor to play the role of Tadzio. A documentary was made of the pre-production search. It was narrated as a pan-European quest, leading Luchino Visconti and his assistants through Hungarian and Polish schools and Scandinavian hotel rooms. In one of these rooms, the sixteen year-old Björn Andresen is shown walking about, standing, smiling. Luchino Visconti is shown looking at photographs, interviewing prospective candidates, sceptically watching Björn Andresen, calling him for a second casting. In the press materials distributed at the time of *Morte a Venezia's* release, the youth of Björn Andresen and his inexperience as an actor, i.e. as artist, presented problems for a film

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<sup>66</sup> Bruno Villien, *Luchino Visconti*. Barcelona (Calmann-Lévy) 1986, p. 209.

<sup>67</sup> Bruno Villien, *Luchino Visconti*. Barcelona (Calmann-Lévy) 1986, p. 209 & 212.

Counteracting an all too »stary gaze« Bruno Villien points out that neither Laurence Olivier nor Marlon Brando were deemed good casting choices at the time by the film studio which was to finance the film. Both were regarded as being actors in semi-retirement, especially Marlon Brando. This was before the film *The Last Tango in Paris*, and Brando thus had yet to recover bankability as artist.

marketed and perceived as product of high culture. Thus, he was presented as an accomplished artist in another area. The German press kit read:<sup>68</sup>

*Er ist jedoch ein vollendeter Musiker. Er spielt Klavier und Gitarre und ist Mitglied eines Fünfmann-Poporchesters, das in Schweden auftritt.*

The documentary was titled *Alla ricerca di Tadzio*. The name of Tadzio standing in for the *tempo perduto* of another project intimates both gain and loss. The actor who was to play the figure was found, this film was made, and thus Thomas Mann's novella with its characters Tadzio and Aschenbach were *trouv * on the screen. But like Aschenbach's desire for Tadzio ultimately comes to nothing, as did the Proust project.

Entering during the third part of this five-part, the film project *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* not only is the centre-position, which in formalist argument points to a pivotal function in diegesis: in the five-act drama structure, the third act marks the high point. The film *Morte a Venezia* was the climactic moment of Visconti's career and the turning point from where his auteurial narrative moves towards an end. As a moment of jubilant climax, the two adaptations (*Morte a Venezia* & *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*) inspired narratives of culture sweeping away boundaries and reality:<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Translation: *He is, however, a highly proficient musician. He plays the piano and the guitar and is member of pop orchestra of five that gives performances in Sweden.*

The same press kit introduced Luchino Visconti as: *Dieser Poet der Armen ist ein unmittelbarer Nachkomme von Gian Galezzo Visconti, Herzog von Mailand im XIV Jahrhundert. Die aristokratische Herkunft der Familie geht tats chlich bis auf Desiderius, den Schwiegervater Karls des Grossens [sic] zur ck.*

Translation: *This poet of the poor is a direct descendant of Gian Galuzzo Visconti, duke of Milan in the XIV century. The aristocratic lineage of the family can indeed be traced back to Desiderius, the father-in-law of Charlemagne.*

<sup>69</sup> Mario Gerosa, *Alcune ipotesi sulla Recherche viscontiana*. IN: *Cinema Nuovo*. (January 1979) Vol. 39, No. 325, pp. 16-20.

Translation: *The Recherche of Visconti was to have been in some way his spiritual testament, therefore it had to be, at least in part, autobiographical. Death in Venice was only the first chapter of Visconti's autobiography: the discovery of Impressionism in the year of apprenticeship with Jean Renoir. We may rightly suppose that the Recherche of Visconti would have been a return to the passions of the times of *Senso* and of *La Terra Trema*, a large fresco of Italian culture of the last century well-hidden under the structure of Marcel and Charlus' passions.*

*La Recherche di Visconti doveva essere in qualche modo il suo testamento spirituale, quindi doveva essere, almeno in parte, autobiografica. Morte a Venezia era solo il primo capitolo dell'autobiografia di Visconti: la scoperta dell'Impressionismo negli anni dell'apprendistato con Jean Renoir. A ragione possiamo supporre che la Recherche di Visconti sarebbe stata un ritorno agli amori dell'epoca di Senso e de La terra trema, un grande affresco della cultura italiana del secolo scorso dissimulato abilmente sotto l'impalcatura degli amori di Marcel e di Charlus.*

Here, the œuvre of Visconti is thematically inscribed with culture: literature, music, affinity to other artistic geniuses, extreme aestheticism. The paragraph juxtaposes his work as autobiographical, with the discovery of Impressionism, the work for Jean Renoir. Yet it does not thematise the potential contradictions or disjunctions in these phases of work, or between the political-aesthetic programmes of the various artists involved. *Morte a Venezia* is read as the first part of an autobiography. Visconti's life is culture. The adaptation of the *Recherche* is not only regarded as the second part of his autobiography, but explicitly supposed to become a visualisation of Italian culture. Visconti's work and he as an artist are read as transcendental, as transcending boundaries of medium, of arts, of countries even. It is, indeed, the supreme moment of the »Making-of-Drama« of Visconti: *Morte a Venezia* and *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* here reveal themselves in the rhetoric of production and of reception synchronously as achievement and as hubris—after which moment in the logic of the drama structure, disintegration and conflict propel the narrative towards conclusion.

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Similarities between *Morte a Venezia* and the *Recherche* film were: the *petite bande* was the group of boys around Tadzio; Proustian asthma was the pest in Venice; Silvana Mangano is likened to the duchesse de Guermantes; the Balbec hotel is represented through the Hôtel des Bains.

Cf. also: Claudio Gargano, Osessione Proust. La Recherche de Luchino Visconti. IN: *Segno Cinema*. (January 1995). Vol. 15, No. 73, pp. 22-24.

## *Ludwig II* - Act Four

The Sicilian (or Southern) trilogy cannot be defined as unity without certain resistances. Its three parts are much farther apart, both in terms of years and of aesthetics. Visconti directed several films between *La terra trema* and *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* and contributed one short film to a collaborative film between *Rocco* and *Il Gattopardo*. *Il Gattopardo* and *La terra trema* share little beyond a Sicilian setting, and being narratives of a society in crisis. Both *La terra trema* and *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* were shot in black and white and set in contemporary Italy, but the latter was set in Milano and its casting and the representational modes chosen are not programmatically political as in *La terra trema*. The German trilogy, on the other hand, emerged as a triad almost immediately: visually, the films resemble each other despite the diverse topics and historical periods, and they were made in quick succession one immediately after the other. But a posteriori, this unity must be questioned, since Visconti had planned to do not another »German« film after *Morte in Venezia*, but rather another adaptation, *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*.

Within a logic of triadical grouping, this film could have been the third part of a French Trilogy—the first being Visconti's contribution to *Boccaccio '70* based on the short story *Au bord du lit* by Maupassant and the second the adaptation of *L'Étranger* by Camus. But the Proust-Project was not connected to Visconti-adaptations of other French authors but to the adaptation of Thomas Mann. Reviewers and scholars alike, here disregarded the national boundary (so prevalent in the reception of *Un amour de Swann* and the author-figure Schlöndorff) and instead transnationally united and established as equals the triad Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust and Luchino Visconti—drawing the director into the writers' cultural period and sphere, through imputed biographical and aesthetic affinities. The logic of *œuvre*, i.e. the film-historiographical concept of

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Quoting Suso Cecchi D'Amico, the German trilogy is here said to be the most Proustian films that Visconti ever made.

œuvre as a body of work deriving its meaning through its origination with a (directorial) author-figure, here reveals itself prone to manipulation.

The way the films have been grouped, reveals political agendas not least by what is not taken up though implied in the act of grouping: thus the label »German« on a selection of Visconti films should have solicited certain questions but did not. The co-grouping of the three films *La caduta degli dei*, *Morte a Venezia*, and *Ludwig II*, infers »German-ness« to a fascist past, the work of Thomas Mann, and to Ludwig II/»Bavaria.« That the label of »German« implicitly aligned Thomas Mann with fascism was conspicuously absent in the reception of *Morte a Venezia*. As the heritage film diverted from realities of production-contemporary Britain and omitted (was expected to omit) »unpleasant« realities of Austen's time, in this celebration of European artists and culture through the author-figure Visconti, divisive events of recent European history were negated; and neither was the question of the interrelation between these artists, their work, and recent European history gone into. Adaptation as an œuvre-unifying moment, here is also used to divert from complex questions: for the locations from which, and the positions for which Luchino Visconti and Thomas Mann spoke on fascism before, during, and after fascism were quite different—as were the respective fates they suffered because of fascism.

If one takes into account the phantom œuvre of the unmade films, the directorial author-figure Visconti comes undone. *Morte a Venezia* was the last film to be smoothly completed before biographical time was running out: Luchino Visconti suffered a stroke in July 1972 during the post-production of *Ludwig II*. Somewhere between early 1971 and the summer, Visconti had abandoned the Proust project to make the film *Ludwig II*. His declining health and the disagreement with Nicole Stéphane and the producers, made it clear that he was not going to direct an adaptation of *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Overall, this period of Visconti's work was marked by a disproportionately high number

of film projects coming to nothing in the years 1970 to 1972.<sup>70</sup> This reduces first of all the significance and singularity ascribed to the Proust project as *Alterswerk* by revealing it to be one among several other projects that were envisaged and which failed in this period of Visconti's working life.

In the logic of the drama structure, the fourth act (*Ludwig II*) provides the structure with moments that draw out the final tragic conclusion (*retardierende Momente*). The final conclusion here is the death of the narrative's director-protagonist and thus also the end of work. In the quote from the script, the character Marcel is caught in self-reflection. This self-reflection has as its object the character himself and his past, and the mode of representation appropriate for a representation of self, i. e. a realism that does not exhaust itself in *donner seulement un misérable relevé de lignes et de surfaces*. For such a realism renders but the external appearance of reality. Taking into account the unmade films, *Ludwig* as the fourth act of the artistic trajectory of Visconti does reveal itself as a drama's fourth act not only in its anti-climactic reception with respect to *Morte a Venezia* as the high point. The postponement (the *Retardierung*) of the *Recherche* project due to financing schedules, turns the film *Ludwig II* itself into a *retardierendes Moment*: it made the Proust adaptation impossible. Because *Ludwig II* had to be begun at that specific time, but it could not be finished within a time

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<sup>70</sup> According to the manuscripts no less than five projects floundered in these years: *Save Me the Waltz / Il romanzo di Zelda* (1970, adapted from F. Scott Fitzgerald), *The Driver's Seat* (1970; adapted from Muriel Spark) *Ritratto di uno sconosciuto* (1971; a biography of Giacomo Puccini); *Nijinski* (1971); *La montagna incantata* (1972; adapted from Thomas Mann *Der Zauberberg*). As a point of comparison, in the years 1955 to 1969 there is evidence of only four failed film projects *Barnabooth* (1955-64; based on *Journal di Barnabooth* by Valery Larbaud); *Giuseppe e i suoi fratelli* (1963; adapted from Thomas Mann *Joseph und seine Brüder*); *Macbeth* (1967, from Shakespeare - partly transferred as diegesis to *La caduta degli dei*); *Proposta per un film tratto da un fatto da cronaca* (1969-70?, based on a rebellion of inmates of Italian prisons protesting against the living conditions). It was in the early forties that the manuscripts list a similarly high number of film projects that failed (4 in 1941, one each in 1943, 1946, 1947 and 1950 and three in 1949).

Please note, that it is impossible to ascertain an exact chronology. The dates here refer to the time of initial planning and (at most) some stage of pre-production. The projects fell through at later dates. *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, e.g., is listed in the year 1967, but was abandoned only in 1971. Also, this list is unlikely to be complete, since there are indications of more non-realized films.



schedule that would have permitted Luchino Visconti to pursue the Proust adaptation. Thus, *Ludwig II* forestalled the making of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*.

What followed in the case of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, was a drawn-out dispute over the editing between Visconti and the producers. As Nicole Stéphane and other producers involved in the Proust adaptation then went ahead with Losey and Pinter, it was the protracted finishing of *Ludwig* that turned it into the prime obstacle for the realisation of a *Visconti-Recherche*. The film *Ludwig II* then is the object whose reality, whose »being-made-ness« points out what it delayed forever through its tardiness: that what putatively mattered most to Visconti, the film to be made of the *Recherche*. The accomplishment of a masterpiece summing up a life, that was sought by the character Marcel in the script's scene remained undone. The autobiographical Proust-film of Visconti, was prevented by *Ludwig*.

### *L'innocente* - Act Five

The film *Gruppo di famiglia in un interno* (1974) set in the present was shot entirely in interiors not least because of Luchino Visconti's increasingly failing health. The last period film of his, *L'innocente*, was released only posthumously. This film was in the post-production stage of dubbing when Luchino Visconti died in March 1974. In terms of narrative, here infanticide and adultery have replaced homosexuality and paedophilia. The story of a marriage from which sexual relationships are absent, or rather, are sought in extra-marital affairs, is shot through (what Michael Wood termed) *the enquiring camera* and which has been referred to by others.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma II. L'Image-temps*. Paris (Editions de Minuit) 1985.

On p. 11: Dès « *Ossessione* », au contraire, apparaît ce qui ne cessera de se développer chez Visconti: les objets et les milieux prennent une réalité autonome qui les fait valoir pour eux-mêmes. Il faut donc que non seulement le spectateur mais que les protagonistes investissent les milieux et les objets par le regard,

In one scene,<sup>72</sup> the character of the husband is trying to find out what exactly has wrought the fascinating change in appearance of his wife. Here, the camera becomes an accomplice for the spectator:<sup>73</sup>

*He is trying to see what can't be seen, the strange alteration that has overcome his wife, as if there could be a visual clue that would explain everything. And we are seeing him looking: we know exactly what he is searching for and why he won't find it. The scene is haunting because it insists on vision; because we are seeing so much and he is seeing so little.*

*Trained by moments like these, we expect scenes in Visconti to tell us their stories, almost independently of the stories which led up to the scenes, and that is why the violent changes matter so much in these movies. The deaths and transformations are the result of certain processes and developments, but they also have a meaning of their own. They are images of ruin itself, wreckages of personality.*

The interpretation of the scene revolves around a *focalisation spectatorialle*: while the spectator knows of the wife's affair, the husband has yet to understand this, and then his reactions declench the final disaster, or wreckage. Wreckage is also operative on the level of the *mise-en-scène's* materials: As the camera follows the two characters on their outing through alleys of blossoms and a deserted country estate and through other settings of the film, the objects creating the wife's seductive appearance come even more sharply into focus both through the intent gaze of the husband and because both characters are under the intense scrutiny of *the enquiring camera*. The hat, dress and other fashionable

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*qu'ils voient et entendent les choses et les gens, pour que l'action ou la passion naissent, faisant interruption dans une vie quotidienne préexistante.*

Cf. also the already-quoted Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation*. London & Sydney (Croom Helm) 1986, p. 129:

*Diffuse but sumptuous, it [Morte a Venezia] succeeds in fixing its characters with a stare so penetrating that the society which has formed them also comes sharply into focus.*

Cf. also the in this chapter quoted (p. 338; footnote 24) Michel Mesnil, « Le Guépard » : La fascination du beau. IN: *Etudes Cinématographiques. Luchino Visconti*. (1963, 3ème trimestre) No 26-27, pp. 103-116. Here pp. 103 & 107, respectively.

<sup>72</sup> It is the scene when the husband after having re-joined his wife in the countryside, takes her to visit a nearby property and its ground where the vegetation is in full bloom. After his absence, his wife appears to him as once more desirable. What he does not know yet, is that she is pregnant by her lover.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Wood, Death Becomes Visconti. IN: *Sight and Sound*. (May 2003) Vol. 13, issue 5, pp. 24-27. Here p. 27.

accoutrements of the wife, signify more than a dress for that particular mise-en-scène, for they are remnants of another film: several of the costumes designed for the character of Oriane de Guermantes were used for the female protagonist of *L'innocente*. In certain respects, the materialisation of these dress designs is a historic irony, as the one person involved in pre-production who thought it might be better if the film *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* was never made, was the costume designer Piero Tosi. It was the minute descriptions of the dresses given in *A la recherche du temps perdu* which rendered the task so difficult: because everybody who knew the novel, would have a very distinct and subjective image what the dresses should look like.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, by necessity the knowledgeable and imagining spectator would have found fault with the reification of that idea on the screen. The sight of the dresses on screen could then only have resulted in an anti-climax of what had been anticipated—regardless how spectacular their representation on the screen and in the narrative.

The dresses designed for *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* were inserted into the film text of *L'innocente* where they reverberate with meaning. Luchino Visconti had several times announced the Proust adaptation to be the last film he would make and that it would represent the sum of all films he had made.<sup>75</sup> Used in *L'innocente*, they indeed formed part of his last film, but also contradict such rhetoric of finality and culmination. Re-contextualised into another film entirely, the Proust-costumes are simultaneously fragment (ruinous remnants of the specific Proust project) and palimpsest (the project that is regarded as having been present throughout Visconti's œuvre and thus continues to haunt that œuvre). Then, as the trappings of period film here prove themselves more

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<sup>74</sup> Piero Tosi as referred to in Bruno Villien, *Luchino Visconti*. Barcelona (Calmann-Lévy) 1986, p. 217.

<sup>75</sup> Bruno Villien, *Luchino Visconti*. Barcelona (Calmann-Lévy) 1986, p. 217; and Suso Cecchi D'Amico in an interview with Anne Borrel titled *Proust - Visconti*. IN: *Proust, Visconti et la lanterne magique* [Catalogue of an exhibition June 21st - October 18th 1992 at the Musée de Marcel Proust]. Illiers-Combray (Musée de Marcel Proust) 1992, pp. 13-18. Here p. 15.

resilient to abandonment or destruction than the Proust film itself, they furthermore represent the frustration of cultural desires. Like the gaping garments in the adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* et al., the dresses here are the locus of desires, but indicate also that as fantasy such desires are condemned to stagnate. Being a fantasy of culture, the Visconti-Proust-Project can not be made, and its being partially made entails disappointment. The realisation of the dresses and their representation on the screen, thus are not affirmative reifications of the fantasy but like lost goods swept up onto a beach, they are the wreckage of the fantasy. Walter Benjamin's concept of the ruin (something that is made, but whose complete-ness relies on remaining incomplete), here serves as an apt analogy for the complex ontology of the cultural fantasy, caught inbetween realisation and reification. To be realised, here is to become a thing. And becoming a thing (the dress), the fantasy of Proust is betrayed. The dress thus is the Proust adaptation's sartorial ruin.

As the scene of artistic vocation in the script of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* draws to a close, the character Marcel speaks to Saint-Loup about the materials of his work (*Tous ces matériaux de mon œuvre littéraire*) in organic metaphors. His life provides the materials (the seed) from which his work (the plant) will grow. Once grown, the plant will no longer need the grain, and thus, the artist can die. This is the case with all œuvres. However, the final sentence, *l'art n'est qu'un prolongement de la vie*, takes on another meaning altogether when read against this particular film project: This last film, *L'innocente*, not only is still extant after the death of its director, but it had even its first release only after that death.

The entire passage of the scene in *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, doubles as narrative the »making of narrative« of Luchino Visconti himself. The words of the character Marcel establish the writer's biography at the centre, as starting point, of the work. The author-figure Visconti has been perceived as, and has actively solicited to be perceived as, representing his own life through his work—and not least through the parallels in the scripting of the character Marcel

and the imaginings of Marcel Proust. This was achieved through a diegesis where the artist creates his final grand opus at death's door, and through the close interrelation made between the artist's biography and œuvre. The scene narrating the accession of the character Marcel to his vocation of writing, ultimately, is perforated with the narrative of the author-figure Luchino Visconti. Luchino Visconti thereby becomes an ideal adaptor of Proust. In the parallel of illness and work, and especially in the ways in which his heritage film work has been related to his life, he positively becomes the heir of Marcel Proust. The Proust-adaptation was supposed to be the final, overarching masterpiece of the director and like the *Recherche* its making also was a race against death. That this race was lost, was a double deprivation: the loss of the work and the loss of the heir.

The film project aligning Proust and Visconti, arrived exactly at the moment of the centennial and mi-centennial celebrations of Proust (1971 & 1972). Several journals dedicated issues to Marcel Proust and his work, and books were published.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, a proportionally large number of documentaries that featured interviews with Marcel Proust's contemporaries was made. Like the documentary made in 1962, these documentaries<sup>77</sup> represented Marcel Proust as remembered: remembering the person, the reading of the work, or how one was made part of the work. These were imaginings of Proust that presented him as part of the biography of the films' interviewees. In the year 1972, the film *Proust*

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. e.g. the two extensive issues of the journal *Europe* in 1970 (Aug/Sep) Vol. 48, No. 496-497 and 1971, Vol. 49, No. 502-503 respectively; the issue of *Revue d'histoire littéraire de France* (1971) Vol. 71, No. 5-6.

Cf. e.g. André Vial, *Proust. Structures d'une conscience et naissance d'une esthétique*. Paris (Lettres Nouvelles & Juillard) 1971; Peter-Vaclav Zima, *Marcel Proust. A Centennial Volume*. New York (Simon and Schuster) 1971.

<sup>77</sup> *Portrait Souvenir* (1962, Gérard Herzog); [*La Normandie de Marcel Proust* (1969)]; *L'Art et la douleur* (1971, Guy Gilles); [*In Search of Lost Time* (1971, Colin Nears)]; [*A la recherche des amours enfantines* (1971)]; [*La société du temps de Marcel Proust* (1971, Jean-Marc Leuwen)]. Cf. also Appendix I for a more comprehensive list of the documentaries.

*et les sens*,<sup>78</sup> then was a first documentary to focus exclusively on his style. The content of the *Recherche* was not related to society but rather to the senses, and the film redefined the *Recherche* as a work of modernity instead of continuing to treat it as a memorial. Thus, exactly at the time of his centennial Proust was threatened to be taken out of a reception narrative that regarded him as the most accomplished *mémorialiste* of his age. As an author-figure, he was about to be re-invented in ways which set aside what his writing may mean to still extant contemporaries and as a narrative of a certain historical period. The adaptation of a director who defined himself as a contemporary of Proust, thus would have secured the filmic continuation of the Proust-*mémorialiste* held dear for so long, and which was at the time under attack. Contrary to the years following Marcel Proust's death, it is also to be noted that by the 1970s film, too, had emancipated itself as art form. The filmic representation of a Proust *mémorialiste* would, therefore, have implicitly profited from the medium's artistic credibility. The wording which describes a screening of the documentary *In Search of Lost Time* by Colin Nears, thus celebrates through the recitation of the guest list the myth of Proust. It is through subtle commentary on linguistics and the director's admiration of Proust that French superiority is again asserted. Moreover, the director himself inscribed himself into a Proustian memory narrative.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> *Proust et les sens* (1972, Michel Butor & Michel Favart). Here, passages from the *Recherche* are read aloud by the actor Laurent Terzieff, and then each is commented by a scholar (Jean-Pierre Richard, Henri Pousseur, Jean Starobinski, Roland Barthes, Pierre Klosowski, Michel Butor). Cf. Appendix I for details. Also note two other films which focussed on stylistics: *Marcel Proust: Naissance d'une phrase* (1977, Hervé Basle); *Lire Proust* (1988; Pierre André Boutang & Michel Pamet).

<sup>79</sup> André Brunet, *Une nouvelle présentation du film « In Search of Lost Time »* IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. (1974) No. 24, pp. 1918-1919. Here, p. 1919.

The screening took place on May 25th, 1973 in the Salle des Arts et des Métiers in Paris, and as guests were listed: Mme Mante-Proust; M. le Ministre plénipotentiaire M. Christopher Ewart-Biggs de l'ambassade de SM britannique à Paris; Mme la duchesse de la Rochefoucauld; comte Robert du Billy; Vice-Présidents de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray; M. P-O. Lapie, ancien ministre, Président; M. l'Ambassadeur de France Jean Chauvel, Vice-Président; M. Wieder, Secrétaire général de l'Association France-Grande-Bretagne.

*Après la projection du film qui connut le même accueil favorable que les précédentes présentations, M. Colin Nears évoqua ses souvenirs d'étudiant, à l'époque où il fit la connaissance d'A la recherche du temps perdu; il exposa ensuite comment, dans la perspective du Centenaire, il conçut son film dont il réussit à faire accepter le principe par la B.B.C. Prononcée en un français excellent, l'allocution du cinéaste charma l'auditoire tant par sa conviction proustienne que par son humeur britannique.*

*Dans une brève intervention qui lui fournit l'occasion de montrer sa maîtrise de la langue anglaise, M. Wieder, Secrétaire général de l'Association France-Grande-Bretagne, se félicita d'avoir pu organiser cette soirée, en liaison étroite avec M. Daniel Wilson, Délégué de la B.B.C. à Paris et la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust.*

If the adaptation of Luchino Visconti had been accomplished, it would have provided »Proust preservationists« with a bona-fide artistic envisioning of Proust that would counter these »new trends«.

The blossoms in the scene of *L'innocente*, the blossoming of the wife, and the renewed blossoming of the husband's interest in his wife thus both express the anticipation of a rich »harvest«. As it was the last film of Luchino Visconti, this harvest should have been the harvest of an artistic life. In his book on intertextuality,<sup>80</sup> Gérard Genette had borrowed a gardening term (*greffer*, to graft) to describe the process of metatextualité, where a hypertext models itself on a hypotext. Amid the »blossomings« of *L'innocente*, the dresses of Oriane de Guermantes are grafted onto the body of the wife. These are intertexts referring to another film's texture. To biographise the *je* as Marcel Proust, and then to locate Luchino Visconti through his biography alongside Proust, are not the only additions made. Amidst this profuse budding in *L'innocente*, it is indeed the framing through an enquiring camera that points to another story operative in the interpretation of Luchino Visconti's images. The dress stands for the Proust project as the signifier of the heritage film par excellence, but as the second chapter has argued it is not with the materialisation of the dress that the expectations formulated towards the adaptations find their conclusion (triumphant as the representation of the wife here may be). It is the stories that are woven around such dresses (into the gaping garments)<sup>81</sup> that matter most, i.e.

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<sup>80</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré*. Paris (Seuil) 1982.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. analysis in Chapter 2, pp. 123f. starting from the article by Erica Sheen, "Where the Garment Gapes": Faithfulness and Promiscuity in the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice*. IN: *The*

here the imaginings surrounding Visconti's Proust adaptation. The »prevention« of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* by Ludwig II through difficult financing and shooting/post-production schedule clashes, and by illness and death, then, re-located the Proust film into a cultural imagining.

In his book *From Hitler to Heimat*, Anton Kaes discusses the Syberberg film *Hitler: Ein Film aus Deutschland*.<sup>82</sup> It transpires from comments of the director that the film which was made had not been the one that he had intended to make. The constraints of time and money resulted in a film other than he had imagined:<sup>83</sup>

*The economy of means creates a strong alienation effect and favors a dramatic structure that produces not reality but rather allusions to something that cannot be presented, only imagined.*

The financing that is available at a certain time and for a certain time enforces the production of something different from the imagined. The difference between that which has been imagined and that which has been made is experienced as alienation. In reception, this alienation between the completed and the imagined becomes that of the spectator. The announcement of the adaptation provoked a cultural imagining of the film which was doubly disappointed: first, by the film that Luchino Visconti made instead of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, and that he never did adapt the *Recherche*, and secondly by the first feature film adaptation that was made, *Un amour de Swann*. Like the unmade film for Syberberg, this one too became a film that was imagined, but here also by others: imagined in the pre-production phase, and recalled and again imagined with every heritage films Visconti did make at the time. In the

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*Classic Novel. From Text to Screen*. Ed. by Robert Giddings & Erica Sheen. Manchester (Manchester University Press) 2000, pp. 14-30.

<sup>82</sup> *Hitler: Ein Film aus Deutschland* (1977, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg).

<sup>83</sup> Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat. The Return of History as Film*. Cambridge, MA (Harvard University Press) 1989, p. 58.



reception of this unmade film, dream teams were assembled. In an article by Hayden White, a connection is made between fashion and European identity:<sup>64</sup>

*The Fashion System* ("Le système de la mode") analyses the ways in which discourse, in this case the "the discourse of fashion", succeeds in endowing objects and commodities having little or no utility - the fashion item against the garment - with the luster of the desirable. Among the techniques of discursivity Barthes identifies as contributing to the desirability-effect is that of "identification" itself. In discourse, difference and even equivalence can be dissolved into identities. Thus, in the case of the fashion system, to "identify" a garment belonging to the genus of outerwear as, for example, "Chanel's classic little red jacket" effectively endows the garment so named with a meaning quite other than anything that might be derived from a description of the materials from which it was made, the tailoring that went into its production, or the practical uses to which it could be put.

The dresses in *L'innocente* receive their cultural value, in this argument, from their affiliation with the Proust adaptation, as being labelled »by Proust as imagined by Luchino Visconti«. However, they point to the absence of the unmade film which will never be made because the person who could have done it, the director, has died. Thus, the film becomes a fantasy of culture. The reading of the film project *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* in reception as moment where ultimate »truth« is attained, i.e. where the alignment of the geniuses of Visconti and Proust would produce spectacular apotheoses of European culture is a dream team. Like the casting rumours, it must be assigned to the domain of fantasy. The discourses and mythologising processes involved in the film's production and reception (which paradoxically is a »preception«, an anticipatory reception), show that this film project is predicated on fantasy, it exists only as it is ideally imagined.

The anticipation of Visconti's Proust adaptation as the heritage film of European culture, preceded the first accomplished adaptation of Proust by fifteen years. Luchino Visconti died a decade prior to the release in 1984 of the film *Un amour de Swann*, but *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* did make an appearance: its French version was published that very year. The reviews which rejected *Un amour de Swann* by referring to the Visconti-project, thus, are

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<sup>64</sup> Hayden White, *The Discourse of Europe and the Search for a European Identity*. IN: *Europe and the Other, Europe as the Other*. Ed. by Bo Stråth. Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt a.M., New York, Oxford & Wien (Peter Lang) 2000, pp. 67-86. Here, pp. 71f.

contributions to a process of cultural mourning. It was also in 1984 that the devoted servant Céleste Albaret died, who was one of the last remaining close contemporaries of the writer. The film *Un amour de Swann* as a finished film production was intentionally released in multiplex or other mainstream cinema film theatres. This distribution right alongside blockbuster films of mass culture then was a final, painful reminder that the Visconti adaptation had not been made. The European cast and crew of *Un amour de Swann*, then, seemed so much less desirable than the project of European culture to be carried out by Luchino Visconti and could do little to compensate for the imagined film.

### 3. The European

The figure of the director has been evaluated differently in the reception of the film *Un amour de Swann* and that of the screenplay *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, respectively. Likewise, the ways in which interrelations had been constructed between Luchino Visconti and the literary writer differed from the ways in which Harold Pinter was established as author-figure in relation to Marcel Proust. Here, the adaptor progressively moved himself, or was moved centre-stage, and other author-figures were either displaced, negated altogether, or constructed as approving spectators. In the case of Visconti, the adaptor was read as and solicited an affinity to the writer as his peer. In Chapters 2 and 3, I had used the model of genre as a tool of analysis that operated with structures of conventions and transgressions. In the preceding analysis of Luchino Visconti's film production, a bundling of those films of the director falling into the category of the heritage genre revealed how similar the narrative of the director as author-figure and the conceptualisation of the character Marcel as a person with a vocation to writing is. Taken together with the wider context of film production and the entire film production of this specific director in relation to his life, the analysis also yielded up obvious contradictions and omissions operative in his reception and in the construction of Visconti as auteur. Beyond the striking parallels that can be drawn between the director and the character of the literary author, Luchino Visconti can also be read as an »incarnation« itself of what type of images the heritage film is supposed to provide according to restorative or conservative agendas. As an author-figure, he and his films are in certain respects treated like the heritage film itself: certain themes and aspects of his work were foregrounded and others were set aside—irrespective of what could de facto be seen on the screen as the following will show.

The critical reception of adaptations feature movements of inclusion and exclusion: what was regarded as (im)proper in an Austen adaptation, and (differentially so) in the Proust adaptations; how transgressiveness is (to be)

interpreted in the act of interpretation. According to the claims made in Proust and the *Recherche*, the figure of the adapting artist is assigned different roles: the Schlöndorff-figure was the aggressor against whom Proust and the *Recherche* had to be protected; the figure of Raúl Ruiz became a narrative of authorial vanishing; the Pinter-figure was a narrative of the »Return of the Author«, where Proust is displaced by Pinter in a resuscitated digest version of the *Recherche*; the Visconti-figure became the cultural mediator between yesterday and today, between the *belle-époque* of Proust and an aesthetically deprived present, and between the arts. Between 1963 and 1974, in a period of social upheaval in Europe where traditional values were critically assessed, Luchino Visconti as artist was assigned the role of *Bewahrer* of Europe's culture, who will ensure its remembrance and endurance for posterity by providing its visualisation.

However, the absence of artist figures in *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* and the uses art is put to in the screenplay seem to contradict this imputed affinity. Firstly, in *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* there are very few artistic characters. Besides virtually eliminating the characters Odette, Swann, and Gilberte, the script has chosen to omit all the subplots involving other artistic characters such as the painter Elstir and the writer Bergotte. Secondly, artistic endeavours are either absent in the adaptation or merely instrumentalised to further flesh out the society tableau. Taken by itself, this either completely strips the narrative of intertextual cultural referents, or restricted their narrative importance. Although *The Proust Screenplay* too had eliminated several of the artistic characters, the writer Bergotte had been represented.<sup>85</sup> In *The Proust Screenplay*, the music of Vinteuil was staged as an important part in the aesthetic revelation and calling of the protagonist Marcel. In *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, the musician Vinteuil is the only artist left and his composition is staged merely as a conflictual social

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<sup>85</sup> He was renamed Anatole France, i.e. like the historical model Marcel Proust had used for his novel.

event not as epiphanic moment of the writer.<sup>86</sup> The concert is not configured as the aesthetic and vocational event that the novel had represented it as, nor as the moment of revelation it was represented in both *The Proust Screenplay*, and the subsequent film *Le temps retrouvé*.

In *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, the arts are instrumentalised in various strategies of containment. One way of achieving this, is by according them a status of supporting crafts as *mise-en-scène*. Though there are several instances where artworks are specified in the manuscripts of the Fondo Viscontiani, i.e. where the name of the painting or the music piece to be used is given, there is no indication in the scripts that foregrounds them, i.e. enunciates their »being-there«. Instead of causing a disruption of narrative, like the surrealist top hats in *Le temps retrouvé*, they are here meant to blend into the background. This is a culturally rich background, but it still is a background.<sup>87</sup> Art (and also art as a vocation) here is diegetically restrained, instead of being the purpose of the film's narrative *per se*. This instrumentalisation, or confinement, contradicts the cultural sensitivity imputed to Luchino Visconti. In particular, the reputation of

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<sup>86</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984. Scene 76, pp. 128 - 143. Here especially pp. 133f.

In this scene (no. 76) where the entire *Verdurin soirée* is represented, his concert is reduced to being musical background of the social drama. This transpires via the build-up of the scene. In the published screenplay it stretches out over fifteen pages. Only about one page of stage directions refers to the playing of the Vinteuil concert, and there the description contains nothing in the way of epiphanic moments for the character Marcel. Instead, it describes the posture and the poses of the guests and the musicians, the style in which the music is played by Morel, and is then followed by a stage directions concerning the reactions of the guests after the music has finished, i.e. their renewed flocking around Charlus and congratulating him whereby they again insult the hostess Madame Verdurin.

No mention is made of the significance of the concert about to be played, the expectations attendant thereupon, nor the near-miraculous recovery of the concert itself—years after the death of the composer. The reference to persons involved merely ties music back into the narrative of the affair between Marcel and Albertine: the character Marcel asks Morel about the composer's daughter not because he is interested in her father's music but he wants to find out about her (lesbian) past and the nature of her friendship with his lover Albertine.

<sup>87</sup> In the film *Il Gattopardo*, e.g. the tapestries and paintings used on set for the astronomy laboratory and office of the Prince were originals specifically chosen and then procured for the production.

his musical sensibility builds not least upon Visconti's extensive work as a director of opera, but also his own family history has been interwoven with a history of music, most obviously so through the uses of music in *Il Gattopardo*. In the film *Morte a Venezia*, the use of Mahler's Fifth Symphony's Adagietto had widely been commented upon enthusiastically. But as Neil Sinyard points out in his analysis,<sup>88</sup> the way in which this movement is put to use in relation to the film's plot, is the opposite of its function within the symphony. Therefore, the music here reads the filmic narrative *a rebours*:

*However, not only does this piece lose much from being wrenched out of its context, seeming more sentimental and care-worn than it actually is when heard in the full symphonic argument, the Fifth Symphony itself charts a movement from tragedy to triumph, from darkness to light, which one could argue is exactly the reverse of what happens in Death in Venice. I suppose one could say that Aschenbach moves from the darkness of self-ignorance to the illumination of self-knowledge, but it is not clear Visconti sees him like that and, if he does not, then the associations of the music run contrary to the drift of the film. Its inappropriateness is crippling to a film that prides itself on its cultural refinement.*

As argued in the previous chapter, the omission of artistic figures can be read as a displacement of the literary author. But in writings on Visconti, he achieves his authorial status as author-figure by aligning himself with other artists and not by displacing other author-figures, as in the case of Harold Pinter. In the reception of the *Recherche* project, the disappearance of artistic characters is not mentioned, let alone negatively commented upon as in the initial reception the Pinter screenplay. Even in historiographic texts, Luchino Visconti is referred to as a central figure of European culture. In a history of Italy published at the time,<sup>89</sup> the brief chapter on the arts singles Luchino Visconti out for praise:

*Now Visconti has produced the film of Thomas Mann's novella, Death in Venice, changing the central figure into a musician based on Mahler whose music is used. [...] the film is of the purest beauty*

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<sup>88</sup> Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation*. London & Sidney (Croom Helm) 1986, p. 129.

Sinyard contradicts the critical argument of his analysis, however, by adhering to a rhetoric of genius when describing the figure of directors. In the above quote, the awareness of Luchino Visconti, the director, is seen as the only possibility of exonerating the film from abusing Mahler's music for its narrative.

<sup>89</sup> Elizabeth Wiskemann, *Italy after 1945*. London (Macmillan) 1971, p. 121.

Of the entire eight pages, five are devoted to literature, one to film and the remaining two to music, painting, sculpture and architecture.

*and historically meticulous, a very mature work of art. After this Visconti, who has previously interested himself in Thomas Mann, intends to make a film of the middle volumes of A la recherche du temps perdu. One can predict with confidence that he will do no wrong to Proust - can more be said?*

Unlike the reading of Schlöndorff as author-figure, Luchino Visconti is fêted from the adaptation's inception as the ideal adaptor of the *Recherche*. He is regarded as an equal of the literary author-figure Marcel Proust and is given »carte blanche« for his adaptation project.

The evaluation of whether any given adaptor is welcomed by the reviewers and spectators, has been shown to be contingent on several factors: on the type of film done (mainstream period film vs. experimental arthouse); on other films that were produced at the time of the adaptation's production; and on the position it takes in the reception trajectory of the particular work of literature. With respect to the figure of the adaptor, I here add that the perception of adaptations as a significant element of his/her œuvre, or the perception of him/her as auteur, may overall be less relevant than the œuvre-position the specific adaptation has in his œuvre and in the adaptation trajectory of the literary author.

That the director Raúl Ruiz has made himself a name as a fiercely independent, almost an underground auteur certainly contributed to the perception of *Le temps retrouvé* not being perceived as a film that would significantly shape the public's view of Marcel Proust and the *Recherche*. It therefore was not seen as a threat to the »monument of Proust«. Furthermore, this film did not come (and no longer had to come) with the gesture of liberating Proust out of the XVIème arrondissement as it was not the first adaptation of the *Recherche*. Another factor may have contributed to the less critical reception of *Le temps retrouvé*. It is interesting to note that when Ruiz was adapting Proust he was 58 years old. Thus, he was only seven years younger than Luchino Visconti at the time of his Proust-project. Joseph Losey at 62 fell into the same age category and this, together with the reputation he had acquired in France as auteur, contributed to an absence of adverse comments for his role in the process of adapting Proust to film, whereas his scriptwriter Harold Pinter was heavily

criticised. The two adaptors who were denied the »right« or the ability to adapt Proust were at the time of their projects aged 45 (Volker Schlöndorff) and 41 (Harold Pinter). Together with the inexperience that such comparative youth suggests, Harold Pinter is even less film-experienced through the smallest time gap between his first professional work in film (as scriptwriter rather than dramatist) and the Proust project: a mere 9 years lay between the first feature film he scripted (*The Servant*) and *The Proust Screenplay*. In comparison, one notes a large gap in the case of Schlöndorff: eighteen years had elapsed between his first film and the making of *Un amour de Swann*, and he had more than ten films to his directorial name.<sup>90</sup> But he was in the unlucky position to be the first to adapt Proust for the big screen and then, as said, in 1984 he was young in absolute terms. Furthermore, his professional association with the cinema movements of the Nouvelle Vague and the New German Cinema may have weighed here. Both of these cinemas established themselves not in opposition to literature in general but most decidedly in opposition to a practice of film adaptation that merely served to affirm a canon of literary classics. The feature films Schlöndorff made directly prior to *Un amour de Swann* also included adaptations, but highly politicised ones.<sup>91</sup> Luchino Visconti's association with Neorealismo, on the other hand, already dated back more than twenty years, and at the time *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* was to be made, he had just finished *Morte a Venezia*.

The three directors Losey, Visconti, and Ruiz, and the scriptwriter Suso Cecchi D'Amico fall into a distinct age group. At the times they made their

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<sup>90</sup> The numbers refer to feature-length films and mostly exclude collaborative and television work. Arriving at exact numbers is, however, difficult. Because in some instances, work done for television did receive a theatrical release, and conversely in other instances, the work done for cinema is simply unavailable nor did it get a wide release, i.e. was screened only at film festivals. The latter is especially pertinent for Raúl Ruiz. Suso Cecchi D'Amico poses a different kind of authorial problem here. Most of the (many, many) films she scripted were the work of several if not a team of scriptwriters.

<sup>91</sup> *Die verlorene Ehre der Katarina Blum* (1975), *Der Fangschuss* (1976), *Deutschland im Herbst* (1978; one episode), *Die Blechtrommel* (1979), *Die Fälschung* (1981).



respective Proust adaptations all three fell into more or less the same age group of around 60—with Luchino Visconti being the oldest.<sup>92</sup> What distinguishes the directors Visconti and Ruiz from Losey is that they had been working in film for several years longer than Losey (and of course Schlöndorff): both had been directing films for about a generation, Visconti for 29 years and Ruiz for 31 years. Here, the political exile of Losey »subtracts« from his œuvre because not only did he have to start again as director after having barely started the second career of film director career in the USA, he also literally lost his name since being blacklisted he had to work under an alias. Moreover, rather than having a possibility of project choice, he was constrained by economic necessity to do work for hire.<sup>93</sup> Only at age 54 did he assert himself fully as auteur—whereas both Visconti and Ruiz (along very different paths) had been perceived as invested with authorial power from their first films onwards. Thus, when they embarked on their respective adaptations of Marcel Proust, they did this authorised not least by a substantial body of film work that was perceived as auteurial. The marked contrast between these two directors as author-figures is then the paths they took to arrive at that position and also the number of films done. Whereas Ruiz' filmography approaches one hundred, it has not been seen by a wide public and is mostly untraceable on video or DVD, and features only occasionally in television programmes. Luchino Visconti's œuvre counts a mere fifteen feature-length films, a higher proportion of his films is available on video and DVD. In May 2003 he had been singled out by the British Film Institute for a complete retrospective that also undertook restoration work of several of his

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<sup>92</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico was 57, Raúl Ruiz was 58, Joseph Losey 62, and Luchino Visconti was 65.

<sup>93</sup> In the early European years, he was thus connected to various projects of Hammer Productions.

It must be pointed out, however, that *freedom of choice* here is a relative term. All the directors and scriptwriters are subject to the pressures of filmmaking's economic structure. But there is a difference here between having to organise the financing for self-devised projects and being assigned projects.

films.<sup>94</sup> A retrospective of the work of Raúl Ruiz given a month later at the Cinémathèque in Brussels, could screen only a handful of his films.<sup>95</sup> With this »slim« œuvre, Visconti is close to Volker Schlöndorff's overall output of eighteen to date (just over ten at the time of the Proust film), and outnumbered by Joseph Losey (over thirty in all, but just over twenty in 1971).

Despite this comparatively lean body of work, then, Luchino Visconti was read as the ideal adaptor of Marcel Proust. In addition to his age and the themes of his films, and next to his work in theatre and opera, it was the perception of this director as a connoisseur of the arts that tinges readings of the script and conceptualisations of the film project. This made reviewers overlook what actually was there or, rather, not there. The absence of artistic figures and the deigetic subordination of art was not perceived as a lack. Articles on the film project,<sup>96</sup> repeatedly re-integrated art into *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, e.g. by referring the characters back to portraits of various artists: the character Marcel resembles Alberto Carlo Pisani Dossi of the portrait by Tranquillo Cremona; Albertine resembles young girls in Gainsborough or Whistler paintings; Odette the contessina Secco Guarda in the portrait by Fra Gulgario; and Charlus, finally, Carolus-Duran of a John Singer Sargent portrait. The reception process thereby counters the absence of other artist figures by projecting art-intertexts onto the unmade film. Here, the absence of artist figures and the re-integration of them into the project *a posteriori* was not seen as a contradiction to either the cultural

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<sup>94</sup> In October 2003, a almost complete retrospective of his films could be seen in Brussels in the framework of Europalia, a cultural event covering screenings, exhibitions etc. An annual event, Europalia was intended to promote awareness of Italian culture in Belgium. During several weeks, there were special screenings of Italian cinema and the homage section of Europalia's film programme in 2003 was dedicated to Luchino Visconti. Luchino Visconti's work had already been present at the first Europalia in 1969: the film *La caduta degli dei* had been chosen for the opening.

<sup>95</sup> As a point of comparison: at the retrospectives of the work of Clint Eastwood, Gianni Moretti, and Charles Chaplin organised the same year at this Médiathèque, a much more comprehensive, if not complete, selection of the directors' films were screened over an entire month.

<sup>96</sup> Mario Gerosa, *Alcuni ipotesi sulla Recherche viscontiana*. IN: *Cinema Nuovo* (1970 May/June) Vol. 39, No. 3 (325), pp. 16-20. Here p. 20.

value of the Proust script nor to the director's artistic reputation as connoisseur of the arts. The prime contradiction in the particular cases of Visconti's film *Morte a Venezia* and of the film project *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, then is that in reception they are endowed with art and are read as a celebration of culture, which is absent. For the *Recherche* adaptation, Luchino Visconti thus emerges as the hero-protagonist in a intertextual spectacle of culture which, projected into the future of the yet unmade film, was not stringently justified on the basis of this script.

Where the circumstances of working abroad and of adapting literary works of other national provenance for Losey, Schlöndorff, and Ruiz were read as a signs of alien(ated) status, the same biographical and professional circumstances are interpreted in yet other ways in the case of Luchino Visconti. Contrary to the hostile reception of the Schlöndorff film and the initially doubtful voices regarding the Pinter adaptation, Luchino Visconti's project to bring the *Recherche* to the screen had been regarded as a promising and desirable enterprise. His œuvre was read not so much as the work of an Italian director, but as a director from Italy who was realising pan-European projects of high cultural value. In the year before the Proust project, Luchino Visconti was awarded the Premio Europa for *La caduta degli dei* by the Centro Italiano di Studi Europei "Luigi Einaudi" in Rome, which extended the label of worthiness to his other films.<sup>97</sup> While the laudation also praised the director's contribution to facilitating the understanding between peoples and to education in general, it significantly did not mention the internationality of his films regarding casting or the aspect of

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<sup>97</sup> *Il valore storico e il messaggio civile dell'opera di Luchino Visconti, altamente ispirata e resa con singolare efficacia, si ricollega, in piena coerenza, con il significato e il carattere dei precedenti films [sic] del Regista italiano [...]*

Translation: *The historical value and the civilian/civilised message of the work of Luchino Visconti, immensely inspired and rendered with singular efficiency, connects itself back to, with total coherence, with the meaning and the character of the preceding films of the Italian director [...].*

financing. The »asset of European-ness« is deposited in the cultural value as »high art« of Luchino Visconti's work alone.

Luchino Visconti's manuscripts further underscore this message of culture through various paratexts. A nineteen-page treatment of *Morte a Venezia* among the manuscripts, features three pages of introduction by Luchino Visconti extolling the cultural value of this particular novella. It does so by placing it in the larger context of Thomas Mann's work; by relating the character Aschenbach to characters of other novels; and finally, by relating the character to the writer Thomas Mann and to the composer Gustav Mahler. In its function as advertisement directed at production companies, this treatment here uses the cultural value of its literary source material and various intertexts to procure money for production. The cultural capital of the film's source material and subject matter is exploited to procure money.

On the title page of several manuscript versions of the script (typed in Italian and English), a motto by Alfred de Musset had been written:

*A Venise, a [sic] l'affreux Lido ou vient sur l'herbe d'un tombeau mourir la pâle Adriatique*  
(A. de Musset)  
(*Les Nuits*)

Thus, these hand-written additions to scripts which are addressed to English and to Italian readers among the producers and the cast, demand cultural literacy—even more so in the absence of knowledge of the French language. For if the reader does not speak French, s/he would probably only be able to understand and thus interrelate with the project the words *Lido* and *Alfred de Musset*.<sup>98</sup> In a twenty-two page letter to Farley Granger that is meant to give him merely some brief introduction to his character in *Senso*, Visconti refers to the character Franz Mahler as *Baudelairian-Byronic-aesthet*. The scene of child abuse in *La caduta degli dei* is in a manuscript version only described by referring

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<sup>98</sup> The eventual additional understanding of *Venise* and *Adriatique* as Venice and Adriatic, would furthermore tie the quotation to filmic location.

it to Dostoyevsky's novel *Besy*.<sup>99</sup> Three words were added by hand to the typed script: *bambina ebrea - Stavroghin*. Here, the name of a literary character functions like abbreviated cultural code.

If one looks, however, at all of the films Luchino Visconti made it appears that his »pan-European art« amounts to only about half of his work: merely four<sup>100</sup> of his films are based on non-Italian literature, and another two<sup>101</sup> are set abroad. Eleven of his films are set in Italy and/or were based on Italian literature. The entire body of his work was done over a period of thirty-four years. To date and over a period of just three years more, Volker Schlöndorff has directed more feature-length adaptations of non-German literature than Luchino Visconti did, yet he is not perceived as a European artist of the same calibre. This is, for one, related to the ways in which their affinities to Proust are constructed and, then, are due to the period in which either produced his oeuvre. Furthermore, the directors' respective association with film movements such as the Nouvelle Vague, Neorealismo, the New German Cinema, and the temporal distance or proximity these affiliations had with respect to their *Recherche* projects. In reception, this enables or disables them as author-figures. Luchino Visconti and Volker Schlöndorff are filmmakers on the same continent, but they also belonged to different filmmaker generations and different types of cinemas.

In generational terms, the directors and scriptwriters fall into two different groups. Luchino Visconti, Joseph Losey and Suso Cecchi D'Amico were born in 1906, 1909 and 1914, respectively. Harold Pinter, Volker Schlöndorff, and Raúl Ruiz were born in 1930, 1939 and 1941, respectively. The dates for the making of a first film both repeat this group pattern and temporally draw the groups closer

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<sup>99</sup> Fjodor Dostoyevsky, *Besy* (1871-72). English Title/s *The Devils* or *The Possessed*. German Title *Die Dämonen*. In the novel, the character Stavroghin narrates his sexual abuse of a child as an indicator of his utter moral depravity.

<sup>100</sup> *Le notti bianche* (1957, from Dostoyevsky's *Belie Notchi* [1st 1848], Engl. title *White Nights*); his episode in the film *Boccaccio '70* (1962, based on Maupassant's *Au bord du lit*, 1st 1883); *Lo straniero* (1965, based on Albert Camus' *L'Étranger*, 1st 1942); *Morte a Venezia* (1971).

<sup>101</sup> *La Caduta degli dei* (1969) and *Ludwig II* (1973).

together: for the former three this is 1942 (in Italy), 1948 (in the USA) and 1946 (in Italy), a total span of six years (from eight); for the latter three 1963 (in the UK), 1966 (in Germany), and 1968 (in Chile), a total span of five years (from eleven). The former three were born before World War I, entered adolescence in the 1920s and matured intellectually, and politically on the 1930s in Europe and in the USA. The latter three were either just born or were children at the time of World War II, and entered into adolescence at the end of the war or in the fifties, at the time of a disintegrating British Empire, a partitioned Germany and a polarised Chile. They matured intellectually, politically, and artistically in the (late) fifties and sixties. Besides the differences in geographical and thereby cultural spheres, these two historico-chronological locations necessarily produced differences in outlook of the artists and also how they and their work were perceived by critics and spectators. To be a »European film director« in the first century of film is endowed with different meanings for each.

In Europe at the times Visconti was working as a director of Neorealismo, Losey had to emigrate to Europe, and Schlöndorff and Pinter were growing up, the postwar period of the forties and fifties brought with it the screening of significantly larger numbers of US-films. As laid out in Chapter 2, in France this contributed to the rise of auteur theory which embraced these films.<sup>102</sup> However, it also antagonised filmmakers because it left less screening space for domestic films. In a contribution to a history of world cinema, financial European collaboration in the sector of cinema is described as a necessity in the face of post-war destruction and of a US-American threat:<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Cf. Thomas Elsaesser, *American Friends: Hollywood Echoes in the New German Cinema*. IN: *Europe and Hollywood. Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-1995*. Ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith & Steven Ricci. London (bfi) 1998, pp. 142-155.

On pages 148ff. it is pointed out that although Wenders, e.g., clearly criticises America in his films, he also has an idea and thereby images of a »good America«, which is the filmic America of Nicholas Ray and Sam Fuller.

<sup>103</sup> Aldo Bernardini, *Le collobarazioni internazionali nel cinema europeo*. IN: *Storia Mondiale del Cinema. Vol. 1: L'Europa. I. Miti, luoghi, divi*. Torino (Einaudi) 1999, pp. 1013-1048. Here p. 1030.

*Vi concorrono naturalmente motivazioni diverse: dalla volontà di ricostruire, nei paesi sconvolti dagli eventi bellici, anche il settore cinematografico (l'industria dello spettacolo diventa sempre molto importante nei momenti di crisi nazionali) all'esigenza di creare un fronte comune contra la nuova ondata di film hollywoodiani che, dopo qualche anno d'assenza, tornano a invadere le sale di tutta Europa, al seguito degli eserciti alleati vincitori.*

Referring to documents of the time, here the opposition is couched in metaphors of war that describe the after-effects of a war. Cinema is seen as one of the areas of nation-rebuilding cultural production that had to be supported and made sustainable. Here, too, one finds a war over culture taking place, as was observable in the French reception of the film *Un amour de Swann*. But in the postwar forties and fifties, the cultural good that had to be protected had not been »French Proust« but the cultural specificity of Europe itself.

However, the stark opposition between the USA and Europe is not as clear-cut as the rhetoric would have it. From a reception point of view, anti-Americanism was not an attitude taken by audiences. After having been barred from seeing US-films for years, Italian, German, and French audiences were interested in seeing films hitherto prohibited and which US-audiences had been enjoying. Faced with the »American threat«, it was producers and film professionals seeking to secure their existences or the *Fortbestand* of their work, who saw the economic necessity of co-productions. The idea of European co-productions was not new, it had been envisaged in the interwar period already.<sup>104</sup> The post-war attempts to protect »European film« against the American »aggressor« primarily originated amongst politicians and film professionals.

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Translation: *Different motivations come together here: from the wish to reconstruct, in the countries ravaged by wartime events, also the cinematographic sector (the industry of film always becomes more important in moments of national crises) to the need to create a united front against the new tidal wave of Hollywood films which, after several years of absence, return to invade the cinemas in all of Europe, as the accompaniment of the victorious allied armies.*

For a similarly split reception of other goods arriving in Europe (like Coca Cola) and US-investment in postwar Europe, cf. also Richard F. Kuisel, *Seducing the French. The Dilemma of Americanisation*. Berkeley, Los Angeles & London (University of California Press) 1993.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Kristin Thompson, *National or International Films? The European Debate During the 1920s*. IN: *Film History*. (1993) Vol. 8, issue 1, pp. 281-296.

Film as culture, on the one hand was mobilised by the Western European states to unite Europe against the economic threat of a non-European film industry, and on the other hand it also divided the Europe of the emerging and then increasingly integrating European (Economic) Community. When arguing for protectionism, i.e. when representing film as an artistic form of expression that forms a vital part of European self-expression and self-representation, it was invariably the art film that is enlisted for the argument. The case of the New German Cinema is an apt example: while depending on the state and television-based financing system and while producing films which commercially were not viable, these films were highly successful abroad at film festivals and with foreign audiences. Anton Kaes has argued that because of the ambivalent relationship with itself as a nation (an unease located most obviously in what kind of relation to take to the recent fascist past), the West German state instrumentalised these films as its self-representations: Eschewing the task of self-definition, the German state chose to represent itself abroad through filmic images.<sup>105</sup> While obviously being pertinent for domestic audiences and their self-imaginings and/or also in terms of producing revenue for the film industry, the above-mentioned film genres like the Heimatfilm, are not added to the evidence in the case made against unrestricted American entry into the European film market nor when selecting »ambassadorial« images.

When a definition of »European cinema« is delivered, it predominantly is based on films considered to be worthy examples of the *septième art* rather than popular entertainment.<sup>106</sup> The common denominator of these films is that they

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<sup>105</sup> Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat. The Return of History as Film*. Cambridge, MS (Harvard University Press) 1989.

On pp. 21f: *Thus the New German Cinema plays an important part in the promotion of West German culture abroad. Considering how little known and appreciated some of the films of the New German Cinema are inside West Germany—foreigners are always amazed to learn this—one is tempted to conclude that the publicly subsidized film functions mainly as an export article for distribution abroad.*

<sup>106</sup> Cf. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Introduction*. IN: *Hollywood and Europe. Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-95*. Ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith & Steven Ricci. London (bfi) 1998, pp. 1-16.



were made according to principles that differed from those of US-American cinema. Ginette Vincendeau summarises it as:<sup>107</sup>

*Arising from the avant-garde works of the 1920s, the films of prominent figures such as Jean Renoir, Ingmar Bergman, and Federico Fellini, and the post-war movements of Italian Neorealism and the French New Wave, the essence of European cinema has been defined as residing in works that are to various degrees, aesthetically innovative, socially committed, and humanist in outlook. To these features are often added the auteurist notions of originality and personal vision—all characteristics which define and promote, European art cinema as fundamentally different from the industrially based and generically coded Hollywood.*

The label of »European« here serves to infer cultural value to a certain group of films that are supposed to underscore the specificities of films made in Europe as opposed to those made in the USA. But the dismissive treatment of popular, industrial and generically-coded films as US-type films, conveniently forgets that films made in Europe in the decades following World War II, too have been popular entertainment, generically defined, and industrially made (e.g. the Heimatfilm, the Heinz Erhardt comedies, the Gainsborough costume films, the Don Camillo e Peppone films, and not least the porn film). Christopher Wagstaff, for one, has pointed out the importance of numerous genres in Italian film prior and next to the art cinema which became a cultural export of the country.<sup>108</sup> It should also be noted that, it was not least the enormous financial success of *La dolce vita* and *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* (bypassing the US-releases of the years 1960/61) that was marked out as a turning point for Italian art film.<sup>109</sup> For

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On p. 6: *There is a purely economist rhetoric, mainly on the American side, which presents the issue as solely one of free markets and consumer choice. And there is the culturalist rhetoric, mainly on the European side, which talks of cultural identities, of language as the souls of a nation, of the right to national self-expression, or resistance to alien cultural hegemony, and so on.*

<sup>107</sup> Ginette Vincendeau, *Issues in European Cinema*. IN: *World Cinema. Critical Approaches*. Ed. by John Hill & Pamela Church Gibson. Oxford (Oxford University Press) 2000, pp. 56-64.

<sup>108</sup> Christopher Wagstaff, *Cinema*. IN: *Italian Cultural Studies. An Introduction*. Ed. by David Forgacs & Robert Lumley. Oxford (Oxford University Press) 1999, pp. 216-232.

As examples for such genres prevalent in Italy (*filoni*) he lists on pp. 223-227: the peplum, the western, the strappalacrime, the commedia brillante/sentimentale.

<sup>109</sup> Cf. Gian Piero Brunetta, *Cent'anni di cinema italiano*. Roma (Laterza) 1992, pp. 343-345.

Cf. here also as pointed out in Chapter 2, how the low costs coupled with the critical success (and partly also the financial viability) of the *Nouvelle Vague* films, like the success of Italian films, led to the production of more films of a similar make.

this study, it then is relevant that the genre of the heritage film was initially successful also as an export of European culture especially in conjunction with adaptation as a secondary genre category. As the genre moved through the phase of consolidation and into a classicist phase, the films made according to the generic conventions also seem to diminish in cultural value, they appear less cultured. They seem to fail as regards conveying what the literary source is »about«. Furthermore, in the repetition of similar representations of heritage (through costume, mise-en-scène, setting) and by being produced by US-studios and cast with US-American actors, they lose both their aesthetic singularity and cultural specificity as European films. As the following will show, it is cultural specificity that is expected of the ideal »European« film.

In the decades of the conception of a European Economic Union, the European art film in particular was defined (in opposition to US-aggressive entry into distribution) as worthy and in need of protection, as specific and also exempted from exposure to the workings of a free market. In the years of the first Proust adaptations, the European Economic Union itself for the first time officially mentioned the concept of a European identity.<sup>110</sup> Besides the certain decline of the US-studio and distribution system, the late sixties and the seventies saw the rise of the so-called New Hollywood cinema. The films of directors such as Francis Ford Coppola, Nick Cassavetes, Martin Scorsese, Arthur Penn, Michael Cimino but also Steven Spielberg received a critical welcome and/or once again generated box office revenue in the US and abroad. Almost 50 years after the war, in 1993 at the time of the second General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs (GATT II), a rhetoric of war was once again

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<sup>110</sup> Cf. Bo Stråth, *Multiple Europes: Integration, Identity and Demarcation to the Other*. IN: *Europe and the Other, Europe as the Other*. Ed. by Bo Stråth. Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt a.M., New York, Oxford & Wien (Peter Lang) 2000, pp. 385-420.

On pp. 394-499, he points out that, as this was done in 1973 at the Copenhagen summit, the term identity was to replace the postwar key term integration and Europe itself was in crisis, where previously transnational orientations were already being abandoned in favour of national consolidation.

assumed where French film professionals and politicians spearheaded the fight against deregulation of the audio-visual sector. The negotiations had begun seven years earlier, in the year when *A Room With a View* was a successful European cultural export. The US-acceptance of cultural protectionism and screen quotas imposed upon them by European states was seen as their capitulation and as a victory for Europe. In *Le Monde*, the scriptwriter of *Un amour de Swann* Jean-Claude Carrière said:<sup>111</sup>

*Yes, it's true, we are at war. ... European authors and producers, at first incredulous, have some difficulties in reacting and in defending themselves. But now they have done it. Almost everywhere, week after week, we have been organizing ourselves.*

The words of Mitterand in Gdansk Poland on September 21st 1993 when defining the French position regarding GATT II's influence on the sphere of European nations' culture declared their protection a duty:<sup>112</sup>

*Creations of the spirit are not just commodities; the elements of culture are not pure business. Defending the pluralism of works of art and the freedom of public to choose is a duty. What is at stake is the cultural identity of all our nations. It is the right of all peoples to [have] their own culture. It is the freedom to create and choose our own images. A society which abandons to others the way of showing itself, that is to say the way of presenting itself to itself, is a society enslaved.*

The argument of culture is here again represented as uniting a European front against the Americans. But the unity of Europe is simultaneously dissolved into heterogeneity, into cultural regions established not least also on the basis of a national criterion. Through the practice of multinational financing structures, a purely national conceptualisation of cinema is, however, economically thrown into question. A number of bilateral and other co-productions treaties signed

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<sup>111</sup> Jean-Claude Carrière, *Cinéma : Réponse à Jack Valenti. Nous sommes pour la coexistence*. Article originally on p. 2 of *Le Monde*. (24.03.1993) alongside an article of Jack Lang on European film.

Here quoted from: Jean-Pierre Nicolas, *From the Blum-Byrnes Agreement to the GATT Affair*. IN: *Europe and Hollywood. Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-1995*. Ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith & Steven Ricci. London (bfi) 1998, pp. 47-60. Here p. 55.

As Nicolas' article also points out, among the European states it was France in particular who sought protection from US-American film industry.

<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Jean-Pierre Nicolas, *From the Blum-Byrnes Agreement to the GATT Affair*. IN: *Europe and Hollywood. Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-1995*. Ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith & Steven Ricci. London (bfi) 1998, pp. 47-60. Here p. 58f.

between European states in the 50s and 60s,<sup>113</sup> ensured economic integration, while in cultural terms, borders were maintained rigorously. In the writings on »European film« both by academics and those involved in film production and arguing for a strengthening the film industries of the European state (through various protectionist measures such as quotas or subsidies), the possibilities of transnational co-operation are argued along the lines of film as art, defending European culture against a non-European aggressor. Within Europe, however, culture remains within the domain of the individual state. Argued economically, the nation could be regarded as vanishing, but argued culturally—i.e. where the individual film is to provide culturally specific images—the national boundaries reinstate themselves firmly.

That film is »Europeanly« divisive when argued in cultural terms, can be observed on other levels as well: in debates ignited around the figures of directors, actors, and actresses working across European boundaries. In his historiography of New German Cinema Thomas Elsaesser must therefore argue that it is both the work in France and in mainstream, US-narrative cinema that precludes Volker Schlöndorff from being included as an equal of Fassbinder, Kluge et al.:<sup>114</sup>

*'Tradition of Quality'? The case of Schlöndorff*

*Schlöndorff has often chosen formula film-making for the representation of conflict situation, on which the audience could recognize a specific social setting or a moral dilemma, but in a form and through a dramatic development instantly familiar from more classical-conventional American or European models. As such, his target audience is the one which responds to 'big subjects': the middle ground of a national- international film industry on a European scale, but with a potential American market to warrant substantial production values. Having begun in France, as assistant to Alain Resnais and Louis Malle, Schlöndorff's projects and career-moves indicate a careful testing of the modes and formats of the European art cinema and of the liberal tradition of Hollywood.*

To introduce the author-figure Volker Schlöndorff, Elsaesser here uses the very label that the filmmakers of the Nouvelle Vague (whose directing assistant

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<sup>113</sup> Cf. Tim Bergfelder, The Nation Vanishes. European Co-productions and Popular Genre Formula in the 1950s and 1960s. IN: *Cinema & Nation*. Ed. by Mette Hjort & Scott Mackenzie. London & New York (Routledge) 2000, pp. 139-152.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *New German Cinema*. London (Macmillan & bfi) 1989, here p. 123.

Volker Schlöndorff more often than not had been) were working against: the *tradition de qualité*. It is furthermore the US-style and format of his work that excludes him from Europe. When a director like Schlöndorff then sets out to establish his films between European arthouse and US-mainstream, this in his reception turns him into a figure of exile, as he cannot be integrated into a national film historiography of European arthouse without putting the premises of that writing into question.

In the case study of Proust film adaptations, the national boundary is not only crossed by having non-French adaptors (try to) bring the *Recherche* to the screen, but in the lives of almost all of the adaptors discussed here at length. Two of the directors had spent their formative years as filmmakers in France: Luchino Visconti as the assistant of Jean Renoir in the 1930s, Volker Schlöndorff as the assistant of Louis Malle, Alain Resnais, and Jean-Pierre Melville, and also through studying film at the IDHEC. Both Joseph Losey and Raúl Ruiz made their homes in France, albeit for different reasons. It is only Harold Pinter who has not spent a significant part of his life in France or abroad. Together with the fact that the vast majority of literary texts he adapted to film belong to Anglo-Saxon literatures, this may further explain why in the case of his Proust adaptation the authorial question poses itself as »either-or«, rather than one of »and«. As the example of Ornella Muti in the reception of *Un amour de Swann* has shown, the issue of national borders as controversial extends to the cast. When Romy Schneider left Germany to live in France in 1959 with a French fiancée and to work there, this was interpreted as »treason«.<sup>115</sup> The casting of Simone Signoret in the British film *Room at the Top*, implied that to chose a French woman here made the character of the adulteress more palatable to British audiences—even though in the novel the older woman and mistress of

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<sup>115</sup> One could read even recently on her website [www.romy.de](http://www.romy.de): *In diesem Jahr geht Romy Schneider für Deutschland verloren: am 22. März ist offizielle Verlobung mit Alain Delon.* (Taken 30.07.2003)

the protagonist had not been French. Being not only a foreigner, but French, Signoret's casting and the redefinition of the character played by her as French, made onscreen adultery more acceptable to British audiences. As in the exchanges between Harold Pinter, Joseph Losey, and Barbara Bray, representations of licentiousness here too were less offensive if ascribed to French cultural habits.<sup>116</sup> In the figure of the British actor Dirk Bogarde (who played Aschenbach in *Morte a Venezia*) the divisions between national and international open up even more divisively. The film that had sent Bogarde off on an international career trajectory, had been *The Servant*. It had been released in the early sixties, at a time of economic prosperity and with the establishment of a saturated consumer culture,<sup>117</sup> and at a time when the art cinemas of England and France also thrived. Bogarde's work done outside of Britain for what is termed »European Arthouse« is dismissed as pretentious. In an article Anthony Medhurst argued:<sup>118</sup>

*It is at this point that many critics would step in to argue that "Victim" marks Bogarde's liberation from mediocrity, that the portrayal of Farr paves the way for the greater achievements of the later art films. I would prefer to argue that after "Victim", Bogarde never again made such an interesting film. He may have found his later work more personally satisfying, as his elegant and informative autobiographies bear witness, but critical analysis can never simply accept an artist's own self-estimation. Bogarde's later films lack that sense of social tension that makes "The Blue Lamp", "Libel" and "Victim" so challenging and so important. They become, increasingly, vehicles for his undoubted actorly skills, reaching with "Death in Venice" (1971) for a peak of virtuosity in a vacuum. Pleasures exist in such films ("Providence", 1977, particularly), but they lose their sense of social moment. They cease to be*

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<sup>116</sup> Robert Murphy, *Sixties British Cinema*. London (bfi) 1992.

<sup>117</sup> Cf. Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties. Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States*. Oxford & New York (Oxford University Press) 1998.

<sup>118</sup> Anthony Medhurst, *Dirk Bogarde*. IN: *All Our Yesterdays. 90 Years of British Cinema*. Ed. by Charles Barr. London (bfi) 1986, pp. 346-354. Here p. 353.

Continued with: *"The Servant" (1963) and "Accident" (1967) seem to me to be so much less rich than the best of Bogarde's earlier work. Their very reservedness shrieks of pretension; they seem determined to seek approval according to literary notions of value. Their vaunted complexity remains fixed at the level of their narrative enigmas, and their vicious misogyny cannot claim the excuses of generic determinism available to "The Blue Lamp". The very fact that "The Servant" was heralded as (yet another) breakthrough into maturity should be enough to send those of us familiar with the various false dawns of British cinema rushing back to the immaturity of melodrama. Of course, Bogarde's performance in both "The Servant" and "Accident" is breathtaking, but his surroundings have taken on a repellent quality.*

*interventions into a national film culture, and not only by virtue of their 'international' label. The British art films Bogarde made in the 1960s are equally culpable in their striving after significance.*

The actor himself is set aside when it comes to evaluating his work and the merits it carries for him. Labelling the autobiographical writings of his *elegant and informative* degrades them twofold: *elegant* here suggests a practice of outdated gentlemanly skills, and thus precludes serious content (i. e. contemporary social issues in a national context); and *informative* demotes them to mere reference (where a unifying movement of biographical narrative is fragmented into pieces of information as required by readers). Here, rather than to produce arthouse films, the article argues for a return to banal popular forms. Even cheap melodrama, it seems, is preferable to European arthouse because it is located in a nationally-defined space from which it can have a social impact, rather than existing for a narcissistic pleasure of itself. Medhurst wrote this article in 1986, the year that *A Room with a View* was released. Here, arthouse films of a British actor in retrospect are criticised for striving for significance right at the moment when the heritage film with its images of Edwardian England and narratives taken from an Anglo-Saxon canon, was poised to start its ascent on cinema screens and when the GATT II negotiations had begun. This is also the period when British film production started to recover from a postwar historic low as regards the numbers of films produced.<sup>119</sup> As pointed out in the

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<sup>119</sup> Cf. *British Television and Film Handbook 1999*. Ed. by the British Film Institute. London (British Film Institute) 1998.

The statistics given on p. 10, show that between 1981 and 1982 the numbers of films produced almost doubled from 24 to 40, after which year they steadily increased to reach the high production levels of the sixties and fifties by the mid-nineties.

It is also to be noted that the late eighties saw a re-definition of the independent US studio production model, with the success of the film *Sex Lies and Videotape* (1988, Steven Soderbergh).

Cf. Alisa Perren, *Sex, Lies and Marketing: Miramax and the Development of the Quality Indie Blockbuster*. IN: *Film Quarterly*. (2001 Winter) Vol. 55, No. 2, pp. 30-39.

The scaling down of US-films in terms of budget size, entails that when several British-French co-productions of the nineties grew larger, the differences between US-films and European films (in terms of financial risks they represented for production companies) grew even more pronounced.

first chapter, it was then with two different strands of cinema, that films made in Britain were successfully exported: the culturally specific New British Cinema and the heritage genre that capitalised upon the cultural value of its literary source material but also on the built heritage and natural heritage of the UK.

In France, however, French films were losing their hegemony in cinemas. In the context of screening space, the antagonism of French reviews in 1984 regarding *Un amour de Swann* can also be connected to the fact that after the decade of seventies when French films had been comparatively successful, in the eighties an increase of the percentage of US films screened in French cinemas could be noted.<sup>120</sup> It was in 1987 that US films had a higher percentage than French films for the first time once more. To have lost screen space to the US in the cinemas, and then to also see Marcel Proust appropriated by a German director (after the New German Cinema had also asserted itself as a vibrant new national art cinema) with an international cast, proved too much. In a context where the definition of »European« film as desirable art as is only valid across borders in the presence of a shared »exterior enemy, the Franco-German financing structure of the film *Un amour de Swann* could not contribute to build bridges between inner-European differences.

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Cf. Anne Jäckel, European Co-Production Strategies. The Case of France and Britain. IN: *Film Policy. International, National and Regional Perspectives*. Ed. by Albert Moran. London & New York (Routledge) 1996, pp. 86-97.

On p. 89: *The choice of British and French producers to base their renewed collaboration [in the late 80s] upon a common European heritage of history and high culture seemed a safe commercial proposition but, unfortunately, neither the old recipe of a sequel to a swashbuckling adventure shot almost twenty years earlier — with the same but now older stars — nor the high production values of Reunion and Valmont worked with domestic or international audiences.*

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Jean-Pierre Nicolas, From the Blum-Byrnes Agreement to the GATT Affair. IN: *Europe and Hollywood. Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-1995*. Ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith & Steven Ricci. London (bfi) 1998, pp. 47-60. Here pp. 53 & 59.

In 1979, the percentage of French films of films screened in France was 50.11 and the American percentage was 29.25. By 1984, the numbers had changed to 49.3 and 36.9 and in 1987 the positions were reversed with a French percentage of 36.2 and a US percentage of 43.7.



#### 4. Losses accumulated

According to a list among the manuscripts of the Fondo Visconti, Luchino Visconti had plans for about forty-three feature films during his working life. The oeuvre of Visconti, however, counts only seventeen finished films. There are twenty-five projects that remained undone, which means that for the director Luchino Visconti the unmade films outnumber those he made. The worklist of any director will reveal a substantial number of films that were not made, like unwritten novels of a writer. The reasons for this are various: for Joseph Losey, e.g. the problem of starting anew in Europe and being on a blacklist meant that in the fifties he did work for a number of projects, which then were never completed or consigned to other directors, and was in no position to undertake film projects of his own. The transfer to Europe for Raúl Ruiz, in this respect had a less traumatic effect on his work, as he had been doing films that did not rely on large-scale financing. The question of loss poses itself covertly in other aspects of Luchino Visconti's work.

The financing and the distribution of the films made in Europe by Schlöndorff, Losey, Ruiz, and Visconti went different European ways. Where information is available, the work of Raúl Ruiz is a standard example of how European arthouse finances itself, i.e. through (mostly French) television co-productions, the ministry of culture, national institutions such as the Centre National de la Cinématographie or regional institutions such as various Maisons de la Culture and then also an array of smaller production companies located mostly in France, Belgium and Portugal. After Losey's move to France, the financing structure of his films increasingly involved a rising number of companies per film and also a rising frequency of television channel co-financing. Schlöndorff's films, too, relied on state television and on smaller production companies, but his later filmography also lists films financed by the US. Among these directors, Visconti is the one who most exemplifies (through the ways his films were financed) how transnational financing was supposed to

unite Europe against the US: from the film *Le notti bianche* (1957) onwards all of his feature-length films but one<sup>121</sup> involved production companies located in different states of Europe. Several of these were French and Italian co-productions, thus profiting from the postwar rapprochement of these two states who were the first to sign a bilateral agreement in 1949.<sup>122</sup> This way of financing his films, is an indicator that the projects of Luchino Visconti sparked interest across European borders. Thus, Visconti's œuvre derives part of its »European-ness« through its financing structure. However, the financial issue disappears behind the rhetoric of culture prevalent in the publicity materials and the reviews, and thus, this aspect of his films is lost in film historiography. The European aspect of film financing, is lost in the reception of films made thus »Europeanly«. For films aiming to be »high« culture, money becomes the abject event at the origin of cultural production.

Then, there are the losses to »cinema art« in the shapes of films that were not made. The unmade projects of a director or writer are sometimes extant in varying degrees of documentation. Some only as recurring mention in letters, or interviews, others in the shape of film scripts, location scouting photos, costume drawings. The adaptation of Marcel Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* by Luchino Visconti and Suso Cecchi D'Amico had advanced to the latter stage: a screenplay was published posthumously, even documentation of the travels undertaken has been turned into monographs.<sup>123</sup> To my knowledge, there have

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<sup>121</sup> *Vaghe stelle d'orsa* (1965).

<sup>122</sup> Cf. Tim Bergfelder, *The Nation Vanishes. European Co-Productions and Popular Genre Formula in the 1950s and 1960s*. IN: *Cinema & Nation*. Ed. by Mette Hjort & Scott Mackenzie. London (Routledge) 2000, pp. 139-152.

On p. 143 Bergfelder gives the number of films produced as French-Italian co-productions between 1949 and 1964 as 711. The total number to this day (i.e. 1999/2000) he gives at 1500. Calculating an average number per year, this then works out at almost 49 per year up until 1964 and 21 after that, which suggests a decrease of co-productions between production companies across that particular European border.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Claude Schwartz (photographs) & Jean- Abadie (text), *Luchino Visconti à la recherche de Proust*. Paris (Findakly) 1996.

been no photos published on the location research undertaken by Harold Pinter, Joseph Losey, and Nicole Stéphane in the summer of 1971. Luchino Visconti appears in the photos documenting the Proust project, and thus his photographic presence becomes one of the few images available of that project. Some of these photos and especially photos which include Luchino Visconti are reprinted in several books specifically dedicated to the project. Not only does this testify to the advanced stages of pre-production, but also to a desire to see at least still images of the never-made (and thus lost) film. The author-figure Luchino Visconti, photographed at a moment of his professional biography, is thus visually tied into the fiction which is perceived as his own history. These images of Luchino Visconti in Proust-country become documentation of Proust imaginings. The necessity of visually representing a first person narrator on film as a full character has been discussed in the second chapter with the problems of spectatorial engagement concerning the film *The Lady in the Lake*. Autobiographical narratives in film require a staged »I«.<sup>124</sup> In the photos of Luchino Visconti, one is not therefore not only looking at the director pursuing his adaptation, but one also sees an imagined autobiography of Luchino Visconti. He was supposed to realise an adaptation, but in the adaptation of *A la*

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Cf. also *Proust, Visconti, et la lanterne magique*. [Catalogue of an exhibition June 21st - October 18th 1992 at the Musée de Marcel Proust]. Illiers-Combray (Musée de Marcel Proust) 1992.

Cf. also Suso Cecchi D'Amico, *Storie di cinema ed altro (raccontate a Margherita D'Amico)*. Cernusco (Garzanti) 1996.

In the published screenplay there are illustrations demonstrating the advanced stage of pre-production, of costumes, locations etc. In the catalogue of the exhibition *Proust, Visconti et la lanterne magique*, photos of the pre-production had been added which featured the persons involved but also the locations chosen, i.e. photos of Paris town houses etc.

<sup>124</sup> Cf. here also Elizabeth Bruss, *Eye for I: Making and Unmaking Autobiography in Film*. IN: *Autobiography. Studies Theoretical and Practical*. Ed. by James Olney. Princeton (Princeton University Press) 1980, pp. 296-230.

Though I agree with her statement that *the implied identity of author, narrator, and protagonist on which classical autobiography depends—seems to be shattered by film* (p. 297), Bruss' speculation that in the transition from a written to a visual culture, the genre of autobiography will disappear remains to be seen; also her assertion that there is no proper autobiographical narrative in film, is very debatable, especially as new technological developments have turned the making of films from an activity requiring a vast technological support into easily feasible undertakings.

*recherche du temps perdu* the director has inserted himself, as »I«, into the visualisations of Proust-country. As the photographs (plus *mise-en-scène* sketches and wardrobe designs) are all the visual documentation that remains of this enterprise, and its *je* was never played by an actor, Luchino Visconti is the focal figure of the adaptation project. He not only comes to be read as the rightful peer of and heir to the heritage of Proust, but he becomes the »I« in the few visual fragments that remain of the adaptation. The director who is perceived as the contemporary of Proust, at the centennial celebrations of Proust comes to take the place of Proust, as he is represented in locales where the *je*, identified with Marcel Proust, too, had been narrated as being. His visualisation as protagonist of this cultural fantasy ensured him the seat of *primus inter pares* of the adaptors through the nostalgic and celebratory retrospective gaze at those photos. With Luchino Visconti as the replacement of Marcel Proust, the director's death in 1974 thus could also be mourned as another Proustian death just two years after the fiftieth anniversary of the writer's death and three years after the abandonment of Visconti's *Recherche* adaptation.<sup>125</sup>

And yet it also reifies him along with the precious objects he stands next to in these photos. The photographic images of Combray, the interior decorations of the Hôtel de Guermantes are *de facto* images of other places which stand in for, which incarnate the literary-celluloid fiction. A list of *fabbisogno*, of things needed for the film *Senso* among the manuscripts listed: gondolas, people, children, flags, soldiers; opera binoculars; libretto for *Il trovatore*, full and empty bottles; books, playing cards, German newspapers, plates, cups, pack of tobacco, vendors of coffee, Austrian canons, a large ship, books, several religious pictures, 40 sacks of wheat of different size, chicken, dogs, 2 dead horses, 100

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<sup>125</sup> Cf. here also the multiply-imagined deaths of Marcel Proust through Bergotte, as laid out in Chapter 1, *Le mot fin*, pp. 1ff.

Austrians and Italians, 20 wounded, various completely burnt trees, and water flasks.

The list juxtaposes things of various sizes and worth, with people in varying numbers and states of health. It obliterates differences between the animate and inanimate. Like »vendors of coffee« become an object among many others needed for the making of a film, the appearance of Luchino Visconti in images of a double ontology (where the real place is willingly exchanged for an imagined place) is needed in the »high culture« fantasy of the Proust project.

The composition of the film *Senso* is intricately bound up with the objects it needs to tell its stories on the screen. The objects needed there and then came at a production price. The film could be made because the demand could be met. However, the object Luchino Visconti on the pre-production photos of the Proust-project came with a price that could not be met. Like the costumes of the Proust project which appear as its ruinous fragments, the figure of Luchino Visconti in these photos appears as the last fragment of the Proust fantasy. This pan-European cultural fantasy could not be financed and thus was not incarnated by a cast—except in the image of author-figure Visconti, »the European«. The image of the director here becomes a locus of both »high culture« and of heritage fantasy, which is both culturally specific through the director's biography and is endowed with the cultural value of »high art«.

Geoffrey Nowell-Smith sees the differences between European films and US films in the place ascribed to fantasy:<sup>126</sup>

*If one looks at the comparative nature of American and European films today it is more and more the case that the American cinema scores with films with a heavy fantasy component, while in Europe films of this type are getting rarer and rarer. And it is not just overt fantasy or superspectaculars that are at issue here. The decline of the ordinary genre film has meant the loss of a main source of fantasy and of the mythic dimension which American films possess and European films, often, do not. What European cinema has tended to oppose to the Hollywood 'dream factory' has, besides realism, been an alternation between modernism and 'heritage' filtered through classics of European literature.*

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<sup>126</sup> Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, *Introduction*. IN: *Europe and Hollywood. Economics, Culture, National Identity 1945-1995*. Ed. by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith & Steven Ricci. London (bfi) 1998, pp. 1-16. Here p. 13.

While it is debatable if this distinction holds, I would argue that the idea of a European heritage film, i.e. a film transmitting a cultural specificity of Europe in toto, is a fantasy on a different level than argued by Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. The contradictions of such fantasies of European heritage transpires ex negativo through in the marketing narrative that tried to turn the European (Greek, French, Italian) cast of the film *Rocco e i suoi fratelli* into a truly Italian one:

*Long before the Roman era, Sicily had three thriving Greek colonies which vied for power with Athens. Later, the Normans came to Sicily and their leader, Ruggero I, roamed all over southern Italy, and his grandson, Frederick II of Hohenstaufen, conquered most of Europe. The typical Italian blood of the south of Italy is as French and as Greek as it is Italian and this casting brings forth a truth which one can see when he travels through Italy.*

In this publicity material, Sicily is presented as a melting pot *avant la lettre américaine* that embodies Europe in its diversity. However, this version of »European« is a fabrication that overlooks not only several centuries of interim history, but also the film's contemporary reality. Like the rhetoric that celebrated Luchino Visconti as a contemporary of Thomas Mann or as of the same class as Marcel Proust, this is a fantasy. Here, it reveals itself as an imagining of Europe that is made culturally homogeneous through a beautified »historiography« of migration and conquest. As the second chapter had argued, the satisfaction of spectatorial desires in the adaptations of Jane Austen and other authors which became so popular in the eighties and nineties, can in reception become an arena, a field of cultural consumption riddled with conflictual politics. Not only in films which base their claim to being »European« on their cultural specificity, also films based on the canon of Europe's literature, may lay claim to being »European« through such a specificity and thereby not also undermine a universalist notion of art. The objection to the historically accurate representation of slavery in the adaptation of *Mansfield Park*, represents an attempt to uphold the canon which here entails relinquishing historical and cultural specificity. Through such a selective de-historicising of the adaptation, a critical engagement with the canon is avoided. Likewise, an enquiry is effectively forestalled into whether there are and, if so, what are the relations between Jane Austen, her

writing, its canonisation and colonialism. The re-imagining of a literary text and the concurrent recirculation of the author in adaptation, here, can be used as a tool of critical analysis. Not all adaptations will yield up the same answers. The specific example of Jane Austen and the reception shows that adaptation eludes final instrumentalisation: not only did adaptation produce transgressive images and imaginings of the writer and her work, in the analysis of individual adaptations, diametrically opposed readings have been given as regards the ideological message of the films. But these analyses and their oppositional readings show, how cultural artefacts are re-used over time and serve heterogeneous agendas.

As already indicated in Chapter 2 and also briefly above, in the late eighties and mid-nineties the genre of heritage film had been regarded as an expression of specifically English culture with the prerequisite elements of a well-known author, an ensemble cast, the country estate or Edwardian townhouse settings and all achieved at a relatively low production cost. In particular with the increasing US-encroachment in terms of finance, cast and/or crew, the label of being specifically English was eroded also in financial terms and as regards professional contributors. The repetition of similar images in numerous heritage films, furthermore, undermined the uniqueness of the films. The objects represented, and the narratives told, failed to fulfil expectations of cultural specificity but then also of cultural imagining. The critical success of a heritage film seems to be linked to its being perceived as culturally specific. Thus, when a film markets itself as European, more often than not within Europe, the label »European« applied to a film presenting itself as a grand narrative, is a marker of failure. A review of the film *Sunshine* thus formulated:<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *Sunshine* (1999, István Szabó)

Urs Jenny, *Vaterland, Niemandsland*. IN: *Der Spiegel*. Issue no. 4/2000.

Translation: *István Szabó, born 1938, has from early on used the comparatively liberal space conceded to him after all within the so-called Goulash-Communism [a more humane and tolerant communism] of*

*István Szabó, Jahrgang 1938, nutzte schon früh den relativ großen Spielraum als Filmemacher, den ihm der Gulaschkommunismus seiner Heimat doch ließ, um sich Westeuropa zuzuwenden, wobei der internationale, auch mit einem Oscar gekrönte Erfolg von "Mephisto" (1981) entscheidend half. Seit den siebziger Jahren hat Szabó nur einen einzigen (bewußt bescheidenen und im Ausland kaum bekannt gewordenen) Film mit ungarischem Stoff und in ungarischer Sprache gedreht.*

*Warum nun dieses nationalhistorische Jahrhundertwerk in kanadisch-deutsch-österreichisch-ungarischer Produktion mit hauptsächlich britischen Darstellern? Für seine Landsleute gewiß nicht, doch für wen in aller Welt? Nachdenken über das Vaterland; Schönheit der Bilder, der Ausstattung, der Schauplätze als Feier der gelungenen Restauration; ein pathetisches Dennoch zum Leben; Größe als Wert an sich: viel zu viel Eitelkeit, und in jedem Detail etwas zu pittoresk. Alles in allem ist "Sunshine" mit drei "Europäische Filmpreise" (für Drehbuch, Kamera und Hauptdarsteller) ausgezeichnet, doch nur ein Ereignis im Niemandsland des Eurokinos.*

This film, then, won several of the European Film Prizes which the left-oriented *Spiegel* would probably have withheld.<sup>128</sup> The winning of the Felix, the European Film Award, like the director's previous Academy Award, here almost become a sign of disqualification for the film as relevant cinema. The main fault found with the film in this review is that it does not have a place. Coming from too many places, it is done for nobody *in dieser Welt*, in this world. Its location is a non-location, i.e. in the no-man's-land of Euro-cinema. This film is lost, since »Europe« is not recognised as location. The universalist notion of European culture, comes to be rejected as unsatisfactory. To positively qualify as a European film, requires a different notion of culture.

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*his native country, to turn to Western Europe. Here, he was helped along significantly by the international success of Mephisto (1981) together with the Academy Award for that film. Since the 70s, Szabó has shot only one film (intentionally modest and little known abroad) about a Hungarian topic and in the Hungarian language.*

*Why now this national historical centennial opus as a Canadian-German-Austrian production with mainly British actors? Certainly not for his people, but for whom in the whole wide world? Thinking about the fatherland; beauty of the images, the mise-en-scène, the locations as celebration of a restoration successfully pulled off; a overly sentimental »Yes, despite everything« to life; size as value in itself; much too much vanity, and too picturesque in each detail. All in all "Sunshine," which has been awarded three "European Film Prizes" (for script, camera and lead actor), is just an event in the no-man's-land of Euro-cinema.*

<sup>128</sup> The European Film Prize was first awarded in the year 1988. Besides representing a measure to create another public platform for films produced in Europe, this award can be regarded as another instance where Europe tries to draw even with the US, especially as the statuette awarded had initially been baptised Felix—just as the statuette awarded annually by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts is nicknamed Oscar.



The artistic survival of films made in Europe that might fill the label »European« with positive meaning, resides in maintaining its cultural specificity,<sup>129</sup> but also I would argue by providing for a cultural imagining. Luisa Passerini has argued for an idea of Europe that includes migrants and exiles and that is a Europe based on emotions which do not operate on a principle of exclusion.<sup>130</sup>

*Our goal is to make Europe a discursive space in a true sense, where we can call ourselves Europeans and express forms of love, which are not exclusive in spite of being specific, towards land and people. The role of emotions, through the mediation of language, thus becomes crucial — although not immediately, but as a horizon of self-recognition and intersubjective exchange. This way of moral and intellectual thinking, which includes sentiment, has much to do with imagination.*

Conferred to adaptation as a cultural practice, this would be a Europe that both relinquishes both its claims to having produced universalist art and its cultural protectionism, but not its cultural specificity. Thereby, the individual spectator can emotionally and critically engage with such images of heritage, both receiving new images and infusing the images with his/her desires.

Within the context of European film, adaptation as a cultural practice may also provide a means of critique as regards the ways in which the respective canons of literature and film have been made and are perpetuated. In the case of the heritage film, adaptation as a secondary genre served to undermine idealised imaginings of the country estate, the author Jane Austen, and not least, the concept of fidelity in film adaptation. Acts that are perceived as transgression in the reception of adaptations, thus, reveal for which heterogeneous agendas cultural artefacts such as books or films are enlisted for. Adaptation at the same time serves as a rallying point for just as heterogeneous imaginings. The cultural practice of adaptation as a locus where literature and film intersect can also establish new interconnections between these two and provide spectators with

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<sup>129</sup> Cf. Benjamin Bergerey, *European Snapshots*. IN: *The American Cinematographer*. (1999 May) No. 80, pp. 80-87.

<sup>130</sup> Luisa Passerini, *The Last Identification Or Why some of Us would like to Call ourselves European and What We Mean by This*. IN: *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*. Ed. by Bo

cultural imaginings. In the case of Proust adaptations, the film *Le temps retrouvé* provided adaptation images that challenged the spectator to decipher them and through that process arrive at an imagining of the literary source and its author. Such processes of cultural imagining involve the provision of a space for spectatorial desires. The reception of the film *Un amour de Swann*, and the project of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* revealed that through such cultural imaginings of Marcel Proust and his work also conservative agendas can be served. The film *Un amour de Swann* and the stage version of *The Proust Screenplay*, both fail to provide the spectator with a space wherein s/he could inscribe a cultural imagining, no spectatorial desire could be inscribed into these bar the desire to acquire a cultural veneer.

But as this study argues, adaptation as a secondary category to the primary category of the heritage genre, provides for terms of engagement with Marcel Proust (and other writers, that have similarly been celebrated as »great European art«) that make both an identification and a critique possible. Such cultural imaginings insert new levels of meaning into the literary text through the spectatorial desires aroused. The eroticisation of Mr. Darcy's body in the reception of the BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* has been the most striking recent example. The politics of that gaze may not signify an imagining of Austen that liberates the represented object, in this case a male body, from alien appropriation. Nonetheless, the gender-reversal in that gaze, in itself, suggests that the practice of the heritage adaptation may be liberating for both the represented as well as the spectator in contexts beyond the film's diegesis. The film genre of melodrama has raised similar questions surrounding what the emotional investment in narrative means for the spectator: whether it is liberating or debilitating, with its offer of fantasy and formulaic happiness,

respectively.<sup>131</sup> Just as in the case of melodrama, in the adaptation heritage film the desires inscribed into the film are heterogeneous: the period adaptation serves different agendas within the context of a cultural imaginary. An adaptation may also arouse some spectatorial desires unexpectedly, e.g. in the case of *Clueless* a gap could be noted between the film's target audience and the composition of the audience that voiced its opinions on the internet—in addition to interesting more male spectators, i.e. the »unexpected« gender. As the final subchapter of this last chapter will argue, it is precisely in the provocation of such unexpected reactions, in the transgressions that adaptation commits, that its significance as a cultural practice is made.

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<sup>131</sup> Cf. Christine Gledhill, Genre and Gender. The Case of the Soap Opera. IN: *Representation. Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. Ed. by Stuart Hall. London (Sage Publications) 1997, pp. 337-386.

Cf. also Ien Ang, *The Living Room Wars. Rethinking Audiences for a Postmodern World*. London & New York (Routledge) 1996, pp. 95ff.

## 5. Progetto Proust

The film script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* reaches its end eight scenes after the scene between Marcel and Saint-Loup. Like *The Proust Screenplay* (and even more pronounced in its stage adaptation), this script ends with the writer's vocation and the arrival at the beginning of writing. Both film projects thus endeavour to capture some of the novel's circular structure. The end of the adaptation narrative is presented as the attempt to finally begin what the protagonist has been evading his entire life: his masterpiece. There is a significant difference, however, between the two adaptations. *The Proust Screenplay* ends with diegetical shots of artistic vocation and the words *It was time to begin*. The script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, on the other hand, returns to the beginning of the novel.

The final scenes are numbered 98 - 98/E (pp. 175-176) and are all set in Combray. This is the only scene of the script that is divided up into six sub-scenes.<sup>132</sup> In the scene analysed previously that staged the character Marcel as a writer-to-be in his bedroom, the way it is written does not differ from other scenes of the script, i.e. it is recognisable as a scene of classical narrative cinema. The four scenes 98/A to 98/D, however, are written as containing images of Combray: These are quite similar to the flashes of scenes in *The Proust Screenplay*. It is one of the rare instances, where the screenplay of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* does not engage in action- or character-driven narrative:<sup>133</sup>

*Scène 98/A*

*Les arbres de Combray.*

*Scène 98/B*

*On entend le son lointain du thème de Vinteuil, pour violon.*

*Scène 98/C*

*En images, fondues, pâles, quelques vues de Combray.*

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<sup>132</sup> Other subdivided scenes are at most subdivided into three scenes: 8 & 8/A; 16 & 16 /A; 17 & 17/A; 72, 72/A, 72/B; 74, 74/A, 74/B; 75 & 75/A; 78, 78/A & 78/B; 92 & 92 /A; 95 & 95 /A.

<sup>133</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, p. 176.

*Dans des sentiers de campagne un petit garçon - vu de dos - marche lentement.*

*Scène 98/D*

*Le sentier devient peu à peu l'escalier conduisant à l'étage supérieur de la maison habitée par la famille de Marcel.*

*Scène 98/E*

*L'enfant, en chemise de nuit, attend assis dans son lit ... du jardin parvient, atténué, le bruit d'une conversation ... l'enfant attend que sa mère vienne l'embrasser avant qu'il ne s'endorme.*

*La mère de Marcel embrasse le petit garçon qui se glisse dans son lit et enfonce sa tête dans son oreiller.*

*La mère sort.*

*Marcel souffle la bougie placée sur la table de nuit, et l'éteint.*

*Sur un oreiller de plume, tout gonflé, très blanc, la tête d'enfant, repose, comme « enfoncée » dans cette molle blancheur. Petite tache claire qui se dissout dans le blanc.*

*On entend la clochette de la grille du jardin de Combray. A ce son, se substitue peu à peu la voix de Marcel ...*

*Marcel (comme une murmure): - longtemps je me suis couché de bonne heure. Parfois, à peine ma bougie éteinte, mes yeux se fermaient si vite que je n'avais pas le temps de me dire : « Je m'endors » ...*

These are the only scenes of the script set in Combray, and as its closing diegetic message the script quotes the beginning of its adapted writing. *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* re-integrates what had been omitted entirely in other adaptations: the first lines of the *Recherche*.<sup>134</sup> The adaptation thereby radically re-writes the narration's progression and conclusion. Where all the previous scripts close their action more or less with episodes representing the end of the particular diegesis chosen (i.e. the dying Swann, the dying Proust, the final matinée), this adaptation negates that closure and picks an interior monologue coming verbatim from the *Recherche*, but radically re-frames it. There is no final matinée here, nor are any of the moments of *mémoire involontaire* represented which the *je* of the novel experiences before, during and after that social event. While it does diegetically conclude the narratives of love, desire, and infatuation of the two couples, it does not follow through the theme of society. Like the stage play *Remembrance of Things Past*, the script here also fails to follow its narrative

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<sup>134</sup> *Longtemps, je me suis couché de bonne heure. Parfois, à peine ma bougie éteinte, mes yeux se fermaient si vite que je n'avais pas le temps de me dire: « Je m'endors. » Et, une demi-heure après, la pensée qu'il était temps de chercher le sommeil m'éveillait; je voulais poser le volume que je croyais avoir encore dans les mains et souffler ma lumière je n'avais pas cessé en dormant de faire des réflexions sur ce que je venais de lire, mais ces réflexions avaient pris un tour un peu particulier ; il me semblait que j'étais moi-même ce dont parlait l'ouvrage : une église, un quatuor, la rivalité de François Ier et de Charles Quint.*

(CS-I, 3)

selection to a logical conclusion. Omitting the final matinée is to deny the society theme its diegetical closure (i.e. the changed people: changed in appearance, in health, in political opinions, in social standing).

What remains and in the verbatim quote is set as immutable, is the artistic origin of the film project: the novel. Where the other adaptations sought a closure of narrative, this adaptation solicits as closure a potentially endless repetition of the literary narrative. In referring the spectator not only to a beginning at the moment of closure, but to the first lines of the literary source material, it is arguably fulfilling what Suso Cecchi D'Amico and Luchino Visconti had intended, i.e. to give an impression of the book but not to pretend to be able to replace the reading experience.<sup>135</sup> Quoting the beginning of the novel after having read the script made of it, gives the literary text additional possibilities of reading. There, the *je* said that in his slumber believing himself awake, he dreams that he himself forms part of the book he is/was reading, or of the narrative of the book: *Il me semblait que j'étais moi-même ce dont parlait l'ouvrage.*<sup>136</sup>

Having read through the novel, this sentence a posteriori fits perfectly with the *je*'s declaration at the end of what it will write about, for the *je* had indeed been the protagonist of the literary narrative. In the context of the script, the *je* has quite literally become the protagonist of a book, i.e. of the script in its published form and he has become part of a dream, the dream of European culture. However egalitarian the intentions of the director and the writer may have been, as the reception of the Proust project and its configuration within the oeuvre understanding of Luchino Visconti have shown, how the anticipated

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<sup>135</sup> Cf. Suso Cecchi D'Amico in interview with Anne Borrel titled *Proust - Visconti*. IN: *Proust, Visconti, et la lanterne magique*. [Catalogue of an exhibition June 21st - October 18th 1992 at the Musée de Marcel Proust]. Illiers-Combray (Musée de Marcel Proust) 1992, pp. 13-18.

Here p. 17: *L'idée de clore le film avec la première phrase de La Recherche est une trouvaille qui aurait donné — comme vous dites — une forme circulaire au roman, mais c'est aussi une façon de dire: "Tout ce que nous pouvons faire, c'est vous donner envie de lire en vous racontant une histoire ; maintenant, lisez l'œuvre ..."*

adaptation has been instrumentalised for purposes of developing cultural fantasy and a celebratory perpetuating (another form of endless repetition) of »great European artists«.

At the end of this study, I refer back to other beginnings of Proust adaptation with two examples of the earliest adaptations of the *Recherche* into another medium. The first one is an example where adaptation has put Marcel Proust to rather dubious use. This is an adaptation for radio which now is still extant in the form of a book. The *Six Proust Reconstructions* are plays written for BBC radio by Pamela Hansford Johnson.<sup>137</sup> Each of these *Reconstructions* focuses on one character or a group of characters and then inscribes an entirely new diegesis into the *Recherche*. Thus, the second *Reconstruction* is devoted to the character of Madame de Charlus, who in the novel only appears by mention: she is the wife of Charlus and is deceased prior to diegesis. This has been done in other instances as well: the novel *Wide Sargossa Sea* told the story of *Jane Eyre*,<sup>138</sup> from the viewpoint of the reportedly insane first wife of Mr Rochester who perished in flames. However, unlike that novel which furnished the reader with a postcolonial narrative of the Creole wife, the re-inscription of the wife into the narrative of *Six Proust Reconstructions* does not re-write but only repeat the wife's

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<sup>136</sup> CS-I,3.

<sup>137</sup> Pamela Hansford Johnson, *Six Proust Reconstructions*. London (Macmillan & Co. Ltd) 1958.

The six plays were titled (and broadcast on BBC3): *The Duchess at Sunset* (Sunday, Sept 5th 1948); *Swann in Love* (Monday March 3rd, 1952); *Albertine Regained* (Monday February 1st 1954); *Madame de Charlus* (Monday Dec 25th, 1954); *Saint-Loup* (Sunday September 25th, 1955); *A Window at Montjouvain* (April 2nd, 1956).

For pieces mentioned in the *Recherche* or introduced in the radio plays, the following music was used: *La petite phrase* of Vinteuil was the *Sonata for Violin and Piano in D minor* Saint-Saëns; Odette's song was the *Pauvres fou*; Albertine's song was *Le Biniou*; the nursery rhyme of *Albertine regained* was *Le furet du bois*; M. De Charlus's waltz was the *Waltz for Eugénie* by Michael Head. The sections of *Septuor* of Vinteuil are composed by Michael Head.

Another adaptation to radio had been made in Italy and was published as book. Giacomo Debenedetti, *Radiorecita su Proust*, Roma (Macchia) 1952.

<sup>138</sup> Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargossa Sea*. (1st 1966); Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*. (1st 1847)

narrative function: she is the officially adored and socially acceptable, but continually cheated spouse. The closing lines of the last *Reconstruction* which is titled *A Window at Montjouvain* extracts all the *Recherche*'s narratives surrounding the music of Vinteuil and re-assembles them into a new narrative which culminates (thus also closing the cycle of radio broadcasts) with the artistic calling:<sup>139</sup>

MARCEL:

*All at once the magical window began to move down the sky, lengthening and widening as it glided towards me, the lamplight streaming out like the ribbons of the sun as the lattices themselves streamed open to admit me. [...] And now, in the triumph of Vinteuil, which was the triumph of Time Regained, distilled for ever into the immortality of art in all its freshness and ineffable dew, so that not a single sorrow, not a single joy was lost or wasted but incorporated into its brightness as innumerable water drops, valueless as glass themselves, are incorporated into the limitless emerald and saffron of a summer sea, I perceived the way of my own work, of the task that lay before me, were Time allotted me in which to complete it ...*

Here, the radio adaptation uses the narrative of artistic calling and phrases from the *Recherche*, as elements to formulate a universalist conceptualisation of art that fails to convey any historical or cultural relevance of either Marcel Proust or his writing.

The second example is the adaptation written by Ennio Flaiano prior to the genesis of the script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*. In 1964, Ennio Flaiano<sup>140</sup> had been commissioned by Nicole Stéphane to write an adaptation of the *Recherche*. The script was finished in 1965 and published as *Progetto Proust* in 1989.<sup>141</sup> It was, therefore, the first of the adaptations to be written, but the last to be published. It was published at the time, when heritage films were beginning to be produced in continuous numbers. The *Progetto Proust*, however, never passed on to the next production stage. In the late sixties, Flaiano was approached by Luchino Visconti for the script he had written, since it was at this time that Visconti

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<sup>139</sup> Pamela Hansford Johnson, *A Window at Mountjouvain*. IN: Pamela Hansford Johnson, *Six Proust Reconstructions*. London (Macmillan & Co. Ltd) 1958, pp. 225-270. Here p. 270.

<sup>140</sup> Ennio Flaiano (March 5th 1910 - died 1972). Italian writer of novels, stories and filmscripts. In film history best known as longtime collaborator of Federico Fellini

<sup>141</sup> The script was published as Ennio Flaiano, *Progetto Proust*. [A cura di Maria Sepa]. Milano (Gruppo Editoriale Fabbri, Bompiani) 1989.



himself decided to undertake an adaptation of Marcel Proust's *Recherche*. In the end, Luchino Visconti commissioned a new script with his longtime collaborator Suso Cecchi D'Amico. Both scripts use the *Recherche*'s fourth part (*Sodome et Gomorrhe*) as the main diegesis of the film. But there are also significant differences. Flaiano's script, for one, does not name the central character Marcel but rather *Narratore*, the Narrator.<sup>142</sup> The screenplay eschews simple identification of protagonist and author. Instead, it re-poses the question of the central character, the »I« in a more complex manner: it expanded the central subject by interrelating him with other characters. In the introduction Flaiano explains how and why he saw the characters of the *Narratore*, Albertine and Charlus as interlinked:<sup>143</sup>

*Detto questo, per interpretazione proustiana intendo una calcolata libertà nella scelta e nella collocazione dei fatti che riguardano soprattutto tre personaggi della Recherche: il Narratore, Albertine e il barone Charlus. Sono, ripeto, personaggi sconfitti, coloro che pagano di persona: e, in un certo senso — molto segreto nella sua chiarezza — sono tre diversi aspetti dell'autore. Immaginiamo uno specchio metafisico a tre riflessi: il Narratore vi si guarda e nel riflesso centrale si vede se stesso, in quelli laterali, le sue proiezioni: Albertine e Charlus.*

Rather than just equating the author with one of the characters, he becomes refracted in three characters. These are all together read as alter egos of Marcel Proust. The mirroring structure thereby enacts a continuous movement of authorial displacement, where the central figure of Marcel Proust is imagined and comes to be understood only through other figures. This »mirrors« the process of adaptation itself. For one, Marcel Proust and his are re-imagined

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<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, the published script makes a more scholarly impression than the other scripts as it is provided with a foreword, several categories of footnotes indicating either emendations and variations, or the provenance of dialogue from the French and Italian text of the *Recherche*. These paratexts, render strikingly visible the compilatory character of adaptation: explicitly referring it back to the source, but also moving between various origin-texts.

<sup>143</sup> Ennio Flaiano, *Progetto Proust*. [A cura di Maria Sepa]. Milano (Gruppo Editoriale Fabbri, Bompiani) 1989, pp. 15f. My underlining KD.

Translation: *Having said that, for the Proustian interpretation I intend a calculated liberty of choice and of arranging the facts which concern themselves with three characters of the Recherche in particular: the narrator, Albertine and the baron Charlus. They are, I repeat, defeated characters, those who pay with their person: and, in a certain sense — very well-disguised under this clarity — they are three different aspects of the author. Let us imagine a metaphysical mirror with three reflections: the Narrator looks into the central mirror and there sees himself, and in the lateral mirrors his projections: Albertine and Charlus.*

through the various film projects. There, the relevance of film as a cultural moment is understood through other intertexts and through its contextualisation. Applying the Flaiano structure of a tripartite mirror to adaptations of the *Recherche*, adaptation and the analysis of adaptation proffer insights of what the practice of adaptation can achieve in terms of critically re-imaginings of Western culture. The three reflections here shall be *The Proust Screenplay*, *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, and *Le temps retrouvé*. The mirror into which adaptation looks, throws back the images of another film altogether: the film *Apocalypse Now*,<sup>144</sup> which interconnects the adaptive mirror-reflections of the *Recherche* through the spectres of Wagner, hats, and war with new meanings.

In scene 90 of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* set at a Paris restaurant in wartime,<sup>145</sup> the conversation between the characters Saint-Loup and Marcel touches upon the subject of Paris in wartime for the first time. Here, a reference to Wagner is made:

*Marcel* : - Evidemment, ici, à Paris, on sent peu la guerre.

*Saint-Loup* : - Bah, même à Paris c'est quelquefois inouï. Tu as vu hier soir, ce raid de zeppelins?

*Marcel* : - Oh, oui. J'aime regarder les avions qui montent dans la nuit.

*Les deux amis sont émus de se retrouver. Et comme cela arrive souvent aux personnes qui ne se voient pas depuis longtemps, ils ont du mal à retrouver le ton juste.*

*Saint-Loup* (avec une vivacité un peu forcée) : - Et ces sirènes ! C'était assez wagnérien, ce qui du reste était bien naturel pour saluer l'arrivée des Allemands. C'était à se demander si c'était bien des aviateurs et pas plutôt des Walkyries qui étaient à bord. Décidément, il aura fallu l'arrivée des Allemands pour qu'on puisse entendre du Wagner à Paris.

*Marcel veut se mettre à l'unisson du ton impersonnel et léger de son ami.*

*Marcel* : Si tu avais été ici, à la maison, tu aurais pu, tout en contemplant l'apocalypse dans le ciel, voir sur terre un vrai vaudeville joué par des personnages en toilette de nuit. (singeant le ton d'un chroniqueur mondain). Reconnaitre la duchesse de Guermantes, superbe dans une chemise de nuit garnie d'entre-deux, le duc de Guermantes, inénarrable en pyjama rose et peignoir blanc ...

In the novel, preceding this meeting of Saint-Loup and the *je*, their joint observations about Paris in wartime are already thematically introduced by mentioning the appearance of aeroplanes on the horizon and the darkness of the

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<sup>144</sup> *Apocalypse Now* (1979, Francis Ford Coppola)

<sup>145</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, pp. 161f. My underlining KD.

The underlining serves to point out elements of the text that re-appear in the images of *Apocalypse Now*.

unlit metropolis. This darkness where restaurant customers and cinema-goers intercross, exceeds that of rural Combray. In the novel, when the aeroplanes are first mentioned<sup>146</sup> they are, however, likened not to Walkyries but to flies—thus ironically diminishing the menace from across the Rhine. It is only twenty-five pages later that the connection between Wagner and war is made. Here, the script's dialogue is taken directly from the novel:<sup>147</sup>

*Je lui [Saint-Loup] parlai de la beauté des avions qui montaient dans la nuit. « Et peut-être encore plus de ceux qui descendent, me dit-il. Je reconnais que c'est très beau le moment où ils montent, où ils vont faire constellation, et obéissant en cela à des lois tout aussi précises que celles qui régissent les constellations car ce qui te semble un spectacle est le ralliement des escadrilles, les commandements qu'on leur donne, leur départ en chasse, etc. Mais est-ce que tu n'aimes pas mieux le moment où, définitivement assimilés aux étoiles, ils s'en détachent pour partir en chasse ou rentrer après la breloque, les moments où ils font apocalypse, même les étoiles ne gardent plus leur place? Et ces sirènes, était-ce assez wagnérien ce qui du reste et bien naturel pour saluer l'arrivée des Allemands, ça faisait très hymne national, avec le Kronprinz et les princesses dans la loge impériale, Wacht am Rhein ; c'était à se demander si c'était bien des aviateurs et pas plutôt des Walkyries qui montaient. » Il semblait avoir plaisir à cette assimilation des aviateurs et des Walkyries et l'expliqua d'ailleurs par des raisons purement musicales: « Dame, c'est que la musique des sirènes était d'un Chevauchée ! Il faut décidément l'arrivée des Allemands pour qu'on puisse entendre du Wagner à Paris. »*

Marcel Proust wrote this before Wagner had become singled out as a composer favoured by German Fascism. Other ways in which a connection between Wagner and war have been made between the writing of the book and

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<sup>146</sup> TR-IV, 313f.: *Avant l'heure où les thés d'après-midi finissaient, à la tombée du jour, dans le ciel encore clair, on voyait de loin de petites taches brunes qu'on eut pu prendre, dans le soir bleu, pour des moucheron, ou pour des oiseaux. Ainsi quand on voit de très loin une montagne on pourrait croire que c'est un nuage. Mais on est ému parce qu'on sait que ce nuage est immense, à l'état solide, et résistant. Ainsi étais-je ému que la tache brune dans le ciel d'été ne fût ni un moucheron, ni un oiseau, mais un aéroplane monté par des hommes qui veillaient sur Paris. [...] Puis à 9 heures et demie, alors que personne n'avait encore eu le temps de finir de dîner, à cause des ordonnances de police on éteignait brusquement toutes les lumières, et la nouvelle bousculade des embusqués arrachant leurs pardessus aux chasseurs du restaurant où j'avais dîné avec Saint-Loup un soir de perle avait lieu à 9 h 35 dans une mystérieuse pénombre de chambre où l'on montre la lanterne magique, de salle de spectacle servant à exhiber les films d'un de ces cinémas vers lesquels allaient se précipiter dîneurs et dîneuses. Mais après cette heure-là, pour ceux qui, comme moi, le soir dont je parle, étaient restés à dîner chez eux, et sortaient pour aller voir des amis, Paris était, au moins dans certains quartiers, encore plus noir que n'était le Combray de mon enfance ; les visites qu'on se faisait prenaient un air de visites de voisins de campagne.*

<sup>147</sup> TR-IV, 337f. The references to the »Vaudeville« taking place at the Hôtel de Guermantes is also given in the following paragraph. My underlining.

The underlining serves to point out elements of the text that connect it to images of *Apocalypse Now*.

the publication of the screenplay, and now confer preposterous<sup>148</sup> meaning to the lines from the *Recherche* quoted above. More than fifty years after the publication of *Le temps retrouvé* and a decade after the writing of the script, but in 1979, five years prior to the publication of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, the connection between Wagnerian music and war found a climactic use in the film *Apocalypse Now*. It is impossible to read these passages from either Proust or from the script *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* and not to think of that helicopter attack in a US-film where Wagner (as an instrument of Western intimidation) is blasted at a native civilian Asian population in total disarray and panic. The sublime moments of Proust perceived in this light, have to be recontextualised into representations of postcolonial warfare. From *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* to *Apocalypse Now* the music changes in meaning. In *Apocalypse Now* it forms part of a general arsenal to give expression to troubled national emotionalities and identities: here, the *Walkürenritt* serves its purpose alongside *This is the End of The Doors*. As a part of the soldiers' equipment, the tape of the music becomes (alongside surfboards) one of the bizarre accoutrements of the film's helicopter brigade. The ways in which it is employed by US-troops in the film transforms it. From being a cultural good it here literally becomes part of a weapon arsenal. The sound of Wagner here does arrive with western civilisation, but in its most horrendous manifestations. To read the passage in the *Recherche* again—while having in mind the scenes of destruction in *Apocalypse Now*—does confirm the helicopters'

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<sup>148</sup> Cf. the already quoted Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio. Contemporary Art, Preposterous History*. Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 1999, p. 9.

Cf. also Mieke Bal, *Memories for the Museum: Preposterous Histories for Today*. IN: *Acts of Memory. Cultural Recall in the Present*. Ed. by Mieke Bal, Jonathan Crewe & Leo Spitzer. Hanover & London. (University Press of New England) 1999, pp. 171-190.

Referring to the exhibition of artist Ken Aptekar "Talking to Pictures" who intertextually uses other paintings etc. in his work and which was held at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC in 1997, she writes on p. 173: *This project engaged the collection, its history, and its public in an exhibition of cultural memories. The result was a cultural critique in which family and institution were related to each other on the basis of an imbricated formation of, and assault on, authority. I take this exhibition as a guide to explore cultural memory in its relation to history and agency, as a model for cultural analysis.*

*beauté terrible* as they are shown to advance in formation onto the Vietnamese village.

As the helicopters advance onto the village, several of the soldiers take off their helmets, put them on the floor with the open side up and sit on them. A newcomer asks why they are doing this. As reply his more experienced comrades retort, they would rather see their heads exposed to gunfire than their genitals. The narrative covers these »vital parts« with costume, with the helmets. In the film *Le temps retrouvé*, there is a fashion show of wartime clothing where models sport costumes that resemble military uniforms. While the child Marcel looks at documentary material of the War, the enigmatic hats now (through the prism of *Apocalypse Now*) indeed stand in for the men who can no longer wear them, who have abandoned them. They are absent from polite society, because they are wearing helmets.

Another hat makes an appearance in the *A la recherche du temps perdu*, in *The Proust Screenplay*, and in *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*: the hat worn by the duchesse de Guermantes at the Salon Villeparisis. In the *Recherche*, this is a straw hat decorated with blue flowers, that match her blue silk skirt.<sup>149</sup> In *The Proust Screenplay*, this is further specified as a *straw hat trimmed with cornflowers*,<sup>150</sup> whereas in *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* the hat is white and trimmed with small fleur-de-lis.<sup>151</sup> Thus, different things are enacted through the hat. While *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* ties narrative of the scene back into the history of aristocratic France, *The Proust Screenplay* in combining the blue cornflowers with the blue eyes of the Duchess, links it back both to the script's topos of innocence (countryside, cornflowers), and to film theory (the gaze). In the novel, the *je* tries to discern in the figure of the duchesse both the history of France that comes

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<sup>149</sup> CG-II, 501-503.

<sup>150</sup> Harold Pinter, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu. The Proust Screenplay*. New York (Grove Press) 1977, p. 63f (scene 191)

<sup>151</sup> Suso Cecchi D'Amico & Luchino Visconti, *Alla recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Persona) 1984, p. 45-50 (scene 25).

down to her through the magical name of Guermantes, and through her he also remembers his childhood in rural Combray. The blue eyes as seen by the *je* are likened to the sky over a French afternoon that is bathed in light even if it does not shine. Thus, the two script projects jointly allude to several elements as configured in the literary narrative.

The goal of this study is to not to point out what was used from the novel, but to analyse how it is re-used. To merely repeat the same narrative all over again (to preserve it as in a classical heritage film), or to boil it down to a easily consumable digest version as in *Remembrance of Things Past* cannot be the purpose of (a study of) adaptation. As said, adaptation as a cultural practice should critically engage with its literary source material, and the study of adaptation, should then pinpoint how artworks change in meaning(s). Film adaptation makes texts mean otherwise. As a cultural practice then, adaptation makes both text and author mean otherwise by inserting them into a new cultural cartography. It charts changes in attitude towards *Kulturgüter*, cultural goods over a period of time. It also may show how they are imagined differently in different places.

To wish for a planet where borders do not exist, is not an option for (Proust) adaptation: for its meaning is affirmatively, oppositionally, idealistically, and controversially established only across borders. The voices speaking, the succession of »I-s«, change in the transition from literature to film, but transgression is a vital part of the process. This change not only occurs because the transposition to film implies that what was written becomes visual and/or uttered, but that their production and reception depends upon the specific moment at which the various films are made or conceived of, and who is imagining them for which agenda. The cultural practice of adaptation certainly does not necessarily work towards divesting such cultural goods of the national and critical baggage that comes with them, but it can reveal the *beauté terrible* of dreamy universalist cinematic gazing and it does destabilise cultural power positions held through preservation of literature and film as high art, by exiling

the literary author from its posterior narrative. and by providing not only new narratives of the source text and its author, but also versions that change the understanding of writer and text.

The process of adaptation requires a rethinking of the categories of literature and film (as arts), and canon, not least through the different modes of circulation, i.e. putting the book on a global multi-medial cultural market, as it were. This does, however, not abrogate the individual spectator's or adaptor's engagement with the adaptation. The recurring words of phantasmagoria (dream, haunting, and ghost) in the reception of the stage adaptation, the recurrence points to a desire to emotionally engage with Marcel Proust and the *Recherche* in ways other than mere summary. When John Ellis argued that adaptation should be a memory of a book,<sup>152</sup> rather than a rendition of it, the subjectivity of each filmmaker and each spectator enters into the making and the experiencing of film adaptations. Nowhere has this been stated more clearly as in the example of Luchino Visconti, but also other adaptors described the reading and adapting of the *Recherche* a project of personal enrichment, as have contributors to film websites. In conjunction with the heritage genre, adaptations of Marcel Proust, in their reception confirm this: the films or film projects are infused with heterogeneous desires of cultural imagining. As the study has shown, the reduction of the past's representation to mere mise-en-scène can be regarded as insufficient. The repeated reference to the intent look at such objects that in films of Visconti also takes them apart, points to the necessity of (ample) time in order to arrive at a satisfactory reading when looking at, filming and representing such objects. While these films could arguably be used for an argument that sees realised in such visual pacing, a strategy to counteract the

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<sup>152</sup> John Ellis, *The Literary Adaptation: An Introduction*. IN: *Screen*. (1982 May/June) Vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 3-4.

acceleration of modernity's memory,<sup>153</sup> the most decisive feature about it is the possibility of distancing it provides through that timing. The time the spectator is given to watch the images' visual and narrative richness unfold, also leaves time for pause, reflection, and critique. Especially now as MTV aesthetics, news journal clips, the episodic structure of television series, and the instant availability of a vast reservoir of images and information on the internet form a fundamental part of film-goers' experiences, such visual leisure appears as a bygone luxury—regardless of the spectator's opinion of the individual film made thus. The adaptation heritage film, thus, ideally should provide both images of cultural imaginings and an opportunity for the critique of these. Heritage enjoys popularity because it can offer a retreat in the safety of a vicariously experienced haven,<sup>154</sup> Michael Crang thus argues:<sup>155</sup>

*The past [in Sweden] was refashioned to meet the insecurities and needs of the present; in a time of urban transition and rapid change the appeal of 'unchanging' tradition was considerable. We might draw new connections with how Britain is coping with the post-imperial, post-industrial world by turning to industrial heritage. Thus the boom in preserved warehouses, industrial museums, conserved waterfronts and so forth has been linked to an uncertainty about the future and about what it means to be British. It has been suggested that lauding these past achievements helps bolster a sense of security in the face of an uncertain future. Rediscovering heritage as a way of reaffirming present identities, particularly in times of rapid change or uncertainty, seems widespread. It seems to function as a backward-facing mirror that presents people with the image of themselves in the secure and stable identities they want to see.*

Heritage here functions as a point of reference which makes the future (or even the present) less difficult to confront. Heritage, however, can also be questioned through the stillness of its images, as the example of the enquiring camera suggested. Heritage, in filmic narrative can be relinquished and consigned to that very past. In the conjunction with adaptation, the idea of heritage as symbolising a certain kind of past may be rejected. In the adaptation of *Orlando* the gender critique of the film makes the protagonist not only give up

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<sup>153</sup> Cf. Matt K. Matsuda, *The Memory of the Modern*. New York & Oxford (Oxford University Press) 1996. Cited in Chapter Two, pp. 62f.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Chapter 2, 3. *The Country Estate*, pp. 84ff.

<sup>155</sup> Michael Crang, *Cultural Geography*. London & New (Routledge) 1998, here p. 167.



her country estate, but she does so with an emancipated tranquillity. As Sharon Ouditt has put it:<sup>156</sup>

*For Potter's Orlando has a daughter, not a son, which means that the lineage is broken and the house passes into the hands of the heritage industry. [...] She no longer owns her house; this is seen to be a liberation rather than a loss. The past is seen to be a trap, something that enforces inappropriate gendered identities, and the house that represents the past should be left behind and permitted to take its role in capitalist production as a commodity: English heritage.*

The character Orlando, however, not only is in the film liberated from an undesirable past, but from the film s/he gains another book: at the end of the filmic narrative, she writes down her story which is an alternative narrative of heritage. In this adaptation, a heritage which is felt to be out-of-date is relinquished as the film »re-writes« the literary narrative.

The Proust adaptations provide other examples of what approaches can be taken to heritage. Where the film *Un amour de Swann* does point to the fake at work in the reproduction of heritage, it fails to produce a cultural imagining because it is caught in illusionist aesthetics of conventional narrative cinema. The film *Le temps retrouvé*, conversely, may overly alienate spectators because of its complex narrative construction and presentation, and with its abundance of details and characters, but it does offers images that incite spectatorial imagining, by employing numerous intertexts that invite the spectator to decipher them. *The Proust Screenplay* offers an intricate connection of memory, society, and narrative, whose suggestiveness was not transposed to the theatre stage of *Remembrance of Things Past*, and in the seventieth-birthday celebration of one of its authors the engagement with the two themes of the *Recherche* became obliterated. Had it been made, the screenplay *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* would

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<sup>156</sup> Sharon Ouditt, 'Orlando': *Coming Across the Divide*. IN: *Adaptations. From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. Ed. by Deborah Cartmell & Imelda Whelehan. London (Routledge) 1999, pp. . Here, p. 155.

On page 153, Ouditt contextualises the film as follows: [...]*we have been through the second wave of feminism and, in the early 1990s, were struggling with the effects of AIDS and a re-elected Conservative government that apparently wanted to stake its future on the imagined values of a Victorian past. What was the potential for a 1990s screen adaptation of a novel whose representation of freedom depends on privilege?*

have represented yet another narrative of » decadence and splendour«. By not having being made, and in conjunction with the directorial author-figure attached to it, it promised to be and was desired as a rendition of European heritage per se.

The *Progetto Proust* is interesting most prominently in this study, because it is the least-known of Proust adaptations. Being the first adaptation of all those analysed here, it emblematically functions as the unacknowledged beginning of Proust adaptation to the cinema screen. Its title, furthermore, is programmatic: rather than being understood as a finite progression, the adaptation of Proust like the reception of any given author on film, is a not process that will find its end by finding the perfect adaptation. The adaptation of Proust to film should, rather, be understood as a project that furnishes (and will continue to furnish) narratives of cultural imaginings.

The previous chapters have in various instances looked upon the literary source material and the films resulting from their adaptation as Kulturgüter, as cultural goods. The choice of this particular world field intended as an instrument of critique: to work against a conceptualisation of film as disinterested-ahistorical »high art« by maintaining that film is tied into specific fields of cultural production and consumption. Not only are adaptations also meant to generate revenue, their making is dependent upon the historical convergence of several factors—among these not least that the financing comes through at the right moment. As the example of *Ludwig II* and *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* has shown, the timing of »real« money is crucial. The history of Proust adaptations, and by extension of film, here therefore not only consists of the films that were made, but also of those that were not made. Film historiography, especially when establishing film as art, must among other factors such as, e.g., the material decomposition of early prints, take into account the effect money (the absence of and the abundance of) tangibly has on the making of films.

The economy of adaptation in this study, then also operates in figurative senses. Through adaptation the book was regarded as being re-entered into cultural circulation in a different medium. Film through the practice of adaptation both capitalised literature, i.e. underscored its importance, and capitalised upon literature by using the cultural capital the source material has been endowed with, to promote both the specific adaptation and then also, by association, itself as an art form. After more than a century of film and countless adaptations, the practice of adaptation also furnishes multiple films of the same literary author or even the same literary work. This makes a »choice« and »assessment of product« possible, as the adaptations of the same author or book can be compared, or also the different approaches adaptation has taken with different authors. Through the financial success of some films, film business then invents its own stories beyond literature, as e.g. with James Bond and *Gone with the Wind*. Then, in a context where the literary canon still retains its cultural capital but the labour of reading is seen as a luxury or a tedious task, the adaptation to film (or to stage as in the example of *The Proust Screenplay*) is assessed in terms of use-value: providing the rudiments of what is necessary to possess a stake in such cultural capital. Through an overlap in cultural referents, adaptation in the case of Proust then also furnishes images (and the sound) of European culture which are re-located into representations of non-European spaces.

In terms of reproducibility, a film adaptation of Proust can potentially export images of literary works far beyond the country of the book's origin. In such global circulation they will be read differently in each location. Through the functioning of the distribution system this more often than not implies that (like other types of films) adaptations made in the industrialised countries are more likely to be seen in non-Western countries, as opposed to those produced in developing countries travelling the other way. However, where there is a market for films, they will also be exported into Europe or even made there—the presence of a substantial film industry producing Bollywood fare in Scotland

testifies to this. For adaptations of the so-called Western canon, the process of exporting them also entails that as cultural goods with an imputed cultural value, this value will be recognised differently (or not at all) by spectators in different parts of the globe. Adaptation as a mode of cultural intertextuality and quotation thus fundamentally undermines the idea of a canon's immutability.<sup>157</sup>

In his article *Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*,<sup>158</sup> Arjun Appadurai develops a model of disjunction and overlapping to explain the interaction between various »landscapes«. This has parallels to my study of adaptation. First of all, there is a surprisingly large *Schnittmenge* (shared quantity), of terms employed: loops, genre, mapping, fidelity, commodification.<sup>159</sup> Then, he argues that this cultural economy no longer functions *in terms of existing center-periphery models* this applied to adaptation would be a conceptualisation of adaptation that refuses to see the literary text as origin, as centre from which all adaptations spring, and as sole point of reference—decisively so, if the adapted text forms part of a western canon. Thirdly, when he conceptualises the *new global cultural economy [...] as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order* this is an equivalent to the defensive, hostile, and

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<sup>157</sup> Cf. here also theories of intertextuality and quotation.

Judith Still & Michael Worton, *Introduction*. IN: *Intertextuality. Theories and Practices*. Ed. by Michael Worton & Judith Still. Manchester (Manchester University Press) 1990, pp. 1-44.

On pp. 11f.: *In each encounter with a quotation, the reader perceives that, while there is an obvious conflict between sameness or identity and difference, there is also a covert fusion of differences within the single textual utterance. We would therefore suggest that every quotation is a metaphor which speaks of that which is absent and which engages the reader in speculative activity.*

Joan Kerr, *Past Present. The Local Art of Colonial Quotation*. IN: *Double Vision. Art Histories and Colonial Histories in the Pacific*. Ed. by Nicholas Thomas & Diana Losche. Cambridge (Cambridge University Press) 1999, pp. 231-151.

This essay looks at how quotation and appropriation of colonial culture is used in antipodean postcolonial art and, as with adaptations of canonical authors to film, this can serve different agendas.

<sup>158</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*. IN: *Public Culture*. (Spring 1990) Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 1-24.

<sup>159</sup> These terms were arrived at, I assure any reader of this study, entirely independent of Appadurai.

affirmative reception of the new versions of the writer and his book which drew up new maps of and onto the *Recherche*, and which (most obviously here *The Proust Screenplay*) were inserted into different cultural cartographies over time. Finally, the article outlines an idea of different types of landscapes which<sup>160</sup>

*are the building blocks of what (extending Benedict Anderson) I would like to call imagined worlds, that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the world.*

Appadurai spoke about global cultural processes being produced through *the image, the imagined, the imaginary* as a result of which imagination itself becomes a social practice.<sup>161</sup> I differ in my choice of the third term, imagining vs. Appadurai's imagination. The term imagining serves this study better because it implies a subject, an »I«. The position of the »I« in Proust adaptation has crucially been one of inserting a subject into the literary narrative, the story to be adapted, repeating that first insertion of Marcel Proust into his writing. This subject may be a reader, an adaptor, a spectator, or a critic, who is producing and/or reacting to images s/he sees, both of which are processes of cultural imagining.

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<sup>160</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy*. IN: *Public Culture*. (Spring 1990) Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 1-24. Here, pp. 7.

On p. 9: *they provide (especially in their television, film, and cassette forms) large and complex repertoires of images, narratives and ethnoscaapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed. What this means is that many audiences throughout the world experience the media themselves as a complicated and interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screens and billboards. The lines between the realistic and fictional landscapes they see are blurred, so that, the further away these audiences are from the direct experiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds which are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world.*

<sup>161</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Disjunction and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy* IN: *Public Culture*. (Spring 1990) 2:2, pp. 1-24.

Here p. 5.: *The image, the imagined, the imaginary — all these are terms which direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as social practice. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is done elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people) and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (both in the sense of labor and of culturally organized practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency ('individual') and globally defined fields of possibility.*

In this study, adaptation as a cultural practice has been shown as both creating and denying imagined communities, where the images of the films are welcomed and repudiated, and adaptations and film projects reveal themselves as screens through which the imaginary enters into the debate. If anything, this study has shown that the idea of a unifying European culture achieved through a heritage adaptation of Proust is an illusion, a cultural fantasy, albeit a powerful one. It also has shown that the meaning of the term »European heritage« can through the process of adaptation be differently imagined.

When contextualised into the histories of adaptation theory, the lives of the adaptors, and into the histories of various cinemas, the imaginings of Proust arrived at through the provision of filmic images of a novel written by him show how the study of adaptation as a cultural practice can be employed as a tool for understanding complex interactions between several fields of cultural production and consumption. This is intricately bound up with the question of heritage through the type of images provided in the films, and adaptation here offers itself as a cultural practice that delivers the desired images. It does so most obviously in the recurrence of its fetishised objects: the dresses, the madeleine, or the hats. These objects give a tangible shape to what the study of adaptation can yield up. Here, it also pointed out what the objects represented cannot achieve, i.e. were they are crucially lacking something.<sup>162</sup> Images of adaptations in the

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<sup>162</sup> Cf. here also Vivian Sobchack, What is Film History?, Or, The Riddles of the Sphinxes. IN: *Reinventing Film Studies*. Ed. by Christine Gledhill & Linda Williams. London (Arnold) 1999, pp. 300-315.

On pp. 304f., this contribution points out when looking at the specific objects of *mise-en-scène*, the changes in film history that now immerses itself in the study of such objects, while also relinquishing the idea of rounded wholeness: *Thus, historical coherence and grand narratives are now riddled not only by holes, gaps, omissions in our historical knowledge that we once might have tried to cover over or fill in, but they are also riddled by the questions and investments of past and present desire. And the 'new type of historian' described above now regards both the original object of history and the objectivity of history as always already in ruins. That is, the field, or site, of history is now seen as unstable and shifting, and its material and temporal excavations are understood as yielding only fragments, traces, and potsherds — and these not of 'the past' but of its earlier representations. And like the ruin, history has become open and unfixed and available for different kinds of dreams than that of objectivity.*

heritage film thus are simultaneously fulfilment of desires and disruptive criticism. In the re-narrativisation of these objects as images, one can observe how the literary author, the filmic auteur, the book and the film are continually but disjunctively re-imagined.

## CONCLUSION

Analysing films begins with looking at films. This study tried to look at adaptation as an object of study differently. Rather than looking towards theory, it argued its case (study) for adaptation as a cultural practice. For this, it looked at a specific type of film, the genre of heritage film. More specifically, it looked at films with adaptation as second generic category, at recently-made heritage films based on books perceived as literary classics. And finally, as a case study, it looked at the adaptations and the adaptation projects of Marcel Proust's novel(s) *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

The study lined out the problematic legacy to adaptation as an object of study, through the conceptualisations of film adaptation in the early studies written on the topic which largely subordinated adaptation to literature. When the study of adaptation is understood as merely the analysis of narrative transposition from book to film, and when film as art models itself on literature, then adaptation as a cultural practice that produces countless films can be little more, and can be conceptualised as little more, than another vessel for literature's perpetuation. However, as studies in adaptation shifted from narrative comparison towards other intersections of literature and film, and as film studies also shifted in focus from theory to history, the conceptualisation of adaptation also changes. Adaptation becomes a cultural practice beyond literature and film as aesthetic or artistic domains, and the study of adaptation then in return transforms the understanding of literature and film.

In the case study of Proust and adaptation, the transposition from literature to film showed the numerous ways in which this writer and his work have been interrelated and imagined. The study of the various films and film projects analysed how the adaptations undermine both the concept of literature as an art that lays claim to universality, and also how the images of heritage provided through adaptation as in *Un amour de Swann* point to the fake-ness of such



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reconstructions of an idealised past and to the element of fantasy such visualisations contain, and are contained in through their reception. The reception of the films and the ways in which the adaptors related and were related to the writer Marcel Proust and his novel, also provided narratives of desire. This study, thus, argues its case for the pleasures the confrontation with such filmic and literary texts provides, while at the same time pointing out possible messages adaptations may transport. Both the production and the reception of Proust into images of heritage, become spaces situated at historically-discrete cultural moments, where individual and heterogeneous desires become apparent as they voice their imaginings of Proust.

The case of Marcel Proust and *A la recherche du temps perdu*, decisively poses the question of individual desire. First of all, it does so because the writing was intricately related to the writer's life. The writer's life in relation to his writing became the place where the fictionalisation of Proust permitted appropriation for his and his work's preservation as conservative heritage, but that same close interrelation resurfaced in diverse constellations when the affinity to Proust was drawn out in different ways between the adaptors and Proust. Secondly, as the novel is written about a character who stays unnamed, interpellation between the »I« and the »you« allowed for transgression in adaptation. The space of the *je* becomes the locus where individual desires of readers, adaptors, reviewers, and spectators insert themselves into the process of Proust adaptation, into the *Progetto Proust*. Here too, film operates upon a gaze cut to the measure of desire (as formulated by Mulvey), but the object gazed at is not woman, but the objects represented such as the dresses worn—or not worn as in the case of 1995 BBC's *Mr. Darcy*. The subject that gazes at the heritage film onto those *gaping garments* thus also enjoys a possibility of a different gaze permitting him/her to endow the objects with new meanings. The cherished objects of the heritage film and of the *Recherche*, thus, were re-represented in the Proust adaptations but radically changed in meaning: the costume designs of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto* became, as they appeared in another film, objects whose spectacularity signified the

thwarting rather than the fulfilment of desire. The absence of madeleine of Proust, as a metonymy for the writer and his book that mythically arose from the steaming cup, thus signals in one case that here the literary author has forcefully been removed from the narrative as in the theatre adaptation of *The Proust Screenplay*, and in the other, in *Le temps retrouvé*, that he has to be removed as centre because as *Kulturgut* (cultural good), too much has been projected onto him. In both of these adaptations, as well as in *Un amour de Swann* and *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto*, the practice of adaptation in different ways and for different ends, starts processes of displacement: the literary author and his work are no longer treated as centre of adaptation, or the sole origin of adaptation. Adaptation as a cultural practice, according to the argument of this case study, therefore, enables an engagement with such *Kulturgüter* (cultural goods) beyond a function as *Kulturhüter* (guardians of culture), where film and literature, and their professional practitioners (adaptors and reviewers) can be subjected to probing and critique. Through the desires it arouses, adaptation as a cultural practice may, thus, also enable an emotional and intellectual identification with such artefacts that does not stringently come with an arrogant gesture of cultural exclusivity or even exclusion.

In this case study, adaptation was used as an instrument of critical analysis to question (hinterfragen) the political and ideological agendas of »cultural preservationism«. It might be too early to say, but other case studies of adaptation can be envisaged which ask and answer other questions. The analysis of children's literature on film could explore shifting cultural attitudes in the representation of violence and the problematic issue of visually represented violence as opposed to written description, as controversy surrounding the adaptations of Harry Potter suggests. And though *The Lord of the Rings* clearly was not meant as a book for children, it was also marketed with a young target audience in mind. But adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland* might already be ample material here when read against documents of national censorship boards. Another possible case study could be the James Bond films and their close

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relation to brand names. As the films invent their narratives beyond the books, i.e. as the figure of James Bond himself becomes a brand, the contracts drawn up between the producers and the providers of champagne and luxury limousines might yield insights into the interaction between brand consumption and society. As saturated consumer culture revels in such luxurious consumption, one here then has the paradoxical phenomenon that the purpose of the BMW in a Bond film supposed to advertise these brands, is not to endure but to be trashed.

What will be essential in any study of adaptation as cultural practice is to keep adaptation as a secondary category, be that of genre as in this study, or conceptualised in other ways. The sheer number of adaptations made in just over one hundred years of film is simply too large as to be wholly integrated in a study of adaptation as a cultural practice, i.e. a study that aims to show what effect adaptation has in a specific historical context. I am still not quite sure whether I have done historiography a service with this study. Nonetheless, the study of adaptation as cultural practice as proposed here, does, I hope, at least further contribute to moving it out of literary and film studies and into the (wide) field of cultural studies where it could at least continue alongside historiography.

## Appendix I: A Commented Proust Filmography

Besides the feature films a substantial number of documentary films have been made on the life of Proust, the places and the time of the *Recherche*, etc. I have so far counted 29. It is rather interesting that they are, broadly speaking, produced in two phases: the first from 1961 to 1972 peaking around 1971/72 the centenary of Marcel Proust's birth and fifty years since his death, respectively (with two at the beginning of the sixties and the other ten at the end of that decade or the beginning of the next and the last two at the end of the seventies); the second from 1987 to 2000 where four of the 17 projects are made in the late eighties and the remaining 13 are primarily of the second half of the nineties.<sup>1</sup> Possibly, this lull in the ten years between 1977 and 1987 came to an end precisely because it was in that period that *Céleste* (1981) and *Un amour de Swann* (1984) could have sparked a new interest. Also, it was in the years 1987-1989 that the second Pléiade edition of *À la recherche du temps perdu* was being published, which in turn then motivated the revisions of both the English and the German translations. Proust had, in a certain sense, resurfaced.

For the films I could not find and which I marked with an asterisk, I have to rely on other sources such as two articles written by William C. Carter on the topic, on the *Quid de Proust*<sup>2</sup> and on others.

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<sup>1</sup> In some cases the information available has been so difficult to come by that I have not been able to ascertain dates of production.

<sup>2</sup> William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179; & idem, *Proust Cinémathèque: Visconti, Schlöndorff and Capri's "The Basileus Quartett"*. IN: *Proust Research Association Newsletter*, Summer 1986, no.25:39-43.

Also used as a source of information is the *Quid de Proust*. IN: Marcel Proust. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.

This introductory guide (by Dominique Frémy and Michel Thiriet) to Marcel Proust and the *Recherche* also features lists of films, radioplays etc. on Proust and on the *Recherche*.

## A. Feature films

### 1. *Impostors* (1979/80)<sup>3\*</sup>

Director: Marc Rappaport.

Script: Mark Rappaport.

Prod. Companies: First Run Features, Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen.

Released: 1988 (USA)

Cast: Charles Ludham (Chuckie), Michael Burg (Mikey), Peter Evans (Peter), Lina Todd (Gina), Ellen McElduff (Tina), et al.

Running time: 110 min.

The film uses the subplot of Albertine as a prisoner of her lover and mixes it with the plot of *The Maltese Falcon*.

### 2. *Céleste* (1981)

Director: Percy Adlon.

Script: Percy Adlon.

Producer: Eleonore Adlon.

Prod. Companies: Artificial Eye Film, Bayrischer Rundfunk, Pelemele Film;

Based on *Monsieur Proust*, by Céleste Albaret.

Released: 1981.

Running time: 118 min.

Other: Colour.

Actors/Actresses: Eva Mattes(Céleste Albaret); Jürgen Arndt (Marcel Proust);

Norbert Warthe (Odilon Albaret); et al.

Musik: César Franck.

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<sup>3</sup> Sources of information: William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179.  
*Quid de Proust*. IN: Marcel Proust. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.  
International Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)).

The film focuses on the relationship between Céleste Albaret and Marcel Proust in the years from 1913 to his death in 1922. It is based on the biography that Céleste Albaret the servant, housekeeper, secretary and confidante of Marcel Proust wrote with the help of Georges Belmont.

The film itself is a small production compared in international standards, but a fairly large production for its producers: German state television, Bayrischer Rundfunk and two small production companies. The film resembles in its stylistics, a *Kammerspiel*: the number of persons as well as locations is reduced to a minimum. Apart from the three main characters (Marcel Proust, Céleste Albaret, and Odilon Albaret, her husband) other figures such as the barber, the publishers, the brother of Marcel Proust, the doctor make only intermittent appearances. The action is shot exclusively inside an apartment block. Whenever the camera reveals other locations such as facades of Paris houses, images of the sea or of rural France (?) the actors are hors-cadre and only a voice-over can be heard.

Historical period represented: [1894-]<sup>4</sup> 1913-1922.

### **3. Il quartetto Basileo (1982)<sup>5\*</sup>**

Director: Fabio Capri.

Script: Fabio Carpi.

Producer: CEP (Italy), RAI.

Released: 1984.

Running time: ca. 130 min.

Cast: Héctor Alterio (Alvaro), Omero Antonutti (Diego); Alian Cuny, Véronique Genest, Lisa Kreuzer (Lotte), Pierre Malet (Edo), Michel Vitold (Gugliolmo), François Simon.

Music: Claude Debussy, Richard Wagner, Franz Schubert.

*The Basileus Quartett*, is a story of a string quartett whose members have homosexual relationships modelled on Charlus and Morel. They sign into hotels for love trysts under the assumed name Baron de Charlus.

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<sup>4</sup> The period between 1894 and 1913 is represented not as filmed action, but as still shots with voice-over, whereas the core period of the film takes place in the apartment.

<sup>5</sup> Sources: William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179. And idem, *Proust Cinémathèque: Visconti, Schlöndorff and Capri's "The Basileus Quartett"*. IN: *Proust Research Association Newsletter*, Summer 1986, no.25:39-43.

*Quid de Proust*. IN: Marcel Proust. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.  
International Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)).

**4. *Un amour de Swann* (1982)**

Director: Volker Schlöndorff.

Script: Peter Brook, Jean-Claude Carrière, Marie-Hélène Estienne.

Prod. Companies: Gaumont, Bioskop Film, France 3 Cinéma, Les Films du Losange, SFP Cinéma.

Released: 1984.

Running time: 109 min.

Cast: Jeremy Irons (Swann); Ornella Muti (Odette de Crecy), Alain Delon (Charlus), Fanny Ardant (duchesse de Guermantes), Marie-Christine Barrault (Mme Verdurin), et al.

Music: David Graham, Hans Werner Henze, Gerd Kuhr, Marcel Wengler.

The film is the adaptation of middle part of *Du côté de chez Swann* and it tells the story of Charles Swann, his relation with the cocotte Odette de Crecy. This part of the Recherche can stand as a story of its own. Set mostly in the years before the birth of the *je* it does not include him in the narrative.

In its style this is a conventional period film, faithfully adapting the literary text. The only instance where it significantly deviates is in its time structure: the film tries to compress the action of the novel into 24 hours.

Historical period represented: late 1860s to ca. 1890.

**5. *Le temps retrouvé* (1999)**

Director: Raúl Ruiz.

Script: Gilles Taurand & Raúl Ruiz.

Prod. Companies: Gemini Films, Le Studio Canal +, Centre National de la Cinématographie, Blu cinematografica, Blu Film, France 2, Les Films du Lendemain, Madragoa Films (Portugal).

Released: 1999.

Running Time: 152 min.

Other: Colour.

Cast: Marcello Mazzarello (Marcel Proust), Patrice Chereau (voice of Marcel Proust), Catherine Deneuve (Odette), Emmanuelle Béart (Gilberte), Vincent Perez (Morel), Pascal Greggory (Saint-Loup), Marie-France Pisier (Mme Verdurin), Chiara Mastroianni (Albertine), Arielle Dombasle (princesse de Guermantes), Elsa Zylberstein (Rachel), Christian Vadim (Bloch), John Malkovich (Charlus); et al.

Music: Jorge Arriagada.

The film is an international co-production with a large cast but relatively limited choice of locations (given its length) that claims to be adaptation of last part of *A la recherche du temps perdu*. But, not only does it use other parts of the Recherche, it also inserts the life of the author Marcel Proust into the fictional story of the *je*, the central figure of the *Recherche*.

The film uses unusual techniques to narrate its story: the continuities of time and space are dissolved by filmic means. Documentary material is used to integrate an historical background into a film. The film mainly narrates how Marcel Proust becomes a writer via a cross-representation of the character's life: out of the child, through adolescence, and finally an adult Paris socialite from ca. turn of the century to just after World War I.

Historical period represented: late 1870s to ca. 1921/22.

#### 6. *La captive* (2000)

Director: Chantal Ackermann.

Script: Chantal Ackermann & Eric de Kuyper.

Prod. Companies: Centre National de la Cinématographie, Gemini Films, Gimages 3, arte France Cinéma, Studio Canal+ & Paradise Films (Belgium).

Cast: Sylvie Testud (Ariane/Albertine), Stanislas Merhan (Simon/*je*), et al.

Released: 2000.

Music: Rachmaninov, Franz Schubert.

Running time: ca. 115 min.

This film uses the story of the relation between the *je* and Albertine, but sets them in modern day France—and mostly within one flat. Like *Céleste*, it is a *Kammerspiel* between the two main characters. Unlike the other *Recherche* adaptations, this film is not in period costume. The film then also significantly re-writes the death of Albertine: rather than dying in a riding accident after she has left the *je*, here she drowns while they are both at the seaside.



## B. Documentaries

### 1. Le temps d'une vocation (1961) \*

Director: J. Letellier.

Producer: (-).

Broadcast: (-).

Running time: 21 min.

Other: Colour. 16mm.

### 2. Portrait Souvenir (1962)

Director: Gérard Herzog.

Producer: Roger Stéphane & Roger Darbois.

Broadcast 11.01.1962 (-) & 7.III.1988, France 3.

Series: Océaniques.

Running time: 90 min.

Other: black and white.

Participants: Jean Cocteau (Académie Française,<sup>6</sup> an acquaintance), Paul Mauriac (writer, member of the Académie Française, an admirer), Paul Morand (acquaintance and instant admirer from CS onwards), Daniél Halévy (a friend from the Lycée Condorcet), Jacques de Lacretelle (Académie Française, acquaintance of Marcel Proust from the time Lacretelle was soldier in World War I. He exchanged letters and opinions with Marcel Proust), the marquis de Lauris (acquaintance) Emmanuel Berle (acquaintance), the duc de Gramont (acquaintance), Philippe Soupault (writer), Céleste Albaret (Marcel Proust's housekeeper, secretary, friend), Mme Paul Morand (wife of Paul Morand, friend, source of information on dresses for Marcel Proust),

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<sup>6</sup> This is specifically mentioned in the credits of the film. Whereas the other information are what I deduced from the film itself.

Mme André Maurois (wife of André Maurois, née princesse Soutzo, acquaintance of Marcel Proust, model for the young Mlle de Saint-Loup in *Recherche*).

Jean Negroni (introduced as from the Académie Française) plays the role of the prologue and host, but he is not the person interviewing the interviewees. This person we see only in personal point of view shots,<sup>7</sup> i.e. from behind if at all.

This is the earliest film of all. It consists of a series of interviews with the contemporaries of Marcel Proust. The interviews are all shot in a fairly straightforward manner: the interviewee is standing or seated facing the camera and tells his/her story of meetings with Marcel Proust, reading *À la recherche du temps perdu*, their relation to the writer and/or the work. The settings are in most cases living rooms or *salons* furnished in the style of the early 19th century.

Historical documentary material (both photos and films) as well as documentary material produced specifically for this film, is used between interviews. It is used either as introductions to a theme (Paris 1900, e.g.) or to ease a narrative transition, e.g. images of the manuscripts about which an interviewee then tells a story.

### **3. Les yeux d'Elstir (1968) \***

Director: J. Brunswig & Alain Magrou.

Producer: Film Hèrmes

Broadcast: (-)

Running Time: 16 min.

Other: Colour; 16 mm.

Description available: *Essais sur l'œuvre, la vie et la pensée de Marcel Proust*.<sup>8</sup>

### **4. La Normandie de Marcel Proust (1969) \***

Director: (-)

Producer: Pathé Cinéma.

Series: *Chroniques de France*.

Broadcast: (-)

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<sup>7</sup>This means the cadre of the picture partially includes the interviewer over his shoulder while the interviewees tell their stories.

<sup>8</sup> William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179. Also mentioned IN: *Quid de Proust*. IN: Marcel Proust. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.

Running Time: 7 min.

Other: Colour. 16 mm.

Description available: *Un voyage dans la Normandie proustienne*.<sup>9</sup>

### 5. A la recherche des amours enfantines (1971) \*

Director: (-)

Producer: Pathé Cinéma.

Series: *Chroniques de France*.

Broadcast: (-)

Running time: 7 min.

Other: Colour. 16mm.

Description available: *Ce film évoque les souvenirs d'enfance, surtout à Illiers-Combray*.<sup>10</sup>

### 6. L'Art et la douleur (1971)

Director: Guy Gilles.

Producer: (-)

Broadcast: 12.VI.1971, Première Chaîne.

Running Time: 90 min.

Other: Black and white; 90 min.

Participants: Patrick Jouané (*visiteur*); Philip Larcher (founder of the *Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray* and the Proust Museum, *La Maison de la Tante Léonie*, at Illiers) and Céleste Albaret.

An essayistic retracing of the places where Marcel Proust lived and wrote with interviews of contemporaries and an invented figure of a *visiteur* (Patrick Jouané)

<sup>9</sup>William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179. Also listed IN: *Quid de Proust*. IN: Marcel Proust. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.

<sup>10</sup>William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179. Also listed IN: *Quid de Proust*. IN: Marcel Proust. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.

who guides the viewer through the film and plays the interviewer, the listener, the traveller. Locations visited are Venice, Illiers (Combray), Cabourg (Balbec), Montfort l'Amaury (village where the Ravel museum is located, the new workplace and home of Céleste Albaret in the 1960/70ies).

The documentary material used consists of photos of Proust and his family and contemporaries. The film uses intertitles to structure its narrative, music to create atmosphere and makes ample use both of quotes from writings of Marcel Proust letters and of fictional works (read in voice-over).

The film traces the childhood of Marcel Proust, his daily life and the domestic arrangements in his Paris home through interviews and by using his writings as descriptive material for describing the motivations of the *visiteur's* journey, and as texts in which the *visiteur* (or others) finds himself, e.g. describing a girl he meets on the location in Venice, or the two travelling teenagers he asks to read Proust out loud at Cabourg. The retracing of Proust is narrated along the journey of the *visiteur* to Céleste Albaret, Philip Larcher, Venice, Cabourg. The camera often lingers on details: there are long close-ups of plants (when Larcher and the *visiteur* are in the garden at Illiers), household utensils (when listening to voice-over read out the passages of *À la recherche du temps perdu* on the kitchen at Combray), etc. The film makes frequent use of music, which significantly is not always the music used by films on Proust, i.e. the music that Proust said to be his inspiration for the *Sonate de Vinteuil*.<sup>11</sup> So, instead of just using César Franck, Camille Saint-Saëns, etc. this film also uses Offenbach, Ravel, tango, popsongs. The film furthermore contains elements of Larcher's and Albaret's lives that are not directly connected to Proust but form part of their lives.

The present time of the film is always kept foregrounded versus the past of the writer it is supposedly recapturing. The journey along the traces of Proust becomes just as important as the writing and the life of Proust himself. This is made explicit from the very outset: the first sequence of the film is the final shooting location, Venice, and the last days of shooting the material. The director himself appears and comments on the experience of making this film. The first intertitles are *Soif de Venise; Projet de départ à Venise; La présence d'Albertine m'empêche d'aller à Venise* (this is a quote from *La prisonnière*, and is followed in the film by images of Venice). This represents a contradiction: not being able to go as suggested by intertitle and the filmic presence there. That is continued with another contradiction: the next intertitle, *Séjour à Venise*, is followed by images of Illiers and the house of Marcel Proust's aunt with a female voice-over reading the madeleine episode. One might suppose that the intertitles are not announcing the film sequences but, rather, are referring to preceding images. But this is not confirmed in other instances. In most cases, the intertitles announce what is then narrated. In this film, therefore, the interrelation between the past and the present is put into play: not only by the use of Proust's writing, but also in foregrounding the manufacturing of such sequencing.

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<sup>11</sup> This Sonata plays a major part in *À la recherche du temps perdu*.

**7. Du côté de chez Swann (1971) \***

Director: Claude Santelli.

Producer: (-)

Series: *Les Cents livres*.

Broadcast: 24.XII.1971, Première Chaîne, France.

Running time: (-)

Music: César Franck.

Participants: Madeleine Renaud (tante Léonie); Denise Gance (Françoise); Marie-Christine Barrault (mère de Proust); Isabelle Huppert (Gilberte); Christophe Grimbert (Proust, adolescent); Guy Laras (Proust, adult); Gabriel Cottand (duc de Guermantes).

**8. In Search of Lost Time (1971) \***

Director: Colin Nears.

Producer: BBC;

Running Time: 65 min.

Other: 16mm.

Participants: Princesse Bibesco; R. Mortimer; Angus Wilson.

Description available : *Ce film retrace la biographie de M. Proust.*<sup>12</sup> It is also listed in the *Quid de Proust*. And an article appeared in the *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray* in 1974 on a screening of this film. However, when consulting the BBC archives in London April 2000, there was no trace of it.

**9. Marcel Proust (1971) \***

Director: Édouard Berne.

Producer: Neuilly Caravelle International.

Broadcast: (-)

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<sup>12</sup>William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179.

Running time: 15 min.

Other: Colour. 16 mm.

Participants: C. Clert; M. Carac.

**10. La société du temps de Marcel Proust (1971) \***

Director: Jean-Marc Leuwen.

Producer: (-)

Series: *Les Chemins de l'histoire*.

Broadcast: 12.VI.1971, Première Chaîne, France;

Running time: (-)

**11. Proust et les sens (1972)**

Directors: Michel Butor & Michel Favart.

Producer: (-)

Broadcast: (-)

Running time: 63 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Laurent Terzieff (actor who reads passages from *À la recherche du temps perdu*); Jean-Pierre Richard, Henri Pousseur, Jean Starobinski, Roland Barthes, Pierre Klosowski, and Michel Butor (all scholars).

This film aims to demonstrate the width of range of Proust's writing. For each of the five senses a passage from *À la recherche du temps perdu* is chosen plus a passage on travelling and (as beginning) a passage on *écriture*. Each is read out loud by Terzieff seated in a room furnished minimally with a chair and a table; the camera moving around him. Occasionally he looks into the camera. While he is reading images related to the topic are shown, e.g. in the case of the visual sense (quote is *l'escalier des géants*<sup>13</sup>) there are images of the pictures described in the quote and elsewhere in the *Recherche*. This continues when Michel Butor speaks on the role of the visual. Each passage is then commented upon by a scholar.

The film uses documentary material of Paris 1900; the portrait of Marcel Proust by Jacques-Émile Blanche, the interior of a restaurant as location; historical advertisements for travels to Venice, Switzerland and Normandy; images of Venice 1960. There is frequent use of music as background: in the sequence on hearing

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<sup>13</sup> CS,I-317-318.

(quote used is *Ouverture pour un jour de fête*<sup>14</sup>) one hears in the background a recording of Debussy's *Péleas* in Russian.

The film does not at any point try to recreate an image of the time of Marcel Proust or of the *Recherche*. It uses the *Recherche* as reservoir of quotes to show the diversity of Proust and his significance for today.

### 12. Les musiques de Marcel Proust (1972)

Director: Jean-Michel Leuwen.

Producer: (-)

Series: *Connaissance de la musique*.

Broadcast: (-).

Running time: 53 min.

Other: Colour. The *videothèque* of the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, holds a copy of this film.

Musik: Ludwig van Beethoven, Claude Debussy; Gabriel Fauré; César Franck; Reynaldo Hahn; Camille Saint-Saëns; Franz Schubert; Richard Wagner.

Locations: Salons of the Ritz, Paris; of the Fondation Singer-Polignac and of the château de Bois-Baudrand.

Participants: Amelote Francis; Emile Fanton; Jean-Michel Nertoux; Georges Piroué.

### 13. Marcel Proust: Naissance d'une phrase (1977) \*

Director: Hervé Basle.

Producer: FF1 & Bibliothèque Nationale.

Broadcast: (-)

Running time: 45 min.

Other: Colour.

Complete title: *Marcel Proust: Naissance d'une phrase. "Une mémoire bien rangée. Aujourd'hui MARCEL PROUST."*

Participants: Florence Callu (Head of manuscript department, Bibliothèque Nationale de France), Jacques Bersani (scholar), Michel Robin (reads the texts).

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<sup>14</sup> LP, III-621-625.

The film traces the development of a Proustian sentence with all its changes. To this end, it uses photographic images of the manuscripts. Callu tells the story of the manuscripts. Callu and Bersani are pictured as bent over them and studying the text and its variants. They study in particular the childhood episode of masturbation in *Du côté de chez Swann*, and the theme of the aeroplane and how it became integrated into the novel as a parallel to the development of the relationship of Marcel Proust with his chauffeur-secretary-lover Alfred Agostinelli. The letter Marcel Proust wrote to Agostinelli is compared for similarity to the letter the *je* writes in the *Recherche* to his lover Albertine, the fictional alter ego of Agostinelli.

The film makes use of photos of Agostinelli, of documentary material of planes. The film is interested in showing the body of texts and the way the text evolved both in the sense of how the story took shape and changed as well as the concrete manifestation of Proust's writing and rewriting in his *cahiers* and in the margins of the galley proofs.

**14. Paris au temps de Marcel Proust (1979) \***

Director: Philippe Prince.

Producer: (-).

Series: *Cent ans de la vie sociale au XIX siècle.*

Broadcast: 23.VI.1979 on (possibly) France 2.

Running time: 25 min.

Other: Colour; 16 mm. 25 min.

Is commented upon as: *Comme le titre indique, le film est surtout un documentaire sur la vie parisienne à la fin du siècle dernier.*<sup>15</sup>

**15. Marcel Proust: la mémoire courte (1987) \***

Director: Fabrice Maze.

Producer: Gaël de Vaumes, for the Ministry of Culture and Communication, France.

Broadcast: (?)

Running time: 8 min.

Other: Colour.

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<sup>15</sup>William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179. Also listed IN: *Quid de Proust*. IN: *Marcel Proust. À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.



Original music of Gonzague du Saint-Bris & Graziella Madrigal.

Description given: «clip culturell» de Gonzague-Bris.<sup>16</sup>

**16. Proust Remembered. Les Intermittences du Cœur (1987)**

Director: Dirk Sanders.

Producer: Maurice Dumay.

Broadcast by BBC 1987.

Running time: 60 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Ballet company Ballet National de Marseilles; Director: Roland Petit; Set Design: René Allio; Costume: Christine Laurent; Peter Schaufuss, a ballet dancer himself, introduces the several staged dance episodes.

The film is a recording of several episodes of the *Recherche* as danced by the Marseilles Ballet Company. The episodes are: *La petite phrase* (César Franck, *Violin Sonata*; pas de deux of man and woman); *Playing Orchids* (Camille Saint-Saëns, *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra*; group of female dancers); *Jupien's hotel* (Camille Saint-Saëns, *Marche héroïque*, group of male dancers); *Chance meetings* (Claude Debussy, *Petite suite pour orchestre*, three male and one female dancers); *Duel of Angels* (Gabriel Fauré, *Elegy for Cello and Orchestra*, pas de deux of two male dancers); *Young Girls in Flower* (Claude Debussy, *La mer (jeu de vagues)*, group of seven female dancer plus one male dancer); *The Prisoner* (Claude Debussy, *Syrinx*; pas de deux of a male and a female dancer).

The production was first staged in 1974. This film is nota bene not just a filming of a stage performance but a performance undertaken specifically for filming. But this could be a re-edited version of a production with the title *Les intermittences du cœur* broadcast on France3 in 1981.

The stage is sometimes completely bare or just has hints of an interior decoration. In one case there is a painted seascape as background. The movements of the dancers vary greatly between episodes: from highly abstract sculptures composed of several bodies (enhanced through bare stage and back-lighting) in *Chance meetings* to the dramatic group in *Jupien's hotel*. Furthermore, all the episodes chosen are thematically linked through sex or desire.

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<sup>16</sup>William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. 1990, No. 40, pp. 177-179. Also listed IN: *Ouid de Proust*. IN: *Marcel Proust. À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris (Laffont) 1987.

**17. Lire Proust (1988)**

Director: Pierre André Boutang & Michel Pamet.

Producer: France 3.

Broadcast: (-)

Running time: 54 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Guy Schoeller (editor at Laffont); Danièle Garsiglia-Laster (editor at Flammarion); Florence Callu (Head of Manuscripts Department, Bibliothèque Nationale de France); Jean-Yves Tadié (scholar); Nathalie Mauriac (daughter of Claude Mauriac, great-granddaughter of Robert Proust, Marcel Proust's brother); Claude Mauriac (son of François Mauriac, husband of Marcel Proust's brother's granddaughter); Bernard Frank (scholar); Marc-Eduard Nabe (editor of journals); Joseph Czapski (Polish painter & writer).

This film deals in particular with the editing history of *À la recherche du temps perdu* and other works of Marcel Proust. It discusses the various paperback editions of the *Recherche*. (In 1987 the copyright for the *Recherche* had run out). The story of discovering the manuscript of *Jean Santeuil* among the papers of the Proust family in 1951 as well as the discussion of the manuscripts and the new Pléiade edition which was then just being made feature as topics.

The participants are also asked to explain their personal experience of Marcel Proust's writing: under what circumstances they read him for the first time, how they read him etc.

The locations are in most cases the offices or homes of the interviewees. the film uses documentary material of Marcel Proust's life and on Paris 1900 besides images of manuscripts. For the personal history of Czapski (who read Proust while being in a German concentration camp) there is included documentary material of World War II and of Katun.

**18. Series: The Modern World. Ten Great Writers: Marcel Proust (1988)**

Director & producer: Nigel Wattis.

Prod. Co.: London Weekend Television.

Broadcast: (-) Channel 4.

Written by: Nigel Wattis & Subniv Babuta.

Running time: 58 min.

Other: Colour.

Music: *Sonata for Violin and Piano* by César Franck.

Series: The Modern World. Ten Great Writers. [Other writers presented were Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Thomas Mann]

Participants: Prof. Michel Butor (novelist & Professor of French at University of Geneva); Terence Kilmartin (translator of Marcel Proust). Actors/Actresses: Roger Rees (Marcel/Marcel Proust); Paul Reynolds (Young Marcel); Eleonor David (Gilberte de Saint-Loup, née Swann); Dominic Jephcott (Robert de Saint-Loup); Grace Wilkinson (Albertine); Julia Blalock (Mother); Zoë Mair (Young Gilberte Swann/Mlle de Saint-Loup).

The film reenacts various episodes of *À la recherche du temps perdu*, and also gives scholarly comments on these episodes and on Marcel Proust's work and biography. Episodes of the *Recherche* which are chosen are, e.g. the triggering instances of *mémoire involontaire* (chink of spoon in cup, the napkin texture, the madeleine); then the goodnight kiss; the walk along the Vivonne.

It also makes use of portraits of Marcel Proust and of his parents; photos of Marcel Proust; paintings of Monet, Picasso, Cézanne; documentary material of Illiers-Combray; images of the early publications and the manuscripts of *À la recherche du temps perdu* and of early edition of *Mille et une nuits*.

#### 19. [Series Lire et écrire] Chagall, Proust (1991)

Director: Robert Bober.

Producer: Thierry Garrel (?), Centre National du Cinéma, Centre National des Lettres, Direction du livre et de la lecture; Bibliothèque Nationale de France; La Sept-Unité des Programmes;

Series: *Lire et écrire*.

Broadcast: (-).

Running time: 53 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Philip Kolb (scholar; editor of the letters of Marcel Proust); Florence Callu (Head of Manuscript Department of Bibliothèque Nationale de France). The interviews are done by Roger Dumayet.

This part of the series contains a feature on Marc Chagall and one on Marcel Proust. At the end of the film it seems as if the next part of the series should continue the Proust feature, but I could not find that one in the archives of the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel in Paris.

The feature on Proust lets Kolb narrate his experience reading and working on Marcel Proust, and lets Florence Callu show the manuscripts. Then traces in extenso the appearance of the cattleya orchid in *À la recherche du temps perdu* and in other writings of Proust.

The locations used are the manuscript department of the Bibliothèque Nationale. The film uses photographic images of Marcel Proust, of the manuscripts and of the edition of the Japanese translation, of the *révues* in which Proust wrote about cattleyas; paintings of orchids; prints of the square in front of the Opéra Garnier, Paris.

#### 20. Marcel Proust: A Writer's Life (between 1990-1992) \*

Director: Sarah Mondale.

Producer: Wolf-Carter Productions & National Endowment for the Humanities, USA.

Broadcast: (-) on PBS, USA

Running time: 60 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Cathérine Deneuve (presenter); Tristan Calvez (Proust, child); Joël Pommerat (Proust, adult); Susanna Lastreto (Mother of Proust); Anne Roumanoff (Céleste Albaret); Pablo Lopez (Alfred Agostinelli).

Description available: *Il sera surtout question de la découverte de la vocation de l'écrivain. Le film sera diffusé par la chaîne publique nationale aux USA, PBS (Public Broadcasting System).*<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>William C. Carter, *Filmographie de M. Proust*. IN: *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray*. (1990) No.40, pp. 177-179.

It is there listed under the title *Marcel Proust: In Search of Lost Time*. It is then furthermore mentioned on the jacket of most recent Proust biography by William C. Carter (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000) as a project that Carter where acted as consultant.

The film has also been listed on the back of a previous publication by Carter under the title *Marcel Proust: The Making of a Writer*.

**21. Marcel Proust (1995) \***

Director: Robert Bober & Pierre Dumayet.

Producer: Vf Films production.

Series: *Un siècle d'écrivains*.

Writer: Pierre Dumayet.

Broadcast: 6.IX.1995, France 3.

Running time: 52 min.

Other: Colour.

**22. Proust - Remembrance of Tastes Past (1995)**

Director: Stephen Lennhoff.

Producer: Peter Murphy.

Series producer: Peter Stuart, Rapido TV for Channel 4.

Series: Without Walls.

Broadcast: (-).

Running time: ca. 20 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Anne Willan (La Varenne Cookery School); Jonathan Burnham (editor of *Remembrance of Things Past*); Prof. Albert Sonnenfeld (scholar?); Leslie Forbes (writer and broadcaster); Lisa Chaney (Art Historian & Food Historian).

The film deals with the importance of food in the work of Marcel Proust. Besides restaging details of some episodes of the *Recherche* (like the madeleine, Françoise's killing of a chicken), it uses images of Proust's works (manuscripts and editions); documentary material on Paris 1900; images of paintings of picnics, dinners, food (by Buffet, Cézanne, Arcimboldo etc.). It also features the filming of the production of a madeleine in a bakery; the Proustian dinners of the Société des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray; a sequence of the film *Babette's Feast*.

Music is used as background accompaniment. And there is frequent use of voice-overs (different voices) reading passages from the *Recherche*.

**23. Marcel Proust (1996) \***

Director: François Chaye.

Producer: Pierre Bouteiller; Pierre Bouteiller Productions & Issy-Les Moulineux: La Cinquième.

Series: *Histoire personnelle de la France*.

Broadcast: 8.X.1996, La Cinquième.

Running time: 13 min.

Other: Colour.

**24. Marcel Proust et nous (1997) \***

Director: Michel Hermant.

Producer: France 2.

Series: *Le cercle des arts*.

Broadcast: 17.XI.1997-

Running time: 90 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Marie France (singer); le Quatuor Parisi (performs part of *Quartet for Piano and Strings* by Reynaldo Hahn)

**25. Marcel Proust: À la recherche du temps perdu(1999) \***

Director: Michel Bastian.

Producer: Olivier Barrot, France 3.

Series: *Un livre, un jour*.

Broadcast: 3.V.1999

Running time: 3 min.

Other: Colour.

**26. How Proust Can Change Your Life (2000)**

Director: Peter Bevan.

Producer: Roger Thompson (BBC)

Co-production of Shaftesbury Productions and BBC.

Series: Art Zone.

Broadcast: 19.III.2000, BBC 2.

Running time: 57 min.

Other: Colour.

Participants: Alain de Botton (writer, author of *How Proust Can Change Your Life*); Louis de Bernières (writer); Doris Lessing (writer); Pierre Rosenberg (director of Louvre), Simon Barnes (writer and sports journalist). Actors/Actresses: Ralph Fiennes (Marcel Proust); Felicity Kendall (Narrator); Phyllida Law (Virginia Woolf), Sir Donald Sinden (duc d'Albufera); Phelim Drew (James Joyce); Richard Blackford (Gabriel de la Rochefoucauld); Jonathan Kemp (Lucien Daudet); Walter James (Harold Nicolson); Lily Bevan (Céleste Albaret); Katherine Porter (Anna de Noailles).

The film restages scenes from the later life of Marcel Proust, i.e. when he was writing *À la recherche du temps perdu*. It uses Marcel Proust and his writing as a sort of self help manual providing answers to such questions as "How to take your time?", "How to suffer successfully?", "How to be a good friend?", "Physical afflictions. Awkward desires".

A narrator figure leads the viewer through the film, while explaining things she frequently looks into the camera. Although being present at scenes, she is treated as invisible by the other players. Alain de Botton, Pierre Rosenberg, Doris Lessing, and Louis de Bernières give critical opinions on Marcel Proust. The enacted Virginia Woolf is »interviewed« just as they are.

Film uses sequences from several other films to illustrate its questions: *Romeo and Juliet* (b/w, pre-Zeffirelli); a silent film titled *The Bible; Anna Karenina* (b/w; 1948; with Vivien Leigh); *Le temps retrouvé* (Raúl Ruiz, 1999); and the Monthly Python sketch *The Summarise Proust Competition*. It also uses documentary images of Paris 1900 for a collage, photos of Marcel Proust's friends and contemporaries and images of paintings by Claude Monet, Jean Siméon Baptiste Chardin.

**28. Du côté de chez Proust (?) \***

Director: (-)

Producer: (-)

Series: *Ecrits sans frontières.*

Running time: 25 min.

Other: Black and white. 16 mm.

Participants: Angus Wilson (writer).



## Appendix II: Additional Information on Screenplays

### 1. Narrative arches of the scenario *The Proust Screenplay*

There are two possibilities to divide the script into larger segments: according to the criterion of spatial or temporal location. Starting with the spatial list, I list the segments according to locational keyword. I then give the year in which the segment takes place, as well as the scene numbers. This is then followed by brief indicators of what takes place in the segment.<sup>1</sup>

#### By Location

##### [Paris 0] Opening Sequence

Combray I: 1888, 35-48, goodnight kiss drama, dinner with Swann in garden;

Paris I: 1898, 49-50, Opéra, the Guermantes box;

Combray II: 1893, 51-75, Vivonne, duchesse de Guermantes at church, M. Vinteuil, Gilberte through the hedge;

Paris II: 1879, 76-90, Verdurin salon, Odette and Swann;

Combray III: 1895, 91-94, Mlle de Vinteuil and friend, steeples of Martinville;

Paris III: 1897, 95-107, ave des acacias Odette, Gilberte Champs-Élysées, Norpois dinner;

Balbec I: 1898, 108-165, with Grandmother, Marquise de Villeparisis, Saint-Loup, Charlus;

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<sup>1</sup> The structure given of the screenplay lists one sequence where no date can be supplied because the scenes of the »glances« originate with historically discrete situations. It also lists two sequences where no exact location can be given, because in the case of the sanatorium there is none indicated in the header, or in the case of the train journey, the location is in a nameless countryside and in the process of change. What this structure does not list are the numerous insertions of one scene of another sequence into the sequence just represented, nor instances where certain scenes serve as diegetic transitions.

Appendix II: Additional Information on Screenplays

Paris IV: 1898, 169-188, new flat, at the theatre with Saint-Loup and Rachel;

Paris V: 1899, 189-209, salon Villeparisis;

Paris VI: 1900, 210-233, Guermantes dinner, Charlus' apartment late at night;

Balbec II: 1901. 234-275, with mother, Albertine, jealousy, Doncières, Raspelière, Charlus and Morel;

Paris VII: 1902, 279-344, with Albertine, syringa episode, concert of Morel at Verdurin's;

Looks: -, 345-351;

Paris VIII: 1902, 352-365, Albertine gone, arrival of telegram, Albertine's death;

Venice: 1903, 367-373, with mother;

Paris IX: 1915, 374-383, wartime, Hotel Jupien;

Tansonville/Combray IV: 1915, 384-386, with Gilberte;

Sanatorium: 1917, 387-390;

Train [en route to Paris]: 1921, 391-392;

Paris X: 1921, 393-445, final matinée.

By Date

[1921] Opening Sequence

1888 Combray, 35-48, goodnight kiss drama, dinner with Swann in garden;

1898 Paris, 49-50, Opéra, the Guermantes box;

1893 Combray, 51-75, Vivonne, duchesse de Guermantes at church, M. Vinteuil, Gilberte through the hedge;

1879 Paris, 76-90, Verdurin salon, Odette and Swann;

1895 Combray, 91-94, Mlle de Vinteuil and friend, steeples of Martinville;

Appendix II: Additional Information on Screenplays

1897 Paris, 95-107, ave des acacias Odette, Gilberte Champs-Élysées, Norpois dinner;

1889 Balbec, 108-165, with Grandmother, Marquise de Villeparisis, Saint-Loup, Charlus;

1898 Paris, 169-188, new flat, at the theatre with Saint-Loup and Rachel;

1899 Paris, 189-209, salon Villeparisis;

1900 Paris, 210-233, Guermantes dinner, Charlus's apartment late at night;

1901 Balbec, 234-275, with mother, Albertine, jealousy, Doncières, Raspelière, Charlus and Morel;

1902 Paris, 279-344, with Albertine, syringa episode, concert of Morel at Verdurins';

none Looks, 345-351, several looks and close-ups;

1902 Paris, 352-365, Albertine gone, telegram about her death;

1903 Venice, 367-373, with mother;

1915 Paris, 374-383, wartime, Hotel Jupien;

1915 Tansonville/Combray IV, 384-386, with Gilberte;

1917 Sanatorium, 387-390;

1921 Train [en route to Paris], 391-392;

1921 Paris, 393-445, final matinée.

## 2. Lists of script shortenings in *The Proust Screenplay*

The cuts made in successive drafts are grouped in two lists. The first list represents the earliest cuts as indicated by their being crossed out in an earlier draft. The second group are later cuts, which were not crossed out in the earlier draft, but then must have been omitted at a later stage, as they are not included in the final script. First I give a description of the scene that is changed or omitted. In brackets I give the changes made to the scene. Unless indicated otherwise, what is given in brackets has been cut. If there are no brackets, the scene has been cut out entirely.

### **Group 1:**

- dinner with Norpois in Paris (more expansive on Swann and his family).
- Princesse de Luxembourg with her black page at Balbec.
- Marcel and his Grandmother on the train to Balbec (Marcel complains about Françoise who being on the wrong train will not be at hand to prepare everything for their arrival).
- dinner with Saint-Loup at Rivebelle, talking about the virility of Charlus
- Marcel arriving at Guermantes house, meeting Swann, and the Guermantes who are about to leave (an old man hurries away as he arrives).
- conversation about the deceased pianist Dechambre at La Raspelière.
- images of Swann and Odette at the Verdurin soirée when septet is played.
- the exchange between Marcel and Albertine as she abruptly stops mid-sentence and arouses his jealous suspicions (considerably shortened).
- a different sequence of shots is given before the scene containing the arrival of the telegram communicating Albertine's death.
- the character Rachel gets into the mood for recital at the final matinée.

**Group 2:**

- dinner with Saint-Loup at Rivebelle when he reveals his sympathies for Dreyfus (these declarations are cut here as are the references to them cut out at the scenes at the salon Villeparisis).
- taunting exchange between Marcel and Charlus on Balbec beach.
- Aimé and Marcel in lift of Balbec Hôtel, Aimé speaking of Dreyfus.
- duc de Guermantes inspecting his horses in courtyard and dialogues between Françoise and other servants on people at the Hôtel de Guermantes.
- an idealised shot of the Guermantes' social circles.
- Françoise talking about photo of grandmother.
- mother walking along Balbec beach.
- Morel asking Marcel at La Raspelière not to reveal his father was a valet of Marcel's family.
- several scenes at La Raspelière.
- scenes with Marcel and Albertine at second Balbec visit (intercut with omitted La Raspelière scenes).

### **3. Structure of *Alla ricerca del tempo perduto***

The segments are listed like those in *The Proust Screenplay* above, but exact dates are rarely given and thus cannot be listed.

**Balbec I:** 1890s; 1-16, seaside resort of Balbec is covered in 16 scenes that extend over 30 pages.

**Paris I:** 1900s, 17-39; at the new flat of Marcel's family and other locales of the capital.<sup>2</sup>

**Balbec II:** 1900s, 40-68; the second stay in Balbec covering the affairs between Albertine and Marcel and Charlus and Morel, respectively.

**Paris II:** 1900s, 69-80; continuation and end of both affairs.

**Countryside:** ca. 1909, 81; countryside post-office, Saint-Loup phones Marcel about his unsuccessful mission to persuade Albertine to return.

**Balbec III:** 1910s, 82-84, Marcel at Balbec seeking out Albertine's past;

**Paris III:** 1910s, 85-87; news of Albertine's death, and in the aftermath of that death, Marcel in conversations with Andrée and Morel about Albertine.

1916, 88-97; Paris during World War I, Saint-Loup visiting Marcel, the Hôtel Jupien and Morel's court martial.

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<sup>2</sup> Where the first segment of the story (i.e. at Balbec) ended with the character of Albertine rebuffing the advances of Marcel at the Hôtel, this one ends with Marcel having rebuffed the advances of Charlus in Paris and hearing from Françoise that Albertine has left for Balbec.

## Appendix III: Glossary of Narratological Terms

### Analepsis/analeptic:

This term is use for a narrative which in relation to the narrative it is embedded in goes forward in time. In film, this is also referred to as a flashforward.

### Extradeigetic:

This term is used to refer to a narrator which is not part of any diegesis.

### Heterodiegetic:

This term is used to refer to a narrator who is telling a story that is not his/her own, e.g. Scheherazade with reference to the stories she is telling, is an heterodiegetic narrator.

### Homodiegetic:

This term refers to a narrator who tells a story of which s/he is a part, e.g. the *je* in the *Recherche*.

### Intradiegetic:

This terms refers to a character or a figure of a narrative which s/he is not telling, e.g. Charles Swann and Odette de Crécy are intradiegetic characters of the novel *Un amour de Swann*.

### Metadiegesis/metadiegetic:

The term designates a narrative embedded within another narrative, and more particularly, within the primary narrative, e.g. the stories Scheherazade tells are metadiegeses embedded in the primary narrative of Scheherazade telling the stories to her husband.

### Prolepsis/proleptic:

This term is use for a narrative which in relation to the narrative it is embedded in goes backward in time. In film, this is also referred to as a flashback.

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