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Literature Become Cinema: Eight Transmutations, 1965-1997

Abstract: This essay treats the subject of fiction versus film through an investigation of eight significant adaptations over some thirty years: of Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim*, D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*, Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, Milan Kundera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence*, Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady*, and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*. Though none of the transmutations of these fictions is a superior work of art unto itself, I analyse them in this piece because in-depth analysis discloses not only a lot about the nature of the novel (and shorter forms of fiction), as well as the cinema. It also uncovers, in depth, what can only be called these films' state of aesthetic limbo.

Keywords: adaptation; fiction-into-film; Joseph Conrad; D. H. Lawrence; Henry Miller; Milan Kundera; E. M. Forster's; Edith Wharton; Henry James; Virginia Woolf; *Lord Jim*, *Women in Love*, *Tropic of Cancer*, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *The Age of Innocence*, *Portrait of a Lady*, *Mrs Dalloway*.

Fiction into Film

As many commentators have noted, film is closer in form to fiction than to theatre. Like fiction, film can move easily through time and space. Novelists may enlist our collaboration by assuming that readers, taken by the manner of the telling, will themselves supply any additional magic required, but the cinema doesn't need such collaboration. Film is the very home of ascendancy over the literal, the earthbound. Changes of place and century, in an instant, offer no problem whatsoever and need no kind of collaboration from the audience. Many decades of movie miracles have left us, in a sense, imaginatively slothful because we need not lift a figurative finger. Fantasy on screen demands less. It is "normal".

Also like fiction, film employs narration—sometimes in the first person, through subjective camera and voiceover; rarely in the third person, through the anonymous commentaries that accompany certain documentaries; and most often and most naturally in the omniscient mode, which enables a filmmaker to cut from a subjective point-of-view shot to a variety of objective shots, from a single reaction in close-up to the simultaneous reactions of several characters in medium or full shot. (Every picture may tell a story, but every moving picture is "told"—by a narrator called the camera.)

Unlike fiction, or I should say in a more powerful way than fiction, film can go inside human beings to explore interiority. It does this through

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the voice and the voiceover, through the close up, and through the ability to present multiple states of consciousness, as Federico Fellini does in *8½* (1963): present awareness, memory, dream, and daydream. A novel could do all this, of course, but its words wouldn't have the immediacy and effect of film, the power of the image and its accompanying sound. To be fair to the novel, the Russian filmmaker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein showed, in his 1944 essay "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today", how such cinematic innovations as fades, dissolves, and parallel editing were in fact taken directly from the pages of Charles Dickens. And to praise the novel, it has learned from film, as has poetry: a number of critics have remarked upon the cinematic qualities of much twentieth-century fiction and poetry, including James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and T. S. Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915).

As for the adaptation of fiction into film, the chief problem for the adapter is that of narration, or how to transmute narrated prose into cinema. As I suggested earlier, omniscient narration is almost inevitable in film: each time the director moves his camera—either within a shot or between shots—we are offered a new point of view from which to evaluate the action. Many films employ first-person narrative techniques, but only sporadically, because in order to produce continuous first-person narration on film, the camera would have to record all the action "subjectively", through the eyes of a narrator. The problem with such a subjective point of view is that it creates frustration in the viewer, who wants to *see* the hero. In fiction, we get to know the first-person narrator through his words, through the judgments and values he expresses through those words. But in movies, we get to know a character by seeing how he reacts to people and events, and unless the director breaks the first-person camera convention, we can never see the hero—we can only see what he sees. So the solution for the adapter of a first-person novel is to include just enough first-person narration—usually in the form of voiceover—to remind us from whose point of view the story was originally told.

This essay will now treat the venerable (but paradoxically—in the age of the computer, the Internet, social media, iPhones, and YouTube, let alone DVDs and cable TV—not yet tired) subject of literature versus film through an examination of the screen adaptation, over some thirty years, of novels by eight notable Euro-American writers: Joseph Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900), D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1920), Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* (1934), Milan Kundera's *Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984), E. M. Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), Edith Wharton's *Age of Innocence* (1920), Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady* (1881), and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). Though none of the transmutations of these fictions is a superior work of art unto itself, I analyse them in this piece because in-depth analysis discloses not only a lot about the nature of the novel (and

shorter forms of fiction), as well as the cinema. It also uncovers, in depth, what can only be called these films' state of aesthetic limbo.

Lord Jim

Richard Brooks's 1965 version of *Lord Jim* raises the question of whether one likes films, in addition to whether one likes Conrad. Much of the picture is extraordinarily well made, and Peter O'Toole's performance in the title role is touched with the poetic; but the revisions, deletions, and additions to the original have the effect of changing the subject under discussion. I am thinking only of those who know the book when I say that they may find this film enjoyable as such. Is the phrase "as such" tenable? The point seems worth exploring when a novel is an accepted classic and the film that has been derived from it has certain virtues of its own.

It seems to me hypocritically naïve to go to a film version of such a book expecting or hoping that no changes at all have been made and being shocked at discovering otherwise. All of us know that the times when the novel has not been altered or wrenched out of shape are rare. (*David Copperfield* [1935, George Cukor]? *Great Expectations* [1946, David Lean]? *Wuthering Heights* [1939, William Wyler]? It would require a fresh look to make sure.) But beyond sad experience, there is the fundamental fact that, even in understanding hands, adaptation cannot mean mere reproduction. To belabour the obvious, there is the sheer matter of time: a film that included all the dialogue in an average novel would run perhaps twenty or twenty-five hours. But there is the even more fundamental fact that a novel exists in its prose; to put it into pictures—to substitute actual places and persons for places and persons that are meant to be suggested inside one's head by the author's words—is to put Conrad largely out of the question and to make demands on another aesthetic. Even to take the synopsis plot—intact, without rearrangement—is not really to be faithful: it is merely to extract a skeleton, which turns to rubber when it is extracted and which can be hardened into bone again only if the new, cinematic flesh that is put on it is moulded by that new aesthetic.

It is purely academic to argue from the above that adaptation ought not to be attempted. The history of film is the history of adaptation, usually from novels. It is true that the best films—with rare exceptions like Pudovkin's 1926 version of Gorky's novel *Mother* (1906)—are original works or are liberal adaptations from inferior fiction that could only be improved by adaptation. But the amount of useful original material written for the screen has never been enough to fill it, and the attraction of certain novels has been understandably strong. As in this case. (I wonder only why *Lord Jim* has been relatively neglected; the one previous version I know of was made by Victor Fleming in 1925, in the silent days.) Besides, there is the

added value of a famous title. So it is mock heroics to play Canute to the sea of adaptations.

Still, the paradox remains: one enjoys much in this film *at the same time* that one is disconcerted by the changes. But if it is fruitless to complain of changes as such or of the very practice of adaptation, how can the dissatisfaction be resolved? (Not merely by staying away if, like me, you often get various kinds of pleasure along with the dissatisfaction.) One helpful method, when a good or great book is involved, might be the recognition of a Third Force: one that is neither the original novel nor an original film. In music there is an ancient tradition of variations on other composers' themes, and no one complains because Brahms and Rachmaninoff have, each in his own way, been "unfaithful" to Paganini. Robert Lowell showed in *Imitations* (1960) that a related process is possible in poetry. Not to equate Brooks with these gentlemen, but perhaps the same attitude could apply to this kind of film. In the most rigorously artistic view, the cinema has demands to be filled in faithfulness to itself; it needs to be as self-centred as any other art. Anything else leads to adaptations petrified with reverence (the 1960 film of Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* [1913], for example). From this point of view, there seems to me a place for "variation" films: to be judged by standards analogous to variations in music and poetry. To wit: has the adapter exploited the original material satisfactorily? Does he justify his alterations?

One obvious objection to this approach is that Brahms's variations are in the same medium and are not intended to produce the same effect as the original work; Brooks's variations, in a different medium, *are* so intended. But unless we are going to dismiss automatically as rape every film of every worthy novel, then we need some way of appreciating them as what they are: since they cannot, in the nature of the case, be the novels themselves. The work of the adapter *judged as possible contribution*, rather than being arbitrarily dismissed as vandalism, seems one viable approach. Let us shelve the literary-purist view that the film's success must be judged by degree of fidelity, and instead judge whether the changes help the film, as film, to arrive at the same general effect; further, whether the changes show virtuosity in the new medium and thus actually add artistic values that were not possible in the first medium. (This, of course, in addition to those original elements that are retained and simply translated.)

By these standards, some of the changes in the script of *Lord Jim* are understandable: the untangling of the time-skein, for instance. But many are incomprehensible. Why, for instance, is the ship *Patna* in the midst of a storm when she strikes the obstacle? Surely it is less pictorially trite and dramatically much more conducive to Jim's later shame if, as in Conrad, the officers panic *before* the squall breaks. A large addition in the script is more understandable but less excusable: a character called The General has been

invented, a dictator who tyrannizes the fictional country of Patusan and against whom Jim leads a revolution. I would guess that this whole episode is the producers' back-formation. They realized that the film would have to be shot partially in some Oriental location (Cambodia, as it turned out) as well as in studios; that to follow the synopsisized Conrad story, as is, would give them a film of perhaps 100 or 110 minutes; that they needed a longer picture to justify the high prices they would have to charge even if it were shorter. Therefore they had to put in more story; and Brooks has supplied an extensive action-packed episode, with heavy implications about the People and Freedom. The General himself is one more try at the new-style philosophizing torturer, two of whose better incarnations can be found in two novels: Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940) and Bridget Boland's *The Prisoner* (1954). Eli Wallach plays him equally derivatively, with no suggestion of the necessary force.

Other changes—regrettable even by “variation” standards—are too many to detail, but two must be noted. By building the General (out of the character of Sherif Ali from *Lawrence of Arabia* [1962, David Lean]?), Brooks has diminished Doramin, thus making Jim's last action less inevitable. Second, the pervasive tone of the script misses the important Conradian irony. It is all written as straight tragedy of honour—neo-Elizabethan style—without the ambience of the modern view that Conrad uses to keep his fiction from being stiffly absolutist. As a “variation” film, then, *Lord Jim* shows expansion without inner justification; change of key to its detriment; italicizing of theme to disproportion. What John Osborne's script for *Tom Jones* (1963, Tony Richardson) is supposed by some (not by me) to have accomplished, will hardly be claimed for Brooks's script here. It is different but not equal.

But Brooks also directed, much more successfully than he adapted; and it is in this area that the cinematic values, as such, begin to appear. The montage section of Jim's marine training is swiftly and engagingly done, and the battles are clear, spacious, convincing. Some scenes that depart from Conrad—like Jim's last moments—are in themselves good film episodes. Of course Brooks had the help of one of the best film editors, Alan Osbiston. It may be true, as some believe, that critics overestimate the editor's contribution. I note, however, that this is by far the best direction that Brooks had done up to this point and that J. Lee Thompson—whose taut *Guns of Navarone* (1961) was made with Osbiston's help—did not make a bearable film after he changed editors. As for cinematography, Brooks had the asset of Freddie Young, the superb cinematographer of Lean's *Lawrence of Arabia*.

In the large cast Paul Lukas, as Stein, is outstanding, displaying a magical power to move us. Daliah Lavi, as Jewel, is also outstanding

because she is so bad. She is duskily lovely, but when she opens her mouth, she becomes a lump. And there is O'Toole as Jim. His work is the premier example in this picture of the benefits that a "variation" film can add. Obviously, the character is, as written here, a simplified version, without much of the original's humour or conscious self-dramatization. But the Conradian quintessence is there, a man torn in an agony that would not bother all men, although many might wish that they were capable of it. Peter O'Toole's person, voice, and performance heighten this romantic truth, making a somewhat different character from the original but nonetheless a fascinating and affecting one.

There are certainly resemblances between O'Toole's Jim and his T. E. Lawrence; but besides the fact that his King in *Becket* (1964, Peter Glenville) showed that he is not limited to this kind of part, there are subtle and lovely differences in Jim: the sheer sunny happiness of the early scenes, the hushed shock at discovering what he is capable of doing. (Much of the later portion is played in daring gradations of *piano*.) His last glance at the sky before he dies is that of the man who "goes away from a living woman to celebrate his pitiless wedding with a shadowy ideal of conduct" (Conrad, 372). All in all, this variation on the character of Conrad's Jim—simplified by Brooks but enriched by O'Toole—is as good a justification as the whole matter of adaptation is likely to get.

Women in Love

The number of times that fine fiction has been made into good film can almost be counted on your fingers; and you won't need another finger for the 1969 picture of D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*. Still, some of the cinematic elements are remarkable.

The screenplay is, inevitably, the least successful of those elements. It was written by the producer, Larry Kramer, and it sniffs out the "action" the way those French pigs are supposed to sniff out truffles. There are snatches of discussion left in the script, but the balance is in favour of dancing and lovemaking and swimming and sledding. Certainly all those things are in the book and certainly a film lives by motion, but the balance is quite different in the book, where the action exists for the sake of self-discovery and thought. The crucial chapter in the book, the conversation when Ursula goes alone to Rupert Birkin's house for tea, is reduced to a snippet, yet Kramer retains—unexplained—nutty old Mrs Crich and her dogs. We get a syllabus tour of the novel until we arrive at the last section, in Switzerland, where a whole new picture seems to start and to go on at length, because the transformations in Gerald Crich and in Gudrun are even more difficult for Kramer than they were for Lawrence.

Gerald is played by Oliver Reed, one of the film's best choices. The character is an unsatisfying one, to begin with. Lawrence modelled this turbulent, idealistic, unconsciously homophile man at least partly on J. Middleton Murry (ironic because Lawrence presumably didn't know that Murry was having an affair with Mrs L.), but the model was insufficient. Reed works hard and well to realize the part. He is growing as an actor in this picture. He carries himself with increasing seriousness, without the oily, smug sexiness of his first films, with an interest in inner complexities and a growing ability to substantiate them. But Alan Bates, as Rupert Birkin, is once again Alan Bates. The film's best chance for success lay in the casting of this role. The actor of Birkin might have supplied some complexity to compensate for the thinning of the original material in the script. Bates is a smooth, silky actor with some schoolboy honesty and mild intelligence but no mystery and no conviction of pain. There is just one moment when he touches Birkin depths—at the *al fresco* luncheon where he eats a fresh fig and discourses about sexual parallels. Otherwise, just a pleasant young leading man.

Jennie Linden plays Ursula with wit and passion, and her film debut once again demonstrates the English miracle of producing young actresses in command of style. Glenda Jackson plays Gudrun, originally the younger sister, though that relation is not credible here. Jackson is a very fine actress, but she will probably never be a box-office star because she is not interested in star "sympathy", either in the parts she chooses or the way she plays them. She is not an actress in order to be loved but in order to act. Her Gudrun catches the buried wildness, the appetite for self, of this New Woman.

The costumes by Shirley Russell are wonderful, just sufficiently dramatic. The settings by Luciana Arrighi insist just sufficiently on their presence. And the colour photography by Billy Williams is lush. Overly lush, I think, in wheat fields and woods. The director, Ken Russell, was evidently out to make Nature "perform". The wheat fields are so golden, the pine-woods so healthy, that there are uncomfortable, Beautiful reminders of *Elvira Madigan* (1967, Bo Widerberg). Russell is also nervous about "cinematizing": he throws in fancy, superfluous dissolves, mirror shots, a sideways sequence, and other evidences of insecurity. A pity, because when he faces his material straight on, he shows talent for human revelation and for the camera motion dictated by it. The dance sequences—spoofed Russian ballet and Dalcroze—are nicely handled, and the nude wrestling scene between Rupert Birkin and Gerald Crich is done with tact, stated but not exploited, so that it supplies the homophile element that disturbs, in differing ways, all four principals.

Lawrence's novel—whole-souled, often beautiful, sorely imperfect—is his largest inquiry into the opportunities and burdens of new

freedom, with its men and women trying to understand more about love and sex and affinity. But it depends, for its continuing validity, on its moment in social and artistic history. It depends on its *form*, as a novel published in 1920, for that validity. It is as a 1920 novel that the freshness of it, such as it is, remains fresh. Restated fifty years later, in someone else's new medium, the themes seem somewhat dated—even if it were possible to make a good film of a novel whose life is in its thought.

Tropic of Cancer

The first thing we see is a fountain, spurting; the next is a bidet, spurting; and away we go on Joseph Strick's 1970 film tour of *Tropic of Cancer*. These two shots symbolize the whole picture. The world of Paris and what Henry Miller called the world of fuck are all that Strick's film is concerned with. Heaven knows (if that's the right reference) that those elements are prominent in Miller's novel. But Strick has used the same principle here that he used in his abortion of Joyce's *Ulysses*: he has picked a famous and respected novel with lots of sex in it and has been chiefly faithful to the sex. The damage in this case is much less than with *Ulysses* because Miller's novel is very much smaller than Joyce's in every sense, so there simply is less to omit, but the formula is the same: find a critically celebrated, sexy book, and under the guise of homage, exploit the sex.

Consequently, we see a parade of breasts and of female pubic hair, and we hear—often—all of Miller's four-letter words, plus one particularly vivid six-letter one (“squish”). All the material has been taken from the novel. So, too, are a few passages of non-sexual ruminative prose including the book's conclusion. But the sum is a long way from representing the novel, because Strick has left out Miller. There is no hint in this film of the two most important elements in the book, from which everything else proceeds. First, the hero—Miller—is a writer. Strick gives us not the slightest hint of this. Second, he has come to Paris to write, as an escape from America, which he loathes. He loathes a lot about Europe, too, but Paris is freedom, America is prison, here is where he can fulfil himself as artist and man; and his sexual gallivanting is part of his declaration of artistic and environmental release, after almost forty years of slavery and constriction. All the film shows us is an amiable fellow, drifting around Paris, mooching on his friends, laying girls.

This leads to another defect. As he did with *Ulysses*, Strick has updated *Tropic of Cancer* to the present. Not credible. First, the group of American expatriates do not seem like contemporary men, in manner or thought; they have a Hemingway-Fitzgerald air to them. Second, the sexual liberation of France vis-à-vis the United States was very much less marked in 1970 than in 1930, both in life and literature. The tone of the present has

a cracked ring.

Some credit does go to Strick and to the co-author of the script, Betty Botley, because they have not tried to impose a formal story on Miller's rhapsody of flow. They have rearranged and reassigned some material but have tried to keep a sense of ease and happenstance. And, admittedly, the film does get some humour from time to time by reason of the glandular pitch at which it operates. But when Strick gives us the nonsexual passages on the soundtrack, he resorts to obvious Terry Southern touches by showing us shots of tanks and soldiers and parades—shots that considerably straiten Miller's larger intent in his remarks about the hollowness and dissatisfaction of life. And, of course, Strick uses by-now platitudinous modern editing: jump-cuts *à la* Godard in the middle of sequences, plus glimpses of events past or to come.

We even get a quick look at old Henry Miller himself in one montage; the young Miller is played by Rip Torn, with some of the appealing goofiness that he showed in Milton Moses Ginsberg's 1969 film *Coming Apart*. (Those two pictures must have made Torn, at the time, Filmland's champion copulation-simulator.) But the best performance is by James Callahan as Fillmore, the American who cracks up and has to go home.

The presence of lots of girls who have lots of everything clarifies something about the novel that is even clearer in the picture. The sexual viewpoint is pure male-chauvinist; the girls are, or might as well be, faceless. To Miller, Paris is a harem, and he is a newly crowned sultan sweating to make up for lost tail. This view of woman-as-utensil is much more apparent now, long after the female revolution, and it is underscored by Strick's lavish, impersonal display of women's liberated fronts.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being

Milan Kundera's *Unbearable Lightness of Being*, according to some, is a great novel. Maybe. Of greatness, tomorrow's critics are better judges than today's. But one point is sure: Kundera is the greatest café companion imaginable. To be seated across a small table from him with drinks or coffee cups between us, which is where his books seem to put me, certifies the sometimes dubious existence of civilization, even though Kundera's discourse wryly turns civilization over to show its underside.

What wit, what tacit grief, what quiet terror, what fresh insight into received ideas, what poignant interplay between eroticism and the political climate in which various lovers go to bed. And what nonchalance about traditional novelistic structure—a blitheness tolerable only in a writer with diamond-cutter's control. Reviewing an earlier Kundera novel, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1979), Robert M. Adams wrote:

A constant interweaving of fantasy and realism, surreal metaphor and prosaic literalness, is characteristic of Kundera's technique. He intervenes frequently to address his readers directly, question his characters, recite his own experiences, or account for his authorial proceedings. He is particularly careful to leave undefined the relations between episodes of his novel; it is the reader's business to make of these relations what he can. Again and again in this artfully artless book an act or gesture turns imperceptibly into its exact opposite. . . . These subtle transformations and unemphasised points of correspondence are the special privileges of a meticulously crafted fiction. (Jones, 207)

Word for word these comments apply also to *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. I would add only, in small dissent, that Kundera's intent to charm, and the knowing pathos of that charm because it comes from an exile writing about a country in bondage, is ultimately a bit theatrical.

Still, I've quoted Adams at length because he cites the important aspects of Kundera's work, and it is precisely those aspects that are missing from Philip Kaufman's 1988 film of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. Only a director with gifts analogous to Kundera's might have approximated the book's "artfully artless" qualities—say, a Godard or Makavejev at his best. Otherwise we were bound to get more or less what we got: plot elements extracted, connected, expanded, contracted. The depth and sparkle and shadow of Kundera's novel depend on the different glimpses of his story he gives us as he talks all around it. Without that context, the story itself is rather banal, disjointed, arbitrarily manoeuvred; and without that context, the film has only a tenuous relation to the book.

Does knowledge of the book prejudice a prospective viewer of the film? Well, it made this prospective viewer hopeful. I hoped at the time that Philip Kaufman, the director and co-author of the screenplay, would expand the capabilities he had suggested in the past. (*The Right Stuff*, from 1983, and a remake of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, from 1978, are his two best previous films, both of them competently done.) I hoped that Jean-Claude Carrière, the co-author, who had often worked with Buñuel, among others, would help to liberate the screenplay from convention. But the collaborators chose to make a film of a book that Kundera expressly did not write, a traditional, continuous, mostly present-tense novel.

Not only are the characters shorn of the Kundera context, they are shorn of characteristics so that they can slip more neatly into regular film slots. Of course the book had to be compressed—the picture runs almost three hours anyway—but Kaufman and Carrière have done their compressing less with an eye to condensing the original than to transforming it into a well-behaved film with good, conventional narrative

manners. Tomas, the central figure, is shorn of a previous marriage and of the son who grows to manhood and a life contrapuntal to his father's. The three other chief characters—Tereza, Tomas's wife; Sabina, his most recurrent mistress; and Franz, Sabina's principal other lover—are also shorn. Sabina comes off best for a negative reason: there's less of her background in the book to shear away.

Virtually none of the themes that Kundera weaves through his novel, that give the novel *its* character, is broached: compassion, cyclical repetition, Beethoven, the theological implications of shit, and others—many others. As for the theme in the title, it's mentioned once. (I don't know what the title can mean to those who haven't read the book.) So is kitsch, which is one of Kundera's major motifs. The Oedipus theme is mentioned in the film, only to be mangled. What we are left with is just a story—not particularly enthralling by itself—in which, in the Prague of 1968, lives and works an attractive, philandering young brain surgeon named Tomas. The movie opens in a hospital, where a nurse strips for him behind clouded glass while other doctors watch; even their patient sits up to look. This beginning made me expectant. Had they made the book into a comedy? This would emphasize only one of its tones; still, it might make a lively picture. Soon, however, the pace slowed to a plod, relieved—frequently—by passionate couplings.

Tomas's meeting with Tereza, his falling in love, their marriage, their flight to Geneva after the Soviet invasion, their return, the results of Tomas's one overt political action, the Sabina episodes with and without Tomas—all these are stitched into sequence, but the more we see, the thinner the film becomes. Even (or especially) when incidents are expanded from the novel, they are thinned. The marriage, which is one sentence in the book, is spun out into a heavily comic “big” scene. The nude photographing of Sabina by Tereza and vice versa is much expanded and is given a homoerotic suggestion. (The book treats the scene as a teasing frolic between two members of Tomas's harem.) These scenes are typical of Kaufman and Carrière's predictable choices, which eat up screen time that might have been used to Kundera's advantage.

There are good touches. Early in the film Tomas goes to a hospital in a spa to perform brain surgery. Outside, a band is playing a waltz; Tomas hums along as he saws his patient's skull. The Soviet invasion of Prague is excellently done—Sven Nykvist is the cinematographer—blending newsreels with shots that include Tomas and Tereza. (Still, riots may not be so difficult: the best part of Spielberg's attenuated *Empire of the Sun* [1983] is the rioting in Shanghai.) And the screenplay does honour one point in the book: Kundera's insistence that we know in advance about the fate of Tomas and Tereza. The film, like the book, ends with ironic happiness—

their finish just ahead of them.

The film's best investment is in the cast, and Kaufman's best achievement is what he does with his actors. Juliette Binoche, the French actress who was in *Rouge Baiser* (*Red Kiss*; 1985, Véra Belmont), gives Tereza the right vulnerability and sweetness and desperate strength. The Sabina is Lena Olin, the Swedish actress who was the young woman in Bergman's *After the Rehearsal* (1984). How Olin has grown in spirit, guile, variety! She creates, to use an old-fashioned noun, a true bohemian. The Dutch actor Derek de Lint is appealing in what is left of Franz's character. (Because of the international cast, I'd better note that the film is in English—not Czech.)

Daniel Day-Lewis, who was the cockney gay in *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985, Stephen Frears) and the Edwardian prig in *A Room With a View* (1985, James Ivory), comes on like a house afire as Tomas. (His hair darkened, he looks like a more supple Maximilian Schell.) But Day-Lewis's role is so sparsely written, its dialogue so bald and trite, that the director seems to have relied on him to fill it out with acting. Day-Lewis tries his best. For instance, every time someone opens a door and finds him on the threshold, he goes through a little facial ballet to suggest complexities around the skimpy lines he is given to speak. It's clear that if the part had really been written, instead of being sketched at length, Day-Lewis could have carried it.

Where Angels Fear to Tread

To some nineteenth-century Anglophone writers, the romantic land of passion and trial was Italy. Nathaniel Hawthorne, Robert Browning, and Henry James are among those who thought that the social mores and emotional depths of their own cultures were put to the test in Italy. For us, Italy may have become the source of Armani and high cuisine, but, for them, it was a furnace where primal flame burned through figurative and sometimes literal corsets. No twentieth-century writer more fully subscribed to that view than E. M. Forster, a fact emphasized by the 1991 film made from *Where Angels Fear To Tread*. This novel, Forster's first, is almost diagrammatic in its contrastings of England and Italy, of upper-middle-class English decorum and indecorous, unbuttoned Italiana; and the screenplay, by Tim Sullivan, Derek Granger, Charles Sturridge (who also directed), is faithful to this scheme.

But once again, in the adapting of novels to films, fidelity is not necessarily helpful. The basic trouble here, to put it elementarily, is that a film is not a novel. The quintessence of Forster's method is that his story progresses from propriety to melodrama—ending in a baby-stealing episode that is right out of mid-Victorian theatre—and that he tells it all in a calm,

wry, shrewdly observant manner. The tone contrasts comically and sometimes poignantly with the tale. It's as if the contrast between Italy and England within the story were mirrored in the contrast between the story and the voice of the narrator.

Now this contrast, between story and narrative tone, is precisely what the film does not capture—probably no film could. Sturridge directed *A Handful of Dust* (1988) and came respectably near the Waugh texture, but this was in some degree easier because the tone of Evelyn Waugh's dialogue is fairly close to the tone of the book as a whole. If the actors merely speak Waugh's lines, they achieve at least something of the flavour of Waugh's novel. This is not true of Forster's book. Forster doesn't envy his characters, as Waugh does: he reveals them. Plucked from their context, they leave the novel far behind, especially that essential contrast between them and their prose environment.

Sturridge makes it worse. The story's initial situation is complicated, and the screenplay doesn't clarify it quickly. Lilia (played by Helen Mirren) is a widow, close to her ex-mother-in-law, Mrs Herriton (Barbara Jefford), and the surviving Herriton children, Philip and Harriet (Rupert Graves and Judy Davis). Lilia, leaving her own small daughter with Mrs Herriton, visits Italy with a friend, Caroline (Helena Bonham Carter). It takes too long to understand Lilia's relationship to the Herritons, and the film never clarifies who Caroline is. More: some of the dialogue is spoken incomprehensibly—Sturridge knows it so well that he hasn't always been able to tell when it is mumbled—so this picture has its share of murk. Michael Coulter's camera seems commissioned to underscore the murk with a dark palette, in England and abroad.

When Lilia sends word of her engagement to a young Italian in the Tuscan town where she is staying, Mrs Herriton dispatches her son (and Lilia's brother-in-law) to rescue the woman from Italian wiles. Too late. Lilia is already married. Subsequently, after Lilia dies in childbirth, Mrs Herriton sends both son and daughter to get the child and bring it back for a proper English upbringing—something Caroline also wants to do. The climax, an unhappy accident, is treated by Forster with tact and by Sturridge with clumsiness.

That excellent actress Judy Davis unwittingly highlights the difficulty of filming this book. Her role, the frustrated, frightened, imperious Harriet Herriton, is written full out by Forster. "Screamed", "violent", "snarling" (Forster, 5, 17, 100) are some of the terms he uses about Harriet, and Davis fulfils them. But that's exactly what's wrong. In the novel Harriet's screaming is contained within its Forsterian ambience; in the film, without the ambience, the screaming seems out of scale. It's not Davis's fault: she is doing what Forster says. But he didn't write Harriet's words to be spoken aloud, bereft of their prose context.

Graves, who was in *A Handful of Dust*, does much better as her brother, conveying the melting of adenoidal northern stuffiness by Italian warmth, but the role of Philip Herriton is much more congenially transportable from page to screen. Bonham Carter is chiefly successful at defining the class to which Caroline belongs and which means so much to her. Giovanni Guidelli, as Lilia's husband, hardly seems the best choice among young Italian actors to suggest a blend of charm, sex, innocence, and guile.

The Age of Innocence

The basic trouble with Martin Scorsese's 1993 film of *The Age of Innocence* is Edith Wharton's novel. Looking back fifty years in 1920, Wharton conceived a tale of love versus honour set in the New York high society of that past era, and she embodied it in a full-dress novel. But her material would have served only as a short story, at most a novella, for Tolstoy or Chekhov. What helps to sustain Wharton's more extended treatment is the attractive prose in which she wraps her narrative. Her writing has so much wit and perception, such a taking blend of satire-cum-nostalgia, that the book holds us though the story is slender. (I still feel that the ending short-changes us. I want to know what Ellen Olenska said to Newland Archer's son in her Paris apartment, what the youth thought when she ordered the shutters closed against his father, how he later reported the meeting to his father.)

In the film, without its garment of text, the denuded story is thin. It's worse than that—because the film tries to be the novel. Attempting to reproduce the text's quality, very nearly page for page, Scorsese even uses considerable prose excerpts on the soundtrack (read flatly by Joanne Woodward). He and his co-adapter, Jay Cocks, have been zealously faithful to the original, but, ironically, all that this fidelity does is make the picture seem slow. Film can't cloak, can't justify, as Wharton's prose does, the linearity of the story.

It's even worse—because (to close the novel's trap) Scorsese and Cocks had no choice: the picture has to run as long as it does. The adapters understood that there was absolutely no point in the enterprise if the decorum of drawing room and dining room, the rustle of silk and the spruceness of *boutonnieres*, were slighted. Etiquette, at its most stately, is the theatre of this drama. Among some critics at the time, there was advance worry about this; could Scorsese, the director from Little Italy, cope with the Four Hundred? That worry always seemed unnecessary to me. A director of his gifts, flanked with brigades of various period experts, aided mightily by the camera of Michael Ballhaus, would delight in the nooks and crannies of the period—and he does. But it's a bitter triumph. Scorsese had

to include all the glitter and elegance; yet it doesn't sustain the story as Wharton's writing does.

Not for lack of cinematic imagination. Martin Scorsese is still one of the two or three best American directors at work, and his talent is quickly evident here in the way the camera searches out every wisp of possible action in a scene, the way that characters move up to and past the camera to suggest that the theatre in which we are sitting is part of the room on screen, the way the camera often nestles in to people as if to hear secrets. In a moment that might have been static for another director, when Newland Archer gets an important telegram from his fiancée, May Welland, Scorsese has May speak it in front of an immense bank of flowers as the camera comes close, charging the moment with perfume and intimacy. When twenty-six years elapse, after Ellen takes herself out of Newland Archer's life and returns to Europe, a time-lapse that Wharton can handle with a simple chapter break, Scorsese shuns the banality of fade-out on the young Archer and fade-in on the middle-aged man. He concentrates instead on Archer's library, "in which most of the real things of his life had happened" (Wharton, 271). He circles the room slowly, showing us moments in the Archer family chronicle during those years.

And music! The most Scorsesean touch in Wharton's book is that it begins at the opera. (Remember Mascagni under the opening of *Raging Bull* [1980].) Red meat to Scorsese, as it was to Visconti in *Senso* (1954). Onward from this opening, Scorsese uses lively music to spank sequences into life—often, at balls and parties, with music that comes from within the scene or else with Elmer Bernstein's felicitous score.

But—a heavy but—Scorsese has made serious mistakes with his principal actors. The biggest disappointment is in the crucial part, Daniel Day-Lewis as Newland Archer. Archer is the protagonist, happily affianced to May Welland, who then falls in love with the newly arrived Ellen Olenska. The central drama is his. (Ellen's *agon* is no less, but she isn't placed at the centre.) On the basis of Day-Lewis's past work, forceful and graphic in *A Room With a View* (1985), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985), and *My Left Foot* (1989, Jim Sheridan), he seemed very likely to inhabit the role, to vitalize it. He doesn't. He merely moves through it. There's never a spark to sting us: he leaves us cold, observant. Perhaps Scorsese was counting on his personality to grip us, a resident power such as Fredric March or James Mason had. Day-Lewis doesn't have it. He needed to act (which Mason or March would have done, too!), but he doesn't. He skates through. It's surprising that Scorsese didn't remedy this.

Michelle Pfeiffer is a somewhat more complicated case. As Ellen Olenska, the American who returns to New York after a broken European marriage, Pfeiffer tries hard but fails. It's sad. She was living as intelligent a

life as possible for an American film star in the 1990s: seeking variety, taking chances, addressing every role with all the resources she could command. She just didn't command enough—in fire or depth or resonance. The result in film after film was a somewhat washed-out version of the woman she was playing, like a painting that had faded. Her Ellen here is perceptible but pallid. What helps Pfeiffer most is the fact that, though she is exceptionally pretty, she patently doesn't rely on her prettiness: she wants to act. But, with her Ellen, though we know what she means from moment to moment, we simply don't feel it.

Winona Ryder is disastrously miscast as May Welland, Archer's utterly conventional fiancée and eventual wife, who turns out to have been more perceptive than her husband knew. Ryder is wrong, first, physically. Wharton describes May as being "tall, round-bosomed, and willowy" (Wharton, 274) with a "goddess-like build" (Wharton, 255), and comments frequently on her features. Clearly Wharton means May's physical being to help explain why Archer wanted her. Here Archer has chosen a moderately pleasant, quite unremarkable girl. As for Ryder's acting, the one smile for me in this film—which is and must be socially hyperconscious—occurred when Ryder remarks to Archer that a man she has just met seems common. To put it gently, her social superiority is unconvincing.

Robert Sean Leonard, who trivialized Claudio in the contemporaneous *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993, Kenneth Branagh), has less chance here to do damage in the small role of Archer's son. But most of the supporting actors in the lustrous New York social parade are neatly cast, and two of them do the best acting in the film. Alec McCowen, as Sillerton Jackson, the aging socialite, has the gravity of a man to whom protocol is his reason for being. Miriam Margolyes, as the obese and ultra-rich Mrs Mingott, curls the surrounding air with dry disdain and hierarchical rigor.

The Age of Innocence was dramatized on Broadway in 1928 (Margaret Ayer Barnes), and was filmed in Hollywood in 1924 (Wesley Ruggles) as well as 1934 (Philip Moeller). I don't know any of those versions, and I wonder how (which means I doubt that) they avoided the snare that Wharton unwittingly set for her adapters—the snare that, for all his gifts, caught Scorsese.

The Portrait of a Lady

Once more unto the breach, dear friends—the breach between a distinguished piece of fiction and a film made from it. This time it is Henry James's 1881 novel *The Portrait of a Lady*. Jane Campion's 1996 film summons, once more, a wild fancy: this would be an even better picture than we can imagine if the novel didn't exist.

Concede at once that condensation—of James’s fifty-five chapters, of his deep explorations of character—was inevitable if we were going to survive the film, which runs 144 minutes as it is. Viewing, contrary to popular assumption, is harder than reading: we have all read for more than 144 minutes many times, but film is more draining per second than reading, more unrelenting in its command of our collaboration. Besides, there is the subconscious imperative of theatrical shape that nags at the back of our brains while viewing, which doesn’t occur while reading. Whether the actors are live or photographed, an acted story has temporal obligations.

The screenplay by Laura Jones, who has written for and with Campion in the past, nonetheless tries to frame the events—more important, the moral adventure—in some kind of Jamesian proportion. In 1872, Isabel Archer, a young American woman, is in England at the estate of relatives when she gets a marriage proposal from the highly eligible Lord Warburton. She declines: certainly because she doesn’t love him, but certainly, too, because she is hungry for experience, of a kind she can’t specify. Another man proposes, too, while—so to speak—she is observed by her cousin, Ralph Touchett, a gentle soul ill with consumption. After she declines the second man, Ralph persuades his rich, dying father to leave Isabel a large legacy to empower her quest for who knows what. “The conception of a certain young woman affronting her destiny” (James, 8) was how James conceived the novel; and Isabel heads for the continent to do her affronting.

In Florence, she meets a fortyish American who lives there, Gilbert Osmond, an aesthete with “an odd mixture of the detached and the involved” (James, 223). He, too, proposes. Isabel takes three years to make up her mind, traveling the while; then, following her destiny, she marries Osmond. Her destiny darkens. The couple has a baby that dies, and they develop an enmity that lives. Previous suitors reappear. For these and other reasons, Osmond becomes even angrier at Isabel. She, for her part, learns disturbing facts about Osmond’s past. When Ralph Touchett, back in England, begins to die, Osmond forbids Isabel to go to him. She disobeys. With her lovingly at his side, Ralph dies. The novel ends with her return to Italy, though not necessarily to her marriage. The film leaves us wondering whether she will indeed return to Italy. In either case, there is more destiny to affront.

It is a critical commonplace that Isabel in some ways resembles James himself. She comes from Albany, New York, where James spent some of his childhood. Like James, she is of an era in which the gaining of experience for young Americans of her class meant going to Europe, being seasoned there. Whether or not James would have adapted, to himself and Isabel, Flaubert’s “*Madame Bovary, c’est moi?*” (Heath, 34, 91, 154), Campion has coloured her film as if he had that empathy. To her, James was not only

concerned with “a certain young woman”, he was a pioneer in feminist issues as such.

Some of Campion’s embroidery is strange, some heavy. The sequence before and under the credits shows us contemporary young women of different races, all in airy gowns in a woodland glade, all circling and beseeching the camera. Perhaps this is to suggest that, even today, the persistent image of young women is that of available nymphs. Interludes in the film take James’s implication into the explicit. We see Isabel’s frustrated sexual hunger in a dream scene in which she rolls on a bed with her suitors. Her travels in Mediterranean countries are synopsisized in a heated fantasy that presents her naked. (Did James ever see a naked woman?)

These additions, and others, seem more than an attempt to assure us that James is up to date; they also seem an attack on Jane Austen’s acceptances. Contemporaneous Austen films (*Sense and Sensibility* [1995, Ang Lee]; *Emma* [1996, Douglas McGrath]; *Persuasion* [1995, Roger Michell]) italicized that her young women have no options in life but to hunt for rich husbands. Isabel is aware of other options (her friend Henrietta Stackpole is a journalist), but, even within the marriage game, she has more nuance, more suggestion of secret shadow; she chafes more at social boundaries. Campion apparently wanted to dramatize this difference from the Austen pattern.

Cinematically, too, Campion is sometimes intrusive. A number of sequences begin with a tilted establishing shot, for no reason except that she wants to remind us that she’s at the helm. The cuts between scenes, intended to be elliptical, are sometimes merely jerky. And Campion leans a lot on great close-ups, which get a bit repetitious even when she keeps the heads off-centre. But, with the exquisite camera work of Stuart Dryburgh, she gives us an inviting view of every scene, sometimes a touch tricky (past statuary), sometimes a touch too picturesque (with huge trees), but on the whole with an eye that searches and perceives.

And crowning Campion’s work are her accomplishments with her cast—except Shelley Winters as Mrs Touchett and Shelley Duvall as Countess Gemini. The two Shelleys could have been left wherever they were. Nicole Kidman, for her part, may not be the Isabel Archer of our imagination, but neither is she the Nicole Kidman of our past acquaintance. In the bizarre *To Die For* (1995, Gus Van Sant), she was surprisingly colourful, and here Campion has induced her to mine herself further. Kidman comes up with tones of hurt and resolve and poise and warmth that she has never shown before.

John Malkovich, not always easy to admire, is perfectly cast here, which is itself a rarity. His moodiness and almost disinterested viciousness fit Gilbert Osmond. He gives a performance that, without grotesquerie, makes us scent from the start that there is unpleasantly more to him than

Isabel suspects. The most adroit casting is of Barbara Hershey as Madame Merle. Hershey is light-years away from her beginnings in film as a Barbie doll with a voice (*The Baby Maker* [1970, James Bridges]; *Boxcar Bertha* [1972, Martin Scorsese]). Through her several decades of film, she has grown and grown, with insufficient praise for her continuing development. Playing the mature American-born woman who has long lived in Europe and has learned from it, Hershey immediately and perfectly suggests complexity.

Martin Donovan, known for his quite different work with Hal Hartley, is touching yet manly as the afflicted Ralph. John Gielgud is his father, a small part but, naturally, unforgettable. (Odd thought: How does a ninety-two-year-old actor feel about playing a deathbed scene?) And a note of gratitude, as well, to the film's Polish composer, Wojciech Kilar. Kilar's music, relying on meditative strings, helps to carry the film along. Campion's choice of Kilar is one more sign that the woman who made *An Angel at My Table* (1990) had emerged from the preciousness of *The Piano* (1993) to resume an interesting career.

Mrs Dalloway

Some films are free adaptations of famous novels, such as Alfonso Cuarón's 1998 picture of Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861); other films cling close to famous fictions, as in the case of the 1997 adaptation of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*.

Eileen Atkins wrote the screenplay of *Mrs Dalloway*. An intelligent and inquiring English actress, Atkins had been working on Virginia Woolf projects for almost ten years prior to this film. First, in 1989, she did a one-woman adaptation of *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which she played in London and New York and on tour. Then, in 1993, Atkins made a theatre piece, not exactly a play, out of the correspondence between Woolf and her lover, Vita Sackville-West. In New York, Atkins played Virginia and Vanessa Redgrave played Vita. Clearly, then, Atkins would have recognized the problems in adapting so shimmery a novel as *Mrs Dalloway*, but, alas, recognizing them is not enough. Those problems still obtrude.

Woolf's novel might be seen as a (much smaller) parallel to Joyce's *Ulysses*. By closely following one day in the life of one quite ordinary woman, the book includes a social tapestry, a political index, a theological position, and something of the history that produced all these elements. Woolf knew Joyce's work (about which she had decidedly mixed feelings, especially because of Joyce's candour); but "stream of consciousness" technique was in the air at the time, and she might well have done what she did if Joyce had never existed. That technique works wonderfully well in the novel; but it is not a comfortable film mode.

The story deals with one June day in the London of 1923, from

morning to the evening when Clarissa Dalloway gives a party in her house. She is wealthy and reticently elegant, the middle-aged wife of an Member of Parliament, a woman whose life is plainly pleasant and vacuous. Through her day of party preparations, several other stories wind. A former suitor of hers, Peter Walsh, returns after a long stay in India. He visits Clarissa, is still in some way affected by her, yet tells her of a current amorous involvement. And there is the story of a young man, a severely shell-shocked veteran of the Great War (as it was prematurely called), who has a devoted Italian wife. His story connects with Mrs Dalloway because the physician who so signally fails to help him is a guest at her party that evening.

To accommodate the background of these and other encounters, Atkins has devised some flashback scenes, derived from Woolf. Also, those scenes serve the usual purpose of the past juxtaposed with the present, a pathos so inevitable that it hardly needs to be mentioned. When we see the young Peter asking the young Clarissa to marry him and thus break out of her cosseted life, when we see her opt instead for the quite conventional young Richard Dalloway, we understand how Clarissa's upbringing has crimped the possibilities for her life. She was reared to be a quite conventional lady, and that is what she has become.

This flashing-back is pretty to look at, and it flexes the narrative, but it works against the unification of the piece; and unification of the whole was patently what Woolf was after. Her prose makes the novel a holistic work even when the narrative shifts from one strand to another. This is impossible in the film, where the shifts are exactly that, breaks from the centrality of Mrs Dalloway's day. There's a further disjuncture. Woolf's prose transmutes ordinary experience. One instance: when Big Ben strikes, she writes: "The leaden circles dissolved in the air" (Woolf, 5, 72, 142). In the film, we simply hear the bells. In a sense Woolf might just as well not have written as she did. Any of us can hear bells; only Woolf could have thus transfigured the sound, and the film cheats us of her.

This is not remotely to argue a fixed superiority of literature over film, but it is to suggest that some novels resist adaptation to the core of their beings. Further, it suggests that an actress-writer can fall so much in love with a fine novel that she overlooks her own experience and knowledge. (For a quite contrary example, see Emma Thompson's screenplay of the 1995 film of *Sense and Sensibility*.) And, unfortunately, that is not all. Most of Mrs Dalloway's activity during that June day is inner—things that she thinks and feels. Atkins knew this, of course, and tried to enrich the outer, visible woman with some voice-over quotations from her thoughts. But those few quotations never have, could not have, the wholeness of the contrapuntal feeling in the book, the sense that the woman whom the world sees has a more interesting, invisible self constantly attending her.

This condition puts a dreadful burden on Vanessa Redgrave, as Clarissa. Up to this point, she had rarely had a role that demanded less of (let us please use the term) her genius. She moves through Mrs Dalloway's house and the London streets like a great, beautiful ship sailing on urban seas, and when she speaks, she makes as much as she decently can of her clumps of standard chatter—banal slivers of politesse such as “How delightful to see you!” (Woolf, 260) and the like. If the role weren't in the hands of an actress who is being underused, it would be intolerable. But even Redgrave can't make Mrs Dalloway, in this form, a fascinating woman.

Her clothes, designed by Judy Pepperdine, are unostentatiously lovely, especially the hats. In the pre-war flashback scenes, the clothes bespeak their period cleverly. And in those clothes, the performances of the young Clarissa and Peter and Richard are vividly . . . young. As the older Peter, Michael Kitchen carries nicely an air of regret plus hope. But the most demanding performance, a demand well met, is by Rupert Graves as the unbalanced war veteran. This man's presence in both novel and film is obviously meant to give us a glimpse of the horror in the world through which Mrs Dalloway has floated. Graves has to deal with abrupt swirls of mood and reality, and he does it movingly.

The director was Marleen Gorris, the Dutch woman whose previous film, *Antonia's Line* (1995), was smoothly fulfilled. (Incidentally, Gorris did an M.A. at an English university, and she has some feeling for the country.) In her hands we can be sure that the feminist aspects of Woolf's work will not be slighted. More, Gorris understands the story, as, in the truest sense, a woman's work. The handicaps that she could not overcome are the implacable ones of the screenplay.

Back to the Future

I'd like to close not by arguing for the overall superiority of fiction or film as an art form—each is superior in some ways, inferior in others. What I would like to say, however, is that film was certainly *the* art form of the twentieth century and promises to dominate the twenty-first as well. That's because it's the one technology that is—or at least can be—absolutely humanistic in its outcome. It can put many of the technological impulses, cravings, and interests of our age at the service, not merely of the machinery of sensation, diversion, and profit, but of the mystery of the human spirit as well—a mystery that, as we have seen, often originates in novelistic sources. I'm speaking about film at its best, of course. Why it often isn't at its best is a subject complicated by the commerce of the world, and one better left for another day.

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