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Whose Story?: The Screen Adaptation of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

Sara Martín Alegre

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Programa de Doctorat en Filologia Anglesa
Departament de Filologia Anglesa i de Germanística
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

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Abstract

The purpose of this research project is to determine in which ways the task of the screen writer, Harold Pinter, and of the film director, Karel Reisz, has altered the original intentions of the novelist in the case of the 1981 screen adaptation of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969) and to see how both novel and film are related to other novels and films. I have preceded the study by a general survey of the main aspects concerning adaptations, with especial attention to the screen adaptations of novels in the last decade and the beginnings of the current one (the 1990s).

I will argue that the most important feature of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is not that it is an imitation Victorian novel, or an experimental novel but a text that is mainly concerned with the question of how sexual liberation has changed the power balance between the sexes in England in the 1960s. In that sense, I read *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as Fowles's response to Thomas Hardy's *Tess* (1891) and I see it in relationship to another 1960s novel dealing with the status of the post-Victorian 'fallen woman' after the movement for sexual liberation, Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone* (1965). I will read as a response to both film and novel, A.S. Byatt's *Possession* (1990).

I will also argue that the end product of this adaptation is a new story that takes as its source Fowles's novel to criticize it rather than to follow it faithfully, a criteria that should be in general valuable to evaluate the success of screen adaptations of any literary text. In my view, Pinter's screenplay explores the function of the cinema as a visualizer of the past and tries to explore how our sexuality is both conditioned by Victorianism and unlike it. I will argue that Pinter partly bases his own screenplay on the screen adaptation of Fowles's *The Collector* (1965) and on his own 1971 adaptation of L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1953). Furthermore, I will argue that this adaptation also springs from a double concern to market a British product for Hollywood consumption–more Victorian than the novels actually is–and from Fowles's exploitation of the original success of the novel, despite his well-known antagonism towards the cinema.

1. Introduction: Establishing the Ownership of Stories

One of the best ways in which novels can be studied is, no doubt, in comparison with the cinema. Both films and novels share basically a common function in contemporary culture: acting as the most popular artistic vehicles through which stories reach their audiences. Screen adaptations of exceptional novels furnish a unique occasion to carry out interdisciplinary studies that help to place the novels themselves within a wider cultural context and to evaluate the films as something more than a mere précis of the novel for non-reading audiences. By offering a perspective from which the novel appears to be, if not truly adaptable, an apt source for cinematic spectacles, the study of screen adaptations also helps to free literary criticism on the novel from its artificial, genre-bound limitations. Given the undeniable popularity of novels and the increasing importance that films are gaining in contemporary cultural life it seems doubly worthwhile to examine which principles, if any, regulate screen adaptations.

The adaptation of John Fowles's novel *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in 1981 immediately attracted the attention of readers, cinema-goers and critics, both literary and film critics. Although its case is not unique in the story of screen versions of remarkable literary works, few films can boast of having emerged from the collaboration of three outstanding artists such as John Fowles, Harold Pinter and Karel Reisz, and of having been a substantial box office hit into the bargain. This seems to have been, besides, one of the few instances in which the resulting film has been accepted with equal satisfaction by the novelist, the screen-writer and the director, despite the fact that the screen version differs noticeably from its novelistic source. Atypical as the case was, and in spite of its success, most reviews tended to value the film negatively because of Pinter and Reisz's breach of faithfulness towards the novel, a questionable postulate that seems to affect most criticism of screen adaptations.

The purpose of this research project is, precisely, to find a fresher point of view from which to consider screen adaptations, disregarding a blind defence of novels against any of their possible film versions. In order to establish this new viewpoint, it has seemed necessary to me to examine this particular adaptation by taking into consideration not only the film but also the screenplay and the screen-writer, plus the conditions shaping the film production and editing, which usually receive very little attention. Thanks to Harold Pinter's reputation as a screen-writer, the screenplay, which was published as the film was released, is easily available, which is not always the case. His text offers the double opportunity to contrast in detail the screenplay, the film and the novel–a kind of research that has been enormously simplified recently by the edition in video of most films–and to consider the links between Pinter's work for the cinema and his work for the screen.

In order to assess Pinter's work in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* better, I considered it necessary to place his screenplay within the context of screen writing in general. Consequently, the first section of this project is a quick survey of the main problems concerning the task of screen-writers, the interest of filmmakers in literature and the importance of adaptations in contemporary cinema. It does not attempt to be an exhaustive relation of screen adaptations in the last fifteen years, but to point at the direction in which further research could be carried out. Without a more general consideration of the ties between film and fiction it is certainly difficult to evaluate screen adaptations, though, on the other hand, a theoretical approach does not help very much to clarify matters in this field. Films and novels have little in common except their common use as vehicles for story-telling, so theorizing about their similitudes often ends up in sterile theorizing about their countless dissimilitudes. A reassessment of the role of the screenwriter within the film system, especially in adaptations, and a proper account of the way in which production conditions all film-making would offer more insights on the connections between novel and film than a compared narratology of both media. Therefore, I have tried to suggest which points could be of greater interest in an eventual study of screen playwrights as literary artists and of the screenplay as a literary genre in a period in which the mutual links between film and fiction are certainly abundant and important.

No close scrutiny of a screen adaptation is feasible without a close reading of the novel involved. Thus, an extensive commentary of Fowles's novel, enriched by a compared reading of other novels, such as A.S. Byatt's *Possession* and Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone*–apart from Thomas Hardy's *Tess*–occupies a central position. These novels certainly illuminate particularly interesting areas of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, such as Fowles's authorial and authoritarian narrative voice, in answer to which Byatt's novel was written, or his biased male point of view, to which Drabble's book indirectly offers a sharp, sensitive response. In addition, Byatt's book obliquely confirms the originality of Pinter's screenplay, for they show marked affinities, especially as both are a direct answer to Fowles's view of Victorianism.

Although comparing a novel to a film seems a matter of simply listing similarities and differences, good criticism of a screen adaptation should be based on as much factual information on the conditions under which filming was carried out as possible. Likewise, the hypothesis that the final shape of adaptations is decided by a single person in control of the film production should be abandoned for a wider view that considered problems of production as the main governing conditions. Correspondingly, I have placed the film of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* within the context of Fowles's opinions on the cinema and his troubled relationship with the medium, Pinter's screenwriting career and Reisz's views on adaptation. As for the question of production, I have considered this film not only as an artistic creation, which undoubtedly is, but also as a commercial product. There is abundant information concerning very minor details of the film production of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, scattered in a number of reviews and interviews, which I have used in preference to general statements about the quality of the adaptation with the purpose of offering a general view of the external circumstances that condition artistic production, less subjective than more habitual criticism of this adaptation.

As regards the actual variations among the novel, the screenplay and the film, my aim has been to record them not as proof of the superiority of any of the three versions of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* above another, but as commentaries on the main impulse underlying each distinct project, novel, screenplay or film. Taken separately, the three of them are, no doubt, successful instances of their respective genres. However, the main query to answer regarding this screen adaptation was why Pinter's screenplay, which had been specifically created for the film, had been finally altered in such a degree, especially considering it has been written in close collaboration with Karel Reisz. Unfortunately, the kind of information required to answer that question is not available, so the most that can be done is to speculate on who controlled the film; without knowing this with precision, there will always be doubts as to the authority of the story told in the film, which, in any case, is not Fowles's own.

The bibliography lists not only those texts from which I have quoted but all the texts read during the process of research. At times important turning points in my path have been suggested by books or articles–especially by David Bordwell's *Making Meaning*–from which I did not consider it necessary to quote; they deal, though, with questions that are fundamental in my project and, so, these books should remain in the bibliography as testimonies of my concern for wider areas that I decided not to detail within this project. On the other hand, I did not want to limit my research to a number of sources equal to a convenient number of quotations or footnotes, since that would have needlessly impoverished my task. "Appendix 1" and "Appendix 2" contain indispensable information about the work of Harold Pinter and Karel Reisz that would have been tiresome to include within the body of the text in any other way. The interesting portrait of Pinter as actor, author and director that emerges from both lists justifies on its own their inclusion, not to mention the view of Karel Reisz as a gifted adapter that springs from the inventory of his films.

1.1. Reconsidering the Role of the Screen Playwright

Whose property is the story told in a film? The claims that a writer has on his or her stories are unquestionable, but in the case of the cinema the intellectual–though not the legal–copyright does not have such a clear ownership. An obvious answer to the initial question would be that stories belong to the story-tellers who make them up and narrate them. However, in the cinema, just as it happens in the theatre, stories (plays or screenplays) reach their audiences through layers of other story-tellers. Producers, film directors, editors, actors, production designers, directors of photography and other participants in the film-making process mediate between the original story-teller (the screen playwright) and the audience. It might seem that the film-making is a process essentially not so different from the staging of a play in a theatre, and so it is in a certain sense. Analogies end when we turn to the role assigned to the playwright and to the screen playwright: while the former often makes his or her voice heard during the process of rehearsal, the latter's work is often distorted beyond recognition without his or her agreement. Moreover, audiences indirectly, and naively, contribute to marking the differences between the stage writer and the screen writer. Thus, while in stage productions, the name of the author is always more important than the director's, in films directors are usually credited with the whole responsibility for the failure or the success of the film and screen playwrights are often relegated to a secondary position, often less prominent than that of actors.

If original screen playwrights command little respect from producers, directors or actors, adapters find themselves in an even more peculiar situation, especially regarding the audiences. Screen playwrights try increasingly more to protect their rights on their texts through their work contracts but they often find themselves in the uncomfortable position of writers living before copyright laws existed. Screen writers often sell their work fro a downright fee which, also often, includes relinquishing all participation in the shooting of the film. This turns scripts into property that the director may use as s/he pleases, as much as the costumes or the set props. Writers commissioned to write a screenplay based on an argument supplied by a producer, a director or a literary text, have even less control over their work.

In the case of screen adaptations of well-known texts (novels, plays or short stories) the requirements of the producer–who often pays exorbitant sums for the rights on successful works, which are simply impossibly expensive to film–and the reputation of the original writer loom large on the background. It might seem that in this process the screen playwright's task amounts to hardly more than writing a good précis of the work in question, just suitable and cinematic enough to fill up two hours of screen time with a reduced version of the original story. It may suffice to declare that the screen writer's loyalty should go to the audience and not to the original writer, but the fact is that audiences, including literary critics, tends to appreciate faithfulness in screen adaptations. Screen playwrights who deviate too far from the original work, who interfere too much, are noted in a negative sense: indeed, the best adapter seems to be, according to popular tastes, the one that passes unobserved.

Actually, the success of screen adaptations does not so much depend on a servile faithfulness to the original text but on the amount of creative (re)telling, rather than adapting, the screen writer is willing to bring into the project. Without the expectation of having their work acknowledged as a literary masterpiece nor as a cinematic success, adapters indeed usually risk displeasing audiences. No wonder, then, that their most habitual motivation is money or, perhaps, the more altruistic wish to transmit onto non-reading audiences stories that are worth knowing.

Audiences often understand that screen playwrights (whether original ones or adapters) are dispensable, since what counts is the relationship between the original text and the film. The shadows of the original writer and of the film version sandwich the screenplay, often with the result of making the screen writer vanish but for the credits. Indeed, the alternative view that a screen adaptation is actually a double adaptation should be enforced: the screen writer retells the original story, which s/he deals with as a source rather than as a sacred text, while the director retells the screen playwright's story. Possibly, the ideal arrangement in the process of screen adaptation is the one exemplified by John Ford's 1940 film version of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, scripted by Nunnally Johnson. Johnson himself told how he found himself between a novelist who absolutely allowed him all the freedom he wanted in his treatment of the novel and a director who simply would not read the book. Steinbeck's idea was that "a novelist's final statement is in his book" and that this forced film-makers to find their own narrative style.[1]

The fact of the matter is that the new narrative point of view is the work of the screen playwright, not the director's. Best adaptations are usually those in which the writer is given enough room to develop his own text; ideally, the screenplay should read equally fresh and independent despite being or not an adaptation–a concept long ago taken up by Elizabethan playwrights like Shakespeare, who used to base their plays on older plays or on other sources without any worry for artistic originality.

Unlike Shakespeare, modern screen adapters are unlikely to make a name on the sole strength of their screenplays, even supposing they did possess such talent. Gaining some kind of reputation within the world of cinema has proven difficult even for writers of long-standing reputation, though the case often is that only writers who already enjoy some reputation in other literary fields receive some critical attention as screen writers. William Faulkner, Grahame Greene, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Aldous Huxley, Ray Bradbury struggled for some time to make their names heard in the circle of Hollywood writers, only to go back the more eagerly to the novel. Hollywood has often made the mistake to believe that a good writer would necessarily make a good screen writer, and writers have often allowed themselves to be lured by Hollywood money into entering a very unsatisfactory work relationship. In general, however, novelists seems to have coped with the demands of team work less gracefully than playwrights, who tend to make better screen writers, since for them writing is a process that ends naturally in rehearsal and staging.

After the fall into discredit of the once popular 'auteur theory' proposed by French cinema critics in the 1950s[2] the stress has been put on the cinema as a choral activity. Films are nowadays regarded as products of team work orchestrated by the producer or the director, in which each participant is essential. Thus, the work of directors of photography such as Nestor Almendros, costume designers such as Edith Heath or composers such as Bernard Herrmann has been reassessed from the perspective that they form an integral part of film production.[3] Screen writers have consequently received more attention than in past decades, though within a context that places them in a position still inferior to that of stars or directors.

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[1] In George Bluestone, *Novels into Film*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1957.) p. 92.

[2] "Auteur Policy. The auteur policy postulates that one person, usually the director, has the artistic responsibility for a film and reveals a personal worldview through the tension among style, theme, and the conditions of production. The net result is that films can be studied like novels or paintings–as clearly individual productions. The '*politique des auteurs*' (auteur policy) was first started by Truffaut in his article "Une certaine tendance du cinema français",

For some reason, possibly connected with the fact that screen writers are usually well-paid, screen playwrights have failed to command as much artistic respect for their work as their stage counterparts. Money and a respectable continuity within the world of cinema have seemed enough satisfaction for a task that often has placed the screen writer in a no-man's land between the artist's and the technician's. The absurdity of the situation is confirmed by the fact that the perpetual crises Hollywood seems to be living since the end of the star system has very much to do with the failure of the businessmen at the head of the studios to secure a place for the truly original screen writer within the dream factory. Commercial filmmaking has painted itself into a corner: it needs good stories to go on but it will not allow its own writers the artistic freedom to develop them, so the industry is forced to buy the stories from writers outside the system, who often are just interested in the money but not in film itself.

Now and then there are attempts at vindicating the figure of the screen playwright as a literary artist[4] or to add the screenplay to the list of academically accepted literary genres. Usually these two sides of the same coin encounter the same hindrance again and again: good screen writers often turn out to be basically adapters; on the other hand, according to the academic establishment it is far from clear that screenplays from part of Literature in the same way than plays. Screenplays are being studied as part of the filmmaking process, though not as texts, just as if plays were solely studied in production. Nonetheless, the day may come when a canon of screenplays and screen writers emerges–though possibly it will include more directors-writers than writers. The more problematic question, however, is the artistic status of adaptations and of adapters.

In our post-Romantic (or still Romantic?) times artistic achievement goes hand in hand with original creativity. It follows that screenplays based on other literary texts are hardly original in that sense; hence, they are not valuable in artistic terms unless they offer such a radical reworking of the original text as to hardly seem adaptations: the case, for instance, of Francis Ford Coppola and John Milius' script for *Apocalypse Now!* (1979). Obviously, this leads to absolutely contradictory views of writers who combine their original work with screen adaptation. This is the case, for instance, of Tom Stoppard. Which aspect of his work is more valuable? His plays? His screenplays,

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which appeared in the January issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma*. It became the policy for that journal and was elaborated on by other writers, mainly André Bazin. Andrew Sarris has been the main exponent of the auteur policy in the U.S". (James Monaco, *How to read a Film*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981 (rev. ed.) p. 422.)

[3] For a view of the cinema as team work see, for instance Donald Chase (ed.) for the American Film Institute, *Filmmaking: The Collaborative Art*. (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1975.)

[4] For instance, the excellent article by Richard Corliss, "The Hollywood Screenwriter" (1970) in Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen and Leo Braudy (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings* (4th edition), (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 606-613).

all of them adaptations, including the highly imaginative *Brazil* (1985), co-scripted with director Terry Gilliam and based on Orwell's *1984*? His original plays have established for Stoppard the literary reputation that has led him to the cinema. As it is often the case, he has all but abandoned the theatre–to which he has just returned with *Arcadia*– for the cinema for several years, so it is implied that screen writing has interested him enough. Moreover, in the meantime he has found time to direct in 1991 the film based on his own play, *Rosencrantz and Guilderstern are Dead* (1967). No doubt, the film, which allowed Stoppard the rare chance to give his most personal, rounded view of his own work, would have hardly been possible but for Stoppard's work as a screen writer. The case of screen writers who combine original literary work with original screen writing, including adaptations of their own work, throws a new light on the genre to which screenplays allegedly belong. It seems obvious, for instance, that Robert Bolt deserves as much credit for his play *A Man for All Seasons* (1960) that he himself adapted for the screen and Fred Zinemman filmed in 1966 as for his original screenplay for David Lean's *Ryan's Daughter* (1970). Certainly if the play, the adapted screenplay and the original screenplay come from the same pen, there are reasons to think that they must be equally valuable.

Screenplays are rarely published[5] unless they are the work of writers who already have some reputation in another literary field. Of course, the published screenplays usually correspond to classic films, since these screenplays already have a potential reading public in the same audiences that saw the film. What is less usual is the publication of the screenplays on the strength of the name of the screen writer. Harold Pinter, who has published five volumes containing most of his screenplays, is rather the exception than the rule. On the other hand, although playwrights like G.B. Shaw frequently published their plays before they were produced (due to the well-known problems with the Lord Chamberlain he often had), unproduced screenplays remain in a no man's land (the agent's desk usually) expecting to be marketed sooner or later. There are interesting anomalies in this aspect, such as Harold Pinter's *The Proust Screenplay* (1978), based on Marcel Proust's *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* which has never been filmed but has been published.[6] It is unclear, nonetheless, which kind of work something like this is, especially considering that it is an adaptation and not an original work such as modern plays always are. Pere Gimferrer may well be right when he argues that

> ...un guión no realizado, un guión que no ha llegado a existir como película, que ha debido permanecer como proyecto, no es algo que forme parte de la historia del cine. Debe considerársele como un nuevo y anómalo género literario subsidiario, ni

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[5] James Monaco gives a figure just above one hundred up to 1980, p. 481.

[6] Pinter himself tells in the "Introduction" to his screenplay (London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991) how in 1972 he was approached by film director Joseph Losey–with whom he had already collaborated in three films–who had been offered the possibility of filming Proust. Pinter spent a whole year working on a screenplay that compressed the whole Proustian opus into a two-hours film, with the help of the Proust specialist Barbara Bray. Unfortunately, the money to produce the film was never raised. My supposition is that Pinter probably thought that since the work had taken him a whole year, something could be salvaged of that time by offering his readers the chance of producing mentally his version of Proust.

> más ni menos seductor que el libreto de una ópera cuya música no hubiera llegado a componerse.[7]

The main difference between the playwright and the screen playwright lies in the expectations of survival they put in their respective texts. The former writes his text in principle for a single stage production, though the stamp of true success in drama is the consequent publication of the play eventually followed by new productions. The latter can only see a single production of his work in the best case, the worst being no production at all. The most successful plays survive because they survive as literary texts by themselves without the aid of any of the eventual theatre productions or screen adaptations. Certainly, a considerable number of readers are familiar with William Shakespeare's work without having ever seen one of his plays in production; these readers would be certainly surprised if they were told that an indispensable condition to understand Shakespeare is seeing his plays on stage. There have been all kinds of productions of Shakespeare's plays, including experimental or simply daring productions[8], but their quality, or that of the different screen adaptations, has not altered at all the reputation of the plays themselves as literary texts.

Even though plays have often been altered and even thoroughly rewritten, older plays still stand a chance of being rediscovered and produced again in direct competence with their newer versions. To mention an instance, John Dryden's *All for Love* (1677) a re-make of William Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1607), managed to oust the latter from the English stage for almost two hundred years[9], though it did not fortunately succeed in erasing from the common cultural memory Shakespeare's play. Again, screenplays are a different case. When films are re-made, the first step taken by the producer is commissioning a wholly new screenplay to replace the older, already produced text. As usual, there are mixed cases, such as the recent case of *Cape of Fear*[10], which takes as it sources both the original script and the original novel, but that is not the habitual procedure.

As it is easy to see, the reputation of screen playwrights depends even more than that of playwrights on coming across a sympathetic director. Obviously, the relationship between screen playwright and film director works both ways. Extremely capable directors have turned not very promising screenplays into excellent films: the case, for instance, of Douglas Sirk and *Written on the Wind* (1956), written by George Zuckerman, a film that tells the melodramatic story of a Texas oil family but manages not to remind the viewer of modern soap operas. Other film directors have become stars thanks to the unacknowledged work of a few good screen playwrights. That is the case of Ridley Scott, who became famous thanks to *Alien* (1979), *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Thelma and Louise* (1991). This last film is an interesting case exemplifying the failure of the media and the audiences to distinguish between the work of the screen writer and that of the film director. Since *Thelma and Louise* is a story about women, Scott has gained some reputation as a feminist among cinema critics and audiences. The fact is that his fame has obscured the name of the original screen writer, a woman called Callie Khouri. As for Scott and the feminist question, he commented that in the hands of a woman director Khouri's story would have become an extremely serious docudrama no man would have bothered to see.[11]

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[7] Pere Gimferrer, *Cine y Literatura*. (Barcelona: Planeta, 1985.) p. 144.

[8] For instance, a production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Barbican, London, in 1987, with Romeo as the head of a gang or motorbike riders.

[9] According to Emrys Jones, who adds that Dryden's "free adaptation" was "so much more to the taste of the time", which has always been a valid reason to adapt for the stage or for the screen. "Introduction" to William Shakespeare, *Anthony and Cleopatra*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984.) p. 7.

[10] *Cape Fear*, 1992, directed by Martin Scorsese, scripted by Wesley Strick. Screenplay based on the screenplay by James R. Webb for J. Lee Thompson, who filmed the first version of *Cape Fear* in 1962, and on the novel *The Executioners* by John D. MacDonald.

A very significative aspect about the relationship between the cinema and the theatre is the fact that very often successful screen playwrights are also dramatists, though much less frequently novelists. A clue that may help clarify that distinction is the different use of dialogue in the novel and in plays. At a talk given at the British Institute of Barcelona (23 March 1993), Martin Amis, commenting on his disastrous experience as a Hollywood writer, remarked that for the novelist writing dialogue is an incidental task, which has little to do with novel writing in itself. His own failure in Hollywood seems representative enough: he scripted the screenplay for *Saturn 3* (1980, directed by Stanley Donen), an adaptation of a story by John Barry rightly criticized by his often indigestible dialogue. Precisely, that is the reason why novelists do not usually make good screen playwrights: they are not used to letting the weight of their stories be totally carried by the dialogue, something that is absolutely natural in the craft of the playwright. Supposing a novelist and a playwright and a screen playwright decided to tell exactly the same story, there would be little difference between the dialogue written for the play and for the screenplay; indeed, the only variants would be more flexibility of location and the decisions about the shots in the case of the screenplay, since the playwright is bounded by the physical limitations of the playhouse. The novel would be, indeed, another world.

Playwrights are used to handling stories in terms of scenic space; they visualize their characters in relation to the props on the stage, something that novelists do only incidentally by means of more or less thorough descriptions. Playwrights, then, are better equipped than novelists to understand which key dramatic scenes in novels are transfer well to the screen; they are also better equipped to dramatize long digressions or descriptions or to compress in a few lines background information about the characters or the precedents of the story being told. The novelist, whose medium does simply not give so much importance to dialogue has frequently problems to transform his or her work and, indeed, many of them rightly decline the offer to adapt their own work. Many novelists are well aware that they simply do not possess the appropriate narrative technique the cinema requires, no matter how successful their own novels can be. Ian McEwan, himself a successful original screen writer, has recently commented[12] on the difficulties he had to overcome to recast his own *The Innocent* (1990) for the screen. Apparently, although he was convinced that most of the novel was easily adaptable, he realized that in cinematic terms nothing happened in the first hundred pages, which basically set the background for the subsequent gruesome events. Writing the screenplay meant, as in most cases, rearranging the events is a clear chronological sequences, and fine-tuning the pace of the story to the point of striking a balance between the verbal freedom of the book and the constraints of the cinematic medium.

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[11] In interview with Koro Castellano, *El País Semanal*, 8 November 1992, no. 90. p. 57.

[12] During a talk at the British Institute of Barcelona, 11 February 1993. The film, directed by John Schlesinger, was then on the editing table and not been shown yet.

Obviously, it is necessary to take it into account that the cinema has mainly developed as narrative; there is not such thing as the visual equivalent of a modern poem in the commercial circuit of films. It is not the experimentalism that marks the difference but the centrality of the plot, even if it is minimal to the bulk of the text: T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) has not been filmed (at least as a feature film, though there may be avant-garde versions of it perhaps even a video-clip) but there are films of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and of Lawrence Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet* (1957-60).[13]

In terms of narrative experimentalism, as it can be seen, the cinema only caught up with the novel, and not very successfully, in the 1960s, itself an experimental time for the genre. In general terms, the cinema, especially commercial cinema, is more conservative than the novel as far as the development of new narrative techniques is concerned; since films are so expensive, money and the potential audiences (most of them hardly literate teenagers), of course, dictate the limits of experimentalism. However, it seems that the idea that experimental novels do not make good films is being challenged and that more difficult text are made into commercial films. The cinema has lost the fear, though not the respect, for stylistically complex texts: *Orlando* and *The Naked Lunch* have been recently filmed and there is a version of *Finnegans Wake*[14] in process of production.

Keith Cohen convincingly argues in *Film and Fiction*[15] that the development of language as the fittest medium to tell stories, and hence of all literature, springs from sheer contingency. According to him, it just so happened that the technical innovations that led to the cinema took centuries to appear, for the optical effect of the illusion of images in movement was well-known since the Greeks[16]. It is hard to imagine what Homer, Dante, Shakespeare or Milton would have done with a camera in their hands, but the fact is that nowadays the choice is available for the story-teller and that many have already decided that the image is more interesting than the word.

The great novelty of the twentieth century in the field of fiction is that there is a new brand of story-teller of which novelists themselves are often envious: the combination of film director and screen playwright or the hyphenated writer-director. The dream of many young modern novelists is rather making a great film than writing a great novel. This may have to do with the appeal of the cinema as a relatively unexplored medium in comparison to language, though it might be argued that the novel itself is not such an old genre, not to speak about the short story. As Bernard Bergonzi writes:

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[13] Films which, incidentally, are notoriously unsuccessful. Joseph Strick filmed and co-scripted *Ulysses* with Fred Haines in 1967; George Cukor filmed and Lawrence B. Marcus scripted *Justine* in 1969, the same year in which John Fowles was hopelessly trying to avoid the catastrophic filming of his own *The Magus* by Guy Hamilton, based on Fowles' own script. About both *Justine* and *The Magus*, Fowles says that it was difficult to decide which was the worst film of the 1960s. (In Fernando Galván, "The Writer as Shaman: A Talk by John Fowles and an Interview" in *Atlantis*, Vol. XIV, no. 1 & 2, p. 777)

[14] *Orlando*, based on Virginia Woolf's book, has been directed by Sally Potter in 1991; David Cronenberg has scripted and directed William Burrough's *The Naked Lunch* in 1992; *Finnegans Wake* is being directed by Amin Q. Chaudri from a screenplay by Chris McIntyre. What distinguishes these productions from former adaptations is that adapters have finally understood that, although the original text cannot be filmed, their visual responses to it–their personal readings–make good shooting scripts.

[15] New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

[16] According to Monaco, Ptolemy of Alexandria discovered the phenomenon of persistence of vision in 130 A.D., p. 497

> No matter how revolutionary a novel's content may become, it is still conveyed to the reader by a vehicle that has not essentially changed since the days of Defoe or Richardson.
>
> One must conclude, I think, that demands for the total modernisation of the novel are likely to be defeated by the stubbornly traditional qualities of the verbal medium, and by the further limitation that words are likely to assume when they are set down in a printed book. The lesson seems to be that the *avant-garde* novelists will find greater possibilities in other media, notably the cinema.[17]

For all their prestige, film directors whose task is illustrating screenplays written by other people have nothing to do with film directors who film their own screenplays. In many instances they rather deserve the derogatory name of *meteur en scène*. On the contrary, just to give a few names, Neil Jordan's *The Crying Game* (1992), Peter Greenaway *The Draughtsman's Contract* (1982) or John Boorman's *Hope and Glory* (1987) are three, among many, instances of a new way of understanding stories as a global process that begins in writing and ends up in filming, carried out by the same impulse. Indeed, Irish director Neil Jordan himself started as a novelist before moving onto the cinema, which, with the exception of his Hollywood experience, has allowed him enough scope for the telling of his excellent stories. Most creative directors turn out to be those who film their own stories, if only because they make it clear that they have something of their own to tell, not somebody else's story.

Possibly, the most striking innovation in the field of cinema has just taken place in 1992. The French comic draughtsman Moëbius has made a wholly computer-generated film, *Starwatcher*[18] based on his own comics. Undoubtedly, comics have done much to teach young readers that visualization is an integral process in reading[19], and Moëbius has been essential in forming the visual imagination of many film viewers and directors (Ridley Scott being the best-known case). Nonetheless, the idea behind *Starwatcher* is rather more innovative that it might seem at first sight. Producing an animation film may not be that surprising after so many years of Walt Disney's brain-washing products, but what counts is that this film is computer-animated. In a few decades computers will be capable of generating virtual images of human beings programmed by the director (the old dream of having a digitalized Marilyn Monroe or James Dean perform again). In a not very far future story-tellers will be able to direct their own stories by using computers, thus doing away with the whole team of cinema technicians, actors included if necessary, to produce something that still has no name. There will be nothing to prevent story-tellers from designing both their plots and the look of their characters even in 3-D, the latter being something that the novel can do so little well that it is easily, and disturbingly supplanted by the look of the actor in screen adaptations. This is not a prophetic announcement, like many others, of the death of the novel or of films as we know them, but a possibility that may be more appealing to viewers and may simply kill off their interest in the written word, something that it is already happening.

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[17] Bernard Bergonzi, *The Situation of the Novel*. (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd, 1970.) p. 30.

[18] *Starwatcher* has been co-directed by Moëbius with Keith Ingham, and co-scripted with Jackye Fryszman.

[19] It may be interesting to note that in Spain and possibly world-wide, Francis Ford Coppola's *Dracula* (1992) has been accompanied by tie-in editions of Bram Stoker's original novel and by a comic based on the film: advertisements in the press stressed the appeal of the comic as *"the modern way of reading"* and that of the novel, as the traditional way.

No cinema goer can fail to notice that the cinema increasingly depends on literature and that the number of adaptations does not diminish. There is a relationship of mutual parasitism between the novel and the cinema, or, perhaps, more accurately, between writers and filmmakers, since the category writers would include original writers, screen original playwrights and screen adapters. The general impression is that the literary genre most often adapted is the novel. As it turns out, plays are equally often adapted if not more so, although not much has been said about the mutual relationship between the cinema and drama, since it was established that D.W. Griffith liberated the cinema from its theatrical origins by introducing editing.

Good stories are difficult to come by as most recent American cinema, full of special effects and atmosphere and little more can testify. Writers aware that they have a good story in their hands usually prefer not to lose their control on it and, so, very often, and increasingly more so, if their talents are enough, either they write it down as a novel, short story or play, with the expectation that some day it will make their literary reputation and interest a film producer that will make them rich, or script it and try to direct it themselves. Only those who lack the talent, the connections or the money become proper screen playwrights, often with the expectation of some time directing their own film or with the comforting knowledge that money compensates well for their lack of sounder literary talent[20].

As it is easy to see, due to ideas that have to do with the Romantic view of the integrity of the artist and his property of his own stories, guarantied by the copyright law, not all the money in Hollywood can trap a first rate writer. What follows, then, is that writers who are not interested in the cinema may accept or reject offers for the rights on their stories, often rightly declining any responsibility for the final product. If they are interested in the cinema, they may try to build an initial literary reputation that will enable them to control screen adaptations of their stories better than if they were mere screen playwrights. The obvious conclusion is that, to play on safe ground, producers often are more interested in buying already published stories and in commissioning the work of an adapter. The elemental reasons are that if the text, usually a novel, is a classic or a newer, successful literary hit, audiences will be interested: simply because one always wants more of what one enjoys, stories included. If it is not a very well-known text, the likelihood is that audiences will not bother with the original source but will be happy enough to be told a sufficiently entertaining story. Alternatively, the number of writers who have forbidden adaptations of his original work on the grounds that their reputation might be damaged by a bad adaptation are non-existent. All of them accept with the expectation that the film will boost the sales of the novel, which has always interested authors.

Since, often, successful novels are technically difficult to translate onto the screen, the producers need a special brand of screen playwright both sensitive enough to the nuances of complex novels and to the demands of the cinema, and these are more likely to be found among novelists and playwrights than among screen playwrights. All in all, it turns out that the most privileged race of screen playwrights is that of the adapters, imported from other literary branches, since they may command the higher charges.

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[20] Just to quote an interesting case, screen playwright James Dearden made his name–or at least reached stardom within the Hollywood world of screen writers–for his original screenplay filmed by Adrian Lyne as the hugely successful, though hardly artistic, *Fatal Attraction* in 1987; the curious aspect is that Dearden had already filmed his own story in a 45 minute film, *Diversion*, in 1979, without receiving the least notice.

1.2. Reconsidering Screen Adaptations

Screen adaptations easily divide into two kinds: adaptations of texts which are literary classics or on the way to enter the category and adaptations of texts which are not regarded as first rate Literature. The categories may seem very broad but the point to underline is that in the first case, the adaptation cannot affect the reputation of the original text because the story told in that text is well integrated in the cultural heritage of viewers. This kind of adaptation may reawaken the interest in writers included in the canon that nonetheless are not truly popular for new generations[21] or may offer thoroughly new readings of literary classics, more in consonance with the time when they are being filmed[22].

Very often, film detractors have argued that most classic novels do not transfer well onto the screen because the cinema does not have the narrative flexibility of language. One could argue as well that what actually happens is that in the cinema the plot is central and often the case is that the plot of great classical novels does not amount to much, while minor classics or second-rate novels contain interesting plots, ingrained into very bad prose. One has only to think of the plot of *Jane Eyre* (1848) or *Wuthering Heights* (1848) and to contrast them with the narrative techniques used by Charlotte and Emily Brontë to see why they make excellent novels but just melodramatic films. In the case of very recent novels that have not yet reached the academic establishment or the wider reading public, the success of the film adaptation may backfire. On the one hand it may lead to unprecedented sales of the original novel that will carve a niche for the original writer and even attract the attention of academia. On the other hand, the film can lead to the virtual disappearance of the literary text from the cultural memory of its contemporaries. Thus, one may wonder which seminal influence started the still on-going wave of stories in cinema and in fiction about psycho killers. Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960) scripted by Joseph Stefano or Robert Bloch's novel *Psycho* (1959) on which the film is based? No film fan would doubt that all the merit is Hitchcock's, a few would think that perhaps Bloch's text might be worth reading... as great Hitchcock's source; certainly, nobody would remember who Stefano was. The most rocambolesque aspect of this story is that Bloch wrote a sequel to his own novel, *Psycho II*, that has nothing to do with the sequel to the film, also *Psycho II* (directed by Richard Franklin, written by Tom Holland, 1983). To round the story off, there is even a further film, *Psycho III* (1986), which has even less to do with Bloch, but that has apparently made it clear whose story this is: Anthony Perkins, who directed it, after having his whole acting career spoiled by the audience's identification of him with crazed Norman Bates.

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[21] Thus, E.M. Forster has possibly become one of the best-known English writers for audiences that have been shown five films based on his books in hardly ten years.

[22] Curiously enough, screen writer Jim V. Hart and Francis Ford Coppola claimed that their *Dracula* simply sprang from the realization than the more than two hundred films on the Transylvanian count had never taken Stoker's novel as its source. Actually, their film is not really a faithful adaptation of Stoker's book, but it does mix well a modern view of the myth with the older films and with the novel.

The cinema is still a new art, so, considering that audiences will not pay for being told the same story too frequently, the most we can expect in a quick survey of the story of adaptations are two or three cinema versions of the same novel. Often, the criteria to try a new adaptation is as shallow as the use of colour to replace an older black and white film (often a better one[23]) though, to be fair, there are also serious attempts to re-visualize the original story under another light. Perhaps the latest instance would be Kenneth Brannagh's 1989 version of Shakespeare's *Henry V*, which is brilliant enough as to compete with Sir Laurence Olivier's 1946 film[24]. However, the most frequent case is that a good adaptation bars a second adaptation for years or perhaps for ever.

There have been interesting accidents in the story of screen adaptations such as the coincidence in the same year of two adaptations of the same novel. Milos Forman's *Valmont* (1989) coincided with Stephen Frears' *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988), both adaptations of Choderlos de Laclos' 1782 novel; in 1973 there were two versions of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, one by Joseph Losey with a screenplay by David Mercer, the other by Patrick Garland, scripted by Christopher Hampton. All in all, what has to be remembered is that not even good adaptations send the viewers back to the original source: the book. The more frequent case is that of cinema goers who are forming their opinions on literature on the strength of the adaptations, not of the original books. These may gain new readers but certainly not as many as the film; only a small percentage of the viewers ever read the book. Thus, literary classics are often incorporated into the culture of a person or a community as the sources for their screen adaptations but not by themselves. Best screen adaptations may be even competitive with their original source, the case of Luchino Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971), based on Thomas Mann's 1919 novel or of Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451* (1966), based on Ray Bradbury's 1951 novel. Audiences easily take up the idea that, say, Visconti's is not a version of Mann's novel, but that the film and the novel are two versions of the same story, to the extent of obliterating the fact that without the original story there would be no film, no matter how talented the film director is. It is easy to see that the origin of myths lies in that appropriation by other story-tellers of stories that were originally created by a particular story-teller. Perhaps the case of the modern myth of *Frankenstein* illustrates best how the mechanism still works in our days: few people relate the creature to Mary Shelley's original novel, but the fact is that there is not another single name to blot out her memory, unless that is Boris Karloff. There have been countless recreations of Frankenstein's monster in drama, film and fiction, though none powerful enough as to erase the cultural memory of the book, which is still there. The more problematic case is that of books that have been adapted just once and successfully: audiences are more likely to credit Stanley Kubrick for *The Clockwork Orange* (1971) than its author Anthony Burgess, of whom they may never have heard. It simply seems unfair, though frequently the case is that nobody has cared for a certain book except the team that produces the film it is based on.

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[23] How anybody could hope to film a better version of Chandler's *The Big Sleep* than Howard Hawks' black and white 1946 film (written by William Faulkner, Leigh Brackett and Jules Furthman) is beyond the understanding of most cinema fans. The fact is that there is a 1978 re-make, directed by Michael Winner, whose only apparent attraction, if any apart from star Robert Mitchum, is the use of colour.

[24] It may be worth noting that while Olivier credited the screenplay to Shakespeare, in Brannagh's film, the screen writer is Kenneth Brannagh himself. Funny as this sounds, it actually reveals a different conception of adaptations: Olivier thought he was truly filming Shakespeare while Brannagh made it clear that he was filming his own interpretation of the play: the screenplay, not the play itself.

The story of adaptations begins much earlier than cinema itself, with theatre adaptations of well-known novels, booming especially at the turn of the 18th century with gothic fiction and continuing throughout the 19th century. Accounts, for instance, of Mary Shelley's attending performances of a play based on her own *Frankenstein* (1818) with pleasure are well-known[25]. In *Frankenstein*'s case, and in many others, the theatre has been an intermediate stage between the novel and the film. There are other interesting instances, such as William Wyler's *The Heiress* or Bob Fosse's *Cabaret*. The former, filmed in 1949, is usually regarded as an adaptation of Henry James' *Washington Square*, but the fact is that what screen writers Ruth and Augustus Goetz adapted for the screen was their own play based on James. Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972), written by Jay Presson Allen and Hugh Wheeler, was the screen version of a Broadway 1966 hit, a musical by John Kander and Fred Ebb. It turns out that this musical was a stage version of Christopher Isherwood's short novel *Goodbye to Berlin*, written in the 1930s. Furthermore, there exists another film, *I am a Camera* (1955) scripted and directed by John Van Drutten, who adapted his own play based on the same story by Isherwood. Of course, such clusters of adaptations are not very current.

One of the interesting side-effects of screen adaptations is that they have expanded the potential audiences for plays. From Broadway musicals to Royal Court *avant-garde* plays, passing through the many films based on Tennessee William's plays, audiences have been shown the screen versions of plays that they could hardly have expected to see in a playhouse. The case has often been that the translation and production in foreign countries of plays originally written in English has been preceded by their film versions. Just to mention an instance, Esperanza Roy scored a great success last year in her role as the protagonist of *Shirley Valentine*, a play whose screen version had been filmed by Lewis Gilbert in 1989. It was precisely the success of the film what led the Spanish producer of the play to stage it in Madrid. The internationalization of audiences has had, precisely, the odd effect of universalizing stories (plays, novels or short stories) that in print would have rarely crossed boundaries. It is just enough to mention how detective fiction has flourished in many countries from the example of film adaptations of Chandler, Hammet, Spillane (and now Jim Thompson after Stephen Frears' *The Grifters* (1990)) rather than from the texts themselves that have often reached those countries later than the films.

The 1980s and the 1990s, as far as they have gone, have been extremely rich in adaptations. It is not only that most good recent films are based on contemporary plays and novels, often on texts that deserve to be better known but are not because of the very weak or inexistent advertising campaigns of publishers. The question is that in these years the cinema has adapted texts from many different periods and has made the collective effort of offering excellent adaptations. As far as Elizabethan drama is concerned there have versions of Christopher Marlowe's *Edward II*, and of William Shakespeare's *Henry V*, *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Hamlet* [26]. Regarding this last film, Zeffirelli's choice of protagonist, Mel Gibson, to play the role best played by Laurence Olivier on the screen is certainly significative. The intention of making a popular, commercial hit out of a play by Shakespeare by casting Gibson as *Hamlet* is obvious. No matter how good his performance may be, the thought that his presence may attract more new readers to Shakespeare than volumes of criticism is worth emphasizing.

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[25] Ann K. Mellor informs us that the novel was first adapted for the stage by H.M. Milne as *Frankenstein: or, The Man and the Monster. A Romantic Melodrama, In Two Acts* and that Mary Shelley saw with pleasure the play on August 29, 1823, five years after the book was published. In *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*. (New York and London: Methuen, 1988.) p. xvii, 133.

The team formed by the American director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant and the screen writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala has filmed two novels by E.M. Forster (*A Room with a View* (1986) and *Howard's End* (1992)), one by James (*The Europeans* (1979)), one by Jean Rhys (*Quartet* (1981)) and Jhabvala's own *Heat and Dust* (1983). Furthermore, Ivory and Merchant, together with screen writer Kit Hesketh-Harvey, are also responsible for the screen version of Forster's *Maurice* (1987). Charles Sturridge, the man who directed in 1981 the enormously successful TV version of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited,* directed in 1988 the screen adaptation of Waugh's *A Handful of Dust* from his own screenplay, co-scripted with Derek Granger and Tim Sullivan. The same team filmed E.M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* last year 1992. David Lean must be credited with the merit for having opened the fashion for Forster in the cinema with his 1984 film based on *A Passage to India*. At the time of his death, Lean was working on the long-delayed adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*.

As for new British novels, the trend for adaptations seems to be catching up, too. There have been screen versions of Martin Amis' *The Rachel Papers,* Ian McEwan's and *The Comfort of Strangers* (apart from *The Innocent*, which has been already mentioned) and Graham Swift's *Waterland,* while Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* and McEwan's *The Cement Garden* are being currently filmed[27]. Perhaps one of the most interesting films to spring from the collaboration between film and literature in the 1980s was Neil Jordan's *The Company of Wolves* (1984), a reworking of the Little Red Riding Hood tale. Jordan himself and Angela Carter collaborated in the screenplay that was based on Carter's short story of the same title.

A by no means exhaustive list shows that the number of important writers that have attracted the attention of filmmakers in the 1980s and the 1990s is certainly large. Various others adaptations include film versions of books by James Fenimore Cooper, Oscar Wilde, Marcel Proust, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Edith Wharton, Virginia Woolf, D.H. Lawrence, Malcolm Lowry, George Orwell, John Steinbeck, Paul Bowles, Isaac Bashevis Singer, William Burroughs, Alice Walker, Ann Tyler, E.L. Doctorow, Oscar Hijuelos, J.G. Ballard, Milan Kundera, Umberto Eco, Tom Wolfe, Manuel Puig, John Le Carrè, Fay Weldon, Margaret Atwood and many others, just taking into account

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[26] *Edward II*, 1991, directed by Derek Jarman and written by Jarman himself, Stephen McBride and Kent Butler; *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1992, directed and written by Kenneth Brannagh; *Hamlet*, 1990, directed by Franco Zeffirelli and written by Zeffirelli and Christopher de Vore.

[27] *The Rachael Papers,* 1989, writer-director Damian Harris; *The Comfort of Strangers*, 1990, directed by Paul Schrader from a screenplay by Harold Pinter; *Waterland*, 1992, directed by Stephen Gyllenhaal, written by Peter Prince; *The Remains of the Day,* directed by James Ivory, scripted by Harold Pinter; *The Cement Garden,* currently being shot by Andrew Birkin.

films spoken in English[28]. The list would simply be impressive if we added to these names the many less well-known novels on which many recent films are based, most of them coming from genres shared by film and fiction such as science-fiction, horror, spy stories, thrillers and so on.

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[28] As it is easy to see, the idea that good novels do not make good films have been thoroughly challenged in the last fifteen years. Consider the following list:
The Last of the Mohicans (1992), based on Cooper's novel and on Philip Dunne's 1936 screenplay. Dir: Michael Mann; Scr: Mann, Christopher Crowe.
Salomé's Last Dance (1988), based on Oscar Wilde's play. Dir, Scr: Ken Russell.
Swann's Love (1983), based on the novel by Marcel Proust. Dir: Volker Schlondorff.
The Dead (1987), based on James Joyce's short story. Dir: John Huston; Scr: Tony Huston.
The Trial (1992), based on Kafka's novel. Dir: David Jones; Scr: Harold Pinter.
The Age of Innocence (1992), based on Edith Wharton's novel. Dir: Martin Scorsese; Scr: Scorsese, Jay Cocks.
The Rainbow (1989), based on D.H. Lawrence's novel. Dir: Ken Russell; Scr: Ken and Vivian Russell. Ken Russell is currently filming Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover.*
Under the Volcano (1984), based on Malcolm Lowry's novel. Dir: John Huston; Scr: Guy Gallo.
1984 (1984), based on George Orwell's novel. Dir, Scr: Michael Radford.
Of Mice and Men (1992), based on John Steinbeck's novel. Dir: Gary Sinise; Scr: Horton Foote.
The Sheltering Sky (1990) based on Paul Bowles' novel. Dir: Bernardo Bertolucci; Scr: Bertolucci, Mark Peploe.
Enemies, a Love Story (1989), based on the novel by Isaac Bashevis Singer. Dir: Paul Mazursky; Scr: Roger L. Simon .
The Colour Purple (1985) based on Alice Walker's novel. Dir: Steven Spielberg; Scr: Menno Meyjes.
The Accidental Tourist (1988) based on the novel by Ann Tyler. Dir: Lawrence Kasdan; Scr: Kasdan, Frank Galati.
Daniel (1983), based on E.L. Doctorow's novel. Dir: Sidney Lumet; Scr: E.L. Doctorow.
Billy Bathgate (1991), based on E.L. Doctorow's novel. Dir: Robert Benton; Scr: Tom Stoppard.
The Mambo Kings (1991), based on Oscar Hijuelos' novel. Dir: Arne Glimcher; Scr: Cynthia Sydre.
The Unbearable Lightness of Being (1984), based on Milan Kundera's novel. Dir: Philip Kaufman; Scr: Kaufman, Jean-Claude Carrière.
The Name of the Rose (1986), based on Umberto Eco's novel. Dir: Jean-Jacques Annaud; Scr: Andrew Birkin, Gerard Brach, Howard Franklin, Alian Godard.
The Bonfire of the Vanities (1990) based on Tom Wolfe's novel. Dir: Brian de Palma; Scr: Michael Cristofer.
Kiss of the Spider Woman (1985) based on Manuel Puig's novel. Dir: Héctor Babenco; Scr: Leonard Schrader.
Empire of the Sun (1987), based on J.G. Ballard's novel. Dir: Steven Spielberg; Scr: Tom Stoppard.
The Russia House (1990) from the book by John Le Carré. Dir: Fred Schepisi; Scr: Tom Stoppard.
She-Devil (1989) based on Fay Weldon's novel. Dir: Susan Seidelman; Scr: Barry Strugatz, Mark R. Burns.
The Hand-maid's Tale (1990) based on Margaret Atwood's book. Dir: Volker Schlondorff; Scr: Harold Pinter.
Orlando, The Naked Lunch and *Brazil* have been mentioned elsewhere.

The last ten years have also produced interesting films about writers and their lives. Ken Russell's *Gothic* (1986), written by Stephen Volk, offered a truly original view of the relationship between the Shelleys and Lord Byron. The same year, the Spanish director Gonzalo Suárez filmed, in English and with an English cast, *Rowing in the Wind* about the same aspect of English literature. Meryl Streep starred in *Out of Africa* (1985), Sydney Pollack's Hollywood biopic about Karen Blixen (Isaak Dinesen), written by Kurt Luedtke. Much more appealing was Stephen Frears' *Prick up your Ears* (1987), the film version of John Lahr's biography of Joe Orton. The film about the love affair between Anaïs Nin and Henry Miller in the 1930s, *Henry and June* (1990), directed by Philip Kaufman from his and Rose Kaufman's screenplay, has been perhaps the most controversial of literary biographies in film.

All in all, the picture that emerges from this brief survey is that of a web of interconnections between film and fiction, that have often resulted in very creative films. There is much to say about the reverse, that is to say, about the influence of film on fiction, but that is an even more complex subject. What is clear is that if readers are losing interest in books, filmmakers certainly are not.

2.The Novel and the Novelist: Obsessive Authorial Control

2.1. Vindicating the Victorian Author: The Problem of Controlling the Female Protagonist

What role did the screen adaptation of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* play in this flow of recent adaptations? In 1986 Charles Barr defined the film as "the most ambitious attempt at adaptation"[29] and certainly it must be agreed that it has little to do with the kind of, in Barr's words, "discreet, tasteful" adaptations offered up to then by British cinema. The paradox is that when this adaptation is quoted as an instance in discussions of the relationship between film and literature, it is usually mentioned as a failure or at the best as a half-hearted success. I will argue that this view stems from a stubborn wish on the side of critics to value films with respect to their literary sources, not by themselves. Nonetheless, before I move onto a close discussion of the film, a close look at the novel will help clarify similarities and distinctions between both.

The most fascinating document about John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is an article written by Fowles himself as he worked on his novel, with the title "Notes on an Unfinished Novel"[30]. There he answers most self-posited questions about the origin of this novel, its technique, its purpose, the difficulties of the writing and other aspects, such as contemporary theory on the novel (it was the time of the *noveau roman*) and the cinema. Among other aspects, Fowles insists that, against what most readers would think, his novel is not a historical novel, since he has little interest in the genre. However, since the novel is set in 1867, a hundred years back from the moment Fowles started writing, most critics have been attracted, above all, by the representation of historical Victorianism in the text. Or alternatively, they have regarded the novel as a modern look on the Victorian novel, a criticism of the period written in obedience to the primary conventions of the period. Actually, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is neither a historical novel, nor a neo-Victorian novel, nor even a truly experimental novel. It is a vindication of the role of the author in narrative at a time when contemporary theory of the novel insisted on his or her disappearance from the text. Accordingly, it refers back to the Victorian times when the narrator in the novel did not have to apologize for existing nor the writer for doing what s/he pleased with the characters.

The main difference between a genuine Victorian narrator and Fowles was that while the former could tell stories about former times without any self-consciousness about the form of the novel itself, the latter could not. Fowles could not ignore decades of experimentalism in the novel in English or the rise of university literary criticism, so his view of the past had to be doubly conditioned by the look at the historical past and at the literary past. What he does, then, is to reinvent himself as a character inside the novel, another voice within its polyphony:

> It seems in any case natural to look back at the England of a hundred years ago with a somewhat ironical eye–and 'I'–... [though] there is a danger in being ironic about the apparent follies and miseries of any past age. So I have written myself

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[29] Charles Barr, *All our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*. (London: British Film Institute, 1986.) p. 140.

[30] This was originally published in *Harper's Magazine*, in July 1968; there are several editions of the text. I am referring to the one in Malcolm Bradbury (ed.), *The Novel Today*. (Manchester and London: Manchester University Press and Fontana, 1977.) p. 147-162.

> another memorandum: *You are not the 'I' who breaks the illusion, but the 'I' who is a part of it.*[31]

What is simply ruled out in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a reconstruction of the voice of the past itself through a first person narrator, a device that has been often successfully used for the same task, perhaps most successfully recently in books such as Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (1980). If a referent is to be found outside literature, Fowles's narrator (his persona within the book) plays a role very similar to that of narrators in TV documentaries.

Like them and like the Victorian narrators, Fowles is authoritative. This may be something personal[32], but it is a deliberate choice that may puzzle critics who have been taken in by the apparently daring experimentalism of the book. So, Simon Loveday complains that "While pretending to blend with the surroundings and assumptions of the *noveau* roman, then, Fowles is in fact exercising very much the kind of authority he castigates in the supposedly outdated novelistic techniques of the Victorians"[33]. This is a total misunderstanding of Fowles's intentions, for, precisely, he writes against novelists such as Robbe-Grillet to show that if the novelist still insists on writing imaginatively–and not, say, in simply recording those around him or her–it is because s/he is inescapably involved in the text. So, what Fowles does, precisely, is to flaunt how involved novelists are in their texts.

The experimentalism in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* amounts to a long authorial digression in Chapter 13 discussing the story as far as it has gone as pure fiction, hence not true; two appearances of the narrator as a character (not the author) in Chapters 55 and 61 and the three endings of the novel[34]. Loveday himself argues that the experimental side of this novel is unimportant and he is basically right.[35] The presence of the narrator is as thrilling as Hitchcock's cameos in his films or David Lynch's role as the deaf FIB superior of his protagonist Agent Cooper in *Twin Peaks*. It is amusing and ingenuous but it is essentially superficial, part of a discreet playfulness in this novel that engages the interest of readers but does not really shatter any conception about the novel.

The question of the three endings may not seem so outrageous now that we are used to interactive books (mainly for young readers) in which readers are given the choice. Obviously, this is a popularization of the metafictional reflections carried on in stories like Jorge Luis Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths" or in Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch*. The fact is that this way of interacting with the story we are being told has also reached TV and the cinema. These days there is a series on TV3 a thriller called *Vostè Mateix* in which spectators are asked to phone and vote for one of the two possible endings. Just last month the first experiment of the kind was carried on in a cinema in New York, with the first interactive film ever[36]. This may be simplifying matters, but the fact is that not even the careful position of the unhappy ending in the last chapter prevents readers from choosing the version they like best. And, against critics' expectations, ordinary readers are more likely to enjoy the playfulness than to reflect on the freedom of the characters or of the author. Malcolm Bradbury comments that with the two endings "Authorial authority is relativized not in order to lighten responsibility for the characters, trusting it on the reader, but rather to take full responsibility for showing their freedom, their faculty of choice"[37]. This argument may be easily counteracted by the ironic use Fowles makes of the phrase 'free will' whenever he relates it to his protagonist Charles, though, nonetheless, the point Bradbury makes still defends rather the author than experimentalism for its own sake.

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[31] "Notes ..".. p. 153 (added emphasis).

[32] Thus, his own wife Elizabeth remarked he would never be able to direct a film because he would certainly behave in a dictatorial way towards the production team. See Leslie Garies, "Translating Fowles into Film", *New York Times Magazine*, 30 August 198, pp. 24-69.

[33] Simon Loveday, *The Romances of John Fowles*. (London: MacMillan, 1985 (1988).) p. 58.

[34] One in Chapter 44 that turns out to be Charles Smithson's fantasy about a sugary future with Ernestina Freeman; the second in Chapter 60, the happy ending that reunites Charles with Sarah Woodruff; the third in Chapter 61, the unhappy ending in which Sarah rejects Charles.

[35] Loveday, p. 55.

On the other hand, David Lodge complains that the power of decision of both Sarah and Charles is not balanced in the two ends (despite the fact that Sarah is the one who accepts or rejects Charles). He remarks that the more plausible ending is neither the Victorian happy one nor the modern unhappy one, but the dreamworld of Charles' imagined respectable marriage with Ernestina. Lodge accepts, though, that "... not even a modern existentialist novel can afford to have an ending as banal, as anticlimactic, as that"[38]. Fowles himself has finally ended up joking about the question of the three endings as it can be seen from a passage in his novel *Mantissa* (1982). There his protagonist, the middle-aged writer Miles Green is seen quarrelling bitterly with his muse Erato whom he holds responsible for having made him cut out the best ideas of his books. As an example, he says that "The text where I had twelve different endings–it was perfect as it was, no one had ever done that before. Then you get at it, and I'm left with just three. The whole point of the thing was missed. Wasted".[39]

When Fowles embarks in Chapter 13 on a discussion of how the demands of his characters overpower him and simultaneously declares that the characters and the story are all imagination, he is certainly taunting the reader. If the readers are infuriated at his breach of authorial honour, then, they are to blame for being as naive as to still believe that fiction and reality are two separate aspects:

> But this is preposterous? A character is either 'real' or 'imaginary'? If you think that, *hypocrite lecteur*, I can only smile. You do not even think of your own past as quite real; you dress it up, you gild it or blacken it, censor it, tinker with it... fictionalize it, in a word, and put it away in a shelf–your book, your romanced autobiography. We are all in flight from the real reality. That is a basic definition of *Homo sapiens*.[40]

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[36] However, the problem seemed to be that the part of the audience whose choice had been defeated did not react in a very friendly way towards the other section, which shows that democracy has its setbacks. Of course, the same phenomenon could never happen when we talk about the novel or TV.

[37] Malcolm Bradbury, *Possibilities: Essays on the State of the Novel.* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.) p. 257.

[38] David Lodge, *Working with Structuralism*. (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981.) p. 155.

[39] John Fowles, *Mantissa*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1982.) p. 126.

[40] John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969 (1985).) p. 99 (original italics and ellipsis).

The great difference between Fowles's statement and other metafictional, post-modernist manifestos about the instability of the barrier between fiction and reality is that while the latter foreground the text as the battleground where the confrontation goes on, the former puts the stress on the activity that goes on in the author's mind. Indeed, much has been written about texts possibly because we know very little about the psychological mechanisms that move writers to write. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* Fowles is clearly vindicating a biographical approach to the novel (what he does when he reads Hardy) not so much from the point of view of reducing the writer to a clinical case, but from the consideration that all texts spring from individual minds. Just to touch on a controversial point in the novel, many readers have been provoked by Fowles's flat denial that he knows who Sarah is (end of Chapter 12) and many, including his wife, have complained that he has not fully explained her or her mystery. In "Notes ..". Fowles insists that he does not know where Sarah's image comes from, except to point out that it appeared "in my mind one morning when I was till in bed half asleep" (p. 147). All in all what he is doing is to attract the reader's attention towards himself as the originator of Sarah's characterization and myth. Likewise, what fascinates him in Hardy is not only his quality as a writer, but, above all, how the books reflect through his authorial voice his personality.

Rather than the anxiety of influences what has always worried Fowles has been the anxiety of experimentalism. He seems convinced that his literary personality is strong enough as to resist the influence of his favourite writers[41], but he does not seem equally certain about himself on the face of post-modernism. The move he made in this novel by writing in traditional way made him even wonder whether he was not panicking into *avant-gardism*[42]. His anxiety about the experimentalism of the modern novel did by no means disappear after 1969, when he published *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. *Mantissa* is, precisely, about that anxiety. It is a very odd book and it is unclear whether it was written to provoke feminists and literary critics in general into exasperation or just as a joke. To summarize it briefly, *Mantissa* tells how writer Miles Green (John Fowles's counterpart) falls in the merciless hands of two women, the highly-sexed and coolly professional Dr. Nellie and his muse Erato. Apart from the fact that Green unexpectedly manages to transform Erato from a punk girl into a pliant, feminine woman more to his liking, the book is remarkable because it carries out lengthy discussion about modern fiction. Inevitably Green instructs his more naive muse into a view of modern fiction that is truly provoking. Here is, for instance, the third point in his list, the one that deals with the modern writer:

> 'Third, and most important. At the creative level there is in any case no connection whatever between author and text. They are two entirely separate things. Nothing, but nothing, is to be inferred or deduced from one or the other, and in either direction. The deconstructivists have proved that beyond a shadow of doubt. The author's role is purely fortuitous and agentical. He has no more significant status than the bookshop assistant or the librarian who hands the text *qua* object to the reader.'
> 'Why do writers still put their names on the title-page, Miles?' She looks timidly up. 'I'm only asking.'

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[41] Mainly Hardy, Peacock, Lawrence and Meaulnes.

[42] "Notes..", p. 151

> 'Because most of them are like you. Quite incredibly behind the times. And hair-raisingly vain. Most of them are still under the positively medieval illusion that they write their own books.' (p. 118)

So much for the man who, according to Malcolm Bradbury, seems to be deconstructing rather than constructing the Victorian novel[43]. What transpires all in all from this is that Fowles, despite his university training in French literature and his claims that only French literature has allowed him to break away from English intellectual insularity, is in the tradition of the English novelist who will simply refuse to be an intellectual. Peter Conradi argues that Fowles does want to be a European intellectual but that he fails and so turns out to be a "showman or journalist of ideas"[44]. Of course, that would place him on the side of most Victorian novelists. Conradi's point of view also reveals, incidentally, that modern fiction is not as truly open as it seems, for it seems to be dominated by a fashion for intellectual *avant-gardism* that actually comes from literary criticism, not from the novel itself.

Criticism of Fowles's way of focusing on the Victorian past has often lacked a sense of humour. Fowles simply chose a year a hundred years back from the year when he was to write his novels and, comfortably installed in his knowledge of what mediated between 1867 and 1967, he used references to Adolf Hitler, Karl Marx and other modern figures to talk about the past. Karel Reisz confesses to being angry with Fowles when in the first chapter of the novel he compares the 1867 Cob of Lyme Regis to a sculpture by Henry Moore[45]. The paradox, of course, is that there is no rule that forces the novelist to exclude the present when writing about the past. There are not anachronisms in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, for an anachronism would be pretending that the Victorians knew who Henry Moore was, not describing something Victorian in terms of how it strikes a modern mind.

Often the book reads as a fictionalized thesis or handbook; it is quite packed with information the story does not strictly need. The way in which Fowles integrates the sources from which he has gathered his information about the Victorian age is not wholly successful. All the chapters begin with one or two quotations from some eminent Victorian[46], sometimes just a few lines form some poem beautifully showing the correspondences between Fowles's story and the Victorian mood of sentimental love. The problem is that less poetical quotations are often introduced clumsily, announcing the subject of the subject or supplying background information that should come from the text itself. When Fowles considers it necessary, he even supplies footnotes (a total of fourteen) to clarify some point in the text with further information. Not only that, he is also fond of writing long digressions (Chapter 35 especially, a very complete treatise on Victorian sexuality), to inform the reader about all aspects of the Victorian age, from sanitation to prostitution. Often, the impression is that Fowles did very good research on his subject but that the story is forced to conform to his research in quite not a successful way. He seems to be working with two kinds of notes by his side, one dealing with the background, the other with his characters, although he claims that research follows the story and not the other way round[47]. The least that can be said, then, is that he found his research as absorbing as his narrative. It seem, though, that Fowles's didacticism springs both from his pleasure at transmitting some kind of knowledge and also from his low estimate of his reading public. He seems to have no expectations at all about the level of knowledge of his readers about the Victorian age; of course, this has the effect of making the book intelligible to all audiences, including non-English audiences who might not be familiar with the great names of Victorianism. Digressions, however, make Fowles look like a kind of author à la David Attenborough, a naturalist showing us the living forms in their contexts, from the knowledge that theirs is another kind of species.

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[43] Malcolm Bradbury. *No, Not Bloomsbury*. (London: André Deutsch, 1987.) p. 636.

[44] Peter Conradi. *John Fowles*. (London and New York: Methuen, 1982 (1983).) p. 104.

[45] In Harlan Kennedy, "The Czech Director's Woman". *Film Comment*, Vol. 17, No. 5, Sep-Oct 1981. p. 28.

[46] With a surprising total number of 81 quotations by 22 authors, ranging from Hardy to Leslie Stephen, passing through Jane Austen, Karl Marx, Matthew Arnold and many others. Twenty of these quotations are from Tennyson's poems.

Fowles's view is ironic, no doubt, but his irony is closer to Monty Python than to Lytton Strachey. The irony is all due to the historical distance, not to the immediacy as in Strachey's case. Precisely, it is the historical distance what allows him to deconstruct people as bundles of historical contingencies rather than as full personalities or consciousness. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* everybody fits into the main characteristics of the Victorian age with such a neatness that we are led to believe we are all unquestionably children of our age. What Fowles does not seem to take into account, despite Sarah, is that there is more life going on at any given period than the few stereotypes clumsily gathered by later ages seem to explain. Fowles often runs the risk of having his characters look like stereotypes. When he says, for instance, that Ernestina has "the right face for her age" (p. 31) and claims that that is the face in the illustrations by Phiz, he reduces the whole spectrum of all possible human beings to one set of features that is more iconic than genuinely personal. We look at Ernestina with the interest of antiquarians (or of palaeontologists), not with the interest of fellow human beings, for she carries on her the label as the specimen of Victorian sugar Aphrodite.

Writing about the postmodernist historical novel, Brian McHale comments that "In general, the presence in a fictional world of a character who is transworld-identical with a real-world figure sends shock-waves throughout that world's ontological structure"[48]. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* this applies to the introduction of D.G. Rossetti in Chapter 60, in whose house Charles finally encounters Sarah. In this way Fowles stretches the reader's credibility to the utmost, since he passes from the extreme of claiming it is all his invention to including historical figures in it. Incidentally, he has the good taste to make us see Rossetti in the background without making him act, so that the historical figure is all but untouched by the fictional environment. This produces the uneasy, curious effect of cameo appearances of well-known people 'as themselves' in films. Up to the moment when Charles recognizes the gentlemen with whom Sarah is living, the world of the characters and the world of the Victorian intelligentsia Fowles has been talking about have not really met. When Sarah reveals she is living with Rossetti and sitting for him as a model, we becomes aware that this is not properly a historical novel, with historical characters, but an intra-historical novel that deals with the possible lives of those who have died without leaving anything behind them.

On the other hand, Fowles's reconstruction of the scenery of the past, especially in the first chapter, looks very much like the kind of task a production designer should do when a period film is made. Quite often the research Fowles has carried out concerns the looks of his characters, and one could well say with Virginia Woolf that his characters come to life dressed to the last button in Victorian fashions. Apart from this, there is an obvious fascination for places as they where in the past. The story might well have originated by Fowles's wish to find a story to tell about the place where he lives and where he wrote the novel, Lyme Regis, as it was a hundred years ago[49].

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[47] "Notes.."., p. 149: "I never do any 'research' until the first draft is finished; all that matters to begin with is the flow, the story, the narrating".

[48] Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*. (New York and London: Methuen, 1987.) p. 85.

The subject of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* was first indirectly announced by Fowles in *The Aristos*, a non-fiction book that gathers together what Fowles considers to be his philosophy. There the following passage can be found:

> Adam is stasis, or conservatism; Eve is kinesis, or progress. Adam societies are ones in which the man and the father, male gods, exact strict obedience to established institutions and norms of behaviour, as during a majority of the periods of history in our era. The Victorian is a typical such period. Eve societies are those in which the woman and the mother, female gods, encourage innovation and experiment, and fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling. The Renaissance and our own are typical such ages.[50]

It is easy to notice that the battle between Sarah Woodruff and Charles Smithson follows this pattern, though it is unclear whether Fowles's feminism is as sincere as it sounds. Peter Conradi calls him "an apologist for the female-principle much given to imagining the sexual exploitation and salvation of women"[51]. Most books by Fowles deal with a man who is overpowered by the woman he seeks to dominate, though the process may cost the woman her life (Miranda in *The Collector*), her self-respect (Catherine in 'The Cloud') or simply a great deal of pain (Alison in *The Magus*). In Fowles's books men are humbled, even humiliated, but that does not prevent Fowles from placing them at the centre of his fictions. None of his novels are written from the point of view of the female protagonists, though they are indisputably often the centre of the male protagonist's life.

Most of Fowles's men are not very agreeable people. Frederick Clegg, the protagonist of *The Collector* (1965), is the extremest case, for he is a psychopath, though perhaps that excuses him in a way. Possibly, his gentlest hero is Daniel Martin of the eponymous novel (1977) and the most despicable one Nicholas Urfe in *The Magus* . Peter Wolfe says that "Fowles dislikes the contemporary ideal of the inarticulate hero, based on Salinger's Holden Caulfield (*Catcher in the Rye*) and Sillitoe's Arthur Seaton (*Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*). Overgrown maladjusted adolescents like these need schooling, not power of vengeance"[52]. The novelty of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is something that was left ambiguously open at the end of *The Magus*, namely, that once the hero has been re-educated by a woman and has learned to see beyond himself, that very same woman may have stopped needing him. That is precisely what the second, unhappy end of the novel says.

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[49] Two books about Lyme Regis are listed among the many non-fiction books Fowles has published*: A Short Story of Lyme Regis*, (Wimborne: Dovecot Place, 1982) and *Lyme Regis, Three Town Walks*, (Lyme Regis: The Friends of the Museum, 1983).

[50] John Fowles, *The Aristos*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1964, revised edition 1980). p. 165.

[51] Conradi, p. 16.

[52] Peter Wolfe. *John Fowles: Magus and Moralist*. (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1976 (revised edition 1979.) p. 54.

Charles Smithson is a Victorian gentleman and an amateur palaeontologist, but he is also an existentialist, as Fowles declares. Following Fowles's definition of existentialism in *The Aristos* (p. 122-23) this means that Charles is in revolt against those pressures that try to destroy his personal identity. As it happens, the original impulse to revolt does not come from himself but is awakened by Sarah's demand that he becomes her lover. If what she wants from life is not very clear, what Charles wants is even less clear. Before Sarah appears the gentleman Charles is vaguely drifting through life, convincing himself that marrying Ernestina Freeman and defending his Darwinism and his amateur task as a scientist is enough occupation in life–especially because he is rich. Fowles's view that amateurism was rather the rule than the exception in Victorian science is basically correct, as a glance at the *Autobiography* of Charles Darwin reveals. Of course, the difference between him and Smithson is that the former eventually devoted his life to his passion, while the later has no fundamental passion that sustains his, at least until he meets Sarah. Fowles places Charles in a great tradition of heroes in this way:

> Perhaps you see very little link between the Charles of 1267 with all his newfangled French notions of chastity and chasing after Holy Grails, the Charles of 1867 with his loathing of trade, and the Charles of today, a computer scientist deaf to the screams of the tender humanists who begin to discern their own redundancy. But there is a link: they all rejected or reject the notion of *possession* as the purpose of life, whether it be of a woman's body, or of high profit at all costs, or of the right to dictate the speed of progress. The scientist is but one more form; and will be superseded. (p. 285, original emphasis)[53]

If we have to agree with Fowles in the question of Charles' lack of lust for possession, his frenzied pursuit of the girl becomes a kind of riddle. Physical possession of Sarah becomes Charles' symbolic possession of his own project of self-creation, one in which he sees himself as a perpetual self-exile roaming the world in her company. In other words, through Sarah Charles falls in love with an alternative projection of himself that has little to do with his view of himself as meek Ernestina Freeman's husband.

By choosing to leave Ernestina and go after Sarah, Charles does something totally modern and very little Victorian, even though he is still thinking of marriage to Sarah. Dr. Grogan, the father figure in Charles' life, warns him of the harsh conditions under which his choice to become one of the elect, of those who set new patterns for life, who introduce a "finer and fairer morality into this dark world" (p. 381), will be acceptable. The condition is simply that he becomes a "better and a more generous human being", in a word, less selfish. What Charles fails to understand is that it is not for Grogan, society or himself to judge: the only tribunal is Sarah and her verdict is that he has not overcome his essential masculine selfishness. He still wants her for himself, for his project of her as his cosmopolitan companion, not for herself, so she rejects him.

When Sarah volunteers friendship instead of love, Charles feels he has become a victim, the first casualty in the battle for possession and power between the New Woman and (the old?) man. As it is, both are fighting despite themselves: she quietly avoids the confrontation by vanishing from Charles' sight; he wants to free both from the constraints of English society. The problem is that they do not seem fit to battle together against the rest of the world, for there is an essential lacunae in their relationship: there is more passion than friendship. Passion may be important for Charles, but for Sarah the relevant thing is friendship. When Sarah asks Charles to hear her in confession she is shown as a woman in need of a mentor, of help; in contrast, even in his most altruistic moments, he constantly thinks of her in sexual terms: first as a fallen woman, then as his object of desire. The relationship between men and women cannot escape sex and Sarah is the first one to make the mistake of thinking that by exposing herself as an object of desire she will get something else from Charles. The great unexplored territory of the novel as a genre is, precisely, the possibility of friendship between men and women. Interestingly, Sarah has at the end a great share of male friendship, what she originally wanted from Charles, and that seems to satisfy her more than love. For him, friendship is a degradation, because it puts him in her power by binding him emotionally to her without the right of exclusivity, which is what he wants.

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[53] The American philosopher Richard Rorty argues that the new hero is the 'liberal ironist', that is to say, the person who believes that cruelty is the worst thing that can be done to others and that the most important thing in life is establishing the conditions to carry out our personal project of self-creation... which fits the description of Sarah Woodruff.

Terry Lovell argues that "The narrative voice of the novel then is complex, but in spite of a 'bias' of sympathy towards women, it is fundamentally elitist and male"[54]. The first time the word 'woman' appears in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* it is as a prudish euphemism for whore, as in the title, chosen by Ernestina to describe Sarah to Charles. It is not as much that women are either whores or virgins in the book, but that potentially they are all whores at different levels. Thus, when Ernestina actually offers marriage to Charles, Fowles says that the offer was as "unmistakable" as that of any woman in Haymarket. Later, he exonerates her as a victim of circumstances (i.e. money) and tries to present her as an erotically desirable woman. On the whole, what causes Charles' disgust for Ernestina is not so much her lack of attractiveness as, paradoxically, the realization that she is willing to be moulded by him to his liking.

Sarah herself is an imaginary whore who has as a namesake a real whore. Fowles gets no doubt much closer to his prostitute than Dickens to his Nancy in *Oliver Twist* (1837-8), but she is still presented as the stereotype of the golden-hearted whore. Indeed, not even when we are shown Charles at the prostitute's flat is there the least indication that men repressed women in the Victorian age, possibly because Fowles thinks that men were also too repressed. For him it all seems to be a matter of self-repression–with Sarah being the exception. He does not really explore how men repress women, except for the vague threat of the asylum for independent Sarah.

Fowles suggests, especially through Ernestina, that if women were not stronger then it was a personal question of wishing it or not. Thus, he informs us that in 1867 J.S. Mill tried to pass a bill extending franchise to women, but that not all women supported it. When Ernestina is shown reading, she is seen boring Charles to death with a poem by Lady Caroline Norton, which is not very good. She is not seen, for instance, reading George Eliot. On the other hand, not even Sarah seems to be too radical in her ideas of professions for women. The former governess ends up either marrying Charles or living as Rossetti's model, hardly a pattern of female liberation.

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[54] Terry Lovell, "Feminism and Form in the Literary Adaptation: *The French Lieutenant's Woman*" in Jeremy Hawthorn (ed.), Criticism and Critical Theory. (London: Arnold, 1984,) p. 120. In *Mantissa*, the infuriated muse of writer Miles Green, Erato, tells him that a modern satyr is "someone who invents a woman on paper so that he can force her to say and do things no real woman in her right mind would ever do". (p. 85)

Somehow, Fowles's true sympathies go to the least complicated of the trio of females in the book, Mary, Ernestina's maid. She is the only one who maintains a happy erotic relationship with her man Sam, Charles' manservant, which begins before marriage and continues within wedlock and motherhood. She is said to be the most attractive of the three young women and the only one who listens in sympathy to her man's projects for the future and even understands him well. In a certain sense, Sam and Mary become a low-class replica of D.H. Lawrence's Rupert Birkin and Ursula Brangwen, while Charles and Sarah often recall the tortured relationship between Gerald Crich and Gudrun Brangwen. Sam and Mary's erotic freedom in contrast with Charles' repressed sexuality is made most clear in the two moments in the novel when he encounters the couple in the Undercliff when he is with Sarah. After her confession of her guilty relationship with Varguennes, Sarah makes Charles her erotic partner by looking at him, smiling, when they see Sam and Mary in the woods, thus suggesting that they could be equally happy. Later, Charles comes across the couple just when he has just kissed Sarah for the first time and when he tries embarrassingly to justify his presence to them, this is when he appears most strictly Victorian.

While Ernestina is positively jealous of Mary, between Ernestina and Sarah there seems to be no point of contact whatsoever. They only exist as rivals in Charles' mind, for whom their attractions are mixed with the degree of commitment they demand from him. Of course, Sarah plays with the attraction of romance, while Ernestina's erotic charms are quite subdued by the fact that there is a host of social circumstances mediating between her body and Charles'. Marriage has to do with work arrangements Charles will not comply with, namely, working for his father in law; sex with Sarah is less compromising in that sense, though, as Charles discovers, more problematic in others.

Fowles's theories on sex go on the whole against the trend for liberation of the 1960s. He pleads that mystery is gone from love, that destroying the mystery destroys the pleasure. To which two generations of sexually liberated people have answered that a better knowledge of one's and the other's body results in more pleasure and that mystery is often a poor substitute for ignorance. Mystery has often meant that men did not want to be troubled with the reality of woman's minds, although this idealized view of the other is not totally men's faults. The Brontë sisters and many other women novelists certainly should have a lot to say about how to feed mystery to young women. However, Fowles contradicts himself blatantly when he writes about Sarah and Charles' first and only sexual encounter. Fowles manages very well to transmit the sexual energy moving Charles, despite his complaint that since no Victorian novelist had written sex scenes he found himself writing science-fiction about that aspect[55]. What he fails to do is to impress the reader with the due sense of very keen pleasure that, according to him, has been lost with sexual liberation. When the love scene happens, Charles ninety seconds of lovemaking are so clumsy one is tempted to read between lines Sarah's actual reason to send him away. Post-coital conversation turns on the subject of Sarah's lie about her loss of virginity to Vargueness, with Charles more angered at the idea of her lying to him than concerned for why she did it. How that can be enough to satisfy any of them is inexplicable.

Fowles tells us that the image of Sarah as she first appeared to him "represented a reproach on the Victorian Age. An outcast. I didn't know her crime, but I wished to protect her"[56]. Funnily enough, Fowles makes her raise the same feelings in his Victorian hero, Charles, but he makes him pay for the mistake of thinking she needed protection at all. Sarah is masculine in her clothes and her behaviour, and a sign of this reversal of roles between her and Charles is that he is the one who is ruined by sex with her, though she pretended to be a ruined woman.

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[55] "Notes..".., p.152.

Sarah is, no doubt, a born actress. The way she poses to allure Charles is totally theatrical; she has a right sense of acting and setting as the scenes in the Undercliff, the barn and the hotel show. What she does is to act out a sexual fantasy of hers, by casting herself in a role which embodies the sexual fantasies of men, but has little to do with her own self (like Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo or Mae West). Sarah's performance is, then, totally calculated. She fancies herself a Victorian, provincial vamp so, the experience in which she involves herself is a testing out of her sexual appeal, power on men. Sarah's acknowledgment that she knows what she is doing comes when she agrees with Charles that she is a remarkable person. What she later realizes is that her theatrical performance has not allowed her to show herself as she is, so she decides to erase that part of her life and Charles with it, and she justifies this with Ruskin's sentence that the artificial has adulterated the natural. She ends up, rightly, playing another role, allowing Dante Gabriel Rossetti to see her, to paint her "Not as she is, but as she fills his dream"[57], namely, as his own dead wife's Lizzie Siddal reincarnation. Thus, Sarah, who is picked up in the street by Rossetti because of her good looks, gains enough room in the world to be herself. Sarah is a figure of myth purely because Fowles says so, but her kind of glamour and the way in which Fowles shows her seem often to speak rather of a relationship like that between Sternberg and Marlene Dietrich than between Flaubert and Madame Bovary. Sarah is associated with Madame Bovary by Charles; indeed, he is always associating her with French beds. She is constantly seen as a foreign person, in the naive way the English have of associating wickedness with the French and freedom with the Americans. Sarah insists in her confession that French was the language between her and Varguennes, and so the language of sin; when she later sends a message to Charles in French asking for help, she directly suggests to him that he replaces Vargueness.

Daring as she is, Sarah is not a modern 1960s girl: she is a very modern 1860s girl. She belongs to the same sisterhood as G.B. Shaw's Vivien Warren in *Mrs Warren's Profession* (1893), who does not want a husband, either. Nonetheless, it could be argued that while Vivie is a feminist, Sarah is in the category between the feminine and the feminist. Somehow, part of this growing out of the Victorian husk is overcoming sentimentalism, a process through which Sarah and Vivie go successfully, but not Charles or Mrs. Warren. Charles goes as far as to appeal to Sarah's natural mission in life (motherhood), of course, not knowing that she has already had her fill with his help, outside marriage. Charles thinks at first that Sarah overacts and that her interpretation when she asks for help is exaggerated, that tragedy works well on the scene but not in real life. The paradox is that Charles himself ends up overacting in the scene when he claims Sarah back, when she has already changed her acting method. While he is still grounded in Victorian sentimentalism, and thus becomes the male counterpart of Mrs Warren, Sarah has moved onto a new, Ibsenian stage.

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[56] "Notes..", p.148.

[57] A line by Christina Rossetti, from her poem 'In an Artist's Studio' (1856) in which she criticizes how her brother Dante Gabriel painted Lizzie Siddal as he saw her, not as she was. Indeed, Fowles had in mind Lizzie Siddal as a model for Sarah's looks.

2.2. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in Conversation with Other Texts: Overcoming the Need for a Husband

The accounts of feminine hysteria given to Charles by Dr Grogan have often been understood as proofs that Fowles intended to suggest a degree of madness in Sarah. This may well be so, but the fact is that what they do show is first, that Sarah's methods are rather Hamlet's than Bertha Mason's, and, second, that men have systematically hated and misjudged women and that these have hated themselves because of men[58]. Fowles suggests that in order to overcome the constrictions of Victorian England, a change of scenery is the most indicated action. Accordingly, America appears to Charles, who goes there in search of Sarah, as the promised land of personal freedom. Charles's romantic self-exile is a kind of Byronic gesture, but in a milder version. The interesting point is that if Charles had gone to fictional America in the early 1870s he would have met Edith Wharton's Newland Archer in New York fighting his way between his Ernestina (May Welland) and his Sarah (Ellen Olenska). *The Age of Innocence* (1920)[59], the great novel about 'Victorian' America shows a society hardly more liberated than Fowles's 1867 London. Of course, the great difference is that in Wharton's story the fallen woman, Ellen Olenska, is not a ruined virgin but a disappointed American wife who wants a divorce from her European husband, much to the dislike of her own family. Nonetheless, the love triangle and the dilemma of the male protagonist are very similar to the ones in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.[60]

Like Thomas Hardy, John Fowles is a great plot manipulator. Unlike him, he does not subscribe to the view that circumstances are what dominates us, but to the view that the will of a few dominate the many. Interestingly, when the shadow of Hardy is invoked in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, apart from the quotations, what we are told is the story of Hardy's disastrous affair with his cousin Tryphena and how she inspired him Tess and Sue Bridehead. Fowles is a strong defender of the theory that the way to understand better the literary work is the biography of the writer, so he embarks in a long digression about Hardy's unfortunate love life, turning him into the emblem of the age's sublimation of unhappy love into good literature. What, evidently, Fowles candidly does with this digression is to suggest that her own Tess, Sarah, comes from private sources, from a real or imaginary Tryphena in his life.

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[58] Perhaps it is worth mentioning that the only noticeable difference between the American and the British paperback edition of the book is that the gruesome story of Lieutenant Emile de la Roncière contains an extended version of the footnote that justifies the mad behaviour of the girl in question only in the American edition.

[59] The coincidences were possibly as obvious as to lead film director Martin Scorsese, who has just adapted the novel for the screen, to offer the role of Newland Archer to Jeremy Irons, who played Charles Smithson in the film *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Interestingly, he rejected the offer, but was replaced by yet another British actor, Daniel Day-Lewis.

[60] The suspicion arouses that Fowles may be joking about the question of America as the land of freedom, for his narrator informs us that Charles is reminded of the freedom of American fashions by Sarah's dress when he meets her at the end of the book. No wonder, for she is wearing a blue skirt, a stripped red and white blouse and a belt with a star, in one word, the American flag. On the other hand, Wharton insists that American women imported their best dresses from Paris. The women were so conservative that they did not consider it proper to wear the dresses until a year after they had been bought.

The connections between Tess and Sarah are many, beginning by the fact that the films based on each book were first shown within only a year of difference, 1980 for *Tess*[61] and 1981 for *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. These two Victorian fallen women have fathers who force them out of their natural classes (in Sarah's case through education) because they are obsessed with their own ancestry. Both even look very much the same, with sensual mouths and big eyes, and healthy-looking complexions. Likewise, their erotic charm is at its best when they are asleep. Alec seduces Tess as she is asleep in the woods; as for Charles, the image of Sarah asleep in the Undercliff awakens in him a surge of erotic passion. What is clear is that Victorian gentlemen seems more attracted by a mixture of innocence and sensuality than by open invitations. Again, both Tess and Sarah leave their respective seducers when they choose and say nothing to them about their respective babies. The pattern of abandonment and reunion plays an important part in both stories, with the difference that in Sarah's story Charles play a mixture of roles, combining Angel Clare and Alec D'Urberville.

Unlike Tess, Sarah has no Alec D'Urbeville (a French Norman surname), so she invents her own Frenchman seducer, Lieutenant Varguennes. In the same way Sarah makes it clear in her confession to Charles (a replica of Tess' confession to Angel Clare, which has exactly the opposite effect) that she yielded wilfully. While Sarah plots herself into a story of her own invention, no doubt because she has read too many Victorian romances, Tess, the more natural of the two, never understands what is happening to her because it has nothing to do with her mind but with how men use her body. What Hardy does with his fallen women is to eliminate the possibilities for her to choose right from the beginning of her story; on the other hand, Fowles is constantly opening doors fro Sarah to walk free. Possibly the two endings of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* are an answer to the insistent fatalism of Hardy's, a 'what if...' that in *Tess* never has a chance.

The subject of the Victorian fallen woman still has its appeal, as it can be seen by A.S. Byatt's *Possession* (1991). The jacket of the Chatto & Windus hardback edition of the book informs us that "Like *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, it is formally both a modern novel and a high Victorian novel". However, the connections between this novel and Fowles's seem to delve deeper than mere formalism. In an interview Byatt herself has claimed that her novel is a reaction against Fowles's novel and the *noveau roman*; she has, furthermore noted in the same interview that Fowles, despite his talent, is a literary sadist who treats his characters without any respect but with a great dose of superiority[62]. However, with its double plot of modern love and Victorian love, Byatt's novel can be read as much as an answer to Fowles as to Pinter's screenplay based on Fowles's novel, which also combines a double plot of modern and Victorian romance.

The plot involves the discoveries made by two specialists in literature, Roland Michell and Maud Bailey, about a up-to-then secret love relationship between two eminent Victorian poets, Randolph Ash and Christabel LaMotte. As Maud and Roland slowly progress in their investigation and slowly fall in love they have to deal with professors Blackadder (the British specialist on Ash, who believes only Britain has a right to British literary relics), Mortimer Cropper (the rich American professor, who believes that literary research is a matter of buying precisely those relics) and Leonora Stern, the feminist and bisexual American specialist on LaMotte's work. Their rocambolesque research eventually leads them to the discovery that a daughter was born from their affair, from whom Maud actually descends.

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[61] Directed by Roman Polanski, from a screenplay by Polanski, Gerard Brach and John Brownjohn and with Nastassjia Kinski as Tess. A beautiful, correct adaptation that, nonetheless, fails to commit itself to a definite reading of Hardy's novel.

[62] Interview with Aránzazu Usandizaga, "Entrevista a Antonia Byatt, Premio Booker por *Possession*", *La Vanguardia*. 10 May 1992.

In Harold Pinter's screenplay the modern equivalent of Sarah and Charles are the actors Anna and Mike who play their roles in the film of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* we see on the making as their story reaches a climax. What Harold Pinter does in his screenplay is to transfer the process of research that went into the writing of the book to the actors; thus, for instance, there is a scene in which Anna reviews with Mike the number of brothels in Victorian England, an item of information that figures in one of the digression about sex in the book. In *Possession*, A.S. Byatt handles this aspect of research much better. Byatt turns Fowles's previous research into the very plot of her book. Of course what her modern couple has in common with Pinter's modern couple is that both are interpreters of the past, as actors or as researchers. Her protagonists are two professional researchers, used to dealing with authentic documents of the Victorian age, who correct their view of the past by the discovery of a collection of long-lost love letters, diaries and other documents. Unlike Fowles, Byatt writes her own Victorian documents, so that when there are opening quotations they are part of the work of the two poets under research; the novel also includes whole chapters containing poems by one of the two poets and a short story by LaMotte. The obvious flaw in her book is that when it comes to explaining scenes for which there is no written record, for the obvious reason that they are too private, Byatt has to break her own convention and pretend that the writer had a right to be there. On his side, Fowles claimed in Chapter 49 of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* that Victorian documents are unreliable since they conceal more than they show, an aspect that Byatt picks up in her elaboration of the diary of Ellen Ash, Randolph Ash's wife. On the other hand, Fowles's use of his authorial voice justifies itself partly by the fact that his people are the kind who do not leave any document behind them, while Byatt's characters are members of the Victorian intellectual world, used to writing about themselves.

The scope of *Possession* is more restricted than that of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The latter is about the whole human spectrum in a given decade of the Victorian age, while the former is, basically, about the intellectuals of the same decade. Byatt's novel is less accessible to general readers than Fowles's; the web of literary references makes it clear that only a university professor could have written it, though it is not so clear whether readers unaware of research methods in literature can enjoy the book. Perhaps the odd aspect is that *Possession* actually reduces literary research to gossip at its worst and to a peculiar collector's mania at its best. Literary research turns literally into grave-digging when Cropper and Lord Ash decide to unearth Ash's body in order to find the compromising letters that back their hypothesis about LaMotte. Byatt, nonetheless, discretely avoids gruesome details, something Harold Pinter by no means does when he has one of his male protagonists tell in his only novel *The Dwarfs*, about his work as a literary researcher at Cambridge. This, of course, consists of digging old manuscripts from tombs with the consequent risk of having the skeletons collapse on top of the researcher[63].

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[63] Harold Pinter, *The Dwarfs*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1990), p. 124.

In certain passages, Byatt seems simply obsessed with Fowles's work. There is a reply almost to all the questions raised by Fowles, with an interesting exception, equally absent from Pinter's screenplay: social conflict. In general, one could claim that while Fowles book is about how different the past was, Byatt's is about how much of the past still remains in the present. As its title indicates, *Possession* deals with this term in three main directions: the possessiveness of sexuality (who possesses who when we talk about love), the possession of the living by the dead (not literally but through literature) and the possessions of objects belonging to the dead as their only sign that they have been once alive. Indeed, the whole intrigue is started when the protagonist, Roland Michell cannot overcome his wish to possess two love letters by Randolph Ash, the Victorian, Browningesque poet he is doing research on.

Like *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Possession is basically about sex. About the 'Unknown Sex Life of Eminent Victorians'[64] actually. Byatt agrees with Fowles that sexual repression was responsible for the enormous literary output of Victorians; at least, she has professor Cropper say in his biography of Ash that his virginal courtship and (as it turns out, blank marriage) were the seed of his best poetry. Ash's marriage actually shows another version of what could have happened to Charles in the first ending of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* had Ernestina turned out to be frigid. Unlike Pinter, Byatt tries to suggest that modern love can be as rewarding as Victorian love in terms of happiness. The problem is that, somehow that is not made credible. When Maud and Roland, the 1986 couple, finally make love at the very end of the book Byatt cannot do better than have Roland say to Maud "I'll take care of you" and describe their long-delayed encounter as "Roland, finally, to use an outdated phrase, entered and took possession of all her white coolness" (507). It is bland, especially because Byatt puts more sexual openness in her Victorian couple. Both Maud and Roland agree that we do not question enough the centrality of sexuality and that mystery is lost, so that the reconstruction of the emotions of the past becomes a hard task–or Fowles's science-fiction. Thus, Maud and Roland:

> '... We know we are driven by desire, but we can't see it as they did, can we? We never say the word Love, do we–we know it's a suspect ideological construct–especially Romantic love–so we have to make a real effort of imagination to know what it felt like to be them, here, believing in these things–Love–themselves–that what they did mattered–'
> 'I know. You know what Christabel says. "Outside our small safe place flies Mystery". I feel we've done away with that too–And desire, that we look into it so carefully–I think all the *looking-into* has some very odd effects on the desire.' (p. 267, original emphasis)

When Byatt turns to the description of Victorian sex, she is both less and more conservative than Fowles. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Victorian sex in *Possession* is that Byatt puts it into Ash's head that Christabel may be so responsive sexually because she has had previous lesbian sexual experiences with Blanche Glover, the ex-governess with whom she lives. However, the scenes themselves do not have the impact of Fowles's sex scene. The fetishism of hair as a sexually attractive feature is emphasized both in *Possession* and in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Like Sarah, who is red-haired, both Maud and her ancestor Christabel use green clothes to underlie the beauty of their pale blond hair, though I am at a loss to understand why Byatt makes so much of suggesting it is a kind of green blond. Their sex appeal is, no doubt, colder than Sarah: the fact that Christabel writes about a woman, half-snake or fish, says much about this. Byatt has, like Reisz, a scene in which her heroine Maud frees herself by letting her hair loose; in the film Sarah uncoils her red hair as she confesses to Charles how she lost her virginity. The fetishism of objects also plays an important role in both novels: while Fowles claims that he possesses a toby jug originally owned by Sarah, Maud turns out to own a brooch that actually belonged to her ancestor, Christabel LaMotte. It is curious because in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, the three women, Ernestina, Sarah and Mary are related by a pearl and coral brooch. In the first sentimental ending, Ernestina becomes the recipient of that brooch, in the second that is destined for Sarah, though it ends up pinned on Mary's bosom.

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[64] A.S. Byatt, *Possession*. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1991.) p. 387. The phrase refers to the headlines with which the press summarizes the discoveries about the Victorian couple formed by Ash and LaMotte.

The term 'possession' itself is first used in excerpts from professor Cropper's biography of the poet meaning Ash's deflowering of his wife, an encounter disastrous enough as to sexually separate Ellen and Randolph Ash. Cropper speculates in his biography with Ash's sexual life during the long courtship of his wife: were there prostitutes or fallen women in his life? That, of course, is the modern point of view, that there must be some kind of love life, especially in men. Fowles makes the same supposition about Charles though he forgets to explain how Sarah solves the same problem without the help of male prostitutes or fallen men. The point Byatt makes is that quality matters more than quantity, that Ash's sex life consists actually of a single week of adulterous honeymoon and that this matters as much or even more than decades of marriage. And the point of the honeymoon is that it affords Ash the chance to make Christabel understand that he is the one possessed, although, unlike Charles, he remains lucid enough to enjoy it without wanting to possess Christabel, something he cannot fully do because he is married. Nonetheless, when Ash confesses to his wife about Christabel, he insists that her love is a kind of possession ("I could say it was a sort of madness. A possession, as by daemons", p. 453). In this Byatt does not really go much further than, say, Keats with "La Belle Dame sans Merci".

The relationship between love and friendship plays an important role in *Possession*. While in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Sarah's demand for a friend leads her to a lover that cannot cope with the idea, in *Possession* sex crowns a friendship that begins through letters. Charles feels first attracted by Sarah's body, Ash's by Christabel's mind, but it all ends up in the same way. What is unclear in *Possession* is how the transition from friendship to love justifies itself, though perhaps the suggestion is that in all man-woman friendship sex is present. We do not see Ash and LaMotte falling in love in the same way we see Sarah and Charles. Curiously enough, Sarah's curt messages (just a line, an address) seem more credible than the Ash-LaMotte love letters. Again, interestingly, Sarah ends up surrounded by men (or married) and, though there are comments about how innocent she was of the idea of being a lesbian, the fact is that she does not seem to look for the sympathy of women. Byatt entangles her heroine in a female domestic arrangement with Blanche Glover that ends up disastrously with Blanche's suicide when she finds out about Christabel and Ash, by which she hints that the most radical feminism and lesbianism are not the right recipe for women's happiness.

LaMotte, who is Sarah's counterpart, is not an ex-governess like her (that role is reserved for Blanche Glover) but a woman poet. What they have in common is that they choose to enter wilfully into a relationship with a man who is not free, a married man in

Christabel case, an engaged one in Sarah's. Both bear a daughter as a result of that relationship and both disappear in order to have their babies, although Christabel finally passes hers for her sister's, the case of Hardy's beloved Tryphena. Like Sarah, Christabel is not concerned for Honour or Morality, but with how letting the man intrude in her life will break the fragile balance of her sense of solitude. What neither of them wants is losing their emotional independence from their men–like Pinter's Anna–though they are ready to offer sex. Like in Fowles's novel, everything French is connected with sexual frankness in this book. LaMotte is of French descent (her father is an important folklorist, whose field covers essentially Brittany) and this fact seems determinant for her open-mindedness according both to Ash and to his wife, Ellen. Christabel is the author, among other texts of an epic poem called *The Fairy Melusina*, written in the 1860s, about a monstrous snake woman who destroys the man she loves when he sees her as she is. In her diary, Ellen Ash connects both Frenchness and Christabel's talent:

> Still reading Melusina. What diligence, what confidence went to its contriving. Miss LaMotte despite a lifetime's residence in this country, remains essentially *French* in her way of seeing the world. Though there is nothing to which one can take exception in this beautiful and daring poem, in its morals indeed. (p. 120, added emphasis)

America also appears in *Possession*. It stands for aggressive scholarly methods that work well because they are backed by a large cheque book. The Americans literally buy the past of the English, who do not have enough money to prevent the diaspora of the relics of their national heroes. Americans in Byatt embody the male passion for collecting that Fowles so much dreads as a deadener of living matter. Among the 19th century Americans mentioned in *Possession*, there is even an American counterpart of Sarah's, the kind of free woman Fowles thought was the privilege of America to boast: a crazed Priscilla Penn Cropper (Cropper's ancestor) who is a spiritualist, a preacher of free love and inventor of a wonder-medicine.

In *Possession* there is a hesitation between the Hardyesque plot of fate and the Fowlesian plot of individual wills clashing, with the woman as the same plot-maker. At first, Randolph Ash feels conditioned by a plot or a plotter outside himself and Christabel. Later, when Christabel denies him access to the child by him she has had (his only child) he realizes he is trapped by her will, quite in the same way Charles Smithson is trapped by Sarah's plot-making. As Victorians gentlemen, Ash and Charles have quite a lot in common. Both play the amateur scientist: Charles as a palaeontologist, Ash as a marine biologist like Edmund Gosse. Of course, both are encumbered by the same uncomfortable equipment in their expeditions. Can it be a chance that both are said to carry ashplants staffs to help them in their pilgrimage and that both engage the help of their ladies Sarah and Christabel in the search for specimens, down to the detail that none of the ladies wears a crinoline. Both couples have a domain: the Undercliff of Lyme Regis coast in Fowles's, the Yorkshire coast in Byatt's. Their modern counterparts revisit those domains, where they are also caught by plots long ago established for them: Roland and Maud by Ash and LaMotte's secret honeymoon, Mike and Anna by the story in the film.

On the whole, *Possession* does not quite transcend a mild sentimental view of the Victorian Age that Fowles quite correctly does away with. Byatt protects her work by dubbing it a romance and as such it works very well, for it is well-plotted and wellpaced, and, indeed, very roundly concluded. As a book on literary research it has also its charms, especially for those in the field. However, if the test to judge a good book is the times it lets itself be re-read, then *Possession* is clearly inferior to *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. It makes a superb first reading, essentially because of the suspense in the solution of the love mystery, but on second reading it is duller. Nonetheless, the effort made by Byatt to write the Victorian texts included in the novel is certainly amazing.

Fortunately, social changes have brought the end of the idea of the fallen woman in our times. Fallen women and single mothers like Sarah, Tess or Christabel no longer exist in the novel or the cinema, simply because the ideas about sexual freedom have changed enormously since the sixties. There are still disturbing rewording of the cases of hysterical women doctor Grogan shows to Charles, especially in the cinema, which, for instance, has not long ago frightened most unfaithful married men with the deranged Alex of *Fatal Attraction* played by Glenn Close. Unrequited love has all but disappeared from stories both in film and fiction and has become the territory of the psychopath.

The 1960s seemed, then a good moment to re-evaluate the figure of the Victorian fallen woman and of the modern liberated woman, if possible in contrast. This is what Margaret Drabble does in her novel, *The Millstone* (1965), which answers the question of what the status of a single mother is in England in the mid-1960s. Interestingly, this novel was published in the same year when Fowles published *The Collector,* a story in which the sexual freedom of Miranda, the twenty-year-old protagonist, is denied by the man who kidnaps her in the name of his love and eventually kills her.

The protagonist of *The Millstone* is a young woman, Rosamund Stacey, who is writing her PhD dissertation, and whose main flaw in the decade of sexual liberation is being afraid of sex, something she regards as a kind of criminal offence. Like Sarah, but for the opposite reasons, she manages to give an appearance of acceptable promiscuity by going out with two men, though not making love with either of them. As it happens, she conceives a baby daughter in the only sexual encounter she ever has, with a gentle bisexual who does not even notice it is her first time, and very probably uses her to convince himself that he is not a homosexual. Rather than about the relationship itself, the book is more about how she decides to have her baby, among the general lack of understanding of her friends, and about how she never actually makes any effort to contact George again or to tell him he is a father.

Rosamund, who is an intelligent modern girl, turns out to be little better equipped than Sarah Woodruff to deal with men. She has substituted the idea of sin or honour by a confused guilt about her lack of sexual activity. This leads her to reverse the idea of fallenness and to end up understanding than her pregnancy is not the fruit of sin, but quite the opposite:

> I had the additional disadvantage of being unable to approve my own conduct; being a child of the age, I knew how wrong and misguided it was. I walked around with a scarlet letter embroidered upon my bosom, visible enough in the end, but the A stood for Abstinence, not for Adultery. In the end I even came to believe that I got it thus, my punishment, because I had dallied and hesitated and trembled for so long. Had I rushed in regardless, at eighteen, full of generous passion, as other girls

> do, I would have got away with it too. But being at heart a Victorian, I paid the Victorian penalty.[65]

She is a Victorian at heart but being simultaneously a 1960s girl she is ready to tell the reader quite frankly about her view of the whole affair, something the male authors of *Tess* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* never let their fallen women do.

Of course, the first idea in *The Millstone* is that fallen women have all but disappeared to become plain single mothers, if pregnancy happens. There is a strong de-romantization of pregnancy as a physical process and the de-sentimentalization of the bond between the new 'fallen woman' and her seducer. Rosamund makes it clear that pregnancy is a punishment for being a woman, that women are bounded by their physical liabilities. Interestingly, both Fowles and Hardy sends their heroines away from their stories while they are pregnant, so there is nothing about how they feel about the father of the child or about the child itself.

Rosamund makes a pitiful attempt at abortion, but when this fails, she finds herself having the baby for good, while her various friends still recommend and abortion and her sister, adoption. She does not even herself see why she should have the baby–and if the idea is that Sarah or Tess had no chance that is quite wrong as Defoe knew when he made the midwife offer his Moll Flanders the chance, which she curtly declines for adoption. The point in all this stories is that in Sarah, Tess, and Rosamund's stories maternity follows from a single encounter (in Christabel, a week of honeymoon), that children are accidents, not something wanted–contingencies one has to cope with–although Fowles quite manages to give the impression Sarah might have wanted Charles for the only purpose of becoming a mother.

As Rosamund says, 'deception is a tangled web'. She invents herself as an actively sexual woman, thus enjoying her imaginary wickedness exactly like Sarah enjoys hers when she tells about Varguennes. This has the unforeseen effect of making George, the father of her child, believe that she is actually promiscuous to the extent that he never conceives the idea that she might have been a virgin when he met her. When he is shown the baby girl, the thought of independent maternity fits so well into his picture of Rosamund as an independent girl that he does not even consider the possibility of being the father. Rosamund is aware that just as she is a false promiscuous girl, George could turn out to be not the bisexual everybody sees. Drabble pokes fun at the idea of mystery in a love relationship by making the Charles Smithson of this story a secretive, quiet man that simply will not talk about himself and who seems indolent and bored with life.

The Millstone is also about how feminism and sexual liberation have not helped at all to improve the communication between men and women. Rosamund makes a funny declaration of independent feminism and equality between the sexes that George answers by making love to her. Her words just mask an insecurity only too evident. As it happens, sex itself is for Rosamund more pain than anything else, though the suggestion is that it is not much more enjoyable for George.

Like Sarah, Rosamund tells nobody who the father of her child is, not even to him, because she assumes they do not have a future together; her project of self-creation may assume a daughter, even though she realizes that jeopardizes her independence, but not a husband. The question in *The Millstone* is that the existence of a child does not bind a man closer to a woman. Rosamund still finds herself at a stage in which the pull of Victorian sentimentalism makes her imagine romantic scenes in which George will go back to her–exactly like Charles to Sarah–despite the fact this is unlikely to happen for George never makes the least effort to contact her. The fact that she keeps silent shows, of course, that she is more modern than she thinks, though her independence is not totally a choice but a passivity.

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[65] Margaret Drabble, *The Millstone*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965 (1974).) p. 18.

As it could be expected, Rosamund explains her plight to herself by going back to Hardy's philosophy of life. However, Rosamund links her story to Hardy's *Life's Little Ironies*, which she defines as a "profound attitude to life" (p. 65). When it comes to comparing herself, obviously, to Tess, Rosamund is not so ready to accept Hardy's fatalism, despite the truly accidental fashion in which her baby Octavia is conceived:

> At the same time it did not seem to be totally the product of malevolence. I did not feel, as hardy felt for Tess, that events had conspired maliciously against my innocence. Perhaps I did not feel to wish this, for it was a view dangerous to my dignity and difficult to live with for the years which were to come. The more I thought about it, the more convinced I became that my state must have some meaning, that it must, however haphazard and unexpected and unasked, be connected to some sequence, to some significant development of my life. (p. 66-67)

Rosamund manages to establish a comfortable enough domestic arrangement with Lydia, her writer friend–quite like Christabel and Blanche's, but without any suggestion of lesbianism. What Drabble correctly suggests is that the myth of feminist sisterhood is quite wrong and that best arrangements of this kind work for self-interest. Thus, Rosamund needs a baby-sitter and Lydia a place to live and work, and, even though Rosamund later discovers that Lydia is writing a book about her own situation, pragmatism carries the day and they stay together.

All in all, Rosamund, whose baby is about to die because of a heart condition, makes the choice of offering all her emotional involvement to her daughter. She reaches the conclusion that the expectation of her daughter's love for her is what finally made her have the baby; although, of course, the doubt is whether that will be enough compensation for her whole life. Like Sarah, Rosamund seems to lose all interest in men as lovers after the birth of her baby. When George comes across her in the street and visits her baby she still has faint expectations of a sentimental scene of recognition; she still expects to hear herself tell him how she loves him, but she never does. Rosamund concludes that friendship is more lasting than love and that, anyway, no kind of love can compare to hers for her daughter, which, incidentally, also explains Sarah's dismissal of Charles in the second ending. As it can be seen, Rosamund's ordeal does throw light on Sarah's case, always taking it into account that Fowles was somehow unfair to Sarah by not letting his readers know what she thought about her child.

Perhaps the most interesting point Drabble makes is that Rosamund carries on with her professional career, with or without baby. She does not collapse, but goes on with her dissertation and plays the game of trying to guess which will be born first, the baby or the book. Again, G.B. Shaw's Vivie looms in the background when Rosamund tells her friend Joe "Didn't you know, I'm one of those Bernard Shaw women who wants children but no husband?" (p. 106). Biological circumstances force Rosamund out of her Victorian self, much like Charles is forced by Sarah. Precisely, it is George who gives her the final push to become the Shavian woman she knows she would like to be but is not. Rosamund's fate is not decided because she rejects George's offer of marriage in the way Sarah may reject Charles', nor because she is strong enough like

Sarah as to know she does not need the man. Simply, his proposal never takes place because he is more convinced than Rosamund that she does not need a husband.

3. The Novel and the Screenwriter: Rewriting from Scratch

3.1. Between Stage and Screen: Harold Pinter

John Fowles has always had a troublesome relationship with the cinema as many other successful novelists whose work has been adapted with unequal results. Instances of his negative views on the cinema can be easily found in texts and interviews covering his whole career. Basically, his opinions on the subject have changed little throughout the years and despite the favourable opinion that the adaptation of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* elicited from him. The exceptionality of Fowles's case lies in the fact that the influence of the cinema on the novel has worried him to the extent of making him write about a British screen writer in Hollywood in one of his most important novels, *Daniel Martin* (1977). It is in that novel where Fowles, with his characteristically loud authorial voice, most deeply attacks the cinema. He does so mainly from the point of view of the slighted screen writer and would-be-novelist who cannot find his own literary dimension within the commercial humdrum of Hollywood movies.

Typically, Fowles uses Daniel Martin, book and hero, to propound his theories about screen writing, film making and even the image of the English on the screen. The terms he uses are clear and direct:

> The commercial cinema is like a hallucinogenic drug: it distorts the vision of all who work in it. What is at stake behind the public scenes is always personal power and prestige, which reduce the industry to a poker-table where every player must, if he is to survive, become some kind of professional cheat or hustler. Success is always with the two-faced; and one can no more enter the game innocently (though Dan did his best) than a house with BORDELLO in neon light across its front ... It cannot be an art, in this form. (154)

The term 'commercial' is specially relevant since in the cinema the distinction between avant-garde and mainstream cinema works mainly in terms of distribution. Artistic, experimental cinema is more and more restricted so that few distributors actually show it and even fewer spectators have access to it. The result is that, since buying the rights on literary texts id often very expensive, adaptations are usually produced for commercial cinema. It is important to note that the adaptation of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* belongs to the circuit of commercial cinema, and it is far less *avant-garde* than most of Fowles's novels or even of Pinter's own plays.

Like all twentieth-century novelists, Fowles has acknowledged his debt to the cinema as one of the main formers of his visual imagination: "At one time I analysed my dreams in detail; again and again I recalled purely cinematic effects ... panning shots, close shots, tracking, jump cuts, and the rest. In short, this mode of imagining is far too deep in me to eradicate–not only in me, in all my generation".[66] On the other hand, the impression is that Fowles would gladly do away with that same influence on the mind of his readers. He has insisted once and again that the cinema is fascistic[67], that, unlike the novel, it does not allow the reader to supply his or her own visual imagination. On the contrary, it offers a definite version of the story that is basically the same for everybody, an aspect in which the theatre is more open due to the different productions[68].

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[66] "Notes ..”., p. 156.

[67] In Galván, p. 775.

If Fowles were completely right, this would make the task of cinema critics virtually unnecessary. As anybody knows from experience, the same images in film may provoke in viewers reactions as different as those the novel can suggest. For one thing, there is no way to isolate the film from the rest of the visual culture of the viewer; just as we bring associations of aspects of other novels as we read, each time we see a film we integrate it in a network of visual associations with other images, which do not have to be exclusively cinematic.

Our optical capacities are very limited if we compare them to the speed with which we tend to assimilate thought through reading. Possibly this is the reason why people who are good readers find it often tiresome to see films. Nonetheless, the task of the spectator is not as passive as Fowles suggests, as any spectator who has had the chance to see a film, say, by Ingmar Bergman can witness. As for the theatre, the physical presence of the actors on the stage, possibly prevents spectators from identifying themselves in such a close degree as with the images on the screen. The actor on the screen ceases existing as a person and it is seen as image, an illusion that is modified by the breathing reality of the actor on stage–though the illusion is still maintained.

On the other hand, in physiological terms it is correct to say that the mental image in the mind of the viewer is replaced by the film image. When we see a film, we stop seeing any other mental image, something that does not happen when we read, for the novel makes us form new images. Nonetheless, since no viewer is a blank, a mental tabula rasa–hopefully–both kinds of images becomes part of the same personal memory: though the filmic image is *there* before the eyes, it soon disappears and eventually, blended with personal associations and connotations, occupies the same domain as the literary image: the memory. Thus, the syntagmatic process of perception may be more immediate in the cinema, but the paradigmatic process of mental linkage and recollection is the same for both cinema and the novel[69].

One of Fowles's most interesting opinions about the subject is his conviction that the cinema will eventually supersede the novel not so much because it may be more appealing, but because the cinema is making people lose their ability to read. His argument is that we form the images that accompany the book by reading correctly the text supplied by the author–the Conradian task of the artist 'to make you see' –but that younger readers find it increasingly more difficult to cope with the task of seeing through reading. Fowles remarks that it is television and not only the cinema what is so negatively affecting potential readers. Perhaps it should be added, that, of course, this is not the fault of the medium itself, but of those who own it and exploit it for purely commercial ends.

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[68] See *Daniel Martin*, p. 99.

[69] Cohen, p. 90. Furthermore, recently (22 May 1993), the Spanish novelist Arturo Pérez Reverte, whose novel *El maestro de esgrima* was adapted for the screen last year, offered an interesting point of view about the relationship between mental literary and cinematic images. He stated that his aim was not exactly writing novels that read like shooting scripts, but editing the scenes in the novels by taking into account the cinematographic culture of the readers. Of course, the visualization required from the readers would be a mixture of both reading novels and seeing films.

From another point of view, that of the creator, as it should be expected, Fowles feels more comfortable working on his own than as a part of a team. Regarding his work as screen writer during the shooting of the film version of his *The Magus*, he recalls feeling like a "skeleton at the feast" [70], though elsewhere he commented on the envy the collaboration between Reisz and Pinter for *The French Lieutenant's Woman* caused him.

It could be said that Fowles feels an unusual degree of possessiveness regarding his work: "I loathe the day a manuscript is sent to the publisher, because on that day the people one has loved die; they become what they are–petrified, fossil organisms for others to study and collect"[71]. He has even gone to the extent of publishing two versions of *The Magus*. Nonetheless, he has allowed three of his novels to become films, as he candidly says, more for the money than for the art[72]. Fowles has often commented that William Wyler's *The Collector* and Guy Hamilton's *The Magus* are not films he likes, but that he is happy enough with the adaptations of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and of his short story *The Enigma* for television.

The case of *The Collector* is certainly interesting. According to Samantha Eggar, the actress who played the role of Miranda, the film was shot following a script which did follow closely Fowles's work; however, Columbia, the producing company, decided to cut off the part of the plot showing how Miranda's love affair with her fifty-year-old art teacher gave her strength to endure her captivity. Significantly, this more basic version of the story has the effect of revealing how truly nasty Fowles's novel is under its cover of social confrontation. The film, nevertheless, has overstamped the text to the extent that when *The Collector* was recently shown on Catalan television (11 November 92), the reviews by the television critics of *Avui* and *El Periódico* did not include any reference at all to Fowles but to Almodovar's *Átame*, which plagiarises this film. In this way the cinema usurps the cultural memory of the writer for the viewers. Apparently, the adaptation of *The Enigma* for television was a more satisfactory experience for both writer and adapter, Malcolm Bradbury. So impressed was Bradbury by what he calls "the enigmatic delicacy with which John Fowles suffered the process of adaptation" and by Fowles's "telling if gnomic comments", that when his own *The History Man* was adapted for television by Christopher Hampton he adopted "an enigmatic Fowlesianism" to make his own suggestions[73].

The British screen writer in Hollywood Fowles writes about in *Daniel Martin* could well be a representation of Harold Pinter: an extraordinarily talented man who has found his metier in a medium that does not contribute to furthering his artistic scope. For the critics, there seems to be a Janus-faced Pinter; one, the *avant-garde* playwright, the other, the money-spinning screen playwright. The particularity of Pinter's task for the cinema is that he has tried to avoid blockbusters and has concentrated on films in collaboration with prestigious directors, or, alternatively, based on distinguished works.

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[70] "Notes ..".., p. 156.

[71] "Notes ..".., p. 160.

[72] In his 'Foreword' to Harold Pinter's screenplay he seems, though, to seek quite another justification: "It is the techniques [of film and fiction] that are so different, not the final aims; and if I have to justify (as rather an alarming number of readers have told me I must) the selling of rights, one reason certainly lies in my fascination with that difference of technique". In Harold Pinter, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981.) p. xiii.

[73] Bradbury, *No, Not Bloomsbury*. p. 303, 305.

Pinter's collaboration with the cinema is long and distinguished; it includes seventeen screenplays extending for thirty years from his first collaboration with Joseph Losey in 1963 in *The Servant,* while his work for the stage consists of thirty-two long and short plays. As it can be seen, Pinter's career in the cinema has run parallel to his stage career (his first staged play was *The Birthday Party* in 1958). His longest-standing collaboration has been with Joseph Losey, with whom he collaborated in three films. Among other directors, Pinter has written scripts for Jack Clayton, Elia Kazan and Paul Schrader and has even directed himself a film based on a play by Simon Gray. His own work has been filmed in four occasions[74].

The second peculiarity of Pinter's screenplays is that all of them are adaptations of works written by other writers to the extent that when he directed his own film, *Butley,* he did not take the chance to write his own screenplay. Pinter has stated that the reason why he does not write original screenplays is that the few original ideas he has immediately go to the theatre, while, on the other hand, for him adapting the work of another person offers the challenge of entering another mind[75]. Thus, screen writing seems to be for him a peculiar form of acting out, of interpreting the role written by somebody else. He is possibly a good teller, a good medium, so to speak, but not a good creator.

There is not so much tension in the screenplays by Pinter as in the plays, possibly due to the fact that for the screenplays he tends to use the dialogue available from the original play. In the plays by Pinter language becomes an impassable barrier between the characters. Pinter's characters find communication terrifying and it could well be said that his plays are precisely about the oddity of actual communication:

> We have heard many times that tired, grimy phrase: 'Failure of communication' ... and this phrase has been fixed to my own work quite consistently. I believe the contrary. I think we communicate only too well, in our silence, in what is unsaid, and that what takes place is a continuous evasion, desperate rearguard attempts to keep ourselves to ourselves. Communication is too alarming. To enter into someone's life is too frightening. To disclose to others the poverty within us is too fearsome a possibility.[76]

Thus, usually in Pinter's plays the little that is said gains a prominence that seems unrelated to the simplicity of the language itself; on the other hand, the focus on silence foregrounds the isolation of the characters and their relationship to the space in which they move. In film, the characteristic Pinteresque dialogue of quasi illogical conversations full of short sentences and non-sequiturs is even more prominent, the action even stranger. An example is the film based on his play *Betrayal*, in which the sharp sound of what the characters do not say almost drowns what their trivial conversations do say.

The realism of Pinter's plays is, then, an eerie, lucid dissection of the illogicality, the non-sense behind most of our everyday conversations and situations. He has invented a brand of realism that seems surrealistic because, precisely, of its hyperrealism; people who do not listen to each other, hold one-sided conversations or simply get entangled with words like with wool balls, are more real than it seems. He has even developed his own kind of humour based on the stickiness of words which is wry, hardly amusing in the habitual sense, though playful enough. His characters are people who have come to life in his mind and demand to exist in a way that puzzles Pinter himself; they are concrete and real, not allegorical: "For Pinter, characters and dramatic context are particularised. He has never, he says, 'started a play from any kind of abstract idea or theory' or has regarded his characters 'as allegorical representations of any particular force, whatever that may mean'"[77]. Pinter's plays do not mean anything but are, especially taking into account that he has always denied that he wishes to broadcast some message through his plays.

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[74] See *Appendix 2: Films and Screenplays*.

[75] In Garies, p. 54

[76] Harold Pinter, "Introduction: Writing for the Theatre; A Speech Made by Harold Pinter at the National Student Drama Festival in Bristol in 1962" in *Plays One*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1990.) p. 13.

Perhaps the clue of the success of Pinter as both playwright and screen playwright lies in his training as an actor: "Yes, my experience as an actor has influenced my plays–it must have–though it's impossible for me to put my finger on it exactly. I think I certainly developed some feeling for construction which, believe or not, is important to me, and for speakeable dialogue"[78]. He does not write from the self-consciousness of the avant-garde playwright but from the point of view of the interpreter on stage. He has, then, a keener sense than most playwright to know how scenes will actually work both on stage and on the screen. As texts, their plays do not amount to much more than his screenplays; they are not especially rich in stylistic terms, because he tries to be as close as possible to the nuances of real speech. This means that like in most contemporary theatre the visualization accompanying the text on stage plays an essential role. Speaking about the contrast between drama and film, Pinter has noted that the difference that not lie in the use of words on stage to focus on some images, but on the impossibility of focusing on certain non-verbal, pure images as closely as in the cinema. Ronald Hayman has seen in Pinter's qualities as a playwright a special naturalness to handle the cinema since, according to him, Pinter has always shown a good command of the resources of the stage so as to "bring into close-up objects and gestures which do not normally figure quite prominently in plays"[79]. Interestingly, in contrast with Fowles, Pinter has claimed that his plays start with words, with somebody saying something to somebody else, while Fowles has seen in images the genesis of his novels. Of course, the paradox is that Pinter deals better in words than in images and Fowles with words than with images.

Other aspects that Fowles and Pinter have–despite their absolutely opposite positions as writers[80]–is the common wish to ask for the collaboration of their audiences. Of course, while Fowles almost harasses his readers by grabbing them like the Ancient Mariner, Pinter assumes the more detached posture of observing the readers come to their own conclusions. Of the two, Pinter is the more authentically post-modern, doubt-ridden as he is about the weird reality of his characters, about what they say or do, he lets his audiences use the text not in reference to himself but to themselves, something Fowles does not allow.

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[77] In Bernard F. Dukore, *Harold Pinter*. (London: MacMillan, 1982.) p. 6

[78] Harold Pinter, "Introduction: Writing for Myself; Based on a Conversation with Richard Findlater published in *The Twentieth Century*, February 1961". In *Plays Two*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1990.) p. vii.

[79] Ronald Hayman, *Harold Pinter by Ronald Hayman*. (London: Heinemann Educational Books, Ltd., 1968(1980).) p. 106.

[80] Thus Peter Wolfe says that "Whereas the subcellar people of Sartre, Beckett and Pinter find reality sticky and sluggish, Fowles's characters try to make sense of it" (p. 49). Possibly, when adapting the work of others, part of Pinter's interest is exploring the works of those who see some sense, no matter how artificial, in life in contrast with his own point of view.

The great difficulty when reading Pinter's plays is deciding the extent to which they are personal creations. Since all of them are adaptations and since he claims to write "... always–and certainly in the case of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*–from a substantial respect for the work itself"[81], what follows is that the screenplays are likely to show fewer connections among themselves than the plays as a body. As it happens, there is something distinctively personal in his adaptations–possibly simply an extraordinary skill at construction. Or, as Jennifer Randisi puts it, what happens is collaboration[82]. The idea of collaboration that not only refer to the way in which the weight of the action is shifted onto the task of the actors as a group, but also to Pinter's own collaboration with the directors he writes for. In the case of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, for instance, the working method consisted of extensive conversations with Reisz from which Pinter drafted the scenes, a task that took them long ten months.

As it could be supposed the plays and the screenplays by Pinter do not lie in separated compartments. There are mutual influences, though perhaps it should be noted that the influences of the plays on the screenplays are a matter of technique, while the opposite influence has rather to do with aspects of the subject matters. Dukore sees significative points of connection between *Old Times* (1970) and the screenplays that mediate between this play and the previous long one, *The Homecoming* (1965), namely, *The Quiller Memorandum*, *Accident* and *The Go-Between*[83]; these runs from names to the use of flashbacks. For Ronald Hayman there are shared aspects in *Accident* and Pinter's play *The Basement* (1967), written in the same year, that have to do mainly with the subject of the invasion of a private space by a couple of lovers[84].

Guido Almansi and Simon Henderson argue that the influence of the screenwriting craft is, nonetheless, relevant in Pinter's stage work: "To convey Bergson's sense of 'lived time' in the theatre (*la durée vécue*), Pinter often resorts to certain cinematic and televisual devices such as flashbacks and fade-ins, devices that he become accustomed to using through screenplays and plays made especially for television"[85]. The representation of the passage of times plays an important role both in Pinter's plays and screenplays. The dramatization of the interrelationship between past and present in *The Go-Between,* based on L.P. Hartley's atmospheric 1953 novel is the best-known case. In the novel, a first person adult narrator remembers in 1950 the events happened in the summer of 1900 as he visits Marian, the woman around whom those events spun. The plot concerns the secret love affair between Marian, an upper-class girl, and Ted Burgess, a farmer, for whom Leo, the protagonist and a guest at her house, acts as a messenger. Eventually, the discovery of Marian and Ted making love and Marian's hasty wedding to another man, pregnant as she is by Ted, will turn Leo into a sexually impotent man. Later, when he is in his fifties he is asked by Marian to pass on the real story to her grandson. What Pinter did to substitute the first person narrator was to interpose in the action dealing with 1900 flash-forward showing Leo on his way to visit Marian. The particularity is that those flashes, which are numerous enough (there is a total of thirty-one) are sometimes images on which voices from the section of the past are overimposed and sometimes voices that are heard as the action in the past goes on. This intercutting device that binds so well past and present may have inspired the intercut narrative of Victorian past and 1980s present in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

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[81] In Garies, p. 54.

[82] Jennifer L. Randisi, "Harold Pinter as Screenwriter" in Alan Bold, *Harold Pinter: You Never Heard Such Silence*. (London and Totowa: Vision Press Ltd & Barnes and Noble Books, 1984(1985).) p. 67.

[83] Dukore, p. 89

[84] Hayman, p. 73.

[85] Guido Almansi and Simon Henderson, *Harold Pinter*. (London and New York: Methuen, 1983.) p. 85.

Of course, this way of connection past and present through an intercutting device is Pinter's own, so it is not so surprising that it is repeated in a number of his screenplays. What is more difficult to interpret are the claims by different critics that there are subjects in common in many of his screenplays. Thus Neil Sinyard: "Thematically, all three films [*The Go-Between, The Servant, Accident*] are about destructive relationships ending in tragedy. In each case, hypocrisy plays an important part, characters being torn apart acting out a role in their public lives that bears no relationship to their private desires"[86]. This applies equally well to *The Last Tycoon*, *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and to *The Comfort of Strangers*, three other screenplays by Pinter. However, taking into consideration that the subjects of the screenplays are not made up by Pinter but provided by the original books, perhaps the obvious conclusion would be that Pinter accepts adapting only the books that are thematically interesting for him, not just the better-paid jobs. Or alternatively, that through his screen writing, Pinter has accidentally discovered subjects shared by several books that he has foregrounded. All in all, his screenplays have finally acquired such a prestige that his name is enough to guarantee a certain quality in the film, despite the director. A sign of this maybe that when *El País* recently (April 1993) informed in its last page gossip column about the new adaptation of Kafka's *The Trial*, the two great names named where those of the protagonist, Kyle MacLachlan and the screen writer, Harold Pinter, though not that of the director, David Jones. The most interesting point is that the journalist did not consider it necessary to inform Spanish readers about who Pinter is by naming other films he has collaborated in.

3.2. From Project to Film: Selling *The French Lieutenant's Woman* to American Audiences

The story of the adaptation of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* has been told by John Fowles in his own "Foreword" to the edition of Harold Pinter's screenplay[87]. Apparently, it was John Fowles's agent, Tom Maschler, who suggested selling the rights of the novel for its screen adaptation immediately after the novel was published. Fowles agreed with the condition of choosing his own director and writer if possible, the priority being the director. He was not satisfied with previous adaptations of his work, so this time he wanted to be in control, if not of the film, at least of who would have the right to film it. His first choice was Karel Reisz but Reisz declined the offer then because ha had just completed *Isadora* and did not want to involve himself in another film that required period production design. Fowles's first choice for screenwriter was indeed Harold Pinter, but since Reisz nor Pinter were then available, other directors were approached. Candidates including Fred Zinemman, with screenwriter Dennis Potter, Richard Lester, Mike Nichols and Franklin Schaffner dropped successively from the project since no screenwriter seemed capable of tackling the problem of adapting the book without doing away with what seemed to be its most prominent feature: the authorial voice. Eventually, in 1978 Maschler approached Reisz again and the latter accepted... on condition that Pinter wrote the screenplay. Thus, Fowles could finally join as heads of his dream team the writer and the director of his choice.

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[86] Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation*. (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986.) p. 72

[87] London: Jonathan Cape, 1981.

All in all, one of the interesting aspects of the process is that the adaptation was originated by the novelist himself. Fowles and Maschler took active part in seeking for a producer and selling the rights of the novel. Despite the initial success of the novel, a number of producers adduced curious objections in order not to tackle the job. As it could be expected, while screen writers had problems to remain faithful to the book, producers rather concentrated on the plot itself, which was what would sustain the screen adaptation. Thus, according to Fowles, one of the difficulties the project encountered was the Victorian romance plot: "As one studio head put it to me, he was profoundly uninterested in buying a latter-day Victorian romance when there were hundreds of the genuine article–and from the most formidable corpus of writers in English fiction–lying about out of copyright and to be had for nothing" (p. xi). Another writer, whom Fowles keeps in a merciful anonymity, rejected the commission to write the screenplay arguing that "he could not help propagate a story so biased to the female side". (p. viii)

Seemingly, the choice of Karel Reisz was reinforced by the sensitive treatment he gave the figure of Isadora Duncan in his film about her. Karel Reisz had started his career in the 1950s as one of the main practitioner of the Free Cinema, together with Lindsay Anderson and Tony Richardson. This movement marked not only a new approach to the representation of reality in cinema, with a quasi-documentary quality; it also marked the moment in which British literature and cinema grew out of their post-war boundaries. The works of many of the new authors of the 1950s and 1960s were adapted by Reisz and the other directors. Indeed, Reisz' first feature film was an adaptation in 1960 of Allan Sillitoe's *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, scripted by Sillitoe himself. According to Harlan Kennedy, like other British films of the same school, Reisz' adaptation is extremely faithful to its source[88]. Nonetheless, the originality of this kind of adaptation lies rather in the novelty of the material out of which the films were made than in the films themselves. Kennedy also points out that Reisz has a romantic conception of his heroes and heroines, an interest on the rebel[89], which must have made him for Fowles the ideal candidate to tackle the finely balanced relationship in Sarah Woodruff between sheer rebellion and wilfulness.

Regarding the technical aspects, Reisz' contribution to *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and to Pinter's screenplay is closely related to his previous experience as a film editor. In 1953 he published, together with Gavin Millar, *The Technique of Film*

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[88] Kennedy, p. 29.

[89] Kennedy, p. 27. Neil Sinyard insists precisely on the same point regarding Reisz.

Editing[90], a handbook still in use in the field. Reisz himself has noted that the best point of the book is that it is not a book about the theory of editing but a handbook without pretensions which aims at teaching how to solve concrete situations in film editing[91]. The fact is that its common sense approach to problem-solving makes Reisz's book a more appealing book that most texts on narrative techniques in the cinema. Obviously, a great part of the success of the volume has to do with the simple fact that it is not written by a theorist by somebody who has practised his craft for years. Among others, Reisz's main argument in the book runs along the lines that visual juxtaposition was regrettably lost with the advent of sound cinema. Other authors have noted that with the rise of sound films, the cinema went back to one of its original sources, the theatre, thus losing in the process much of its inherent qualities. Obviously, what the cinema borrowed from drama was the reliance of action on dialogue, a feature that spoiled the visual richness of montage, especially in the creation of metaphor. None can deny, though, that silent films were limited since lack of sound was not a choice but a necessity. Music and notices supplied the blanks left by the absence of spoken language and, though notices have disappeared[92], music still remains as non-diegetic accompaniment for the narrative action. Again, the problematic of the relationship between silent and sound film have very much to do with the fact that film has developed as narrative and not, for instance, as the silent equivalent of poetry.

The most important point Reisz makes in the book, though, is the emphasis on the artificiality of editing on film:

> Thus if we find no parallel in actual experience for certain editing devices, it is simply because the editor and director do not want to reproduce the physical world as one normally sees it. A spectator, moreover, does not expect to see a film unfold like an episode of real life–any more than he expects a novel to read like a diary. He accepts the film-maker's right to select and emphasize, to show a piece of action in a way which is obviously more suitable to dramatic presentation than is our normal perception. (p. 215)

Actually noticing that the way films are edited has little to do with real life requires an unusual degree of self-consciousness in the spectator. It would be fascinating, though, to see to what extent our perception of reality is being influenced by films. Do we recall our memories as close-ups, medium-shots, tracking shots and so on? So imperceptible is the mechanism of editing than when it is foregrounded as it happens in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, reactions from viewers run from pleasant uneasiness to total rejection. As for Reisz, who has used intercutting devices in other of his films–notably in *Isadora*–he believes in a musical nature of cinema reflected by montage that distinguishes it from the novel[93].

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[90] London and Boston: Focal Press, 1953 (second edition 1968; 1987).

[91] In Michel Ciment, "Entretien avec Karel Reisz". *Positif*, no. 252, March 1982. p. 29.

[92] Almost. In *The French Lieutenant's Woman* Reisz does use a notice to inform the viewer that there is a lapse of three years between the beginning of Charles' search for Sarah and its end.

[93] One wonders, though, whether this effect is not being taken up successfully by the novel. An interesting instance is Peter Ackroyd's *Hawksmoor* (1985), which leads the reader back and forth in time between the 18th century and our century. The subject itself is the intermingling of past and present, including coincidences of place and name in the circumstances surrounding

Possibly the greatest quality Reisz possesses, the furthest one from Fowles and what must have attracted him in the first place, is his belief that film is a free process that entails freedom at all levels of production, including adaptation[94]. He is the kind of collaborating director that obtains the most of his team, precisely because he does not belief in being an authoritarian director. For him, a all good filmmaking is an organic process than should not be curtailed by the intervention of a dictatorial director. This explains his collaboration with Pinter in the discussion of the script, though, it does not explain so well the final changes on Pinter's script that are obvious in the film.

The fourth man in the team, possibly the most important one but also the one to whom less critical attention is paid, was producer Leon Clore. Unfortunately, films are not easy projects to carry out because they require a great investment, so, for all its value, without Clore's collaboration, Pinter's screenplay would have become another rarity, a second *Proust Screenplay*. Assembling the money to film *The French Lieutenant's Woman* was almost as difficult as finding a competent screenwriter and it could well be argued that money determines the kind of adaptation filmed much more than the talents of the team involved. As Fowles says, films are so expensive and difficult to make that "the greatest gift a good screenwriter can give a director is not so much a version 'faithful' to the book as a version faithful to the very different production capability (and relation with audience) of the cinema"[95]. Leon Clore is credited with having said one of the most poignant sentences about British cinema, namely, that if the United States spoke Spanish, there would be a genuine British film industry[96]. Since home audiences are so small, the economic success of commercial British cinema has become dependent on Hollywood studios which are willing to invest dollars on English films with the expectation of exploiting them in the USA. Sharing the language but not the money has meant that the British film industry has often lost its most valuable men to Hollywood money (Reisz's own case), though the experience has often been disappointed for filmmakers used to working with less money and more control on their work. Reisz himself has complained that all creativity in Hollywood is bounded by contracts[97]. On the other hand it has also meant that there are fewer and fewer genuine British films, especially if they are made to make a profit. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* did not escape this situation, quite on the contrary.

This very English story cost nine million dollars to produce in 1980-1, which, according to Karel Reisz, was cheap enough for Hollywood standards though expensive for British pockets. The money was raised partly by Leon Clore by pre-selling the film to an American distributor and partly by Steven Bach of United Artists, who later became famous as the man who financed the disaster of *Heaven's Gate*. Interestingly, although 1981 was not a good year for the British film industry, out of 26 films three became absolute successes in USA: *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *Chariots of Fire*

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both the 18th century and the 20th century protagonists. The main difference, though, is that Ackroyd announces the shifts by means of dividing the novel as it is traditional in chapters.

[94] See Ciment, p. 31.

[95] 'Foreword', p. xii.

[96] In interview with Nick Roddick. See Roddick's interesting article on commercial British cinema, "If the United States spoke Spanish, we would have a film industry..". in Martyn Auty and Nick Roddick, *British Cinema Now* (London: British Film Institute, 1985).

[97] For this remark and for Reisz's explanation of the financial arrangements backing his film see Lise Bloch-Morhange, "Entretien avec Karel Reisz", *Cahiers du Cinema*, no. 332, February 1982, p. III-V.

and *Time Bandits*[98]. The attraction the three films had for American audiences was their very Britishness, each one in its own kind, though in the first case a distinctive American note had been introduced.

Fowles commented half-amused and half-angry that a previous version of the script was once rejected by an American producer on the grounds that the only character with whom American audiences could identify was Mr. Freeman, Fowles's Oxford Street store-owner. Fowles decided mercifully that by that remark the studio head had managed to insult his fellow-countrymen more than the British team of collaborators[99], but the fact is that in the definitive version securing the interest of American audiences became a priority. This was done by casting in the role of Sarah an American actress, Meryl Streep.

Karel Reisz is extraordinarily candid when he confesses that the project took definite shape when Meryl Streep accepted the main role and that they were lucky in that the actress they absolutely wanted was the one that led them to the money[100]. The fact is that, after seeing Streep's performance, it is hard to imagine who else could have played Sarah with so much sensitivity. Fowles claimed that he was pleased with the choice because he had always seen Sarah as a free American and that the fact that Meryl Streep was the only American in the all-British crew was an apt metaphor for Sarah being a social outcast. As usual, Meryl Streep showed her mastery at dominating accent by playing the part of Sarah with a very satisfactory English accent, which contrasts sharply with the American accent of Anna, the actress who plays Sarah in the film within the film. Thrilling as it must have been for American audiences to appreciate the work of a new truly great American star, with Streep Fowles lost the chance of hearing her own Sarah speak with a Dorset accent. Not that Meryl Streep could not learn this as well, if she wished so, but that the head of the American studio financing the film considered that American audiences would not accept a film with dialectal accents other than American, something that displeased Fowles profoundly[101].

The casting of Jeremy Irons as Charles Smithson was no doubt calculated to counterbalance the American appeal of Meryl Streep with a dose of British acting style. Although the habitual gossip about Hollywood films attributed the choice of Irons to Meryl Streep and to his role as Charles Ryder in the successful TV adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited*, the fact is that Irons was originally Pinter's choice. The admiration between Irons and Pinter was mutual: Irons had played Mick in Pinter's *The Caretaker*, though his choice was determined by Pinter's adaptation of *Langrishe, Go down*, allegedly because he played very well a quite nasty character. Later, in 1983, Irons played one of the main roles in the screen adaptation of Pinter's *Betrayal*, the project he undertook as he ended *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

Apart from being the right age to play Charles Smithson, Irons is, as Fowles suggests, one of the few actors, indeed of the few British actors, who can play a gentleman with the elegant style of a David Niven or a Laurence Olivier, without being ridiculous. At the time he made *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Irons candidly declared that his main aspiration as an actor was international stardom without loss of privacy. As a matter of fact both Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons reached stardom thanks to this film, stardom that was a couple of years ago redounded by the Hollywood Oscar as best actor to Jeremy Irons for *Reversal of Fortune*[102].

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[98] Barr, p. 67.

[99] See 'Foreword', p. xiii.

[100] See Ciment, p. 27.

[101] In Galván, p. 275.

All in all, Reisz finds a distinctive European quality in his film that goes against contemporary American production and is based on the literary roots of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*[103]. Intelligent as it is, it is not very frequent to find references to *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as an exemplary adaptation. It seems that the popularity of the book, which must have been one of the very few instances (if not the only one) of a best-selling novel well received by the literary establishment, is superior to the popularity of the film. John Fowles remarks that his initial fears, which he attributes to all writers whose work is adapted, that the novel would be overstamped by the film were dispelled by the sales figure of the novel by the time it was film: around ten million copies. In any case, the film was successful enough as to boost anew sales of the novel and to partially erase the connection between Fowles and the other films based on his novels[104]. In a sense, as it happens with many novelists, Fowles has becomes more popular as the originator of the story in the film than as a novelist–at least his later novels have never reached the popularity of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* and that has very much to do. Fowles has become *The French Lieutenant's Woman*'s man whether it pleases him or not.

3.3. Re-telling as a Creative Effort: *The French Lieutenant's Woman* as Filmic Notion and Metaphorical Reading

Tony Lovell argues that "...the novel's triple identity as best-seller, nineteenth-century realist fiction, and modernist text offered a complete range of possible choices to the film-makers"[105]. His conclusion is that the novel has been finally turned into a Victorian costume romantic melodrama because the conventions of the literary adaptation are limited. What Fowles calls the stereoscopic vision of the book, that is the interplay between the romantic plot and the digressing author of course, is, of course, impossible to transfer onto the screen. There is no such thing as a narrative voice in cinema[106] in the same way as a narrator has no place in the theatre. At a given moment somebody suggested introducing a narrator within the film, such as the one in Max Ophuls' *La Ronde*, but Fowles was not excessively happy with the idea. All in all, what Lovell's criticism reveals is that critics tend to ignore Pinter's modern plot as an unnecessary contribution that mixes badly with the more important Victorian plot. It also hints, indirectly, at what Pinter probably quickly saw: that without its authorial voice the plot of the novel (which is the only element susceptible of adaptation) is pure Victorian melodrama.

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[102] Nonetheless, Meryl Streep found it easier to diversify her roles than Irons who was typecast as 'the British actor who can play gentlemen'. Irons has tried hard to do away with this image, for instance by playing the crazed gynaecologist twins of David Cronenberg's *Deadringers*, but he still remains associated to that memory of him as Charles Ryder and Charles Smithson. Incidentally, Streep and Irons are working together for the first time after *The French Lieutenant's Woman* in Bille August's all-star adaptation of Isabel Allende's *La casa de los espíritus*.

[103] See Bloch-Morhange, p. III.

[104] An unmistakeable sign that the popularity of the film has opened newer markets for the book is the fact that the Spanish translation of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* was the book the Caixa of Barcelona's Sant Jordi's gift book for 1982. The dust-jacket showed at the front Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons as Sarah and Charles, while the blurbs made reference to Karel Reisz's, though, needless to say, it kept absolute silence about Pinter's retelling of the story. Interestingly, the summary of the plot on the jacket was absolutely misleading, presenting Sarah as the governess of the house owned by Charles; it did not make reference, either, to the allegedly important experimental side of the book. No doubt, the funniest aspect of this edition is that the book included a note from the publisher guaranteeing that there was no mistake whatsoever of proof-reading in the last two chapters. John Fowles, *La Mujer del Teniente Francés*, translated by Ana Mª de la Fuente. (Barcelona: Argos Vergara, 1982.)

[105] Lovell, p. 126.

John Fowles has received well this adaptation and has praised the film as a "brilliant metaphor" [107]; that is to say, for Fowles the film has imaginatively much to do with his novel, but literally very little. Nonetheless, his praise of Pinter's work does not obscure the fact that he was the only one at the film set not amused by somebody's suggestion that Pinter's screenplay were novelized[108]. His suggestion is that the limit of time imposed on most films helps them become artistic products while at the same time preventing them from actually reproducing the book. He has declared several times that television, concretely TV serialisation, is the most adequate medium to reproduce novels if what the novelists prefers is simply an illustration of his work. The eight-hour series he suggests would be necessary to adapt *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is, indeed, much closer to the actual time it takes to read the novel than the bare two hours Reisz takes to tell the two parallel stories. No doubt, a television adaptation would still have encountered the same difficulties with the authorial voice but it could have dealt with the characters more extensively than Pinter's screenplay does.

Good adaptations should rather be a matter of criticism than of illustration. In the former case they play with the complicity of the reader who already knows the book and offer new angles from which to appreciate; in the latter, they are not much more valuable than extended television advertisements for the book in question. For Reisz the question of faithfulness in literary adaptations is "nonsensical", so what Pinter and him did was, on the one hand to extract the purely cinematic elements in which Fowles's novel abounds to construct the Victorian side of the plot and, secondly, to find their own modern point of view to contrast Fowles's plot: "So we came to the conclusion that creating an artefact and sharing the idea of it with the audience was basic to the telling of this story. So we tried to find a filmic, not an equivalent–you can't find an equivalent–but a filmic *notion* that would give us this double view"[109].

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[106] There are exceptions, of course, but the narrative voices off heard with the film usually correspond to first person narrators; one instance is *Blade Runner,* whose action is accompanied by Harrison Ford's voice as the protagonist Rick Deckard. Interestingly, the narrative voice off has been sacrificed by Ridley Scott in the 1992 re-edition of the film, though not all critics agree that this has been a happy decision.

[107] "Foreword", p. 12. Kenith L. Simmons has written that the way in which the metaphor is achieved is through the parallel editing of the modern and the Victorian story; he argues that the intercutting is Reisz's self-conscious answer to filmmaking just like Fowles' authorial voice is his self-conscious reply to the art of the novelist. See his "*The French Lieutenant's Woman* as Metaphor: Karel Reisz's Non-plot Centered Editing" in *New Orleans Review*, 1984, Summer, Vol 11(2), p. 17-22.

[108] See 'Foreword', p. xiv.

[109] Kennedy, p. 28.

The idea what to engage the audiences through a good yarn while teasing them out of their credibility on the story told, much as Fowles does, by making it obvious that one of the stories was absolutely fictional since it was being filmed. Furthermore, the aspect to emphasize would not be the foregrounding of fictionality but the blurring of the edges between fiction and reality–within the film, of course–by centring the plot on love. As Richard Combs says, the film could be "the first deconstructed period blockbuster"[110], though what is doubtful is on which word of this phrase should the stress be laid. Possibly Pinter's task, implied in Fowles's work, is represented by the first adjective, Reisz's by the period look of the film, while the third one is possibly producer Leon Clore's responsibility.

The double plot of modern adultery and Victorian romance in the film crosscuts the action very much in the same way that in the novel extensive flashbacks and other digressions stop the flow of the ongoing story. The pretext for the double plot is simply that of organizing the modern story around the shooting of a film called *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Thus, what we have on screen is the couple of actors having an affair while they play the role of two Victorians having their own affair on screen. In several moments we are shown clearly shown aspects of the set where the shooting is going on, so we are supposed to be mystified by the illusion of believing that Sarah and Charles are real as we see Anna and Mike perform them. Of course, showing the film-making process in which Anna and Mike are involved does not imply authorial intervention in the same way as in the novel. Obviously, the film cannot refer back to 19th century films as there are no Victorian films so it chooses to refer, alternatively, to the present. The device of showing the actors perform is not totally innovative, of course; Truffaut used it very well in *Day for Night.* Besides this, it is the actors who carry the weight of the modern story, not the director. The screenplay could have well dealt with the problems a 1980s film director could have to film *The French Lieutenant's Woman* but the option chosen by Pinter and Reisz is to deal with the implications the film brings to the life of the protagonists. Reisz, who actually had the idea of the double plot that Pinter developed, wanted the modern story not to contain much drama or intrigue; both director and screenplay agreed that the film would show both stories as a commentary on each other, as a well integrated whole rather than as separate plots. Besides this, Reisz wanted to produce the effect that the interrelationship between both stories should not depend on the flow of passion of the characters but on the absolutely controlled nature of the film. The effect Pinter and Reisz aimed at, then, was not a romance plot reduplicated in the past and in the present: they aimed at a plot of frustrated love in which one of the main ingredients was frustrating the spectator's illusion until the very end that he was going to be shown yet another romantic story. They simply did not want this story to become the gripping narrative of Fowles's book.

For some reason, critics and reviewers have tended to consider the double plot more annoying than the intrusion of the authorial voice in the novel, possibly because cinema audiences tend to be more conservative. In general, most criticism of the film is disappointing because it is written from the point of view of the defence of the novel and mostly by contrasting film and novel, not by looking straight at the film. Most complaints have to do with the modern part of the plot. The affair between Anna and Mike has been described by various critics as facile, uncommitted, and bland, and the development of their story as tiresome. The affair between Sarah and Charles has been dubbed the glossiest love triangle, deprived of most of the social consciousness of Fowles's novel. Tom Milne has claimed that "Pinter subjects the whole thing to disastrous impressionistic fragmentation"[111] and even been so harsh as to say that the most successful sequence in the film is the Pinteresque garden party in which Mike tries unsuccessfully to win back Anna under the noses of his wife Sonia and her lover Davide, a scene that for him has much to do with Pinter and nothing with Fowles. Precisely the point of the film is that what Reisz has filmed is not Fowles's story at all but Pinter's–furthermore, as Fowles himself realized, there was no reason at all why Pinter or Reisz should be forced to film his novel. The amazing aspect is that the realization of this has not lead critics to review the film by itself; it has led them back to the novel, sometimes with an unjustified anger that tells very much about the conservatism of literary critics: "His [Pinter's] adaptation, in truth, is no adaptation at all. The film carries the book's title; the names of some of the characters are the same; even some of the dialogue and a great deal of the action repeats the text. But that is where the similarity ends. The film is a death-mask image of the living novel; what is missing is the very life of the book. The surface is recapitulated; the heart is gone".[112]

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[110] Richard Combs, "Through a Glass Doubly", *Sight & Sound*, Vol. 50, No. 4, Autumn 1981. p. 277.

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[111] Tom Milne, "*The French Lieutenant's Woman*", *Monthly Film Bulletin*, Vol. 48, No. 573. p. 200

[112] Tony Whall, "Karel Reisz's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*: Only the Name Remains the Same", *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 1982, v10(29), p.91. In general, opinions are divided concerning the film; nobody seems thoroughly satisfied with the film as a whole, though its various aspects are distinctly praised. As far as reviewers and critics are concerned, Peter Conradi's view that it is "certainly a curious commentary on a remarkable novel" seems to be the last word. (Peter Conradi, "*The French Lieutenant's Woman*: Novel, Screenplay, Film", *Critical Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 1, p. 56.

4. The Screenplay and the Film Director: Tensions over the Right End

4.1. Material Aspects in Film Construction: Making *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

While writing a novel involves integrating the different functions (characters, locations, actions, descriptions and so on), the screen adaptation involves a process of disintegration of those same functions. The screenwriter dissects the novel into separate functional items and assembles the text of the screenplay by combining anew those items, very much in the way that Victor Frankenstein assembled his monster out of scattered pieces. Adapting is neither summarizing, nor copying, but reconstructing in screenplay format from a previous deconstruction of a non-screenplay format text. As Karel Reisz says, the director and the screen playwright should make something coherent in film terms, not in novelistic terms.

The whole screenplay was written by Pinter in a process that took a year, of which ten months were spent in discussion with Reisz as a source for the first draft. Obviously, Pinter wrote from top to bottom the modern scenes, but for the Victorian plot he took most of his lines from Fowles's novel. The question of the dialogue is interesting enough. Fowles researched extensively to write something that sounded sufficiently old-fashioned and Victorian for 1867, since, according to him most real dialogue of the period still sounded modern enough[113]. This deliberately old-fashioned language of the dialogues was regarded as too artificial by Reisz and a great worry of his was that it did not sound too much so on the screen. Accordingly, most of the rich dialogue of the novel has been reduced or, alternatively, Pinter has tried to use the more condensed conversations. In any case, speeches have always been shortened, though, not always because of the artificiality of the language. All in all, the film is not wordy, which was Reisz's main fear when the writer is in control. Indeed, Pinter tried to keep a tight control on the dialogue heard on the film. Apparently, Karel Reisz asked for permission to change lines, whenever necessary, though this permission did not extend to cutting lines or speeches off, of which there are many instances. For Pinter, though, the main problem seems to be to protect the lines not so much from the director as from the actors:

> '... Well, you don't take a bloody year to write the damn thing and have the actors change your lines ... In my contract I have something very explicit, precise and concrete: The screenplay is decided before we shoot. Done, that's it. I mean, certainly Karel would ring me up during shooting and say, 'Look, can we say...?' And then it's up to me to write the new ... line, or whatever it is. It never came to a speech. It was always a matter of phrases.'[114]

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[113] "Notes", p. 150.

[114] In Garis, p. 69. For a discussion of the not so placid relationship among the novelist, the screenwriter and the director of this film, see Shoshana Knapp, "The Transformation of a Pinter Screenplay: Freedom and Calculation in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*", *Modern Drama*, 1985, March, v28(1), 55-69.

One of the aspects of the novel that was totally altered in Pinter's screenplay is the sequence of events. Fowles's book includes extensive flashbacks to explain the past of the characters up to the moment when Charles and Sarah meet. This could not be done in the screenplay basically because it would have interfered with the double plot to the effect of totally confusing the viewer. The film within the film, that is to say, the Victorian plot, begins, then, with the episode of Charles' proposal to Ernestina, so that the first scene in the novel actually occurs just after the first fifteen minutes of the film. Regarding the device of the film within the film, we are never told whether what we see from the Victorian film is the whole thing, in which case it would last for about one hour and a quarter, or whether there are other scenes we are not shown. As Peter Conradi has noted, we are made to believe that films are shot in chronological order, which, of course, is not true. In other aspects, the chronological rearrangement alters the sequence of events so as to make them the opposite of what they are in the novel. The most significant change is that in Pinter's text, Charles visits Sarah the prostitute before having sex with Sarah, while in the novel the visit happens after their hotel encounter.

The location of the film was, obviously, dictated by economic considerations. The film was made on location in Lyme Regis, where Fowles lives and where he set his story. The team spent five weeks in Lyme and even converted their reconstruction of 19th century Lyme into a tourist attraction for the season following the shooting of the film[115]. This is surprising enough, for there is very little sense of place in the film. Lyme is actually little shown in the film and the air shot Pinter wrote in the script to contrast 19th century Lyme Regis with 20th century Lyme is not even seen.

The interior locations have also very little to do with the spaces of the novel. In some cases, the decision seems to have been jointly taken by director and production designer to emphasize aspects that have nothing to do with the novel or the screenplay. Thus, Mrs Tranter's house, which in the novel is for Ernestina a horror museum of dark, heavy, old-fashioned early Victorian furniture where she does not fit, becomes in the film a luminous place that stresses the innocence and purity enfolding Ernestina[116]. Other changes are conditioned by more or less accidental aspects of production and by other considerations. Thus, in the novel Mr. Freeman owns a store in Oxford Street while in the film he appears as a shipping merchant in his Thames wharf. The change of Mr. Freeman's business, with which Fowles completely agreed, was due to the simple fact that recreating Victorian Oxford Street was impossibly expensive. Some Victorian warehouses by the Thames were available as building sets on location, so Reisz and his team changed Freeman's profession while still making him a representative of Victorian capitalism[117]. The tilted shot of Freeman and Charles beneath the impressive sign that shows he is the owner of the place indicates as clearly as the novel how Charles's aristocratic manners are being crushed by the rising Victorian tycoons.

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[115] Lovell, p. 122.

[116] For an interesting discussion of space in the film, see Charles Scruggs, "Ethical Freedom and Visual Space: Filming *The French Lieutenant's Woman*", *Mosaic*, 1987, Spring, vol. 20(2), p. 13-29. Scruggs argues that the tension between open and closed space that can be found in the novel is well-preserved by the film, though perhaps it would be better to say that it is well-reinvented by the film. However, as most literary critics, Scruggs ignores finances and supposes that location is an absolutely free choice of the director and the screenplay, which certainly is not.

[117] See Kennedy, p. 31.

The decision to shift the place where Sarah is found from Rossetti's home in Chelsea to Windemere participates of both financial and ideological aspects. Reisz and Pinter rightly thought that a medievalizing pre-Raphaelite atmosphere would not seem radically modern to contemporary audiences as it was to the Victorian themselves. Perhaps it should be added that audiences ignorant of Rossetti's work would not have picked the hint, nor the thrill of finding Sarah in the house of an eminent Victorian like the poet-painter. The team, thus, replaced Rossetti's for an avant-garde Victorian house built by Charles Voysey in the 1880s[118]. This pre-Bauhaus atmosphere of ample spaces and large well-lighted rooms should suggest, according to Reisz, Sarah and Charles's liberation from the cluttered Victorian age. The fact that the house was located in Windemere also indirectly allowed Reisz to associate Sarah with a newer version of Romanticism, underlined by the final shot in which Sarah and Charles are seen rowing out of a tunnel into the wide spaces of the lake, a postcard that is not only pre-Raphaelite but also Romantic. Great part of the Romantic look of the film is due, not only to the locations, but to the photography of Freddie Francis. This was the first film he ever made in colour, but the more interesting aspect is that his previous job had been David Lynch's *The Elephant Man* (1980); he was, so to speak, an expert in adding beauty to the worst aspects of Victorian life. Acting under Reisz's order to go in for Constable and nor for Monet, Francis contrasted both plots by supplying a pre-Impressionist look for the Victorian scenes and a whiter, less-contrasted light for the modern scenes[119].

Jeremy Irons has commented how it embarrasses him to receive any prize for his interpretations when he knows that what can be seen of him on the screen depends on the joint effort of the whole team. Nonetheless, it is true that actors are the essential ingredients in all productions and that in the case of adaptations miscasting can ruin the whole film. Their look and interpretation is so important because it can efface the previous idea viewers, even writers, had. Thus, Malcolm Bradbury on the television adaptation of his *The History Man*: "The work had been transformed by the extraordinary performance of Anthony Sher as Howard Kirk. He bore no resemblance physically to the character I had imagined, though so powerful was the interpretation that he has become the Howard of my imagination, more or less effacing the original creative image I drew on to write the book"[120]. The fact is that the splendid interpretations of Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons do replace any other Sarah and Charles readers could have in mind. The effect is so powerful in most adaptations that readers who go back to the original book find themselves surprised by the fact that they identify the characters with the actors even in those passages of the book that have no cinematic equivalent.

John Fowles was pleased enough with Meryl Streep, though he has also remarked that she does not look like Sarah. Indeed, choosing Meryl Streep for the role of Sarah was significative; hers is an unconventional beauty far from the ideal Hollywood star glamour and she is herself an actress that controls her roles above the directors' demands. Reisz lets the actors' feelings and intuitions played their part in the film and, no doubt, Sarah is to a great extent Streep's creation. She read from the book, not from the screenplay, in the set before shooting, thus creating another level of complicity between the book and the film that surpasses the control of screenwriter and director. Indeed, Streep responded well to Fowles's injunction to keep Sarah inexplicable and offered an interpretation of a controlled and intelligent Sarah. Some reviewers have found her performance as Sarah too withheld, little suggestive of physical passion, but possibly that was the only way to play Sarah. Meryl Streep looks like the kind of woman capable of bearing the gaze of men and of gazing back as Sarah does in the scene in the novel when she looks at and through Charles. The film did not require a pretty woman, but a woman who made herself irresistible despite the fact that her attractive is not easy to explain at first sight. In any case, the way Streep looks as Sarah has nothing to do with the novel and possibly little with Pinter. Somebody, possibly Reisz decided that Sarah's look should be Romantic rather than Victorian and subdued rather than bizarre. Sarah's rich complexion has been replaced in the film by Streep's very pale face and her masculine black clothes by green dresses that make her blend with the wood of the Undercliff. The only black item of clothing kept has been the huge hooded black cloak that wraps her in the first scene. In this there is an obvious intention to lead viewers to a melodramatic idea of Sarah, that is neither Fowles's nor Pinter's. Sarah's black cloak comes from Fowles's book, but it is a distortion of Sarah's personality. It corresponds to Mrs. Talbot's naive image of her as a heroine in a gothic Victorian melodrama, after she has eloped apparently with Varguennes:

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[118] See Ciment, p. 26.

[119] Ciment, p.28.

[120] Bradbury, *No, Not Bloomsbury*. p. 306.

> She knew Sarah faced penury; and lay awake at nights imagining scenes from the more romantic literature of her adolescence, scenes in which starving heroines lay huddled on snow-covered doorsteps or fevered in some bare, leaking garret. But one image–an actual illustration from one of Mrs Sherwood's edifying tales–summed up her worst fears. A pursued woman jumped from a cliff. Lightning flashed, revealing the cruel heads of her persecutors above; but worst of all was the shrieking horror on the doomed creature's pallid face and the way her cloak rippled upwards, vast, black, a falling raven's wing of terrible death. (Ch 9, p. 56.)

Likewise, Ernestina's magenta and green outfit in the afternoon Charles meets Sarah becomes a pink and lavender dress that merges better with the grey atmosphere but makes her look less of a daring, fashionable 1867 girl.

4.2. Disagreeing over Sarah: Pinter's Screenplay and Reiz's Film

In the screenplay, Pinter has turned Sarah's quest for freedom into a quest for the fulfilment of her artistic talent. She is shown drawing twice: the first time she appears on the screen and at a moment when in the novel Fowles suggests she is about to commit suicide. The end of the script suggests that she is living with some sympathising employers who allow her time do her own drawing. Pinter is more generous with Sarah than Fowles, even more of a true feminist; Fowles, after all, does not suppose Sarah has any kind of artistic talent but just enough to sit as a model for Rossetti. Dissatisfied critics have noted, though, that Sarah's artistic side does not seem genuine enough in the film[121]. Ironically, Pinter's idea may have come from the heroine of *The Collector*, art-student Miranda. Both films even share a scene in which the imprisoned heroine draws her self-portrait and there is a possibility that Pinter was reinforcing the connection with Fowles's work while suggesting that Sarah could be a free, independent, modern woman supporting herself with her art.

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[121] Almansi and Henderson, p. 97, show how unfortunate would-be-feminist critics can be in their remarks: they start by praising Streep's rich interpretation of Sarah to end up concluding one sees why Charles desires Sarah but not at all why would anybody pay for her paintings. Or, let her look well, marry the hero and stop bothering with brushes.

The feminist question seems to be one of the points of disagreement between Pinter and Reisz. The screenplay replaces Fowles's chapter about hysterical women and the threat of asylum for Sarah, with an illustration of life in Lyme Regis's asylum. With the excuse of fetching Dr. Grogan, Charles is shown in Pinter's version Sarah's possible fate in such a place; a few distressed female patients beg Charles to take them away just before being brutally dragged away. In the final film these scenes (123-27) have been suppressed, thus madness is not seen as a common excuse many Victorian men used to repress women but as a realistic possibility in crazy Sarah's case. Reisz's suggestion that Sarah is slightly crazed and not a woman unjustly attacked by those socially superior to her is reinforced by the suppression of the scene where her employer Mrs. Poulteney forces her to read Psalm 140 about sinning women. Nevertheless, the most blatant case of the manipulation of the feminist message of both novel and screenplay is the suppression of the key passage in Sarah's confession to Charles about Varguennes. This is what Sarah and Charles does not say in the film but does say in the screenplay:

> CHARLES. I understand.
> SARAH (*fiercely*) You cannot, Mr. Smithson. Because you are not a woman. You are not a woman born to be a farmer's wife but educated to be something ... better. You were not born a woman with a love of intelligence, beauty, learning, but whose position in the world forbids her to share this love with another. And you are not the daughter of a bankrupt. You have not spent your life in penury. You are not ... condemned. You are not an outcast.
> CHARLES. Social privilege does not necessarily bring happiness.
> SARAH. It brings the possibility of happiness.[122]

It is not only that Sarah is made to lose her feminist edge by this cut; this alters the whole connection between her and modern Anna. Pinter mixes beach scenes with Mike and Anna in modern swim-suit with Sarah's confession, scenes that are suppressed in the film. Anna's most melancholy moments contrast thus in Pinter's text with Sarah's most outspoken moments: after Sarah's outburst we move immediately to Anna meditating on the beach, a move that allows Pinter to tell us about their 'sisterhood'. While Reisz neatly separates both plots, Pinter has Sarah's voice during her confession overlap the view of the modern lovers on the beach. When we hear Charles ask whether Varguennes offered marriage we were supposed to see on the screen Anna looking at Mike. Furthermore, by cutting Sarah's speech, Reisz has concentrated the reasons of her unhappiness in Sarah's declaration that since she is a fallen woman she will never have a proper home, thus indirectly suggesting that Anna is doing such a good job playing Sarah because she feels the same lack.

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[122] Harold Pinter, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1982(1991).) p. 43, scene 100. A few figures may help clarify the ratio film-screenplay: the screenplay consists of 245 scenes, the film of 188–approximately a quarter of the screenplay has been suppressed, about twenty-five minutes of film. The 245 scenes can be divided in 49 modern scenes and 196 Victorian scenes; 14 modern scenes and 43 Victorian scenes are missing from the film–so that the proportion is kept to 25% of missing scenes in both plots and a ratio of 80% Victorian scenes for a 20% modern scenes. Apart from this, 15 scenes of those which do appear in the film have been partially cut. It is easy to see, then, that the screenplay does differ much from the film.

The contrast between the modern women and the Victorian women in not well-marked in the film, either. Pinter shows Anna taking off her corset in relief after playing the scene in which Sarah is introduced to the dictatorial Mrs. Poulteney; the actress who plays Ernestina performs a dance using her Victorian corset as a fan at the final wrap party. These scenes showing that modern woman are not constrained by Victorian ideological corsets are not seen in the film: Anna looks tense most of the time she is with Mike; the actress who plays Ernestina is seen regretting the missed chance to start an affair with him. Likewise, Pinter shows Anna as Sarah in the very first scene holding her hair and then releasing it and letting the wind catch it. Something is lost in the film, when Reisz opens it with Anna as Sarah hooded, no hair visible. Later, Reisz (or Meryl Streep) redressed the balance by making Sarah loosen her hair as she tell Charles about her loss of virginity, but she is not the freer Sarah that Pinter imagined.

The key concept in the portrayal of Charles Smithson in both the screenplay and the film is his Victorian earnestness. The humorous, ironic, often cynical, easy-going bachelor that Charles is in the novel–the man with the Byronic ennui without the Byronic outlets–becomes an embittered Victorian gentleman incapable of laughing at himself. Jeremy Irons plays Charles in earnest, not as an existentialist, but as a Hardyesque desperado. Whose Charles is this? Certainly not the Fowlesian Charles who constantly teases his servant Sam and falls in love with Ernestina because she lets him see he is turning into a bachelor as ridiculous as his uncle. Is this other Charles Smithson Pinter's, Irons's or even Mike's? In theory, Mike should offer an ironic point of view on Charles Smithson but Irons plays both Mike and Charles so earnestly that there is no room left for irony. Pinter stresses the parallel between both men, to the extent of writing scenes in which they appear in the same attitude (113, 118, suppressed in the film.) In another scene, located in the film set where the film within the film is being shot, Mike tries to convince Anna to go on with their relationship characterised as Charles, so that it is unclear who is really speaking and to whom. All in all, Pinter seems to have been more concerned with Mike as Charles than with Charles Smithson himself. The key scene in Charles' choice of a new life in the novel, the one in which he justifies leaving Ernestina for Sarah to Dr. Grogan in order to establish a new moral pattern did not interest Pinter. Likewise, he supplied Charles's purification in Exeter cathedral by a tennis game which serves the function of letting Charles' steam off.[123]

Pinter also did away with much of the social conflict involving Charles to concentrate on him as a privileged man in relation to an underprivileged woman. Thus, the plot concerning his rich uncle has been erased, which has the indirect effect of not showing the ugly face of Ernestina's selfishness. Charles' status as a scientist is not referred to very extensively in the film except for his admiration of Darwin; Pinter does not seem interested in Fowles's view of Charles as an upper-class specimen that is being fossilised. Perhaps social considerations were suppressed because they did not fit within the double plot. When they exist at all, social aspects were cut off by Reisz; the case of Sarah's background has already been noticed but the really odd cut is that of Mr. Freeman's ranting to Charles about his booming commercial empire. In this way, we never have a clear idea why Charles's love for Ernestina is partly conditioned by his inferior economical position despite his higher social class status.

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[123] Incidentally, critics have noted the connection of this scene with the cricket match in the film based on *The Go-Between* where it marks the defeat of the aspirations of the farmer lover for his lady mistress; it is rather more accurate, though, to see it, as Charles Scruggs does, in connection to the scene in which Mike is shown playing ... table tennis.

The relationship between Sarah and Charles is also subject to a number of changes in the screenplay, beginning with their very first meeting. The novel emphasizes how slightly odd, rather than conventionally romantic, the first meeting is; Fowles quite spoils it for his more romantic readers by having Charles get closer to Sarah still holding Ernestina by the waist, a detail with which Pinter does neatly away. Ernestina is in the novel a more erotic, piquant woman, to the extent that Fowles wants the reader to see in her a hint of Becky Sharp; she is quite capable of applying her mordant irony to Charles and to herself and, though still immature, she is by no means a sugary, despicable Victorian husband-huntress. In the screenplay, in contrast, she is an insipid Victorian young lady who never stands a chance of being direct competition for Sarah yet if Pinter does not follow Fowles very closely in her characterization, Reisz follows Pinter even less. The script scenes that show Charles and Ernestina at ease, as a loving couple, are not included in the film. Apart from the betrothal scene, we never see why Charles may or may not love Ernestina; we do not see Charles joking and Ernestina concerned that she is too foolish for him (scene 77), nor do we see her rejecting his suggestion that they elope to Paris (scene 90), the only two moments when they are really seen talking about themselves. This, of course, has the effect of predisposing audiences not to sympathise in any case with Ernestina and to underline the conventionality of Ernestina and the greater attractive of Sarah.

Since Pinter has constructed his own double love plot, there is no place in the screenplay for the other couple in Fowles's book: Sam and Mary. The parallel love story going on in Mrs. Tranter's downstairs kitchen is a secondary line of action in the screenplay, in which it has the exclusive use of justifying how disloyal Sam could blackmail Charles. Emily Morgan, the actress who plays Mary could never awake Ernestina's jealousy as she does in the novel, for she looks positively maidenish. Fowles intended Mary to appear as the most attractive and openly erotic of his trio of 'goddesses', but the fact is that in Reisz's film only Sarah matters. The servants are clearly not as attractive as the masters whereas in the novel Fowles emphasises the opposite possibility. Pinter does not really bother to tell their story in the same way as Fowles but he does think of an interesting way of contrasting the increasing hostility between master and servant. As the film begins we see Charles spying on Sam's attentions to a girl in the street with a telescope; later, Pinter reverses the suggestion of invaded privacy by having Sam and Mary–and aunt Tranter from upstairs–spy on Charles's proposal to Ernestina. It is not the only moment when Pinter suggests that Victorian culture excluded real privacy or that voyeurism was linked to Victorian sexuality. Dr. Grogan spies the bathers on the beach as he does in Fowles's novel, but it is Pinter's idea to make Charles a voyeur. He sees Sarah in the wood through a telescope, though the instability of his position is shown by a shot in which, with a subjective camera, it is indicated that someone else, most likely Sarah, is spying on him. Apart from the leit motif of spying, Pinter writes with a fine irony a sequence (scenes 40 to 43) that show in parallel Ernestina and Charles in the living room upstairs and Sam and Mary in the kitchen downstairs; as Charles asks questions about Sarah, Ernestina gets increasingly impatient with Mary for not bringing in the tea. Of course, while the upstairs couple chatter, the downstairs couple are better employed. Reisz chose to cut off the sequence except for Charles's question, possibly yet another move not to suggest the audiences that there is something laughable in Ernestina or Charles.

Pinter and Reisz found that despite Fowles's insistence on Sarah's mystery, she acted following a certain logic of her own. She is still mysterious in the screenplay, but the impression is that Pinter wanted to create his own mysterious woman in Anna. She is apparently a liberated, free modern woman, yet she seems chained to her French boyfriend–and what a joke cracked Pinter by making David a totally uninteresting man, certainly not a Varguennes. She is shown lovingly choosing Sarah's clothes for the last scene, yet she is happy to take off the red-haired wig that she uses for the role. She declares to Sonia, Mike's wife, how she envies her domestic bliss, yet she will not listen to Mike's proposal that she starts a new life with him. She is, in one word, torn between her admiration for Sarah and her realisation that the role is possessing her to such a degree that Mike has stopped seeing Anna and only sees Sarah. It is not so much a matter of her lacking an identity of her own, for the screenplay hints that both Anna and Mike lack a personal identity, but that she is more genuine when she is somebody else.

Their love story is one of those adulterous affairs between actors people like to read about in the tabloids. Indeed, the first cut in the screenplay moves from Charles's proposal of marriage to Ernestina to Mike and Anna in bed, possibly not for the first night. This announces the subject of the Victorian plot, since up to that moment Sarah and Charles have not been seen together; the modern story stresses already a triangular tension that is only realised much later in the Victorian counterpart. In any case, this is not the kind of adaptation that exploits the new permissiveness of contemporary cinema as far as the visualization of sex is concerned. In general terms, the novel has always been ahead of the cinema in the explicitness of sex scenes, so, often, the main object of some adaptations is just to show what until then could only be read. Nonetheless, Reisz has not opted for explicitness in the case of Anna and Mike, who are shown together in bed, though not making love. As for Sarah and Charles's sex scene this is an exact reproduction of what Fowles wrote in 1969. Our morbid curiosity to see aspects of our ancestors' life they chose not to represent is not particularly attractive to Reisz, though in more recent films the trend has been in favour of more explicitness concerning Victorian sex. Just to mention an instance, by contrasting the scene written by Fowles and filmed by Reisz with the Victorian sex scene in Bob Rafelson's *Mountains of the Moon* (1990) the impression is that in ten years our view of Victorian sex has been thoroughly changed. Instead of Charles and Sarah's hurried encounter, in Rafelson's film we are shown a real eminent Victorian, Richard Burton, joyously jumping into bed with his liberated girlfriend, Isabel Arundel, like any modern couple. Curiously enough, the figure of Richard Burton comes up again in Coppola's *Dracula* when Lucy and Mina are shown reading Burton's edition of *Thousand Nights* with its many erotic engravings.

Most critics have complained that what the modern story tells us is that modern love is a desultory affair, emotionally uncommitted by comparison to old-fashioned ideas about passion. Quite on the contrary. By restricting the Victorian romance to the screen as this is, after all, the plot of the film Anna and Mike are making, Pinter actually claims that our expectations about love are conditioned by fictional stories. The modern couple end up realising that they cannot or they will not live their love according to the standards set by a romantic but fictional story, as they realize they miss the romantic intensity of fiction. Most every day love stories are rather like Mike and Anna's than like Charles and Sarah. While Reisz agrees that sexual liberation has done away with the sense of mystery in human relationships, Pinter seems to hints that the belief in that mystery, provided by fiction, is what spoils modern relationships. Indeed, what Pinter attacks in his screenplay is the tension that George Bluestone described as

"Victorianism in modern dress"[124], that is to say, that what we brand of romanticism or sentimentalism we are shown on the screen becomes for us more desirable than real life. It is also in this sense that Fowles is Victorian: he was the one who suggested that Mike's last line should be "Sarah!" and not "Anna!"; but here is where the main disagreement between Pinter and the novelist happens. The mock gothic look of some of the scenes cannot be accidental. Pinter makes gentle fun of the sentimental side of the novel most clearly when he has Charles meet Sarah secretly in a churchyard in a ludicrous scene that can only belong to cheap melodrama; he does parody Sarah's passion for sending secret messages by making her slip one into Charles's napkin. While Fowles gives us the alternative endings, Pinter asks the audience to overcome their Victorian sentimentalism by fully realising that Sarah and Charles belong to fiction, and not only that, but to a very melodramatic kind of fiction.

Pinter, like Fowles, does not let us know what his heroine wants. There is so little background about Anna's life that it is hard to judge what her motivations are in entering the affair with Mike. The fact that Mike is a husband and a father while Anna is unmarried and childless suggests that Anna is a kind of predator who does not care for family life, but the question is that she does not take her affair as seriously as to think of breaking up Mike's family life. On the contrary, he is the one who is ready to leave daughter and wife for Anna. Pinter took up precisely that same point by making Sarah be childless in the film. The parallel between Sarah the prostitute, mother of a baby daughter, and Sarah, Rossetti's model, mother of another baby daughter does not exist in the film. The scenes between Charles and the prostitute were filmed and later discarded, possibly because they interfered in the development of the parallel modern plot. Part of the process of overcoming sentimental Victorianism is, then, doing away with the idea that children are what keeps a couple together. Pinter wanted Charles to stay with Sarah for herself, not for the baby, especially as presents Mike, the father of a little girl, willing to break up her family life for Anna.

As it happened in the case of the scenes between Charles and Ernestina, great part of the playfulness involved in the relationship between Anna and Mike has been suppressed by Reisz. Scene 72 in Pinter's screenplay shows Charles introducing himself to Sarah; she declares that she already knows who he is and asks him not to tell anybody he has seen her. The scene can be found in Fowles, except for a very provocative swishing of Sarah's skirt. Scene 73 shows Anna and Mike in Anna's caravan parodying scene 72, commenting on Anna's handling of the skirt and, especially, discussing their performances. Scene 74 shows them repeating the scene and bursting into laughter at the recollection of their caravan conversation. It is the only relaxed moment in which the personalities of Anna and Mike merge in an enjoyable way with those of Sarah and Charles. Yet this is not seen in the film. Nor is scene 165, when Anna explicitly declares she wishes she were already in Exeter, where the encounter between Sarah and Charles is going to take place. A fragment shows that by suppressing it we are denied the chance to understand that Anna longs, exactly like Mike, for a escape from ordinary love:

> MIKE. How's it been? Have you been having a good time?
> ANNA. I don't' know ... it's all so unreal ...
> MIKE. What do you mean?
> ANNA. The world isn't real ... up here.
> MIKE. What about your boyfriend? Isn't he real?

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[124] Bluestone, p. 43.

> ANNA. I miss Sarah. I can't wait to get back. I can't wait to be in Exeter.
> MIKE. You know what's going to happen in Exeter? I'm going to have you in Exeter. (p. 67)

The most beautiful moment in the film–the image that justifies seeing it again–is the transition from Anna and Mike's rehearsal of Charles and Sarah's meeting in the Undercliff (scenes 78, 79) to the scene itself. Reisz sets the rehearsal scene in a greenhouse, paralleling the Victorian proposal scene and cuts to the Victorian wood as Anna falls down and Mike as Charles catches her as Sarah. Apart from the precision of the editing, the scene is especially meaningful because it shows Mike and Anna literally embodying their characters, being possessed by them. In addition to this, Pinter plays throughout the screenplay with the idea of the double ending of the novel. It is not only that there is a happy ending for the Victorian couple an unhappy ending for the modern one. Pinter hints that the end of the film Anna and Mike are making is not yet decided since the original novel has two endings; furthermore, that their own ending will depend on the one chosen for the film. The tension between Anna and Mike regarding that end is partly missed by Reisz who suppresses part of scene 193, in which Anna ambiguously states to her boyfriend that it is in her hands to decide:

> DAVID. Weren't you going down to do the last scene on Sunday?
> ANNA. No, they're behind schedule. It's Wednesday.
> DAVID. Ah. Have they decided what they want to do with the end?
> ANNA. I've decided.
> DAVID. What have you decided?
> ANNA. I want to play it exactly as it is written.
> DAVID. Is there going to be a fight about it?
> ANNA. I hope not. (p. 84)

Later, Mike mystifies David in the only scene they share, which, again toys with the idea of the endings (within brackets, the lines suppressed by Reisz):

> DAVID. Have they decided how they are going to end it?
> MIKE. End it?
> DAVID. I hear they keep changing the script.
> MIKE. Not at all. Where did you hear that?
> DAVID. Well, there are two endings in the book, [aren't there? A happy ending and an unhappy ending?]
> MIKE. Yes, We're going for the first ending–I mean the second ending.
> DAVID. Which one is that?
> MIKE. Hasn't Anna told you? (scene 217, p. 95)

Indeed, which one is that? The one Pinter wanted or the one Reisz wanted? As we close the book the bitter taste of Sarah's rejection of Charles in the second ending lingers in the reader's mouth in a way that the film curtails. Pinter's ending shows Mike self-defeated by his obsession with Sarah; when Anna goes away leaving her wig behind we are told that fictional illusions may be engaging but cannot sustain real life. Reisz sweetens this to suit the more sentimental tastes of his audience by showing as the last scene just before the credits another shot of Charles and Sarah rowing free in lake Windermere, a shot that is not in Pinter's script. As Fowles knew, the dominant end would definitely be the last end, and so, Reisz decides to go for the sentimental end, the Victorian end the novel could not afford but Hollywood audiences love.

Conclusions

As I hope to have proven in the pages of this dissertation, film adaptation is a complex process of re-writing which involves not only the transfer of a story from the original page to its final destination, the screen, but also, most crucially, an intermediate step too often ignored. This other step or stage is the screenplay, a text written by the screen writer or (screen playwright) with little hope of acknowledgement either from the original author or from the director, much less the audience. Thinking of the affinities between the task of playwrights and screen writers, both authors who produce dramatised fiction to be performed by actors, it is hard to understand why the former are regarded as literary artists while the latter are not, with very few exceptions. The prejudice that screen writers are mere hack writers working for money makes simply no sense, particularly if we consider that the greatest English writer, the playwright William Shakespeare, worked for the commercial theatre adapting other sources in his much praised plays.

The particular film adaptation I have focused on here offers many relevant insights into the process of adapting stories for the screen and also into the problem of the ownership of these stories. To begin with, John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a novel expressing, above all, the author's resistance to his/her own death, as proclaimed by French post-structuralism. Yet it is also a novel about the impossibility of writing with the authorial confidence that Victorian writers enjoyed. The decision to sell the rights over his novel is thus at odds with Fowles's project to claim authorship for the post-modern writer, as he actually authorised someone else to retell his story as he wished (or rather, as he was allowed to do).

Harold Pinter, an impressive playwright in his own right and a much respected writer, brought to the screenplay of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* his own vision, turning Fowles's discourse on authorship into an exploration of how fiction and reality clash in the way we understand love and romance today. Fowles's authorial interventions were replaced in his clever re-telling by the contrast between the illusion generated by film-making and the 'real' loved and lives of the actors performing the tale. Yet, despite all his theatrical artistic prestige, Pinter found himself treated by director Karel Reisz and, presumably, producer Leon Clore, as just one more cog in the film machinery: whereas few directors would have dared impose their vision onto a Pinter play, Reisz simply uses Pinter's screenplay as a blueprint from which to generate a more conventional interpretation of Fowles's text.

The issue I am raising here is that this blueprint is also an autonomous text worth attention, as much as any of the other plays written by Pinter. Indeed, his unique status as a first rate playwright and respected screen writer makes Harold Pinter unique as a literary artist, yet it is routinely assumed that while he uses to the full his immense talents in his plays (which none denies are worth studying) his screenplays employ just the tip of this iceberg. It is my belief that his screenplay for *The French Lieutenant's Woman* disproves this assumption, while stressing that, most certainly, many other screenplays must be worth studying as literary texts. The pity is that since screenplays are considered, as I have noted, just blueprints for the director's work and not autonomous texts, few survive, fewer among them are published and only a handful by first-rank names deserve attention. Hopefully, this is a situation that will be soon redressed.

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Appendix 1: Plays by Harold Pinter in Production

The Birthday Party. Methuen & Co, 1960.

1. It was first presented by Michael Codron and David Hall at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, on 28 April 1958, and subsequently at the Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith. Directed by Peter Wood. Cast:

PETEY....... Willoughby Gray
MEG ....Beatrix Lehmann
STANLEY .....Richard Pearson
LULU.........Wendy Hutchinson
GOLDBERG.....John Slater
McCANN...... John Stratton

2. It was revived by the Royal Shakespeare Theatre at the Aldwych Theatre, London, on 18 June 1964. Directed by Harold Pinter. Cast: Newton Blick, Doris Hare, Bryan Pringle, Janet Suzman, Brewster Mason, Patrick Magee.
3. It was broadcast on BBC Television on 28 June 1987. Directed by Kenneth Ives. Cast: Robert Lang, Joan Plowright, Kenneth Cranham, Julie Walters, Harold Pinter, Colin Blakeley.

The Room. Methuen & Co, 1960.
1. It was presented at the Hampstead Theatre Club on 21st January 1960. Directed by Harold Pinter. Cast:
BERT HUDD......Howard Lang
ROSE...........Vivien Merchant
MR KIDD........Henry Woolf
MR SANDS...... John Rees
MRS SANDS......Auriol Smith
RILEY......... Thomas Baptiste
2. It was subsequently presented at the Royal Court Theatre on 8th March 1960. Directed by Anthony Page. Cast: Michael Brennan, Vivian Merchant, John Cater, Michael Caine, Anne Bishop, Thomas Baptiste.
The Dumb Waiter. Methuen & Co , 1960.
1. Presented at the Hampstead Theatre Club on 21st January 1960. Directed by James Roose-Evans. Cast:
BEN .... Nicholas Selby
GUS.......... George Tovey
2. Transferred to the Royal Court Theatre on 8 March 1960. Same cast.
3. Produced for television by the BBC on 23 July 1985. Directed by Kenneth Ives. Cast: Colin Blakeley, Kenneth Cranham.

A Slight Ache. Methuen & Co, 1961.
1. Performed on the BBC Third Programme on 9 July 1959. Directed by Donald McWhinnie. Cast:
EDWARD......Maurice Denham
FLORA.......Vivien Merchant
2. Presented by Michael Codron at the Arts Theatre, London, on 18th January 1961, and subsequently at the Criterion Theatre. Directed by Donald McWhinnie. Cast: Emlyn Williams, Alison Leggat, Richard Briers.
3. Produced by the Young Vic in June 1987. Directed by Kevin Billington. Cast: Barry Foster, Jill Johnson, Malcolm Ward.
The Hothouse. Written 1958, revised 1979. Eyre & Methuen Ltd, 1980.
1. Presented at the Hampstead Theatre, London, on 24 April 1980. Directed by Harold Pinter. Moved to the Ambassador Theatre, London, on 25 June 1980. Cast:
ROOTE.......Derek Newark
GIBBS.......James Grant
LAMB........Roger Davidson
MISS CUTTS..Angela Pleasance
LUSH........Robert East
TUBB ...... Michael Forrest
LOBB........Edward de Souza

A Night Out. Metheun & Co, 1960.
1. Performed on the BBC Third Programme on 1 March 1960. Produced by Donald McWhinnie. Cast:
ALBERT STOKES...Barry Foster
MRS STOKES..... Mary O'Farrell
SEELEY..........Harold Pinter
KEDGE...........John Rye
BARMAN ....Walter Hall
OLD MAN.........Norman Wynne
MR. KING........David Bird
MR. RYAN........Norman Wynne
GIDNEY..........Nicholas Selby
JOYCE...........Jane Jordan Rodgers
EILEEN..........Auriol Smith
BETTY...........Margaret Hotine
HORNE...........Hugh Dickinson
BARROW..........David Spenser
THE GIRL ....Vivien Merchant
2. Televised by the A.B.C. Armchair Theatre on 24 April 1960. Produced by Philip Saville. Cast: Tom Bell, Madge Ryan, Harold Pinter, Philip Locke, Edmond Bennett, Gordon Phillott, Arthur Lowe, Edward Malin, Stanley Meadows, José Read, Maria Lennard, Mary Duddy, Stanley Segal, Walter Hall, Vivien Merchant.

The Caretaker. Methuen & Co, 1960 (revised 1962).
1. Presented by the Arts Theatre Club in association with Michael Codron and David Hall at the Arts Theatre, London, on April 1960.
On 30 May 1960, presented by Michael Codron and David Hall at the Duchess Theatre, London. Directed by Donald McWhinnie. Cast:
MICK....Alan Bates
ASTON...Donald Woodthorpe
DAVIES..Donald Pleasance
2. Revival presented at the Mermaid Theatre, London, on 2 March 1972. Directed by Christopher Morahan. Cast: John Hurt, Jeremy Kemp, Leonard Rossiter.
3. Produced at the Shaw Theatre, London, in January 1976. Directed by Kevin Billington. Cast: Simon Rouse, Roger Loyd Park, Fulton Mackay.
4. Produced at the National Theatre in November 1980. Directed by Kenneth Ives. Cast: Jonathan Pryce, Kenneth Cranham, Warren Mitchwell.

The Dwarfs. Metheun & Co, 1961 (corrected 1968).
1. Performed on the BBC Third Programme on 2 December 1960. Produced by Barbara Bray. Cast:
LEN...Richard Pasco
PETE..Jon Rollason
MARK..Alex Scott
2. Presented on a new version for the stage by Michael Codron and David Hall at the New Arts Theatre, London, on 18 September 1963. Directed by Harold Pinter, assisted by Guy Vaesen. Cast: John Hurt, Philip Bond, Michael Forrest.

The Collection. Methuen & Co, 1963 (1964).

1. Presented by Associated Rediffusion Television, London, on May 11 1961. Directed by Joan Kemp-Welch. Cast:
HARRY....Griffith Jones
JAMES....Anthony Bate
STELLA...Vivien Merchant
BILL.....John Ronane
2. Presented on the stage at the Aldwych Theatre on 18 June 1962. Directed by Peter Hall and Harold Pinter. Cast: Michael Hordern, Kenneth Haigh, Barbara Murray, John Ronane.

The Lover. Methuen & Co, 1963 (1964).
1. Presented by Associated Rediffusion Television, London, on 28 March 1963. Directed by Joan Kemp-Welch. Cast:
RICHARD....Alan Badel
SARAH......Vivien Merchant
JOHN.......Michael Forest
2. First presented on the stage by Michael Codron and David Hall at the Arts Theatre, 18 September 1963. Directed by Harold Pinter, assisted by Guy Vaesen. Cast: Scott Forbes, Vivien Merchant, Michael Forest.
3. Produced by the Young Vic in June 1987. Directed by Kevin Billington. Cast: Simon Williams, Judy Buxton, Malcolm Ward.

Night School. Television version first published in 1979.
1. Presented by Associated Rediffusion Television on 21 July 1960. Directed by Joan Kemp-Welch. Cast:
ANNIE...Iris Vandeleur
WALTER. Milo O'Shea
MILLY...Jane Eccles
SALLY...Vivien Merchant
SOLTO...Martin Miller
TULLY...Bernard Spear
2. Performed on the BBC Third Programme on 25 September 1966. Directed by Guy Vaesen. Cast: Mary O'Farrell, John Hollis, Sylvia Coleridge, Prunella Scales, Sydney Tafler, Preston Lockwood, Barbara Mitchell, Carol Marsh.

The Black and White; Trouble in the Works. Methuen & Co, 1961 (corrected 1968).
1. Performed in the revue *One to Another*; opened at the Lyric, Hammersmith on 15 July 1959.

Last to Go; Request Stop; Metheun & Co, 1961 (corrected 1968).
Special Offer. In *Harold Pinter* by Arnold P. Hinchcliffe, Twayne, New York, 1967.
1. Performed in the revue *Pieces of Eight*; opened at the Apollo Theatre, London on 23 September 1959.

The Homecoming. Methuen & Co, 1965.
1. Presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre on 3 June 1965. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
MAX......Paul Rogers.
LENNY....Ian Holm
SAM......John Normington
JOEY.....Terence Rigby
TEDDY....Michael Bryant
RUTH.....Vivien Merchant
2. Revived at the Garrick Theatre in May 1978. Directed by Kevin Billington. Cast: Timothy West, Michael Kitchen, Charles Kay, Roger Lloyd Park, Oliver Cotton, Gemma Jones.

Tea Party. Methuen & Co, 1967.
1. Commissioned by sixteen member countries of the European Broadcasting Union, to be transmitted by all of them under the title *The Largest Theatre in the World*. First presented by BBC Television on 25 March 1965. Directed by Charles Jarrott. Cast:
DISSON....Leo McKern
WENDY...Vivien Merchant
DIANA.....Jennifer Wright
WILLY.....Charles Gray
DISLEY....John LeMesurier
LOIS......Margaret Denyer
FATHER....Frederick Piper
MOTHER....Hilda Barry
TOM.......Peter Barlett
JOHN......Robert Barlett

The Basement. Methuen & Co, 1967.
1. Presented by BBC Television on 20 February 1967. Directed by Charles Jarrott. Cast:
STOTT......Harold Pinter
JANE.......Kika Markham
LAW........Derek Godfrey

Landscape. Methuen & Co, 1969.
1.Presented on radio by the BBC on 25 April 1968. Directed by Guy Vaesen. Cast:
BETH........Peggy Ashcroft
DUFF........Eric Porter.
2. Presented on the stage by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre on 2 July 1969. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast: Peggy Ashcroft, David Waller.

Silence. Methuen & Co, 1969.
1. Presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre on 2 July 1969. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
ELLEN......Frances Cuka
RUMSEY.....Anthony Bate
BATES......Norman Rodway

Night. Methuen & Co, 1969.

1. Presented by Alexander H. Cohen Ltd. in an entertainment entitled *Mixed Doubles* at the Comedy Theatre on 9 April 1969. Directed by Alexander Doré. Cast:
MAN.....Nigel Stock
WOMAN...Vivien Merchant

Old Times. Methuen & Co, 1970.
1.Presented by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych Theatre, London on 1 June 1971. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
DEELEY.......Colin Blakeley
KATE.........Dorothy Tutin
ANNA.........Vivien Merchant
2. Produced for television by the BBC in October 1975. Directed by Christopher Morahan. Cast: Barry Foster, Anna Cropper, Mary Miller.
3. Produced at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, London, in April 1985. Directed by David Jones. Cast: Michael Gambon, Nicola Pagett, Liv Ullmann.

No Man's Land. Eyre Methuen, 1975.
1. Presented at the National Theatre at the Old Vic, Waterloo, London, on 23 April 1975. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
HIRST......Ralph Richardson
SPOONER....John Gielgud
FOSTER.....Michael Feast
BRIGGS.....Terence Rigby
2. Presented at the Wyndham's Theatre, London, on 15 July 1975. Same cast.

Betrayal. Eyre Methuen, 1978 (revised 1980)
1.Presented at the National Theatre, London, on 15 November 1978. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
EMMA......Penelope Wilton
JERRY.....Michael Gambon
ROBERT....Daniel Massey

Monologue. Limited edition published in 1973.
1. Shown on BBC Television on 13 April 1973. Directed by Christopher Morahan. Cast:
MAN........Henry Woolf.

Family Voices. Next Editions, 1981.
1. Broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 22 January 1981. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
VOICE 1....Michael Kitchen
VOICE 2....Peggy Ashcroft
VOICE 3....Mark Dignam
2. 'Platform Performance' by the National Theatre on February 1981. Same cast and director.
3*. Presented with *A Kind of Alaska* and *Victoria Station* as part of the triple-bill *Other Places* first performed at the National Theatre, London, on 14 October 1982. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast: Nigel Havers, Anna Massey, Paul Rogers.

A Kind of Alaska. Inspired by *Awakenings* by Oliver Sacks M.D., Gerald Duckworth and Co. 1973. Methuen London Ltd, 1982.
1. See 3*. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
DEBORAH.......Judy Dench
HORNBY........Paul Rogers
PAULINE.......Anna Massey
2*. Presented with *Victoria Station* and *One for the Road* at the Duchess Theatre, London in March 1985. Directed by Kenneth Ives. Cast: Dorothy Tulin, Colin Blakeley, Susan Engel.
3.Produced by Central Television in December 1984. Directed by Kenneth Ives. Cast: Judy Dench, Paul Schofield, Susan Engel.

Victoria Station. Methuen London Ltd, 1982.
1. See 3*. Directed by Peter Hall. Cast:
CONTROLLER........Paul Rogers
DRIVER............Martin Jarvis
2. See 2*. Directed by Kenneth Ives. Cast: Colin Blakeley, Roger Davidson

One for the Road. Methuen London Ltd, 1984.
1. Performed at the Lyric Theatre Studio, Hammersmith, in March 1984. Directed by Harold Pinter. Cast:
NICOLAS.....Alan Bates
VICTOR .....Roger Lloyd Pack
GILA ....Jenny Quayle
NICKY.......Stephen Kember and Felix Yates
2. See 2*. Presented as a part of a triple bill, *Other Places*, at the Duchess Theatre, London, 7 March 1985. Directed by Kenneth Ives. Cast: Colin Blakely, Roger Davidson, Rosie Kerslake, Daniel Kipling and Simon Vyvyan.

Mountain Language. Faber and Faber, 1988.
1. Performed at the National Theatre on 20 October 1988. Directed by Harold Pinter. Cast:
YOUNG WOMAN........Miranda Richardson
ELDERLY WOMAN......Eileen Atkins
SERGEANT...........Michael Gambon
OFFICER............Julian Wadham
GUARD..............George Harris
PRISONER...........Tony Haygarth
HOODED MAN.........Alex Hardy
SECOND GUARD...... Douglas McFerran

Appendix 2: Films and Screenplays

The French Lieutenant's Woman
1981, 127', UK; United Artists, Junipaer.
Director: ....Karel Reisz
Producer: ....Leon Clore.

Associate Producers: ....Tom Maschler, Geoffrey Helman.
Screenplay:................ Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by John Fowles).
Director of Photography:.... Freddie Francis.
Editor: ....John Bloom.
Musical Director: ....Carl Davis.
Production Designer: ....Assheton Gorton.
Art Directors:............. Norman Dorme, Terry Pritchard, Allan Cameron.
Set Decorator: ....Ann Mollo.
Costume Designer: ....Tom Rand.
Camera Operator: ....Gordon Hayman.
Make-up Chief: ....Susan Barradell.

Cast:
Meryl Streep.................Sara Woodruff/Anna
Jeremy Irons.................Charles Smithson/Mike
Leo McKern...................Dr Grogan
Lynsey Baxter................Ernestina Freeman
Peter Vaughan................Mr Freeman
Charlotte Mitchell...........Mrs Tranter
Hilton McRae.................Sam
Emily Morgan.................Mary
Gerard Falconetti............David
Penelope Wilton..............Sonia
Patience Collier.............Mrs Poulteney
Liz Smith....................Mrs Fairley
Michael Elwyn................Montague
David Warner.................Sergeant Murphy

Unfilmed Screenplays by Harold Pinter

The Proust Screenplay. With the collaboration of Joseph Losey and Barbara Bray. Based on Marcel Proust's *A la Rechèrche du Temps Perdu*. Commissioned by rights owner Nicole Stephane to Joseph Losey in 1972. Published in 1978 by Eyre Methuen Ltd in association with Chatto & Windus; paperback edition 1980. Published by Faber and Faber in paperback edition 1991.

Victory. Written for film director Richard Lester in 1982, based on the novel by Joseph Conrad. Published by Faber and Faber 1991.

Films based on Screenplays by Harold Pinter

The Servant.
1963, 117', UK; Springbook.
Director: Joseph Losey.
Producer: Joseph Losey, Norman Priggen.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Robin Maugham)
Photography: Douglas Slocombe.
Editor: Reginald Mills.
Music: John Dankworth.
Art Director: Ted Clements.

Cast: Dirk Bogarde, Sarah Miles, Wendy Craig, James Fox.

The Pumpkin Eater.
1964, 118', UK; Columbia/Romulus.
Director: Jack Clayton.
Producer: James Woolf.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Penelope Mortimer).
Photography: Oswald Morris.
Editor: James Clark.
Music: George Delerue.
Art Director: Edward Marshall.
Cast: Anne Bancroft, Peter Finch, James Mason, Cedric Hardwicke, Richard Johnson, Eric Porter.

The Quiller Memorandum.
1966, 103', UK; Rank.
Director: Michael Anderson.
Producer: Ivan Foxwell.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel *The Berlin Memorandum* by Adam Hall, penname of Elleston Trevor).
Photography: Erwin Hiller.
Editor: Frederick Wilson.
Music: John Barry.
Art Director: Maurice Carter.
Cast: George Segal, Alec Guinness, Max von Sydow, Senta Berger, George Sanders, Robert Helpmann.

Accident.
1967, 105', UK; London.
Director: Joseph Losey.
Producer: Joseph Losey, Norman Priggen.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Nicholas Mosley).
Photography: Gerry Fisher.
Editor: Reginald Beck.
Music: John Dankworth.
Art Director: Carmen Dillon.
Cast: Dirk Bogarde, Stanley Baker, Jacqueline Sassard, Michael York, Vivien Merchant, Harold Pinter.

The Go-Between.
1971, 118', UK; M-G-M/EMI.
Director: Joseph Losey.
Producer: John Heyman, Norman Priggen.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by L.P. Hartley).
Photography: Gerry Fisher.
Editor: Reginald Beck.
Music: Michel Legrand.
Art Director: Carmen Dillon.
Cast: Julie Christie, Alan Bates, Margaret Leighton, Michael Gough, Edward Fox.

The Last Tycoon.
1976, 122', US; Paramount.
Director: Elia Kazan.
Producer: Sam Spiegel.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (Based on the novel of the same title by Francis Scott Fitzgerald).
Photography: Victor Kemper.
Editor: Richard Marks.
Music: Maurice Jarre.
Art Director: Gene Callahan.
Cast: Robert de Niro, Tony Curtis, Robert Mitchum, Jeanne Moreau, Jack Nicholson.

Langrishe, Go Down.
Screened on BBC-2 television on 20 September 1978. Produced and directed by David Jones (although a note by Pinter inserted before the published screenplay explains that the screenplay is very detailed because Pinter intended to direct it himself–not all directions were observed by Jones). Based on the novel of the same title by Aidan Higgins.
Cast: Jeremy Irons, Annette Crosbie, John Molloy, Niall O'Brien, Susan Williamson.

Turtle Diary.
1985. 97', UK; CBS/United British Artists/Britannic (Richard Jonson).
Director: John Irvin.
Producer: Richard Johnson.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Russell Hoban).
Photography: Peter Hannan.
Editor: Peter Tanner.
Music: Geoffrey Burgon.
Production Designer: Leo Austin.
Cast: Glenda Jackson, Ben Kingsley, Michael Gambon, Richard Johnson, Rosemary Leach.

The Heat of the Day
1989, UK; Granada Television.
Director: Christopher Morahan.
Producer: June Wyndham-Davies.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Elizabeth Bowen).
Photography: Jon Woods.
Editor: Andrew Sumner.
Music: Ilona Sekacz.
Production Designer: Christopher Bradshaw.
Cast: Michael Gambon, Patricia Hodge, Michael York, Ralph Michael, Tina Earl.

Reunion.
1989, 110', France, W. Germany, UK; Ariane, FR3, NEF, Vetribis, CLG, Tac, Arbo, Maran.
Director: Jerry Schatzberg.
Producer: Anne Francois.

Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Fred Uhlman).
Photography: Bruno de Keyzer.
Editor: Martine Barraque.
Music: Philippe Sarde.
Art Director: Alenxandre Trauner.
Cast: Jason Robards, Christian Anholt, Samuel West, Francoise Fabian, Marianne Kewin.

The Comfort of Strangers.
1990, 107', Italy/US; Erre, Sovereign , Reteitalia.
Director: Paul Schrader.
Producer: Angelo Rizzoli.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Ian McEwan).
Photography: Dante Spinotti.
Editor: Bill Pankow.
Music: Angelo Badalamenti.
Art Director: Gianni Quaranta.
Cast: Christopher Walken, Rupert Everett, Natasha Richardson, Helen Mirren.

The Handmaid's Tale
1990, 109', US, W. Germany; Cinecan, Bioscop.
Director: Volker Schlondorf.
Producer: Danny Wilson.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter (based on the novel of the same title by Margaret Atwood).
Photography: Igor Luther.
Editor: David Ray.
Music: Ryuichi Sakamoto.
Art Director: Tom Walsh.
Cast: Natasha Richardson, Robert Duvall, Faye Dunaway, Aidan Quinn, Elizabeth McGovern, Victoria Tennant.

Other Films not yet Released

The Trial, 1992.
Director: David Jones.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter based on Franz Kafka's novel.

The Remains of the Day, 1992.
Director: James Ivory.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter, based on Kazuo Ishiguro's novel.

Films based on Plays by Harold Pinter

The Caretaker
1964, 105', UK; Caretaker.
Director: Clive Donner.
Producer: Michael Birkett.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter.
Photography: Nicholas Roeg.
Editor: Fergus McDonell.
Music: Ron Grainer.
Art Director: Reece Pemberton.
Cast: Alan Bates, Donald Pleasance, Robert Shaw.

The Birthday Party
1968, 123', UK; Continental, Palomar.
Director: William Friedkin.
Producer: Max Rosenberg, Milton Subotsky.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter.
Photography: Denys Coop.
Editor: Tony Gibbs.
Cast: Robert Shaw, Patrick McGee, Dandy Nichols, Sydney Tafler.

The Homecoming.
Screenplay written by Harold Pinter in 1968-69 for John Frankenheimer to direct.
1973, US-UK; American Express Films. Not in distribution.
Director: Peter Hall
Cast: Cyril Cusack, Ian Holm, Vivien Merchant.

Betrayal
1983, 95', UK; Horizon.
Director: David Jones.
Producer: Sam Spiegel.
Screenplay: Harold Pinter.
Photography: Mike Fash.
Editor: John Bloom.
Music: Dominic Muldowney.
Art Director: Eileen Diss.
Cast: Jeremy Irons, Patricia Hodges, Ben Kingsley.

Films directed by Harold Pinter

Butley.
1974, 129', UK/US/CANADA; American Express/Landau/Cinevision
Director: Harold Pinter.
Producer: Ely Landau.
Screenplay: Simon Gray (based on his own play).
Photography: Gerry Fisher.
Editor: Malcolm Cooke.

Art Director: Carmen Dillson.
Cast: Alan Bates, Jessica Tandy, Richard O'Callaghan, Susan Engel, Michael Byrne, Georgina Hale.

Films based on Other Novels by John Fowles

The Collector.
1965, 117', US; Columbia.
Director: William Wyler.
Producer: William Wyler, Jud Kinberg, John Kohn.
Screenplay*:* Stanley Mann, John Kohn.
Photography: Robert L Surtees, Robert Krasker.
Editor: Robert Swink.
Music: Maurice Jarre.
Art Director: John Stall.
Cast: Terence Stamp, Samantha Eggar, Maurice Dallimore, Mona Washbourne.

The Magus.
1969, 117', UK; 20th Century Fox, Blazer.
Director: Guy Green.
Producer: Jud Kinberg, John Kohn.
Screenplay: John Fowles.
Photography: Billy Williams.
Editor: Max Benedict.
Music: John Dankworth.
Art Director: Don Ashton.
Cast: Michael Caine, Anthony Quinn, Candice Bergen, Anna Karina, Paul Strassino, Julian Glover.

Films Directed by Karel Reisz

Momma don't allow
1956, documentary.

We are the Lambeth Boys
1959, documentary. Co-directed with Tony Richardson.

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning
1960, 89', UK; Woodfall, Bryanstone.
Director: Karel Reisz.
Producer: Tony Richardson, Harry Saltzman.
Screenplay: Alan Sillitoe (based on his own novel).
Photography: Freddie Francis.
Editor: Seth Holt.
Music: Johnny Dankworth.
Cast: Albert Finney, Shirley Anne Field, Rachel Roberts, Hylda Baker, Norman Rossington, Bryan Pringle.

Night Must Fall

1964, 99', UK; M-G-M.
Director: Karel Reisz.
Producer: Karel Reisz, Albert Finney.
Screenplay: Clive Exton (based on Emlyn Williams's stage thriller).
Photography: Freddie Francis.
Editor: Philip Barnikel.
Music: Ron Grainer.
Production Designer: Timothy O'Brien.
Cast: Albert Finney, Susan Hampshire, Mona Washbourne, Sheila Hancock, Michael Medwin.

Morgan (A Suitable Case for Treatment).
1966, 97', UK; British Lion, Quintra.
Director: Karel Reisz.
Producer: Leon Clore.
Screenplay: David Mercer.
Photography: Larry Pizer.
Editor: Tom Priestly.
Music: Johnny Dankworth.
Art Director: Philip Harrison.
Cast: Vanessa Redgrave, David Warner, Robert Stephens, Irene Handl, Newton Blick, Nan Munro.

Isadora
1969, 141', UK; Universal.
Director: Karel Reisz.
Producer: Robert and Raymond Hakim.
Screenplay: Melvyn Bragg, Margaret Drabble, Clive Exton.
Photography: Larry Pizer.
Editor: Tom Priestly.
Music: Maurice Jarre.
Art Director: Jocelyn Herbert.
Cast: Vanessa Redgrave, John Fraser, James Fox, Jason Robards, Ivan Tchenko, Bessie Love.

The Gambler
1974, 109', US; Paramount.
Director: Karel Reisz.
Producer: Irwin Winkler, Robert Chartoff.
Screenplay: James Toback (based on Dovstoevsky, but uncredited).
Photography: Victor J. Kemper.
Editor: Roger Spottiswoode.
Music: Jerry Fielding.
Art Director: Philip Rosenberg.
Cast: James Caan, Paul Sorvino, Lauren Hutton, Morris Carnovsky, Jacqueline Brooks.

Who'll Stop the Rain
1978, 125', US; United Artists.
Director: Karel Reisz.

Producer: Herb Jaffe, Gabriel Katzka.
Screenplay: Judith Roscoe, Robert Stone (based on his own novel *The Dogs of War*).
Photography: Richard H. Kline.
Editor: John Bloom.
Music: Laurence Rosenthal.
Cast: Nick Nolte, Tuesday Weld, Michael Moriarty, Anthony Zerbe, Richard Masur, Ray Sharkey

Sweet Dreams
1985, 115', US; HBO, Silver Screen.
Producer: Karel Reisz.
Producer: Bernad Schwartz, Charles Mulhevill.
Screenplay: Robert Getchell.
Photography: Robbie Greenberg.
Editor: Malcolm Cooke.
Music: Charles Grass.
Art Director: Albert Brenner.
Cast: Jessica Lange, Ed Harris, Anne Wedgeworth, David Clennon, James Staley, Gary Basabara.

Everybody Wins
1990, 97', UK/US; Recorded Picture.
Director: Karel Reisz.
Producer: Jeremy Thomas, Ezra Swerdlow.
Screenplay: Arthur Miller (from his own 1982 pair of one-act plays *Two-Way Mirror*).
Photography: Ian Baker.
Editor: John Bloom.
Music: Mark Isham, Leon Redbone.
Art Director: Peter Larkin.
Cast: Debra Winger, Nick Nolte, Will Patton, Judith Ivey, Jack Warden.

Questionnaire: Seeing Novels and Reading Films

Please, indicate your sex: a) female b) male and your age:

ANY COMMENTS ON THE SUBJECT ARE WELCOME! THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

NOTE: By works of fiction I refer to novels, plays and short stories.

1. How often do you go to the cinema?

2. Approximately, how many films–including TV, cinema and home video–do you watch in a month?

3. Approximately, how many works of fiction do you read in a year ?

4. Name:
a) a film based on an English or American work of fiction work:

b) a television series based on an English or American work of fiction:

5. Do you think that television is a better media then the cinema to adapt works of fiction?
YES / NO
Other comments...

6. Which works of fiction are most suitable for TV or cinema adaptation: novels, plays or short stories?

7. Do you remember:
a) the name of the directors of the films you see?
ALWAYS
OFTEN
SOMETIMES
NEVER
b) the name of the screen writers of the films you see?
ALWAYS
OFTEN
SOMETIMES
NEVER
c) the author or the title of the book if you know a film you have seen is an adaptation for the screen of a literary work?
ALWAYS
OFTEN
SOMETIMES
NEVER

8. Who should adapt a work of fiction for the screen?
a) The original author
b) A screen playwright who is also an author.
c) A screen playwright who is not an author.
d) other comments...

9. Should the author interfere in the adaptation for the screen of his work?

10. If you know that a film you have enjoyed is based on a literary work do you buy or try to read the book?
ALWAYS
OFTEN
SOMETIMES
NEVER

11. If you know that a novel, based on a film you have enjoyed, has been written after the film has been made, do you buy or try to read this novel?
ALWAYS
OFTEN
SOMETIMES
NEVER

12. If you knew that the original screenplay of a film you have enjoyed had been published, would you buy it or try to read it? YES / NO

13. The role of the novelist is very similar to the role of the (choose only one option):
a) film director b) screen writer c) other comments....................

14. The role of the original screen playwright is similar to that of the (choose only one option):
a) novelist b) theatre playwright

15. In your opinion, the work of the screen writer who adapts novels, plays or short stories is (choose one or more options):
a) less valuable than that of the original screen writer
b) as valuable as that of the original screen writer
c) artistically, as valuable as the work of the original novelist or playwright
d) other comments...

16. As a rule, you prefer (choose one option):
a) first reading the work of fiction and then seeing the film or TV adaptation
b) first seeing the film or TV adaptation and then reading the work of fiction

17. In general (choose one or more options):
a) a good novel, play or short story always becomes a good film

b) the better a novel is, the more problematic its screen adaptation is
c) frequently bad novels make excellent films
d) the quality of the literary work has nothing to do with the quality of the film version
e) other comments..

18. When you read a work of fiction after seeing its film adaptation (choose one or more options):
a) you use the physical appearance of the actors and borrow the production design of the film when visualizing the literary characters
b) your reading is absolutely independent from the filmed version
c) other comments..

19. When you read a work of fiction:
a) you find it easy to visualize characters and settings
b) it is difficult for you to visualize the setting and the characters of the literary work
c) you do not try to visualize either characters or setting.
d) other comments...

20. If a novel is notoriously difficult to adapt for the screen, you think (choose one or more options):
a) this proves that the novel has a high literary quality
b) this proves that the cinema is a deficient medium in comparison to the novel
c) this proves that novelists are trying to get rid of cinematographic techniques by using more complex literary techniques
d) other comments...

21. In general (choose only one option):
a) cinematographic narrative techniques have not influenced the development of the novel in the 20th C because the novel has followed its own course
b) the novel has been influenced to such an extent by the cinema that novelists have tried to develop a kind of anti-cinematographic narrative
c) the influence has been mutual
d) other comments...

22. The adaptation of a work of fiction for the screen should be (choose only one option):
a) absolutely respectful with the original
b) as respectful as possible, but with a certain room for modification or inclusion of other materials
c) free, using the original material merely as a source
d) other comments...

23. Original screenplays of quality should be published because they are as valuable as any literary work: YES / NO

24. If a screen playwright is also a novelist or a playwright, we may consider that (choose one or more options):
a) his/her work for the cinema is not as valuable as his/her literature
b) his/her work for the cinema is as important as his/her literary work

c) his/her work for the cinema has a higher value than the work of a screen playwright who only works for the cinema–it has an added literary value
d) other comments...

25. In terms of cultural significance or experience seeing a good film is as valuable as reading a good novel: YES/NO
other comments..
26. Adapting literary works is beneficial for authors because films are a very good way of advertising literary work of quality (and of making money):
YES / NO
Other comments..

27. For best results, literary work should be adapted for the screen in the same country of origin (i.e.: an English adaptation of an English novel is likely to be better than an American adaptation of the same novel): YES/NO
Other comments...

Justification

This is the text of the 'tesina' (or short dissertation) I submitted in June 1993 following the requirements of the Doctoral Programme in 'Filología Inglesa' I was enrolled in (1991-1996) at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. At the time, when MA degrees did not exist yet in Spain, students in possession of a five-year 'Licenciatura' could access doctoral programmes straight away. We were then supposed to take a variety of semestral courses for two years followed by a 'tesina' in the third year and, thus, obtain the equivalent of a foreign MA. These three years of academic training were a requisite to start a PhD dissertation, which took three more years minimum.

This 'tesina' obtained a 9 out of 10 (an A) and was generally praised by a very generous board whose members were, perhaps, taken by surprise by the topic of film adaptation, then quite new in the Spanish academic environment. I have, however, long hesitated to publish it, as I am not myself satisfied with the results. I have finally gone ahead thinking that it is no use to keep it in my drawer (or hard disk), anyway, and, well, why not give it the chance to gather some digital dust?

A major problem I faced was that due to contractual requirements connected with the teaching position I occupied then I had to complete the whole text in under two months at the end of my second doctoral year, instead of using the complete academic year I was counting on. I am sorry to say that, in addition, I worked with little supervision, as I am sure it must be evident. I could certainly have done better but there was simply no time. I have, nonetheless, modified the text very little, only to suppress typos and improve punctuation, also to add the missing headings for chapters and their sections, and the brief conclusions.

The very extensive Bibliography and the Appendixes were assembled in pre-internet times, and I recall making these extensive, time-consuming lists with the hope of proving my proficiency as a researcher seeking primary and secondary sources. I do not feel the dissertation makes the most of the abundant sources I read and I can only say in my justification that I was given no instructions as to how many sources it was desirable to quote from. Supervision procedures have changed very much in the last two decades indeed.

I still stand by my main thesis: that screen adaptation is a creative literary process, still today overlooked as, generally speaking, all screenwriting form film and TV is. Much has been done in the intervening 20 years to improve the status of both screenwriters and screenwriting but there is still a worrying general ignorance of the basic fact that films depend on writing. And that writers working for the film and TV industry are still writers, often using all their talent.

After submitting this 'tesina' I embarked on a PhD dissertation on a completely different topic: the articulation of monstrosity in 1980s and 1990s films and novels in English. I never abandoned, though, my interest in film and TV adaptation, to which I regularly return in my teaching and my research (as you can see if you care to take a look at my publications on my website).

Sara Martín Alegre
Barcelona, 31 December 2014
http://gent.uab.cat/saramartinalegre
Sara.Martin@uab.cat

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In case of doubt, contact the author: Sara.Martin@uab.cat